T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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EXISTENTIALISM AND DYSTOPIAN DRAMA: AN ANALYSIS OF *ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS*, *A NUMBER*, AND *THE WAR PLAYS*

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ÖZET

Sanayi Devrimi ile birlikte insan hayatı hem toplumsal hem bireysel açıdan büyük değişikliklere uğramıştır. Beklenilenin aksine, bilimsel ve teknolojik gelişmeler ile toplu üretim insanlığa toplumsal eşitsizlik, yıkıcı savaşlar ve kargaşa getirmiştir. Bu hüsranın ve yirminci yüzyılda ortaya çıkan yeni problemlerin bir sonucu olarak insanlar gelecekleri hakkında endişe duymaya başlamışlardır. Bu olumsuz değişim, distopya edebiyatının gelişmesine vesile olmuştur. Distopik eserler bir yandan hoşa gitmeyen gelecek senaryoları tasvir ederken bir yandan da insan doğası ve eylemlerini sorgulamaktadır. Distopik eserler bu yönüyle varoluşçu düşüncenin birçok özelliğini yansıtmaktadır. Distopya edebiyatı ve varoluşçuluk arasındaki bu bağ birçok çalışmaya konu olmuştur. Ancak bu çalışmalarda genellikle distopik romanlar ele alınmıştır. Distopik tiyatro bu çalışmaların dışında bırakılmıştır. Bu tezin amacı, *Rossum'un Evrensel Robotları*, *Bir Sayı*, *ve Savaş Oyunları* üçlemesini varoluşçu ontoloji ve etik açısından inceleyerek distopik tiyatro ve varoluşçuluk arasındaki bağı ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: distopik tiyatro, varoluşçu ontoloji, varoluşçu etik, Karel Čapek, Caryl Churchill, Edward Bond.

ABSTRACT

Together with the Industrial Revolution, human life has undergone drastic changes both socially and individually. Contrary to expectations, scientific and technological improvements, and mass production have brought social inequality, destructive wars, and conflicts to humanity. As a consequence of this frustration and the new problems that emerged in the twentieth century, human beings have begun to fear for their future. This negative change has conduced to the development of dystopian literature. While depicting undesirable future scenarios, dystopian works also question human nature and actions. From this aspect, dystopian works reflect many characteristics of existentialist thought. This link between dystopian literature and existentialism has been issued in several studies. However, those studies generally deal with dystopian novels. Dystopian drama has been excluded from such studies. The aim of this dissertation is to reveal the link between dystopian drama and existentialism by examining *Rossum's Universal Robots*, *A Number*, and *The War Plays* trilogy in terms of existential ontology and ethics.

Keywords: dystopian drama, existential ethics, existential ontology, Karel Čapek, Caryl Churchill, Edward Bond.

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INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century, from its very first days, has witnessed the outcomes of the major interest in science and technology. Thanks to this interest, scientific and technological research fields have increased in number and they have also accelerated. Consequently, the lives of people living in the twenty-first century have substantially changed together with the advancements in technology, enhancements in science, and innovations in medicine and biogenetic studies. In this day and age, we are able to do many things that cannot be imagined in the previous century. Using artificial intelligence in almost every field of life, possessing personal phones and having access to the Internet, reprogramming DNAs to cure or prevent illnesses, creating synthetical organs and improving the abilities of the human body, and monitoring other solar systems and planets can be given as examples to them. These scientific and technical developments have not only eased and expedited human life, they also have had a critical impact on the mindset of people by entering into every corner of their lives. Socially, human beings have become isolated, distanced, and disconnected. On the other hand, they have shown a tendency to feel alienated, anxious, and insecure. Although the change that has taken place in this era is unprecedented, its effects on human beings are not unknown to the philosophy and literature of the foregoing times.

The feelings and conditions of the twenty-first-century individual have been the main topics of existentialism, a philosophical movement that was very influential especially towards the half of the twentieth century. This philosophical movement emerged as a reaction to the Western philosophical tradition and unquestioned reliance on human reason which brought about two massive wars. After the First World War, the general trust that reason could solve all the problems of humankind collapsed and the demolition that came after the Second World War reinforced this loss of trust. Accordingly, experiencing the ruins of the First World War, and the devastation of the second, the existentialist thinkers questioned the limits of the human mind and its products; science and technology. Beginning from

the forerunners of Western philosophy, the dominant philosophical attitude has been to value rationality and objectivism above other qualities of human beings. Concordantly, emotions and the subjective aspects of the individual have been neglected. However, overvaluing reason and objectivity was found quite problematic by the existentialists because such a kind of perception has distorted the wholeness of the human individual since it has degraded him to an insensitive but smart being that does not possess more features than an intelligent machine. On the contrary, existentialism has put emphasis on the irrational and sentimental sides of the individual which had long been disregarded. The existentialists were interested in what it is to be a human being. They regarded the individual as a complex entity by embracing his logical, illogical, subjective, and universal characteristics.

The main focus of existentialist thought is the existence of the individual here and now in this world, therefore, the experiences and acts of the individual have a significant place in existentialism. The human being, as viewed by the existentialists, finds himself thrown to this world without any kind of predetermined destiny. He is totally free to shape his life through his choices, and therefore, he is to hold responsible for every outcome of his decisions. Besides, the human being is aware of the fact that he is a finite being and his existence will eventually come to an end. This position of the individual as an independent, responsible, and perishable being who is thrown to an unknown world evokes anguish, uneasiness, and worry in him. In fact, the mere act of existing itself is a source of anxiety according to the existentialists. Yet, the distortion of the wholeness of the individual or degradation of him to a one-sided being by the reason-centred civilisation and philosophical tradition is equally worrying because such a kind of perception would cause the individual to overlook his complex nature, divert his attention from his true being, and thereby cause fragmentation and alienation. The existential philosophy proclaims that this troubling condition of the human being, albeit originating from existence itself, can be overcome when the individual embraces his authentic existence even though it is very difficult to achieve. Correspondingly, the aim of existentialism is to make the individual aware of his true self, remind him what he forgot, and thereby, encourage him to accept his genuine existence.

The catastrophic atmosphere that emerged during and after the two massive wars has affected the literature of the period as well. Together with the loss of faith in the glory of human reason, the values of the Western civilisation and the preeminent position of man as a mighty creature who has control over himself and other beings have started to collapse. As it was demonstrated by great thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Albert Einstein that human being was in fact under the effect of many factors that he cannot determine; the idea of progress was more deception than a reality, and the so-called rigid facts could be relative and changeable. These new perspectives and the devastating impacts of the world wars have shaken the individual at his core and made him concerned about the future. Thus, in the wake of this transformation that he underwent, the individual has started to feel depressed, alienated, worried, and restless. The impacts of this change in the thoughts and feelings of the human being have been seen in literary works. The authors, being among the individuals who went through those troublesome times themselves, narrated the isolation, angst, and despair of the modern man in their writings, and consequently, the dystopian genre has emerged.

Quite similar to existentialist philosophy, dystopian works issue the disquietude of the human being in an alien environment. The word "dystopia" refers to nightmarish fictional times and places in which the residents are isolated, depersonalised, and strictly oppressed either because of a cataclysmic event, extremely domineering social and political organisations, or excessive mechanisation. Dystopia is seen to be a sub-category of utopia; a term refers to a non-existent ideal place whose population and system function flawlessly. Utopia takes its source from the desire of human beings for change and their aspiration for a greater future. It can be said that dystopia is also fed by the same sources but the world that it presents is undoubtfully undesirable. As a literary genre, dystopia alludes to the narration of depressing future projections which warn the reader against the possible consequences of the existing problems. Dystopian literature has generally been treated in two different ways. Some scholars concentrate on the social and governmental criticism employed in dystopian works while other scholars consider dystopias as a criticism of the after-effects of the overgrowing scientific and technological developments. When the dystopian works are

investigated, it is seen that the majority of them include a bleak, dark, and gloomy setting resulting from totalitarianism and despotism. Especially the works written in between 1924 and 1949 can be associated with Russian communism (Akman, 2015: 75). Based on this point of view, some scholars assert that dystopias are not about the probable dangers which can occur in the future but about the social and political problems that individuals have already been facing. After the downfall of totalitarian regimes, the dystopian works which portray tyrannical ruling organisations have decreased in number. Yet, the genre has continued to flourish. In this respect, some critics put emphasis on the link between dystopias and scientific and technological developments in the twentieth century (Lederer, 1967: 1134-1135). Due to the disastrous results of the employment of nuclear weaponry in the twentieth century, there has been a growing fear against scientific and technological improvements. These improvements gained speed, especially during the Second World War and the Cold War period and continued to affect the daily life in the twenty-first century (Higgins, 2008: 225).

However, the uneasiness has continued even after the end of the Cold War because the negative consequences of scientific and technological advances have started to be seen as a threat to the existence of humankind on earth. On the one hand, the solid negative outcomes of the enormous growth of science and technology have been seen in the form of global climate change, deforestation, and pollution in the vital resources for humans to survive. As a result, the habitats of human beings are in danger, which has created great concerns about the future of earthly life, and therefore, of human life. On the other hand, scientific and technological improvements have changed the culture and generated new manners of life. Inevitably, the position of the individual in society, his self-perception, and his relationship with others have already been affected. Such kind of interference to human life has started to collide with the individuality of humankind. Today, the adverse consequences of scientific and technic progress might not be seen as destructive since it is still possible for mankind to enjoy liveable earth. However, looking at the present state, some writers are worried with regards to what lay ahead of humankind and they reveal their concerns in the dystopian worlds they create. Focusing on the hardships that the detached and estranged individual faces in a hostile environment unsuitable for human life, some dystopias raise questions

about freedom, the subject-object duality, the connection between humans, the limits of human being and his actions, and also the limits of science. Other dystopian works foreground the scientific and technological enhancements and their direct effects on human life and body even though they do not portray a post-catastrophic setting. These works discuss the differences between being a subject in contrast to being an object and the specialities that make a person a human being.

The questions that dystopian works ask have much in common with the topics of existential philosophy. Both of them raise doubts about the glorification of the human mind, accentuate what the reason-centred point of view ignores, and investigate the human as a distinct being among other beings. The situation of the individual in dystopian contexts and the feelings it arouses recall the anxiety and uneasiness of man that arise from existing in a strange world. Likewise, the juxtaposition of human beings with nonhuman beings in dystopias in order to examine the unique modes of being human resembles the ontological claims of existentialism. Moreover, making people aware of the risks their current actions and decisions bear, dystopian works also investigate how a human being should act and stress the significance of acting consciously and responsibly. This emphasis is in parallel with the ethical assertions of existentialist thinkers. In this respect, dystopias can be linked to existentialist thought and dystopian works can be examined through an existentialist lens. This association between the dystopian genre and existential philosophy has been formerly built by other scholars. However, their studies generally concentrate on novels. In a study titled "Dystopian Novels are in Reality Literary Expressions of Existentialism," the common points of dystopian fiction and the existential philosophy in terms of their emphasis on the situation of the individual are revealed with the following claim that "The struggle of an individual in society is a momentous catalyst for dystopian fiction, and whether these ideas are predicated upon by a philosopher or an author, they are at root united by concern for the individual and not for society" (ty: 1). In a similar fashion, it is possible to find studies that employ an existentialist approach to dystopian novels. Ayo Kehinde, for instance, presents an existential perspective to the novels of the English writer Graham Greene focusing on the struggle and alienation of the characters (Kehinde, 2003-04). A similar connection between existentialism and dystopian novels is made by Mathias Mallia in his dissertation

which concentrates on the characters' state of despair in Atwood's *The Heart Goes Last* and Bukowski's *Post Office* in relation to the fundamental arguments of the existentialists (Mallia, 2018). Likewise, İhsan Ünaldı ve Özben Tuncer highlight the impact of the existentialist philosophy on Burgess' famous dystopian work *A Clockwork Orange* (Ünaldı and Tuncer, 2019: 68). An interesting claim in terms of dystopian novels' link with the existentialist thought is made by Thomas Boer as he draws a parallel between the function of dystopian novels to warn today's people about the catastrophic outcomes of their actions and the ideas of Sartre on literature (Boer, 2020: 6). Dystopian drama, on the other hand, has been excluded from the existentialist analysis. As is the case in novels, existential philosophy presents a better and deep understanding of dystopian plays. In fact, drama might be more apt to express the main concepts of existentialism than any other literary genre as it centres on characters and their subjective world. Accordingly, this dissertation aims at revealing the connection between existentialism and dystopian drama by analysing three dystopian plays such as *Rossum's Universal Robots* (1921), *A Number* (2002), and *The War Plays* (1985).

The first chapter will concentrate on the philosophy of existentialism. The term existentialism is very comprehensive and it encompasses several philosophers and different modes of thinking. It is possible to talk about various types of existential philosophy. Still, although their perceptions are dissimilar, existentialists generally deal with the same problems related to existence. Thence, the essential concepts of existentialist thought that are shared by existentialist thinkers will be demonstrated firstly. In this respect, this section will cover the notions of existence, essence, genuine existence, the human person as a being, freedom, choice, responsibility, limits of the individual, absurdity, alienation, existential anxiety, and death. Then, the prominent figures of existentialism and their existential philosophy will be described in detail. The first part of this section includes the ideas of the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard and of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who are accepted as the precursors of existentialism. Both Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's thoughts regulate the perception of existential philosophers and thinkers. Kierkegaard's emphasis on the importance of individual awareness, freedom, and transcendence; and his questioning of human life on earth together with the feeling of absurdity have influenced the existentialist thinkers of

the twentieth century. Together with the opinions of Kierkegaard, the remarks of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche on the truth, the individual, and long-standing established systems including religion and philosophy set ground for the existentialists' critique of the Western philosophical tradition. This part will be followed by the examination of the ideas of four leading theorists of existentialism; Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus. Heidegger's views about human existence play a significant part in existential philosophy. Throughout his philosophical studies, Heidegger was generally interested in the modes of beings. Opposing to the long-standing convention in Western philosophy, Heidegger developed his ontology by centring upon the significance of being and he distinguished the being of the human being from other entities in the world. Heidegger's contemporary Karl Jaspers is another influential thinker of existentialism. Jaspers, too, sees human existence as different from other modes of being. Yet, following Kierkegaard's steps, he attributes a transcendental aspect to the human being. According to him, existing means being in a situation. Contrary to other existentialists, Jaspers puts a special emphasis on the role of communication between human beings in attaining genuine existence. After giving details about the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger and Jaspers, the section will proceed with Sartre's and Camus's existentialist thoughts. Sartre puts forward the main conceptions of existentialist philosophy throughout his work. Being influenced by Heidegger's ontology, he separates man from other beings as a "being-for-itself" that is essenceless and completely free to shape his own essence. Based on this notion, Sartre's existentialism deals with absolute freedom and responsibility, the feelings of fear and worry triggered by being blameworthy of every action that one takes, and the individual's tendency to ignore his true existence. Following this part, Albert Camus' ideas related to existentialism will be investigated. Although Camus refused to be called an existentialist, the issues that he handles in his works and his ideas are very much in line with existentialist thought. Camus especially concentrates on the plaguesome feeling that the individual has in the world which is strange to him. He thereby questions the motivations that make the individual pursue this absurd life, and draws attention to the issue of suicide. Including different approaches of these mentioned

philosophers and thinkers to existentialist thought, the goal of this chapter is to give a detailed account of existential ontology and ethics.

The second chapter deals with existentialist literary criticism. Existentialism is highly tied to literature as some existentialists verbalised their existential ideas in the form of literary works. As much as his philosophical works, the novels and plays of Sartre reflect his existentialism. Likewise, Camus' views related to human existence can be found in his *The Stranger* (1942). Their plays are also thought to be the leading examples of the existentialist theatre movement which was a trend in drama that followed the growth of existentialism. Apart from writing literary pieces, Sartre and Camus wrote about literature as well. Sartre's *What Is Literature?* (1949) presents his perception of literature. In this nonfiction work, Sartre depicts the writer both as an individual who is always in connection with his place and time and as a crucial figure in his society who has the responsibility to enlighten the readers and encourage them to change. To be able to achieve this, the writer should create life-like worlds with an emphasis on the current social problems. Sartre attributes a social function to literature but this function can only be achieved if the reader is involved. The reader, as a free being who is shaped through his decisions, completes the literary work by adding his interpretation to it. Camus, on the other hand, sees artistic creation as a means of coping with the absurd. According to him, the writer resembles the philosopher but the aim of literature is not to clarify. The writer should convey his understanding by means of images and feelings. His views on literature take place in the third chapter of his famous work *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Elaborating these thoughts of Sartre and Camus related to literature, this chapter scrutinises the existentialist approach to literary theory.

In the next two chapters, utopian and dystopian genres will be examined respectively. Beginning with an explanation of the terms "utopia" and "dystopia," the fourth chapter will continue with the various approaches towards utopia. Some scholars lay stress on the necessity of perfection in utopias whereas others take Thomas More's *Utopia* as the basis and develop their interpretation of utopia in accordance with the characteristics of this work (Fitting, 2009: 123-124). After mentioning different perspectives related to the term, utopian thought and theory

will be surveyed. Together with the development of utopian studies, new claims about the creation process of utopias have emerged. The motivation behind creating utopian systems has been linked to different contexts such as psychology and sociology. Those studies also distinguish literary utopias from utopian social and political systems. Accordingly, the next section of this chapter investigates literary utopia and the essential qualities of utopian literature together with a portrayal of the historical development of the utopian genre. As a consequence of the grand changes in life, as well as in the mindset of people, towards the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, utopian works have gradually been replaced by dystopian works. The following section will expand on this transition from utopia to dystopia, then, proceed with the explanation of dystopia and dystopian literature. Subsequent to demonstrating the characteristics of dystopian works, a comparison between dystopian genre, utopian genre, and science fiction will be made lastly in this chapter. The fifth chapter is devoted to the historical development of dystopian literature. The dystopian novel genre will be explored in the first section of this chapter. The second section, on the other hand, will focus on the aspects of dystopian drama and its relation to existentialist philosophy.

After setting the philosophical and literary background, the last chapter will include the analysis of Karel Čapek's *Rossum's Universal Robots* (1921), Caryl Churchill's *A Number* (2002), Edward Bond's trilogy *The War Plays* (1985) in the context of the existential thought. Čapek's and Churchill's plays portray the destructive effects of over-developed machinery and science on the individual in a future time when science and technology are more involved in everyday life than today. *Rossum's Universal Robots* depicts a future in which robots do all the work for humans and eventually unite and rise against human beings. The robots' resistance is so strong that they finally destroy humanity. Demonstrating such a horrid scenario for the future of human beings, this dystopian play questions the limits of technological improvements as well as the limits of the individual as a unique being among other beings in the world. As the robots get involved in the life of the individuals, the former becomes humanised whereas the latter is eventually dehumanised. Through this duality, existential topics such as depersonalisation, loss of meaning, and what it means to be a human being are

treated in Čapek's play. A similar questioning can be found in *A Number*. Although Churchill's play does not illustrate a dystopic environment caused by a calamity that puts humanity in jeopardy, it is still dystopian since it sets forth a future when human cloning is affordable for ordinary people and human beings are affected by the implementation of this scientific development in daily life. Rather than giving a depiction of the general situation in this environment, Churchill focuses on the struggles of the clone as well as the original after learning that they have been subjected to human cloning. This procedure not only deprives them of their individuality but also turns them into a product of science and a prey for their father's decision to amend his problematic relationship with his first son by having him copied. As soon as they discover that there are a number of people who have the same genetics, both the clone and the original start to feel unrest and they question the meaning of their lives. Their perceptions about themselves change as their uniqueness is threatened. This questioning about the authenticity of their being takes place when they confront their father who, in the meantime, faces the consequences of his choice. All these issues are very much in line with the existentialist philosophy.

While Čapek's and Churchill's plays deal with what a human being is by spotlighting how the over-involvement of science and technology in human life affects the human being, Bond's trilogy concerns itself with the same matter by investigating how a human must act. Raising ethical questions, *The War Plays* reminds the reader that human beings have the responsibility for their actions, however, the consequences of some actions affect generations of people. *The War Plays* is a series of three plays that give a depiction of the hardships of individuals during and after a nuclear war. The first play of the trilogy, *Red Black and Ignorant*, demonstrates how the ongoing political and social systems objectify and suppress human beings, devalue human life, and trigger conflicts and violence. Eventually, a series of nuclear wars erupt and those systems collapse but the wars also bring destruction to the world and humanity. This ruination of the world is described in *The Tin Can People*, the second play of the series. In the aftermath of such massive wars, the survivors live in isolation and anxiety as they are constantly facing death. Those who can find one another in the ruins come together and attempt to form a new community but they cannot produce children. The third part

of the trilogy, *The Great Peace*, gives an account of the same wars and their cataclysmic outcomes through the experiences and struggles of a woman whose own son killed her baby before the nuclear bombardment. All three works emphasise the responsibility of the individual in his actions, which is one of the chief arguments of existentialist philosophy. Together with this, the distress of the characters in barrenness after the wars mirrors the condition of the individual depicted in existentialism.

CHAPTER ONE

1. EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism is one of the momentous movements in twentieth-century philosophy. As the American philosopher, Hazel Barnes declares, "it would be inconceivable for someone who spoke even three minutes on philosophy today not to include [existentialism and phenomenology] as a very profound part of it" (qtd in Kohn, 1984: 391). In this respect, it is crucial to study existentialism to understand the current frame of mind of human beings and also the challenges that they face in this day and age. However, as a term, existentialism refers to more than one branch of philosophy since it includes a variety of philosophers and thinkers from different periods. For this reason, one may discuss different types of existentialism (Bigelow, 1961: 171). Consequently, there are several definitions of existentialism made by a variety of scholars depending on the type that they concentrate on. Some scholars even believe that a definitive attempt towards existentialism is futile because comprehending existentialism itself is hardly possible. In this sense, one who tries to grasp the meaning of existentialism is resembled to the existential individual who struggles because of his “desire for neatly packaged definitions” in life and finds “the maddening ambiguity of the subject in question” (Kohn, 1984: 382). Others put forward the comprehensiveness of the term in their definitions. To exemplify, existentialism is described by the existentialist philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich as “a cultural movement which is manifest in dance as well as in sculpture, in painting as well as in music, poetry, and drama” and he adds that “it is powerfully expressed in novels, and it works in alliance with the psychology of the unconscious. Its conceptualization is the existentialist philosophy, but its ground is a unique encounter of man with reality in all functions of man's spiritual life” (Tillich, 1956: 740). This definition reflects that existentialism is associated not only with different fields from art to philosophy but also with the sub-branches of these fields. Due to this diversity

of existentialism, investigating the varied types of existentialism in philosophy would be constructive for understanding the scope of existentialist thought.

In general terms, scholars tend to categorise ideologies that are included in existentialism in terms of their approach to religion. On one hand, there are religious existentialists such as Soren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, Nikolai Berdyaev, Paul Tillich and Martin Buber. On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus are considered to be non-theist existentialists. Apart from these names, German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers whose ideas have a prominent impact on existentialist thought are left out of this categorisation due to their puzzling stands on religion (Kohn, 1984: 384). Since the prominent thinkers of existentialism are either German or French, a nationality-based classification of existentialist thought is also valid such as the German existentialism and the French existentialism. The latter has developed under the impact of the former. Still, their characteristics are not inconsistent with one another as both existentialisms have arisen in the same era and been nourished by the same social and ideological sources (Arendt, 1946: 226). A similar classification based on both religion and nationality was made by Jean-Paul Sartre himself in his *Existentialism Is A Humanism* as follows: "there are two kinds of existentialists: on one hand, the Christians, among whom I would include Carl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics; and, on the other, the atheistic existentialists, among whom we should place Heidegger, as well as the French existentialists and myself" (Sartre, 2007: 20).

Although their perspectives differ from one another, existentialist philosophers have lots in common in terms of their origins, the issues they are concerned with, and their reaction against former philosophical conventions. First of all, whether believer or non-believer, or, French or German, it is possible to find the influence of the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard on the ideas of all the existentialist thinkers. Kierkegaard's aim of making the human being regain the awareness of himself and of being intrinsically free has substantially influenced the existentialists. Their existential theories are also shaped by the doctrines of Friedrich Nietzsche. Therefore, these two philosophers of the nineteenth century are believed to be the forerunners of existentialism, together with the Russian writer Dostoevsky (Killinger, 1961: 305). A second common point of the existentialists is that all of them designate the existence

of the individual as the nucleus of their philosophy. Thus, the issues on which they have concentrated are parallel with one another. Centring on this first determination that "man exists," the existentialist thinkers have developed their philosophies with the fundamental challenges of the individual living in this world. These challenges, however, do not stem from the social, cultural, or religious matters but from the very situation of the individual as an existing being who is in search of the meaning of his life, his actions, his position among others, his limitations, and his death (Kohn, 1984: 383). In addition to them, almost all the thinkers of existentialism attack the ideas of former philosophers. However, this attitude of the existentialist philosophers gives rise to some criticism against the existential philosophy and some scholars believe that their ideas are nothing more than just finding fault with the previous philosophies. John Killinger, for instance, emphasises this "corrective" side of existentialist thought and regards it as insufficient to form an autonomous philosophical system (Killinger, 1961: 312). A more bitter criticism is made by Alfred Farau who perceives existentialist thought as a pessimistic "non-philosophy of the masses of isolated and unhappy individuals, who are marching together in no direction" or "at best, a philosophical syndrome" (Farau, 1964: 2).

Although nevertheless existentialism is criticised by some, there are also other scholars who attribute great value to this philosophy. Despite the criticisms, the works of existentialist philosophers are of significance as they proclaim the ambiguous state of the human person in an age of confining and distressing external forces (Bykhovski, 1973: 199). Problematizing the burden of the individual's absurd situation in a meaningless world may indeed be pessimistic. Yet, it is beyond doubt that this situation is valid for every human being so much so that ignoring it would create a lack in understanding of what the human being is. Again, the existentialist thinkers' way of dealing with the concepts related to the human being may differ from the treatments of other philosophical systems but this also means that they bring a new perspective to the individual. Therefore, it can be said that these very criticisms define the crucial weight that existentialism carries. If the existentialists criticise former traditions, it is because they highly value the individual and his being a free subject. As Paul Tillich states that "the passion and significance of existentialist thought lie in its attempt to resist the threatening loss of the existential subject to the realm of mere objects" (Tillich, 1956: 726). Concordantly, existentialist thinkers react against all kinds of

philosophies and institutions which exclude the subjectivity of human beings and their struggles originating from the mere fact of existing. The majority of the former philosophers perceive the human person from an "essentialist" point of view. In that regard, they focus on the essence of the human being and disregard the spatio-temporal matters related to his life. Plato with his realm of ideas and Hegel with his dialectics are the leading figures of this essentialist attitude in philosophy. In contrast with them, the existentialist attitude revolves around the existence of the human being and the problems he faces throughout his life on earth. It is possible to find some existentialist characteristics in the ideas of the previous philosophers. Following and enhancing their path, existentialism is engrossed in the alienated situation of the existing individual which is not in accord with his essence (Tillich, 1967: 539-549).

In the same manner, existentialists also object to the glorification of reason over other facilities of human beings. This has been the prevailing view in Western philosophy for a significantly long time. Beginning with the ideas of Plato, there has been a tendency to elevate reason as the ruler of the incomprehensible sides of the individual. Since reason necessitates objectivity and impartiality, the reason-centred ideologies ignore what the individual undergoes in his own existence. Generated by reason, science aims at reaching universal certainties, which inevitably eliminates the personal and illogical occurrences in the life of the individual. Albeit being overlooked by science and philosophies favouring reason, those personal and unique sides constitute a fundamental component of the human being. Resultantly, science and reason-centred philosophies always lack a part in defining the human being, and therefore they cannot entirely present the condition of the individual. (Wild, 1960: 47). Dignifying reason and disregarding the unreasonable sides of the human being distort the wholeness of him. According to Existentialism, however, the individual should be recognised in totality both with the rational and irrational, objective and subjective, and evidential and intuitional sides of him. Because that reason falls short to explain the parts that cannot be ignored to appreciate the whole individual, the existentialist thinkers attack the reason-centred standpoint in philosophy (Bigelow, 1961: 172). Besides, existentialism is at variance with science and ideologies which prioritise rationality in terms of their understanding of truth as well. As the individual is acknowledged as a whole without excluding his subjectivity and partiality, the concept of truth in the existential philosophy cannot be dissociated from the individual's

internal and personal characteristics. In this respect, the truth for existentialism is different from the notion of truth in scientific thinking which is impartial and impersonal. This difference is apparent especially in Kierkegaard's philosophy who asserts that the impartiality of reasoning estranges the individual from his authentic ego. Furthermore, the elevation of human reason has serious consequences on human existence according to existentialists. They assert that the individual has been diverted from his own being with the emphasis on reason and scientific development as a consequence of the Renaissance movement. Rather than the unique characteristics of the existence of the human being, ideas and generalisations have been prioritised. This has created a gap in the relation of the individual with the world and himself (173). Dignifying rationality has also brought about scientific and technological developments and their excessive involvement in daily life. This situation, too, has widened the gap between the human being and his existence. Together with the application of scientific and technological improvements into daily life, people have started to be detached and estranged from their real selves. Thus, the development of technology and science has become one of the major distractions for individuals from understanding themselves and their existence, and it has become the "chief source of existential sadness" (Gray, 1951: 116). Especially from the beginning of the twentieth century, both social and individual lives have been affected by the radical changes and innovations generated by those massive improvements in science and technology. The problems which occur as the results of the changes have been problematized not only by the existentialists but also by the writers. Depersonalisation of the human being has alarmed some authors and they reflected their anxieties related to the future in the form of dystopian novels (Killinger, 1961: 305).

As is seen, existential philosophy is against all kinds of doctrines that damage the totality or subjectivity of the individual which in fact defines his being. The reason lies behind this objection to such doctrines is, as it was mentioned earlier, the worth that the existentialists attach to the human being. Indeed, the individual and his existence are at the heart of existentialism. Throughout their work, existentialist philosophers discuss what it means to be human. On the one hand, they set forth the being of the individual, the qualities which separate him from other living creatures, and his condition in this world. On the other hand, they treat the individual as a social being among others, therefore, they also give importance to the relationship between

individuals and their actions. In this respect, existentialist philosophy proposes both ontology and ethics. Attacking the foregoing philosophies, the views of the existentialists related to the nature of being and morality are distinct from traditional perspectives. It can be said that existential ethics is closely related to existential ontology. In this respect, clarifying how being is treated in existentialism is a must to have a better understanding of an existentialist perspective towards morality. Correspondently, this part of this dissertation will continue with the exploration of existential ontology and existential ethics respectively, by looking at the thoughts of the prominent philosophers and thinkers of the existentialist philosophy.

1.1. SOREN KIERKEGARD AND FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

1.1.1. Soren Kierkegaard and the Individual

The 19th-century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard occupies a significant position for this study as his works constitute the roots of existentialism. Being a theologian, Kierkegaard's work mainly concerns religion and man's faith in God. Still, his thoughts bear the traces of existentialism and have a strong influence on the 20th-century existentialist thinkers (Tillich, 1967: 302). The concept of existence forms the basis for Kierkegaard's philosophy. It is believed that he is the first philosopher to use the term "existence" in the modern sense. His understanding of existence is closely related to his criticism of the long-established emphasis on abstract and objective thinking in the philosophical tradition. He believes that this attitude of the former philosophers neglects the existing individual who is a passionate and emotional being. Contrarily, Kierkegaard foregrounds subjective thinking which does not disregard the nucleus of the individual's existence (Akarsu, 1987: 193). For him, the word existence indicates the concrete and subjective existence of the human being who is responsible for and aware of himself. In this respect, existence is not to be subjected to rational thinking. It can be sensed or believed but it cannot be understood through reasoning. Besides, as Kierkegaard suggests, thinking on existence would annihilate it because of its incomprehensible nature. Therefore, existence is irrational (194). Because of this illogical quality of existence, together with its concreteness as opposed to the

abstractness of ideas, existence is separated from thought by Kierkegaard. Ideas are not only intangible but are also general, in other words, they are not endemic to a specific person or a group of people. “But to exist means first and foremost to be a particular individual, and this is why thought must disregard existence, for the particular cannot be thought, only the universal,” says Kierkegaard in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscripts to the Philosophical Crumbs* (273). On the other hand, concrete existence is unique to every single human being as each person has his or her own uniqueness. Thus, contemplating on existence is not related to or cannot demystify existence itself. However, one should not assume from Kierkegaard’s words that to exist does not reject the act of thinking since man, as an existing being, is able to think. Kierkegaard accordingly highlights that “existence is not unthinking, but in existence thought is in a medium foreign to it” as opposed to “abstract thought … where there is no one who thinks … and the thought is in its own medium” (278). For him, the presence of the subject who practises the act of thinking outweighs the importance of thinking.

Because he attached immense importance to the concrete existence of man, Kierkegaard attacked every institution or ideology which does not give a pivotal position to existence. His era was a crucial one, in the sense that it hosted major alterations in daily life that took place following the Enlightenment. Together with this movement which laid stress on human reason and progression, the development of science, technology, and automation of production accelerated, which transformed both the way of life in cities and the perception of people about themselves and the world. This new way of life, with its consumeristic concerns, gave rise to the self-estrangement of the human being. Kierkegaard was concerned with such disquieting impacts of this transformation and he opposed to the rationalistic and capitalistic ideals of his period (Swann, 2018: 95-96). In parallel, he directed his criticism against science and religious institutions. For him, the former is not a valuable area of study which unveils fundamental realities about human beings and the world they live in. Instead, Kierkegaard finds science unnecessary because it occupies itself with coming up with universal principles, and therefore excludes the subjective part of existence. The scientific point of view casts light on finished events in order to analyse the outcomes and to be able to reach general rules. Contrarily, for Kierkegaard, what matters are not the universal truths that are impartial and verifiable, but the subjective emotions,

passions, and impulses of the individual who lives and acts in the present moment. Therefore, Kierkegaard asserts that truth in life cannot be reached through intellectual understanding. Instead, he suggests movement and experience as the way towards the truth (Bykhovski, 1973: 188-189). Kierkegaard also reacts against religious organisations for similar reasons. Religion, in his understanding, is a highly personal practice that necessitates no other thing than having faith in God. On the other hand, religious institutions aim to systematise religion by means of constructing principles for believers to obey. By doing so, such establishments rationalise religion, and therefore they estrange individuals from religion itself according to Kierkegaard. He states that "If Christianity were a doctrine, the relation to it would not be one of faith, for the only relation to a doctrine is intellectual. So Christianity is not a doctrine but the fact that the god has actually been there" (Kierkegaard, 2009: 273). With the doctrines they postulate, those institutions also create a distance between the individual and divinity. He argues that Christianity distresses human beings because "it is too high, because its goal is not man's goal, because it wants to make man into something so extraordinary that he cannot grasp the thought" (Kierkegaard, 1980: 83). The teachings of Christianity, claims Kierkegaard, is too demanding that human beings are diverted from the faith which is the sole important thing in terms of religion. Thus, similar to science and reason-centered ideologies, religious institutions and theology which are doctrinal are denounced by Kierkegaard since they pay no heed to the subjectivity of the individual.

As mentioned earlier, the central point of the thought of Kierkegaard is the subject's existence. The questions he puts forward in his work are chiefly related to the being of the individual. According to Kierkegaard, the earthly existence of the individual should be among the primary issues of philosophy. Yet, he also reminds that theorising existence would require generalisation and thus eventually mean tearing the subjective quality apart from it. Hence, a theorisation of existence is an unachievable task (Scruton, 2002: 183). Nevertheless, Kierkegaard seeks to explicate the situation of the individual as an earthly being throughout his work. In this respect, it can be said that his philosophy is an ontological one. However, it should be noted here that Kierkegaard does not discuss the characteristics of beings other than human beings nor he elaborates on what being is. In that sense, his ontological views are somehow less comprehensive than traditional ontologies that examine being in a broad

sense. What interests him is the ontological situation of man in this world, in other words, the qualities that are unique to the human being as an existent. In addition to that, his ideas related to the ontological uniqueness of individuals also individualise the conventional ontological concepts, and thus the ontology itself. Rejecting former ontologies which aim at giving an impartial and widespread explanation to the being in a detached manner, Kierkegaard suggests a philosophy of the being of human being which foregrounds the living of man with his distinctive practices, acts, and situation. From these aspects, Kierkegaard's ontology is a "subjective ontology" (Colledge, 2004: 4-6).

Although Kierkegaard does not give a significant place to the aspects of nonhuman beings, he compares and contrasts human beings with other beings in order to depict the ontological position of the former. The existence of the human being is differentiated from any other creature on earth as a superior way of existence by Kierkegaard. However, the pre-eminence that Kierkegaard attributes to the human individual over nonhuman beings does not merely a continuation of humanistic ideologies. For Kierkegaard, one of the distinguishing characteristics of human existence from nonhuman existence is its subjectivity and individuality. As declared by him,

> Being a human being is not like being an animal, for which the specimen is always less than the species. Man is distinguished from other animal species not only by the superiorities that are generally mentioned but is also qualitatively distinguished by the fact that the individual, the single individual, is more than the species.… it is a perfection to be the single individual. (Kierkegaard, 1980: 121)

In contrast to other creatures which typify their kind and do not possess special traits that would separate them from other members of their kind, human beings have idiosyncratic features, which makes every single human existence atypical and unrepeatable. For that reason, to be a human being means being more than just a representative of a genus according to Kierkegaard. Together with that, Kierkegaard also mentions two basic characteristics of human existence such as "the self" and "the spirit." Before continuing with explaining these two characteristics, it is important to restate that belief in God occupies a crucial place in Kierkegaard's philosophy. Likewise, his ontological views present man in relation to his creator. Being created by everlasting, unceasing, and boundless God but existing on earth as well, "a human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of

freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis" (Kierkegaard, 1980: 13). In this respect, individuals are not bound to live a predetermined fate according to Kierkegaard. Even though their existence is restricted with time, space, and some certain compulsory conditions, human beings are also possessed of freedom, that is to say, they have the possibility to decide their lives for themselves. Accordingly, Kierkegaard reacts against predestinationist theories which do not grant freedom to humankind and resembles those who believe that they are powerless against fate to the "king who starved to death because all his food was changed to gold" (40). This claim of Kierkegaard also supports the uniqueness of the existence of individuals. As it is possible for every single human being to direct his life and give shape to who he is, his existence is idiosyncratic. Along with determinist ideologies, Kierkegaard criticizes non-religious perspectives as well in terms of the formation of the self. He asserts that disregarding the existence of a deity means waving the eternal side of the human being aside, thus, it shrinks human existence into the existence of an earthly being. Kierkegaard, therefore, depicts the unreligious approaches towards human beings as "narrowness involved in having lost oneself, not by being volatilized in the infinite, but by being completely finitized, by becoming a number instead of a self, just one more man, just one more repetition of this everlasting Einerlei" (33).

One of the essential qualities of human existence, namely the self, associates with man's embodying opposite poles in himself, therefore, his being open to change. Man's existence is a combination of eternity and ephemerality, as well as certainty and possibility. This togetherness of dichotomies enables the formation of the self of the human being. However, although each individual encompasses this unity, not every person is a self because to be a self requires more than being in relation both to the earthly and the divine (Kierkegaard, 1980: 13). For Kierkegaard, man incorporates the self not only as a necessity but also as a possibility. The self is not given to the individual as an innate quality but he can grow into a self by means of being aware and willing. "The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self," states Kierkegaard and he adds, "a person who has no will at all is not a self" (29). As is seen, Kierkegaard believes that it is up to the human being to realise what he potentially possesses and come to be a self. For that reason, he attributes the self "the task of becoming itself" (35). What urges individuals to actualise their potential is the spirit which is the second fundamental trait of human

existence. Thanks to the spirit, the individual becomes aware of his life and purpose. Together with providing him this awareness, the spirit also furnishes the human being with passion and strength, and it encourages and stimulates him to change. Viewed from this point, the spirit constitutes the basis for the self to generate (Colledge, 2004: 8-9). The self, by virtue of the spirit and the individual's will and awareness, grows throughout his existence. According to Kierkegaard, the development of the self takes place in distinct steps and each step represents a different phase in man's existence. As man's consciousness develops, so do his interests and concerns. In accordance with this change, he passes from one stage to another.

In the first phase, man is interested in going after his desires. He is not concerned with philosophical subjects, nor he criticises others or challenges his society. Instead, he lives in the present moment and wishes to obtain what excites and tempts him. For that reason, he does not want to bind himself to other people or engage himself in organisations or institutions. However, his way of chasing satisfaction is also graceful and refined. Hence, Kierkegaard names this phase of human existence as "the aesthetic stage." Kierkegaard declares that the individual who wishes to be limitlessly free from bounds of any nature so that he can follow his desires might understand in time that he is restricted by this very desire of him. Gaining this awareness, the individual can no longer be in the aesthetic stage and he passes to the second phase which is called "the ethical" (Kenny, 2007: 17). In contradistinction to the aesthetic stage in which the individual lives an isolated life and takes advantage of others for the sake of pleasure, the ethical phase requires establishing strong bonds with other individuals as well as with society. These bonds can be built only through love, which is absent in the former phase. Thus, the individual is connected to his environment with love in the ethical phase. The existence of the individual is no longer segregated in this phase, but he becomes a responsible being due to the bonds he establishes. Being responsible is the key feature of the ethical phase (Tillich, 1967: 466).

In the ethical stage, the human being is also responsible for his own being. He acts with the awareness of this responsibility, therefore, nothing is coincidental in his life as opposed to the aesthetic individual whose life is shaped by chance (Schrader, 1968: 698). Besides, being aware of one's responsibility leads to ethical decisions and

actions. As its name connotes, in the ethical phase, the human being is confronted with the necessity of being ethically faultless under any circumstances. This does not only mean to act in an ethical way, the aim of the action must be virtuous as well. However, such a kind of moral excellence is not possible for human being to attain. Kierkegaard asserts that the individual cannot endure this burden of being immaculate and eventually finds himself deficient to be ethical. Yet, this failure is inevitable but it is also indispensable to be able to go beyond the ethical stage and proceed to the third phase, namely "the religious stage." Owing to his ethical failure, the human being realises how sinful he is and that only God can exonerate him. To find absolution, he must have faith in God (O'Meara, 2014: 6). Nevertheless, progression from the second stage to the third stage is not a painless task. For Kierkegaard, every action of the human being is made in front of God, the all-knowing creator. Yet, not every individual becomes conscious of this inescapable human condition of being in the sight of God. On the other hand, those who reach the awareness of this condition feel desperate and remorseful because they understand they cannot avoid sin. "The error consisted in considering God as some externality and in seeming to assume that only occasionally did one sin against God," states Kierkegaard and adds, "nor does one only occasionally sin before God, for every sin is before God, or, more correctly, what really makes human guilt into sin is that the guilty one has the consciousness of existing before God" (Kierkegaard, 1980: 80). Knowing that he exists in the presence of God and that he and he alone is and ethically responsible for his actions, the human being in the ethical stage suffers from anxiety.

One source of his uneasiness is that he cannot find a set of universal ethical rules that would guide him. According to Kierkegaard, establishing ethics that determines the moral and the immoral for every single person is beyond the bounds of possibility because to achieve such a task, one needs to ignore the subjectivity of human actions. Setting moral standards means presupposing what is good and what is bad for the individual in an impartial manner without considering the personal condition of him. Universal ethics provides the individual with impersonal presuppositions but it is not possible for him to act disinterestedly on the abstract level. Thus, moral codes are not useful for the individual when he needs to choose between what is good and what is bad for him (Holmer, 1953: 162-163). In addition to that, since every human existence has its individual sides and every human being maintains

his existence in a different situation, an action that is good for one can be bad for another. Besides, an action made with the intention of doing good may have harmful consequences for other people. Kierkegaard, therefore, insists that whatever the human being does is sinful even though he aims to be virtuous. The pure good belongs to God and it is unreachable for humans (Friedman, 1982: 161). After realising that he is solely responsible for himself in front of all-seeing God and he is doomed to be a sinner, the individual falls in despair. It is surely an excruciating feeling for the individual but Kierkegaard sees this anguish as a gift. Although being in despair sickens human beings, Kierkegaard believes that "the possibility of this sickness is man's superiority over the animal, and this superiority distinguishes him in quite another way than does his erect walk, for it indicates infinite erectness or sublimity, that he is spirit" (Kierkegaard, 1980: 15). Owing to this unavoidable despair, the human being is forced to take another step towards his self-realisation, which is the "leap of faith." Kierkegaard's solution for the anguish of the individual in the ethical phase is to believe in God and his powers. Man can find the chance of redemption only in God because "for God everything is possible," and "possibility is the only salvation" according to Kierkegaard (38).

As is seen, Kierkegaard's philosophy centres on the existence and the condition of the individual as an accountable being for his deeds and actions. He especially underlines the importance of the subjectivity and individuality of human existence, and due to this view of him, he opposes generalisations about human beings. In the sight of Kierkegaard, the human being is a composite of worldly and divine characteristics. While he is mortal, subjected to time, and limited by circumstances, he at the same time embraces possibility and change. In this respect, he develops his own self by going through different stages of human existence, which makes humans superior to other creatures. Kierkegaard portrays the situation of man in his self-realisation journey as agonising and painful due to being alone and responsible, but he also depicts the cure to the sickness of despair; faith. Even though it is full of misery and suffering, human existence is immensely valuable for Kierkegaard, hence he states that "however unhappy one is, it is always a good thing to exist" (Kierkegaard, 2009: 276).

1.1.2. Friedrich Nietzsche and the Rejection of the Traditional

The ground-breaking ideas of the 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche constitute another base for 20th-century existentialism. Similar to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche disapproves of the long-standing views related to the essence of the human being and his capacities. He especially attacks the Western cultural, religious, and moral codes which, for Nietzsche, overshadow the wild and vital characteristics of the human being. His philosophy questions those conventional principles and demonstrates how they contribute to the formation of a misperception about what a human being is and how he acts. Therefore, Nietzsche advocates the necessity of re-evaluation of deeply rooted customs and ideologies in order to spotlight the significant sides of being human which have been neglected for long. His broad criticism of philosophical, religious, and moral traditions, as well as his views related to humankind, the relationship of the individual with the world, the truth, the self, and ethics present a valuable source for proceeding philosophers among which the existentialist can be included.

Nietzsche's criticism is mainly about the general tendency in philosophy, religion, and ethics to acknowledge man-made assumptions as universal laws. Any ideology or institution which are formed in accordance with this inclination has its share of his attacks. To begin with, Nietzsche strictly criticizes the philosophical tradition beginning with the views of Ancient Greek philosophers. Since their times, reality has been seen as an entity that is irrelative and indifferent to human perception (Leitch, 2001: 870). As claimed by the followers of the representatives of this tradition, the truth is definite and it does not depend on how individuals perceive it. Nietzsche protests this detachment of reality from human comprehension. He asserts that it is futile to try to eliminate human apprehension from the process of understanding the environment and reaching the knowledge of it because mankind is able to apprehend things only by means of their interpretation. In this respect, the only attainable knowledge about reality is contingent upon the way individuals comprehend it, and therefore, it is not possible to talk about absolute, unalterable reality. Truth, for Nietzsche, is nothing more than a deception that people need in order to go on living (871). The arguments which promote knowability of reality independent from the individual generate a contrast between the reality of the world and how the human

being sees it. This division not only attaches a false meaning to everything outside the human being, but it also nullifies human perception. Nietzsche opposingly asserts that the outside world does not possess any truth apart from how it is discerned by human beings. Since they live in this world, human beings change and regulate it in their own way and the truth of such a world cannot be separated from the involvement of its inhabitants according to Nietzsche (Nehamas, 1999: 45-46). Consequently, it is impossible to attain impartial knowledge of things firstly because things do not possess any quality regardless of the interpretation of the individual, and, secondly, because acquiring knowledge is dependant on the connection between the subject and the thing that he comprehends it. The subject is the one who posits meaning to things and he unavoidably involves in this process in accordance with his aims and benefits. Therefore, as Nietzsche highlights, it is not possible to apprehend the knowledge of objects as fixed and detached notions. The only impartiality that can be reached in the process of having knowledge of things is accepting the validity of different points of view (50).

Still, for the Western individual, eliminating the conviction that the truth is impartial and detached from the vision of human beings is a challenging task. Christianity and Western philosophy, ethics, and culture have been shaped by the acceptance of the objective reality outside human perception. As these ideologies have developed in the course of time, they have become traditions, and thus their principles have been granted as unquestionable and unchallengeable facts. However, Nietzsche claims that their very grounds are far from being objective, universal, or true. Instead, they are founded on selfish aims to dominate (Brass, 2008: 8). Even though they are merely based on presumptions, the doctrines of Western thought, religion, and morality are believed to be the reality and they impose on individuals the necessity to command their nature to be able to attain redemption. They advocate the teaching that a virtuous and innocent life requires the repression of emotions and desires (9-10). Nietzsche is rigorously against oppressing the passionate side of human beings in order to elevate reason. For him, such a kind of attitude distorts the wholeness of the human being and leads to degeneracy. He points to the glorious state of Ancient Greek art and literature and declares that the golden age of literature and art in Greece had taken place before the turn to reason occurred because the artists, poets, and playwrights could achieve a balance between the rational and the irrational by embracing unlimited

passions and order together. However, the non-rational faculty of the human person has been neglected and disparaged ever since Socrates. Beginning from this breaking point in ancient Greek thought, corruption and degeneration have predominated Western thought and culture according to Nietzsche (Kenny, 2007: 30-31).

Nietzsche believes that doctrines remain indestructible as long as their bases are camouflaged. If a starting point of a long-established doctrine is not known, it is believed to be unceasing, thus, it is accepted as an everlasting truth. Accordingly, it is necessary to unbury the historical roots of doctrines in order to demonstrate that they are man-made rather than being objective realities. As a way to disclose the fictitious nature of Western tradition of thought, faith, and morals, Nietzsche proposes a method named "genealogy." This method, by digging back to the foundations of traditional convictions, also uncovers the mediums these customs have employed to disguise (Nehamas, 1999: 32-33). Using this genealogical approach, Nietzsche illustrates Western religious and ethical doctrines. According to the moral teachings of Christianity, one must be unselfish, commiserating, and self-denying if he aims to act morally. However, Nietzsche asserts that it is only a "popular superstition of Christian Europe," but it is forgotten that well-respected moral codes of Christianity "affirm some consensus of the nations, at least of tame nations, concerning certain principles of morals, and then they infer from this that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me" (Nietzsche, 1974: 284-285). Thus, he concludes that the codes of Christian ethics are not irrevocable truths, they are nothing more than convictions that emerged at some point in history and were acknowledged by the majority of peoples of that period. Along with its fallacious character, Nietzsche also criticises Christian ethics because of its devitalising doctrines that preach the necessity of self-abnegation. Prioritising humbleness and altruism, Christian ethics turns individuals into yielding and inactive beings. Nietzsche, therefore, describes this ethics as "slave morality" that disgraces human beings and he compares it with "master morality" that glorifies courage and dignity (Kenny, 2007: 33).

For Nietzsche, resignation lies at the core of ethical principles of Christianity. On the one hand, Christian morality prescribes being passive and obedient, but at the same time, it remains standing owing to the ones who are compliant and resistless. He states that

> Faith is always coveted most and needed most urgently where will is lacking; for will. as the affect of command, is the decisive sign of sovereignty and strength. In other words, the less one knows how to command, the more urgently one covets someone who commands, who commands severely-a god, prince, class, physician, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience. (Nietzsche, 1974: 289)

It is here seen that Nietzsche builds his criticism of morality, or any other authority, on the deficiency of will, a concept that has a crucial place in his philosophy. In the sight of Nietzsche, will signifies what matters for human life such as power and greatness. If a person does not possess enough will to empower himself and rule his life, he is in need of being ruled by another. Those who lack will keep doctrines in power. As with the case of the Western tradition, Nietzsche considers deficiency of will to be corrupting. To possess will, on the contrary, emancipates the individual from being merely a "believer" and vitalises him; "one could conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such a freedom of the will that the spirit would take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty" (289-290). In this respect, it is of vital importance for individuals to will according to Nietzsche. The concept of will, especially its relation to power, is also the basis of his views related to human beings and other beings. Nietzsche asserts that beings are heavily interconnected to one another since they share not only the place but also the moment, thus, their existence is inevitably affected by other beings around them. For this reason, Nietzsche sees existence as "relative" and designates action as the core of it (Nehamas, 1999: 75). If each being is in relation to one another and the existence of a being is under the influence of other existents, then the existence of a completely detached being which can exist by itself is not possible. He, therefore, rejects the concept of "thing in itself." For Nietzsche, a being is the totality of its actions, interests, possessions, and connections to other beings. The existence of human beings, too, is generated by their capacity to combine and connect small components such as events and actions and arrange them in accordance with their intentions. They are in connection with each other as well as with nonhuman things which are open to evaluation and orchestration of human beings (82-83).

To be in relation with others and to take action naturally necessitate power since relation and action cannot emerge from timidity or passivity. An existence that comprises of relations and actions, thus, must inescapably be linked to power. Nietzsche maximises the tie between existence and power and claims that every

existence is a manifestation of its "will to power" stating that "*This world is the will to power - and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power - and nothing besides!" (Nietzsche, 1968: 550). It is understood from his words that will to power is the only definitive feature of the human being and everything that surrounds him. Consequently, Nietzsche acknowledges it as the sole criterion that can be employed to categorise actions and situations as good or bad, beneficial or useless, and fortunate or unfortunate. According to him, if something empowers and encourages individuals, it cannot be harmful. In a similar vein, anything that debilitates them must be refused. "What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself. What is bad? Everything that is born of weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome" states Nietzsche (qtd. In Rydenfelt, 2013: 217). In this regard, the moral codes of Christianity are unacceptable for they restrict the strength of human beings and devitalise them. Yet, when the long-established values are refused, the life of the individual who had believed them throughout his life would be shattered. He would suffer the loss of significance in his life. Nietzsche's suggestion is to fill this gap by demolishing the old values and constructing new ones, which requires the individual to be creative. However, human beings fall short of going through such a loss, defeating the distress, and constructing original values according to Nietzsche. He claims that only a greater being, namely the overman, can achieve this quest (Fischer, 1964: 1009-1010).

Nietzsche's claim that existence is nothing but will to power also suggests that neither the existence of the human being nor other beings possesses any distinctive significance, and for this reason, existence is deprived of meaning or aim. Indeed, he believes that nothing is of value in this world but human beings can attribute meaning to things or their existence. They can construct meaning even though it is not possible to find it in the outside world (Nehamas, 1999: 135). Being in a valueless world, the human subject is also an undetermined being whose life is not foreordained to fulfil an aim. Nietzsche hence maintains that he is responsible for himself and free to establish his own self by means of his views, deeds, activities, and passions. The human being must be inclined to see that who he is now is the outcome of his former actions. He must recognise his responsibility in his past and present life. There are the fundamental conditions of the construction of the self which requires the will to power (188). Though every individual naturally possesses the possibility of forming his self, those

who lack the will and strength to take responsibility would not be capable of establishing the self. However, the formation of the self is not an achievement on one single occasion for the ones who are willing and powerful enough to develop their selves. It is rather a life-long task through which individuals "become" themselves as they come to the awareness that they were in the past and are in the present as the way they would want to be (191). Nietzsche's concept of "amor fati" arises from this embracement of life as it is. Nietzsche presents this concept as a "formula for human greatness" which is "not wanting anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity. Not just enduring what is necessary, still less concealing it—all idealism is hypocrisy in the face of what is necessary—but *loving* it" (Nietzsche, 2007: 35).

1.2. MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND KARL JASPERS

1.2.1. Martin Heidegger and Dasein

While dealing with existentialist philosophy, it is a must to refer to Martin Heidegger. He is mostly known for his unique way of expression and his challenging ideas related to the existence of beings in this world. Though Heidegger focuses his attention on ontology and brought new perspectives to it, his philosophy touches upon different issues including, language, literature, and technology (Holden, 2009: 2). Including this diverse range of topics, Heidegger' philosophy has influenced many prominent philosophers in his era such as Hannah Arendt, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, and Jean-Paul Sartre. His later thoughts also have inspired those who contributed much to contemporary philosophy including Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Luce Irigaray. Accordingly, Heidegger is considered among the leading philosophers of the twentieth century (Thomson, 2012: 1-2). Heidegger's views on human existence constitute an essential source for existential philosophy. Especially for the French existentialists, the impact of his work is indisputable. Yet, in spite of that, he expressed that he was against being regarded among the existentialist thinkers as he criticised the existentialist philosophy for its excessive emphasis on the subjective side of the human being as well as its treatment of being (Dufrenne, 1965:

57). Nonetheless, though he distinguished his philosophy from existentialism, examining his ideas is of vital importance in terms of bringing insight to being, existence, human existence, and human situation in the world which are the essential concerns of the existentialist philosophy.

According to Heidegger, ontology is the bedrock of philosophy, thus, he is very much interested in the long-investigated notions of being and existence. Yet, his views thoroughly differ from those of his predecessors. Thus, Heidegger's philosophy of being is a rejection of the traditional ontologies of Western philosophy. He firstly criticises the perspective of traditional ontologies for ignoring the existence and prioritising essence while addressing to being. Heidegger, on the other, opposes the separation of essence and existence and claims that the essence of being can only be found in its existence. Consequently, existence must be the starting point for an ontological investigation (Akarsu, 1987: 214). Moreover, former ontologies deal with the beings without problematising the meaning of being. They concentrate on understanding the being of concrete beings instead of contemplating on what being is, and they formulate general concepts related to the being. However, for Heidegger, it is necessary to make a distinction between the beings and the meaning of the being as a concept detached from the things that exist. Such an inquiry related to the explanation of being distinguishes human beings from other beings according to Heidegger. The human being, as a being, is a part of the being. Yet, among all the beings in the world, the human being is the only being who considers and examines the meaning of being. (Amstutz, 1961: 260). The human being is the incarnation of the being itself which is the origin of every being on earth. Yet at the same time, he is able to problematise, inspect, and reveal the being itself. The knowledge of the being itself, therefore, can be reached through the human being. However, as he is a part of the being itself, when the human being explores it, he also looks into his own being. Or, in reverse, inquiring himself means inquiring about the being itself. Heidegger asserts that the being needs to be recognised, contemplated on, and expressed. For that reason, the human being is indispensable to the being as much as the being is crucial for him to have existence (261).

Owing to this critical role he plays for the being itself, the human being as a being who has the ability to discover the being is the core of Heidegger's ontology.

Differentiating the existence of human beings from other beings, Heidegger categorises beings as Sein and Dasein; the former stands for the being itself while the latter signifies the being of humankind. The word "Dasein" connotes both the existence of the human being and his being in the world, however, not every person who has an existence on earth is Dasein according to Heidegger. Such a mode of being requires authenticity, which can be attained through consciousness of one's own existence. The human being as Dasein, for Heidegger, is an actant who obtains freedom and potentiality. Only those who are conscious of their potentials, autonomy, and actions can be Dasein (Killinger, 1961: 307). Apart from consciousness, Dasein also has other qualities which make this mode of being an exceptional one. First and foremost, Dasein means "being-there" which connotes to being in a specific space for a certain duration. Thus, Dasein is inescapably in relation to the world in which it exists. It is nothing but its earthly existence and it is defined by its being in the world. Dasein, therefore, is primarily here on earth but this world is a foreign place for Dasein. It is not rooted in the world but thrown to the world by an unknown power. Before coming to an awareness of its existence, Dasein finds itself existing in a world which is not familiar to it. Besides, this alien world limits Dasein with outer realities because to be in the world necessitates to be in a situation. In such a world, Dasein is a rootless stranger (Akarsu, 1987: 220). Apart from the outer situations, Dasein is also restricted by an inner condition that is inherent to its being. Dasein comes into being endowed with a fore-structure that enables Dasein to interact with the world. Due to this fore-structure, Dasein's perspective while encountering the world is limited, however, Dasein is never able to overcome this limitation because it cannot completely extricate itself from this innate characteristic even though it can become aware of it (Toprak, 2016: 110). Dasein's existence in the world suggests that it has a temporal quality. As mentioned earlier, Dasein is thrown into a particular time, therefore, it is historical. On the one hand, Dasein is a being that proceeds from the past towards the future, in other words, from previously happened and unchangeable experiences to probabilities, and Dasein develops by means of gravitating towards the future. On the other hand, Dasein's historicity refers to its temporal integrity from birth to death. The birth of Dasein, in other words, the human being, marks the beginning of his existence while his death puts an end to it. In between these two points the human being experiences sequential moments through which he approaches his death. With definite starting and

concluding points, this sequence of moments makes the existence of the human being a combined whole in terms of time (113).

Accordingly, the conventional division of time such as the past, the present, and the future gains new meaning in Dasein's relation to time. Rather than being the chronological order of successive moments, Dasein's past, present, and future reflect his unfinishedness. While the past stands for what has already happened and therefore sets the conditions for the present, the future manifests the possibilities and freedom that are immanent to Dasein. Advancing towards the possibilities in the future, Dasein is an unfinished being who can change. Although the past cannot be altered, the future is not fixed and established. Yet, both of them are distant to the present which is the only point in time that Dasein can possess. Once the human being comes to the awareness of this, the present embodies what has happened together with what has not yet come, and becomes the foundation for Dasein's potentiality. To this respect, Heidegger's concept of time is not an objective chronology that is independent of human involvement. He, therefore, stresses the importance of realising this subjective quality of time for the human being to achieve authenticity (Gray, 1951: 122). When Dasein is conscious of this temporal aspect of his existence, death as the final point becomes of utmost importance. Being conscious of his continuous progression towards death causes anguish and uneasiness. Since death means not existing in the world, the human being faces nothingness when he realises the inevitability of his death and nothingness terrifies him. (Tillich, 1956: 743-744). Furthermore, draining all his potentiality, death is the final restriction in the existence of the human being. It is the major obstacle to his freedom, therefore, the reality of death discomforts him. Nonetheless, Heidegger attaches utmost significance to death because it is extremely personal. The death of the human being is peculiar to him since no other person is able to die for him nor his death can put an end to others' existence. In this respect, death is a distinctive characteristic of Dasein in spite of the fact that it restricts his existence (Peach, 2008: 73). Heidegger additionally asserts that the agonising feelings caused by the awareness of death are also crucial to Dasein. Disquietude and distress are much more than mere sensations according to Heidegger. In fact, they are among the traits that differentiate Dasein from other beings. It is a specific feature of Dasein to be anxious and uneasy. Therefore, albeit being disturbing, such feelings belong to Dasein (Amstutz, 1961: 256).

Nevertheless, accepting the final limitation of existence together with the uneasiness it produces with courage is not always achievable for the human individual. Especially the apprehension of the uniqueness of one's own death can be a heavy burden to carry. To relieve themselves from this weight, human beings tend to normalise death by considering it as an ordinary incident that every being will encounter eventually. Such an attitude puts a distance between the human being and death and turns it into a remote probability that does not threaten the present. Adopting this attitude, some individuals choose to ignore the heaviness of death and due to this choice, they degrade to the level of "das Man," which refers to the general and neutral crowd without emphasising any specific person or community. According to Heidegger, neglecting the significance of death also means avoiding the fact of being responsible for one's own self, therefore, those who seek shelter in das Man lose their individuality and genuineness (Gray, 1951: 120-121).

In addition to his fore-structure, being in a certain time and space, death, and his anxiety, Dasein is also characterised by the way he approaches to other beings. In the environment he lives in, Dasein is accompanied by other beings with which it comes into contact and interacts. This interaction between Dasein and the others is an exceptional trait of Dasein by which it is differentiated from other modes of being because Dasein is not a remote observer, instead, he utilises and operates what he encounters in the world. Therefore, Dasein makes the world his instrument (Riemer and Johnston, 2012: 6-7). Heidegger classifies nonhuman beings in two groups as "vorhanden" and "zuhanden." Beings that belong to the first category do not serve a practical function for the human being. Still, they attract the notice of the individual by means of their special traits. On the other hand, beings in the second category are implements that human beings actively utilise. Heidegger also mentions "work" which is the piece of art. According to Heidegger, objects of art are a means of unveiling the quintessence of the world (Amstutz, 1961: 258). During his existence, the human being is in constant relation with these beings, which makes him a part of the world to which he is initially alien. The interaction between him and other beings contributes to the development of his own self. In addition to making contact with others, the human being is also capable of understanding his surroundings. Dasein is a being who can comprehend the world as well as his own being. Comprehension is indispensable for Dasein as it plays a crucial role in the formation of his being. When Dasein attempts

to understand being in general, he also understands himself. He, therefore, becomes both the subject and the object of comprehension. While he understands the others, he at the same time forms his being (Toprak, 2016: 110).

This trait of Dasein, in addition to puts him in a higher position among existents, also burdens him with responsibility. Due to his ability to understand himself and the being, Dasein is given the task of thinking about the being, comprehending it, and bring it to the open through language. This task solely belongs to Dasein since any other being in the world is not capable of understanding. It is a moral mission of the human being to understand and uncover the being itself. Yet, it should be stated that this mission is not ascribed to him by a deity since the being itself is not a divine being that creates and commands other beings. It is the origin of beings including Dasein and it needs Dasein to be expressed and disclosed. In this respect, Heidegger's ontology also ascribes an ethical task to the human individual (Amstutz. 1961: 261). To achieve this task, the human being must embrace his authentic existence. He must face his freedom and accept his responsibilities rather than feeling from his individuality seeking comfort in das Man. To bear the burden of authenticity is indeed formidable, especially when the thrownness of the human being is taken into consideration. To come to existence and be thrown to this world is not his choice, he rather finds himself existing in the world with the heaviness of being responsible for the development of his self and the uncovering of the being itself. Therefore, it is tempting to forget this burden in the midst of daily life. However, Dasein also possesses a conscience that reminds him of his genuine self and responsibility. Conscience warns the individual against degrading to the worry-free but the depersonalising position of das Man and requires him to acknowledge his genuine self and take the responsibility of his existence resolutely no matter how crushing this burden it is (Akarsu, 1987: 201).

1.2.2. Karl Jaspers and Existenz

Along with Heidegger, Karl Jaspers is another eminent philosopher of German existentialism. His works take an important place in existential philosophy in such a way that he is thought to be among the three leading figures of existentialism (Gordon,

2000: 105). In just the same way as the other existential thinkers, Jaspers developed his thought system on the ground of human existence. He differentiates the existence of the individual from the existence of any other beings and asserts that individuals alone can attain existence in the truest sense of the word. However, this does not mean that every single person is rewarded with real existence only because he or she is a human being. Such a kind of existence cannot be attained only through living in this world, observation, or mere intelligence according to Jaspers. It is required for individuals to pursue their own selves to actualise their true existence (Tymieniecka, 2010: 221). Therefore, at the centre of Jaspers' study is the human being as a living entity. He gives utmost weight to the unique experiences of this entity for he claims that reality is reached through them. In this respect, the existence of human beings who are free, unique, and also connected to others forms the main line of Jaspers' philosophy (Peach, 2008: 30).

In parallel with other existentialist philosophers, Jaspers criticised the philosophical convention which elevated rational man and located him at the core of the universe. This ideology generated the emergence of modernity which, according to Jaspers, resulted in deterioration in philosophy as well as in society and politics (Grunenberg and Daub, 2007: 1003). His criticism of modern ideology is one of the bases on which Jaspers' theoretical system developed. While attacking former some of the former philosophers, Jaspers' ideas were also influenced by other philosophers and thinkers among which Plato, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, and Max Weber can be mentioned (Gordon, 2000: 107). He was especially influenced by Kierkegaard's thoughts on the individual and transcendence. Similar to Kierkegaard, Jaspers viewed philosophizing as going beyond the boundaries of reason and emphasized the importance of the subject for philosophical pursuit (Owen, 2007: 68).

According to Jaspers, human life, as well as the world human beings exist in is absurd. Thence, individuals have difficulties finding meaning and sense in their lives. Indeed, Jaspers believes that human beings cannot entirely understand their existence. One of the main causes of this is that human reason is insufficient to give the true explanation of human existence. Since human intellect falls short of explicating existence, it is futile to turn to science as well (Akarsu, 1987; 198). As science aims to

come up with logical explanations and to reach universal principles, it ignores everything that is subjective and irrational. However, human existence involves subjectivity and irrationality, moreover, as Jaspers claims, those subjective and irrational sides of the way that the individual exists cannot be overlooked if one's goal is to attain true existence. Besides, the individual is reduced to the position of an object in scientific observations and examinations. In this way, science rejects the distinctive parts of human beings which are emphasised by Jaspers. Therefore, to have a better understanding of existence, it is necessary to deal with it by employing another perspective. The solution Jaspers suggests is a philosophy through which human beings can embrace their possibilities in life and freedom to choose among those possibilities (Riesterer, 1986: 323). Only through a philosophy that problematises the individual and the being without objectifying them can existence be apprehended.

As it was mentioned earlier, the existence of the individual is at the centre of the philosophy that Jaspers suggested. Starting from this basis, he focused on the obstacles and questions which have their sources in existing in this world, and he extended his philosophy by linking the observed actuality with what goes beyond it. Jaspers grounded his ontology on this unity of opposites. In that respect, his philosophy presents more than one dimension such as the corporeal dimension, the transcendental dimension, and Being which are strictly entwined with one another (Peach, 2008: 43). According to Jaspers, it is possible to talk about three different types of Being, all of which are dependent on each other. These types, id est. being as an object, being as a self, and being-in-itself, do not correspond to an "absolute" entity in the sense that was used by former philosophers of ontology. Jaspers declares that reaching such an entity, or unity of discrete types of being is beyond the bounds of possibility for humans (Wahl, 2017: 134-135). Being as a self, together with being as an object belongs to the physical realm so they are related to actual existence on this planet. For Jaspers, existing in the world is significant not only because he sees this world as the place on which human existence can emerge, but he also affirms that truth arises from it. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to deduce from this view that the physical realm is the only source of ultimate reality. Likewise, it is by no means adequate to answer the question of what being is. In an attempt to attain true existence, as Jaspers declares, it is essential to rise above the physical realm (Peach, 2008: 36-37).

Philosophy reveals that Being as a concept can be understood only by going beyond its limits. Accordingly, it is not possible to grasp being as an object or being as a self without transcending their boundaries because the relation between subject and object determines their nature. To identify a being as an object, the existence of a being as a self who differentiates himself from objects is indispensable. In the same manner, a being as a self is characterised by his not being an object. For being as a self, everything apart from him is an object. When he attempts to understand himself, he himself becomes an object for him. Yet, he cannot be degraded to an object because he, as the self who seeks to understand himself, is still present. Besides, by trying to comprehend himself or the things around him, he also attempts to apperceive Being which is something other than being as an object or being as a self (Akarsu 1987: 200-201). Jaspers terms this attempt of the subject to search for Being by means of positioning himself against objects "orientation." The subject reaches the knowledge of objects by utilising science which enables world orientation. On account of this world orientation, the factual world and the connection among things can be clarified. Even though world orientation and science can come up with an explanation of objects, Jaspers insists that they are limited to explain human beings since human beings have some aspects that can never be measured by scientific methods (Erdem, 2020: 164-165). It is not possible to make every aspect of human beings clear. As a being as a self, human beings are not fully knowable. Such a kind of being that exceeds the limits of human understanding is called "Encompassing" by Jaspers and he identifies human beings as an Encompassing (169).

With the term Encompassing, Jaspers indicates both all that belongs to the physical world and all that can rise above it. Correspondingly, it comprises all three types of Being. Notwithstanding that humans are unable to apprehend Encompassing and it is inconceivable as a whole for them, reaching the forms of it is within the realm of possibility through philosophy. Contemplating on the forms of Encompassing enables humans to cognise it though obliquely (Peach, 2008: 38). Here, it is necessary to mention the difference between the human being and the world which, too, is Encompassing according to Jaspers. While the latter is strictly different from the human being and comprises the things that humans come across, the former encompasses all potentialities of the human being and it is subcategorized into "Dasein," "consciousness in general" and "Spirit" (Knudsen 1969: 125). Each of them

represents the stages in the individual's journey to reach true existence which is the highest potentiality of the human being, namely Existenz. The first form, Dasein, signifies the factual presence of the human being in the world in the midst of other people and objects. In this level of Encompassing, he himself is an object whose body of flesh and bones are mortal. In addition, he is surrounded by circumstances. That being the case, the human being as Dasein is subjected to limitations. Yet, even though Dasein intrinsically embodies limitations, it also comprises a special characteristic of rising above them. Dasein is not the only form of the Encompassing and the human being can go beyond his experiential existence in the world of observable realities and reach his true being which expands out of the corporeal towards the extramundane sphere (Peach, 2008: 33). Consciousness in general is the next stage that follows Dasein. As its name suggests, consciousness in general denotes the mental and rational competence that is a common feature of human beings. It differentiates humans from other beings in the world. The objects that individuals come across do not possess such potential but they can be made knowable by human beings who are capable of rendering them subjected to consciousness (Akarsu, 1987: 205).

The forms of Encompassing depict a particular side of human existence. While Dasein refers to the bodily existence and corporeal experiences of mankind in this world, consciousness in general implicates logic. Likewise, Spirit which is the third form of Encompassing denotes humans' desire for completeness, coherence, and oneness as well as their capability to cognize events and situations as a whole. Humans' interest and involvement in theological, governmental, and creative activities can be linked to this form of Encompassing (Peach, 2008: 35). In that regard, Spirit is the phase where humans deal with ideas. Jaspers sees ideas as totalities that encapsulate numerous characteristics, and therefore, it is not possible to know them completely. Still, human beings as Spirit are competent to attribute meaning to ideas. In addition to this, they can lead their lives in accordance with the ideas that they make meaningful. Some of them, e.g. goodness or justice, are a subject of ethics. Hence, Spirit also reflects human beings' ability to make ethical decisions and to act ethically (Erdem, 2020: 164).

Before proceeding further, it will be helpful to clarify the notion of transcendence for Jaspers to have a better insight of Existenz which is the core concept

of Jaspers' philosophy. In Jasper's philosophy, transcendence is a crucial concept especially in terms of attaining true existence. As it was mentioned earlier, Jaspers believes that factual existence in this world constitutes only a part of the truth about genuine existence. He also speaks about a transcendental sphere that comprises the unknowable aspects of mankind and their existence. It lies beyond the limits of the human intellect, and therefore, of science. For that reason, it requires transcending from physical reality. For Jaspers, this state of transcendence, together with the physical reality, makes up the whole of genuine existence. In addition to this, transcendence points to the individuality and unicity of each and every one of human beings. Jaspers believes that two people cannot be identical because there is always a distinctive characteristic that is special to one and absent in the other. This individuality makes every human being independent and free (Ghaemi, 2007: 77). Yet, freedom as viewed by Jaspers stems from two other characteristics of human existence which are also related to transcendence. Firstly, man is a being whose life has an end, thus, his existence is subjected to limitations. The major limitation, death, not only marks a border to the factual existence of man on earth, but it also deprives him of the possibilities he has. In this respect, the fact that man is mortal also implies that he is not concluded until the day he dies. The condition of being unfinished becomes the grounds for freedom. Secondly, having a restricted time, it is surely beyond doubt that mankind is not omnipotent, quite the opposite, their abilities are limited. According to Jaspers, this situation of human beings connotes the association between them and a superior force that is by no means subjected to any limitation. This transcendental force possesses all the knowledge and meaning that mankind can never be endowed with. Jaspers maintains that being surrounded by limitations and not completed echoes the potentiality of man, and therefore, human freedom (78).

In Jaspers' understanding of human existence, human beings are more than mere bodies that can think reasonably, evaluate their actions and act upon moral ideas. He argues that humans embrace numerous possibilities and they can pass beyond the limits of Dasein, consciousness in general, and Spirit all of which imply their worldly existence. When transcending the worldly existence, humans become Existenz which is "the dimension of our being that has the capacity to stand between the world and 'Transcendence'" (Gordon, 2009: 115). With the word Existenz, Jaspers refers to a special way of existence that all humans potentially have. Indeed, it is an exceptional

kind of potentiality which lies beyond the borders of language. Consequently, Existenz cannot be comprehended, rationalised, or observed. Nevertheless, it can be realised by the agency of man's factual existence, in other words, Dasein (Peach, 2008: 35-36). Jaspers introduces "limit situations" as a way of attaining Existenz. Situation is a significant term in Jaspers' reasoning. He asserts that existing means being in a situation. However, not every situation has importance for the achievement of Existenz. He states that

> We are always in situations. Situations change, opportunities arise. If they are missed they never return. I myself can work to change the situation. But there are situations which remain essentially the same even if their momentary aspect changes and their shattering force is obscured: I must die, I must suffer, I must struggle, I am subject to chance, I involve myself inexorably in guilt. We call these fundamental situations of our existence ultimate situations. That is to say, they are situations which we cannot evade or change. Along with wonder and doubt, awareness of these ultimate situations is the most profound source of philosophy. In our day-to-day lives we often evade them, by closing our eyes and living as if they did not exist. We forget that we must die, forget our guilt, and forget that we are at the mercy of chance. (Jaspers, 1954: 19)

As his words above indicate, Jaspers identifies and categorises different types of situations. First of all, he mentions "general situations" which are the less significant circumstances that individuals undergo from the beginning until the end of their lives. Those circumstances are not fixed and permanent. Jaspers opposes limit situations to general situations and he maintains that such circumstances are of utmost importance in terms of reaching Existence since they open the door for human beings to recognise their genuine existence. As contrasted with general situations, limit situations have a major impact on the person who experiences them. They remind human beings that their lives are full of dangers and uncertainties, and that almost every incident or being including themselves is ephemeral (Peach, 2008: 42).

Besides, individuals are condemned to fail if they strive to ratiocinate such severe circumstances because they are highly subjective and cannot be explained with the universal laws of reason. In that respect, limit situations are left outside the borders of consciousness-in-general by Jaspers. Since those situations are not to be expressed logically, their effects are unrelenting and it is difficult to come to terms with them. The individual whose reason falls short of clarifying limit situations, all the same,

undergoes the destructiveness of those situations which render him vulnerable. Also, he cannot escape from limit situations for Jaspers does not differentiate undergoing limit situations from existing (Wahl, 2017: 141). While on the one hand limit situations terrify the ones who live through them, on the other hand, they provide a basis for the realisation of authentic being. When a person undergoes a limit situation, he realises the irreversible fact that he is mortal and that his life is restricted from all quarters by countless limitations. This realisation also denotes that his days on earth will come to an end sometime. Even though he is a free being whose existence embraces many potentials, he cannot actualise and enjoy all of his potentialities in his limited life. Consequently, the individual grows discontent with his life (Ghaemi, 2007: 76). According to Jaspers, there are two choices that the individual can choose at this point of discontentment. He explains these options as follows; "to ultimate situations we react either by obfuscation or, if we really apprehend them, by despair and rebirth: we become ourselves by a change in our consciousness of being" (Jaspers, 1954: 19). It is understood from his statement that limit situations are not necessarily destructive for human beings even though they cause agony and the feeling of desperation. After a person faces a limit situation and suffers from despair, he might choose to turn a blind eye to that situation and continue to live as before. Choosing this path is understandable because the burden of going through such a situation is exceedingly heavy. However, he might also choose to confront and accept his limits. In this way, he can appreciate limit situations as a chance for him to transform the way he perceives his existence.

Lastly, Jaspers also designates communication as a medium for reaching Existenz. "Man's supreme achievement in this world is communication from personality to personality," (Jaspers, 1954: 71) says Jaspers, and he also adds that "in living we are dependent on others with whom we stand in a relation of mutual aid. As selfhood we are dependent on other selfhood, and it is only in communication that we and the others come truly to ourselves" (115). His words exhibit the amount of importance he attributes to social interaction, which separates him from the other existentialist thinkers. His contemporary and fellow citizen Heidegger, for instance, does not make a connection between human communication and the authentic way of existence. Rather, he sees the interaction between people as an issue related to civil life and to "das Man" (Grunenberg, 2007: 1015). By contrast with Heidegger, Jaspers

believes that the individual attains genuine existence through communication between him and other individuals. One who spends his life in isolation or rejects interaction by no means passes beyond his worldly being because he cannot realise his potentials. Communication enables human beings to become aware of the potentiality of their being and existence (Gordon 2000: 111). However, it should be noted here that what Jaspers means by communication is inconsistent with daily interactions among people. Living in a society, the individual inescapably interacts with others, yet, this communication does not necessitate the fundamental conditions that pave the way for Existenz. Therefore, it is different from "existential communication" which springs from the affectionate connection between individuals who accept their freedom and existence. Such a kind of communication, for Japers, is a struggle but in a positive sense. To have an existential communication, both parties must have suffered from loneliness and found the courage and strength to embrace this struggle. If they achieve to build this kind of connection, they both can reveal their genuine selves and attain Existenz (Akarsu, 1987: 208-209).

1.3. JEAN-PAUL SARTRE AND ALBERT CAMUS

1.3.1 Jean-Paul Sartre and Being-for-Itself

The significant position that Jean-Paul Sartre occupies in the philosophy of existentialism is irrebuttable. He is one of the main figures of existentialism whose works not only have contributed to the development of the movement but also have popularised it among new generations. Sartre is well-known for his philosophical writings as well as for his literary works which are in strong correlation with his philosophy. These fictive works of him have gained so recognition that they are believed to attract the attention of people towards existentialist thought and stimulated them to study the origins and development of this philosophy (Dieckman, 1948: 33). As for his philosophical works, Sartre forms his ideas on the grounds of Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's philosophy together with the phenomenology of Husserl and expands the existentialist thought by presenting his understanding of the human situation which is in line with the thoughts of other existentialist thinkers to some extent (Wild, 1960:

45). Sartre's philosophy demonstrates a wide discussion of the situation of the human being as a free and responsible being among other beings in this world. Such a being is undetermined, unfinished, and open to change. Thus, he is to continuously establish his self with the awareness of his responsibilities not only for himself but also for others, which deeply affects and distresses him. In addition to portraying what a human being is, Sartre also lays stress on how this being feels and acts. In this respect, Sartre's existentialism provides an ontological and moral psychological insight into the existence of human beings.

Sartre allocates a crucial place to the existence of the individual in his philosophy. The focal point of his ontology is the being of human beings in comparison with other beings around him. There are two modes of being explained by Sartre; the first one is "being-in-itself" and the second one is "being-for-itself." The common characteristic of both of these beings is the absurdness of their existence. Apart from that, being-for-itself is radically different from being-in-itself. To start with, being-in-itself, in other words, the nonhuman being, is one and the same with itself. It is always the same being in every condition. In sharp contrast, being-for-itself, namely, the human being, is always in change and his being can by no means be the same since he has "consciousness" which does not belong to being-in-itself (Arendt, 1946: 227). Sartre associates consciousness with nihility which creates a contrast between being-for-itself and being-in-itself. Having consciousness, emptiness lies in the core of human existence as opposed to the completeness of being-in-itself. This emptiness of human existence is also the basis of human freedom. While being-in-itself is complete throughout its existence, and therefore absolutely confined to itself, the existence of being-for-itself is only a blankness that demands to be filled. Owing to his emptiness, the human being is not tied to any imperative, he is an autonomous being who can construct his own fate (Bautista, 2015: 21). For Sartre, the human being does not possess any substance to define his being as a result of his nothingness, rather, he determines himself through his actions. Whereas being-in-itself is unconscious, quiescent, and static for its being does not undergo a change, the being of the human being is unattached, unplanned, and active. Therefore, he can go beyond the limitations of yesterday and today, of his previous self and his current state, and he is capable of becoming utterly different. As a free being, reaching the future which has not existed yet is possible for the human being (Jakopovich, 2010: 196).

Differentiating being-for-itself from being-in-itself, Sartre's ontology creates contrast against former theories related to the existence of human beings which put forward the essential qualities of human beings that are predetermined by nature or a deity. According to these theories, every individual has innate characteristics which are common to humankind. In other words, the substance of each particular human subject is determined prior to his coming into existence. Sartre challenges those views by arguing that they in fact regard the human being as being identical to nonhuman beings. For Sartre, nonhuman beings have quintessential general qualities because they are produced following certain prescriptions to serve a purpose. Their "essence" is already definite and fixed before they have existence. Accepting the validity of such a preset substance for human beings, therefore, means equating them with other beings. Besides, this view not only attributes an aim to human existence but also suggests the necessity of a producer for humans to come to existence (Sartre, 2007: 20-21). However, Sartre professes the absence of both the purpose of human existence and of a producer, a deity that brings humankind into being. Being an "atheist existentialist" as he calls himself, Sartre believes that the lives of humans are not predesigned or controlled by a supreme being. The absence of God engenders another absence; the absence of the intrinsic quintessence of human beings. As there is not a creator who grants the individual a certain character and purpose but he still has a being, the individual comes to existence without essential traits. Hence, "existence precedes essence" declares Sartre and he explains the condition of this essence-less being:

> Man first exists: he materialises in the world, encounters himself, and only afterwards defines himself. If man as existentialists conceive of him cannot be defined, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, then he will be what he makes of himself.… Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be, and since he conceives of himself only after he exists, just as he wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself. (22)

In contrast to the things which are created in accordance with their gist, human beings come to existence as "nothing." Yet, this lack of essence enables them to create their own core all through their lives. In this respect, individuals themselves are the only constructors of their essences.

Underlining this void in the being of mankind, Sartre also problematizes the traditional understandings of fate, free will, and freedom. One school of thought asserts that the things that an individual comes across and experiences in this world are

determined beforehand. If the fate of an individual is determined and certain, this means that the decisions and choices of that individual do not have any impact on who he is. As he is not in control of his life, he neither has individuality nor is he independent. On the other hand, some others believe that people can decide how they live because they possess free will. Such a kind of understanding ascribes human beings full control of their lives and endless freedom without defining the limits of their will or touching upon their responsibilities. Thus, the issue of human freedom is problematic in both ideologies (Bautista, 2015: 21). Sartre, on the other hand, presents a quite dissimilar understanding of freedom. According to Sartre, the human being is utterly free because he comes to exist without essence or a fate preestablished for him by a deity. Nonetheless, freedom does not mean the ability to perform free will limitlessly. Freedom, for Sartre, does not imply the powerful and lofty position of human beings over other creatures. First and above all, there are some certain outer actualities that individuals are not able to change in their lives. Although humans are not directed by a prespecified destiny, they are encircled by extrinsic realities and nonhuman beings, which inevitably limits their actions. As a consequence of this encirclement, human beings are in constant encounter with extraneous realities. Sartre names such a kind of encounter as "situation" which necessitates people to choose (Lightbody, 2009: 87). Thus, Sartre's notion of freedom refers to nothingness in human being's existence rather than absolute detachment of spatial and temporal conditions, it dictates indispensability of choosing rather than a predominance of mankind over other beings.

Human beings are indeed restricted by the outside environment because of the mere fact of existing positions them in concrete corporeality. Besides, they share their territory with beings other than themselves. Consequently, whenever they act, they come across spatial and temporal restrictions in addition to obstructions arising from their relations to other beings. Still, human beings are conscious of themselves, their actions, the environment they live in, as well as of nonhuman beings with whom they coexist. They are also conscious of the restrictions they face when they desire to act and this knowledge of the outer impediments demands individuals to decide. Sartre claims that the decision of the individual attributes worth to these impediments because choosing a way connotes parting with other ways. The significance of human being's decisions originates from the very act of choosing. Apart from that, the world or

existence does not contain any meaning in itself. In this regard, human freedom is always tied to situations, yet, this tie creates the essentiality of making decisions that makes human existence meaningful. Besides, owing to his being free to choose, the human being has the ability to go beyond actualities that restrain him (Bautista, 2015: 23). Still, in this meaningless world, Sartre's concept of human freedom restricted by outer realities is not relieving for the individual. First of all, being delimited by situations is a source of suffering because he has to renounce some of his desires and wishes. Among the restrictions he undergoes due to not being able to escape from being in a situation, other human beings, and death might be the most distressing for the human subject. Even though his freedom enables him to pass beyond external limits, the bodily existence of the human being is still subjected to finitude and it is not possible to surpass death. In this respect, death is a necessity, and therefore it negates man's freedom and ability to choose. The human subject is degraded to the position of being-in-itself by death. It deprives the individual of what makes him a human being, in other words, of his potentiality (Lightbody, 2009: 90). The awareness of this transition from potentiality to fixity causes uneasiness in the subject.

Also, since he is not guided by a divine being nor can he find a purpose for his existence, his choices are the sole basis for him to form his essence. Therefore, he is inescapably responsible for his decisions. As Sartre predicates,

> We have neither behind us, nor before us, in the luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. We are left alone without an excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free: condemned, because he did not create himself, yet nonetheless free, because once cast into the world, he is responsible for everything he does (Sartre, 2007: 29).

Freedom, thus, turns out to be confinement for the individual. If making decisions is the first requirement of being totally free, embracing the consequences is the second. Sartre's notion of freedom leaves the human being alone with the burden of the results of his choices. To accept total responsibility whenever the outcomes of his choice are unpleasant is undisputedly difficult for the individual. This anguish is doubled when the human subject realises that his decisions inevitably affect others people since he exists among other existents. As he shares the same time and space with other beings, the consequences of his decisions and actions are a concern of other human beings as well (Fischer, 1964: 1000). Accordingly, Sartre maintains that the individual is not only responsible for himself, but he is also responsible for every single person in the

world. For Sartre, with one solitary decision, for instance, the decision of getting married, the human being is "committing not only [himself], but all of humanity, to the practice of monogamy," in this respect, "he is not only the individual that he chooses to be, but also a legislator choosing at the same time what humanity as a whole should be" (Sartre, 2007: 24-25). Once the human being recognises his obligation, he hesitates to make a wrong decision or take an action that could have harmful consequences. To avoid taking such outcomes, he wishes to know what is good and what is bad for every individual. However, his search for the universal meaning of the good and the bad, to put it another way, universal ethics, is in vain according to Sartre due to two reasons. Firstly, as it was mentioned earlier, Sartre rejects a divine figure who creates, controls, and guides human beings. The absence of such a deity invalidates the possibility of universal values that would bind all humanity. Second, it is not possible to determine the universal value of any decision or action because existence is in itself meaningless. Notions of worth and significance are nothing but the constructions of individuals, hence, they differ from one person to another. According to Sartre, a decision that is valuable or conversely, worthless for one human being cannot be assumed as a general rule that directs the actions of all human beings. For that reason, Sartre claims that an all-embracing morality is impossible. Ethics, in his view, is grounded on human decisions, thus, it is subjective and relativistic (Anderson, 2010: 5-6).

Such ethics does not soothe the agony of the individual who feels crushed under the heavy burden of being responsible for himself and others. This burden, however, is indeed quite challenging to handle. Thence, some individuals may not cope with being free and responsible, and they simply reject their freedom. Instead, they deceive themselves by believing that their lives are in control of some other authority. Sartre describes this denial as "bad faith." By rejecting their freedom, those who choose to have bad faith also reject their potentiality which is an essential quality of being human. Therefore, as Sartre claims, such individuals perceive themselves as a being-in-itself that lacks the freedom to choose (Slote, 1975: 27). Quite contrary to bad faith, Sartre's philosophy strictly emphasises the importance of acknowledging one's nothingness, freedom, and responsibility for both himself and others. Bad faith, thus, must be eliminated according to Sartre. He considers "those who seek to conceal from themselves the complete arbitrariness of their existence, and their total freedom" to be

"cowards" and asserts that one should accept that "existence precedes essence, and that man is a free being who, under any circumstances, can only ever will his freedom … [and] must will the freedom of others" because only through this acceptance the individual can reach "authenticity" (Sartre, 2007: 49). Moreover, since bad faith is rejecting freedom and responsibility, it suggests not only refusing one's own freedom but also disdaining others' being free and responsible. This view also conflicts with Sartre's concept of authenticity which foregrounds the necessity to taking cognizance of the freedom of other individuals. According to Sartre, the human being must acknowledge the fact that he is surrounded by other human beings, and thus he must appreciate their autonomy (Jakopovich, 2011: 205).

1.3.2. Albert Camus and the Absurdity of Existence

Along with Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus is regarded as an important figure in French Existentialism even though he criticised existentialism and refused to be called an existentialist. Indeed, his dissatisfaction with existential philosophy never ceased throughout the evolution of his thought. Although he even once declared that "the one philosophical book I have published, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, was written against philosophers called existentialists," this work of him has been listed among the major works of existentialism (qtd. in Raskin, 2001: 158). According to Hannah Arendt, the main difference between existentialism and Camus' thought is related to the source of a feeling of uneasiness that every individual feels as being an existent, a feeling that is described as "absurd" by Camus. For existentialist thinkers, not only the world but also the existence of human beings is meaningless, hence arises anxiety and distress in the individual. Opposing to them, Camus believes that neither the world nor the human being is meaningless, however, what causes the feeling of the absurd is the relation between them (Arendt, 1946: 227). Still, the issues he touches upon in his work can be associated with the fundamental concepts of existentialist philosophy such as the bothersome situation of the individual as a being who cannot find meaning and purpose in his existence. As he is both in relation with and opposition to existentialism, investigating Camus' ideas can provide a significant perspective to this philosophical movement.

Camus' thought is generally considered to have two distinct stages. His early works deal with the disharmony between the individual and the world he exists in. Especially the feeling, the absurd feeling, that arises from his being disharmonious with the world is the focal point of Camus' philosophical views in the first stage. In his later works, however, his focus shifts to rebellion against the absurdity of existence as well as against social and political oppression (Cevizci, 2002: 207). Since absurdity and defiance constitute the main subjects of his thought, these themes must be elucidated to understand his views related to human existence. To begin with, Camus treats absurdity as an ontological concept which originates from the encounter of two different natures; the human and the world. According to Camus, the human being is a being who is rational and desires to understand himself, his life, and his world. He wishes to know the purpose of his existence and, with the aim of finding it, he explores the world. Nonetheless, what he discovers is that the world is illogical and nonsensical, and also indifferent to his wishes. "I want everything to be explained to me or nothing," says Camus, "the mind aroused by this insistence seeks and finds nothing but contradictions and nonsense…. The world itself, whose single meaning I do not understand, is but a vast irrational" (Camus, 1979: 31). The individual's yearning for an explanation is unreciprocated by the world, which results in disunity between them and gives rise to the absurd. Camus, therefore, states that "the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" (32). Existing in a senseless world but unable to suppress his need to understand, the human being continuously suffers from his lack of cohesion with the world. This inconsistency differentiates the human being from other beings with whom he coexists in the same environment. Richard Brosio explains humankind's difference from nonhumans by pointing out the word "absurd" itself as the situation of human beings is best described with this word, "the prefix 'ab' means away from; 'surd' means not capable of being expressed in rational numbers. Human beings are unique in not being able to be successfully described and measured in the same way as other beings and things" (Brosio, 2000: 168). As opposed to humankind, nonhuman beings exist as a member of their kind, as a part of a unity. Therefore, they do not experience such disunity in their existence. On the other hand, the singularity and individuality of the human being separate him not only from his kind but also from other beings and his world. Because of this absurd situation of him, the human being is an alien in this

world rather than a native inhabitant (Arendt, 1946: 227). In front of a meaningless world, the human being as an individual existent is solus. He is isolated and helpless in his absurd situation and he himself has to cope with the absurd, which makes him feel distressed and anxious.

Arising from the discordance between the world and the human being, Camus' concept of the absurd is polysemous. On the one hand, it refers to the distressing feeling that is caused by the condition of the human being who demands meaning in the world which is alien to him. On the other hand, the absurd signifies uninterestedness, detachment, and even numbness. It is the emotional barrenness of the individual in a meaningless and absurd life. Experiencing the absurd as an agonizing feeling or as an impassivity is troublesome for the human being but Camus asserts that it is futile to seek the origins of these sensations to be able to annihilate them. Quite the opposite, they must be accepted as a fundamental reality of human existence (Lansner, 1952: 571). Nevertheless, the absurd, in both senses, disquiets the human being, thus, he continuous his search for a way to extricate himself from it. According to Camus, turning to religion to get rid of this agonizing feeling does not help the individual. God is also indifferent to this distressing condition of him and the religious teachings which promise peace and contentment to be attainable in the afterlife are not facts that can ensure him a non-absurd life. The human being cannot be certain about the life after death, however, his worldly existence is beyond doubt. Therefore, Camus maintains that one should focus on his reality, in other words, his corporeal existence (Madison, 1964: 224). Similarly, Camus is also against being hopeful about the future to cope with the unrestful present situation. For him, life must be lived as what it is, even though it is full of absurdity that discomforts the human being, and living requires action and resistance. Hopefulness, on the other hand, is a form of passivity which holds the individual back from resisting. "From Pandora's box, where all the ills of humanity swarmed, the Greeks drew out hope after all the others, as the most dreadful of all," states Camus and adds, "contrary to the general belief, hope equals resignation. And to live is not to resign oneself" (Camus, 1979: 137). Since hope is a way of acquiescence to the absurdity, man must give up his hopes for a more content life. However, when all earthly and divine aids are denied, the absurd situation of the human being in a meaningless world becomes more agonizing. Hence

arises two related questions; why continue to exist if existence is absurd, and is it possible to defeat absurdity in life?

Camus focuses on both of the questions and investigates different ways of defiance to the absurd state of the individual in an impenetrable universe. One of them is to put a drastic end to this nonsensicality by taking one's own life. Since every individual undergoes the anguish of living a purposeless life, suicide should be considered as the only "truly serious philosophical problem" rather than an outcome of a pathological mental problem according to Camus (Camus, 1979: 11). It is surely beyond doubt that existing in such a kind of absurd environment can be intolerable for the human person who seeks answers. It is even harder when one realises that this meaningless will last lifelong. In the state of hopelessness, self-murder appears to be an exact and rapid solution to overcome absurdity. As declared by Camus, "there can be no absurd outside the human mind. Thus, like everything else, the absurd ends with death" (34). Therefore, suicide appears to be one of the means that can free the human being from the torture of the absurd. However, for Camus, putting an end to the absurd is not the same as overcoming it. The absurd originates from the conflict between the individual and the world and it is true that eliminating one of the parties of this conflict prevents its continuation. Nevertheless, such an act is not a victory, it is rather a withdrawal. Thus, the individual who kills himself resigns himself to the dominance of the absurd over him. For this reason, Camus puts forward the necessity of "a total absence of hope … a continual rejection … and a conscious dissatisfaction" in order not to surrender to the absurd which "has meaning only in so far as it is not agreed to" (34-35). Due to the same reasons, Camus does not accept philosophy as a method of prevailing over absurdity in life since it is grounded on rationality. He believes that rationality is ineffective in front of the absurd because it suggests that the individual, as an intelligent being, can give meaning and aim to his existence. It can be deduced from this logic-centred view that the world itself, as the individual experiences it, is different from what the world actually is, and this actual essence of the world can only be attained through the intellect. Thus, the agonies of the human being are not due to the absurdity of life but to his rational inadequacy. However, as the world is nonsensical, human reason, and therefore philosophy inevitably collapses. Then, the claim of philosophy that existence has a meaning turns into a hopeful belief which,

again, denotes resignation according to Camus. He, therefore, sees this attitude as a kind of suicide on the theoretical level (Madison, 1964: 226).

Camus finds both the first and the second forms of suicide fruitless to ease the troubles of the human being since they put the individual in a submissive position against the absurd. Still, the absurd can be defeated according to Camus by abandoning the search for meaning, giving up hope, accepting the existence as it is, and rising against its absurdity. To achieve this, one should understand that life "will be lived all the better if it has no meaning," and that "living is keeping the absurd alive" (Camus, 1979: 53). If living cannot be freed from the absurd, the individual then must be aware of the absurdity of existence but continue to live with a rebellious attitude because "the absurd dies only when we turn away from it" (53). In this respect, rebelling against the absurd is the only effectual method against the burden of the absurdity of life. It is a one-man resistance that lasts a lifelong, therefore, it is extremely challenging. Yet, the human being must persist with his rebellion against absurdity until his existence comes to an end because "the absurd is his extreme tension which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in that consciousness and in that day-to-day revolt he gives proof of his only truth which is defiance" (55). Only through this rebellion, asserts Camus, can existence be made meaningful. Thus, the human being must never cease to fight against the absurd.

The resistance of the individual against the absurd is, in a sense, to welcome worldly existence with open arms even though it is full of agony and distress. Indeed, even though the world is deprived of meaning, to exist is of significance according to Camus. In that respect, everything that diverts the human being from his present-day existence is bad such as hopefulness "for if there is a sin against life, it consists perhaps not so much in despairing of life as in hoping for another life and in eluding the implacable grandeur of this life" (Camus, 1979: 137). Apart from the existence itself, Camus does not determine any value in existence. He believes that existence encompasses pleasures alongside struggles, both of which must be lived to the total extent, or else, one would not live in the fullest sense. Accordingly, an act is specified as right or wrong basing on its effect on the individual. If it detains him from living his life with its pleasures as well as its absurdity, it is unjust according to Camus (Brosio, 2000: 177). Since the only value in life is the life itself and revolt is the sole

reality for the individual, his selfhood is grounded on nothing but his resistance to the absurd. He can preserve his individuality as long as he continues to resist, on that account, genuine existence can be solely achieved through revolt according to Camus. Furthermore, resisting the absurd is also the tie that binds human beings together. The human being is necessarily deprived of help in his revolt, yet, he is not the only being in the world to undergo the absurdness of existence. Every single human being is inevitably affected by the absurd which is the common adversary that each individual opposes. By uprising against the absurd to constitute his own self, the human being also revolts for the sake of others, which adds a moral dimension to the act of resistance. Therefore, for Camus, resistance is an act of value not only for the individual but also for humankind (Madison, 1964: 227-228). Viewed in this way, revolt is a concept which has both ontological and moral significance in Camus' thought. One should revolt to assert his existence as well as to act morally.

Camus does not elaborate on ethical behaviours nor does he put forward moral codes, however, as Lansner ascertains, "to the question of how a man should act in an absurd world, he gives us Sisyphus" (572). According to Camus, the Greek mythological character Sisyphus is the embodiment of the absurd individual who is in disharmony with the world but does not resign himself to this disunity. As a result of angering gods, Sisyphus is punished to a never-ending task which is to push a massive boulder to the crest of a hill. His toil is pointless because this boulder always rolls down to the starting point. "[Gods] had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour," says Camus (Camus, 1979: 107). Sisyphus has to face that his efforts are and will ever be useless. Indeed, such a task resembles the situation of the individual in a meaningless world. Trying to make meaning out of a nonsensical existence is certainly pointless. Yet, though this useless task is as heavy as the massive boulder he pushes, Sisyphus is not overwhelmed with this burden. Camus sees him as "superior to his fate" and "stronger than his rock" because he is aware of his situation (109). Knowing his punishment but rejecting its futileness, Sisyphus embraces his troubles and therefore surpasses them. The meaninglessness of his fate does not bother him, quite the contrary, he finds the strength to carry his burden from the burden itself because "the struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart," thus, "one must imagine Sisyphus happy"

(111). The individual, then, must make his existence his own by means of embracing it as it is and rebelling against its absurdity.

1.4.EXISTENTIAL ONTOLOGY AND ETHICS

Existential ontology, as its name suggests, centres upon the idea that what actually matters is the earthly existence of human beings and their personal experiences of existence. Rather than setting standards for an absolute man, it places emphasis on what a human being undergoes throughout his life as an existing being (Bigelow, 1961: 172). Therefore, the question "What is a human being?" is answered by the existentialists with what pertains to the individual and his own existence instead of the universal facts, idealistic and essential definitions, or empirical evidence about humankind. In that respect, the ontological view of existentialism is connected with the this-worldly situation of the individual. The following words of Micah Sadigh demonstrate this condition of the human being:

> Although we live and satisfy our needs as one of the creatures of this planet, somehow we are, at least, dimly aware that we are not in concert with nature; a sense of 'not belonging' often permeates our thoughts. Unlike the other animals who need no explanations for the purpose of their existence, who are driven by instincts that guide their behaviour, we cannot simply find satisfaction in our instinctive drives; something is amiss. (Sadigh, 2010: 79-80).

As sketched by the quotation above, the situation of man is by no means easy, painless, or peaceful. First and above all, he finds himself existing in a place to which he is a stranger. He does not know the meaning of his being there and he cannot be sure if there is any meaning in his life or it is completely meaningless. Still, he continues to search for the meaning of his existence because he suffers from the feeling that being a stranger in an unknown place causes. Whether the individual can find any sense in his existence or not, there is one point that is beyond doubt; he exists. Accordingly, the fact that man exists is the core of existential ontology. Essence and existence are among the main subjects that have been discussed by ontologists. In this respect, existentialism maintains the conventional discussion in ontology. However, it introduces a novel viewpoint to ontological studies by declaring that existence comes before essence (Dufrene, 1965: 52). This claim of existentialism signifies that the essence of the individual is not pre-given or pre-shaped before he comes to existence,

quite the contrary, he firstly exists without an essence. The essence of the individual is formed by himself and himself only throughout his life through his choices (Barash, 2000: 1012). The assertion that essence follows existence also implies the key points of existential ontology which are necessary to be touched upon to apprehend how existentialism treats the issue of being.

To start with, proclaiming that human beings do not have essence prior to their existence, existentialism differentiates between the being of the human person and the being of other creatures. Hence, in existentialism, beings are categorised into two as the subject's being and the object's being. The latter is predetermined; an object is not open to change nor can it create its essence. It is what it is from the beginning until the end of its existence. In contrast, human beings have the potential to form themselves. "An inkpot is always an inkpot," says Hanna Arendt and adds; "Man is his life and actions…. He *is* his existence" (Arendt, 1946: 227). Human beings are the subjects who can decide in what manner they will maintain their lives. Being in a position to choose and create his own essence, the human being can attain his genuine existence, which is impossible for the being as object. Viewed in this way, the human being as subject is situated above the objects. However, this does not mean that the being of each and every human person is genuine. For the existentialists, genuine existence is not given to the individual, rather, it is to be achieved through being aware of one's own potential and making choices to realise this potential capacity. The individual may become an authentic being, or, he may choose to live as an ingenuine being similar to an object. Therefore, existentialism claims that it is entirely up to the individual to choose "man-ness over thingness, subjectivity over objectivity" (Killinger, 1961: 304). Secondly, as his essence is not pre-established and it is entirely in his hands to be an authentic subject or not, the individual is on his own in this world according to the existentialists. They argue that the individual's being in the world is coincidental, which signifies that he is not predestined to live his life. Likewise, existentialists object to the belief that human beings maintain their lives under the guidance of a higher being. Quite the opposite, human beings are left alone at the hands of chance in the midst of vagueness. This is called "human contingency" (Brosio, 2000: 163). Trying to live with the awareness of this situation is undoubtedly overwhelming for human beings. At this point, different stances of religious and non-religious existentialisms towards human contingency must be noted. In can be said for the religious

existentialists such as Kierkegaard that their belief in God may provide a refuge for the human person even though they stress the potentiality of the individual as a being as subject and the accidental quality of his existence. However, non-religious existentialists deny the possibility of any kind of aid for human beings in their existential struggles. Their assertions that the individual is alone and his existence is completely coincidental connote the absence of a godly figure who controls and looks out for human beings. (Amstutz, 1961: 259). If the existence of human beings is not bound to destiny or any divinity, this means that they are independent in their lives. Indeed, existentialist philosophers consider the individual as a free being. Nonetheless, their perception of freedom is peculiar.

For existentialist philosophers, being free corresponds to more than being able to do everything that one desires to do. It is considered to be an essential element of the existence of the subject. Although they come to existence without an essence, human beings come into this world being free. Through their freedom, they construct their essence, in other words, themselves. The secular existentialists believe that the freedom of human beings is by no means restricted. Consequently, they are in full control of their decisions and actions. Their lives are shaped through their choices and their choices only. Therefore, owing to their being free, they possess the ability to reject the current situation and change (Aderibigbe, 2015: 155). Contrary to other beings in the world, human beings and human beings alone can alter themselves. However, at the same time, this freedom renders them responsible for who they are, as well as for every decision and action in their lives. To put it differently, they are to blame if their decisions end in an unwanted way, or if they are not pleased with their lives. Knowing that doubtlessly creates a mental weight on them. Besides, the consequences of their decisions affect not only themselves but also other people since they exist together, which duplicates the difficulty of being responsible. Therefore, freedom is rather a negative concept in existentialism. Nonetheless, for secular existentialists, embracing this responsibility is fundamentally important. Human beings should not deny their responsibility even though it is a troublesome weight to carry. On the other hand, the views of religious existentialists related to human freedom are slightly distinct from the secular existentialists. Although both perceptions share many common points, religious existentialism cannot be separated from the idea of “faith” as opposed to secular existentialism (Bigelow, 1961: 177).

Notwithstanding that human beings are limitlessly free, their being is still limited in many aspects. This finite characteristic of them constitutes a crucial part in the human situation according to existentialist philosophers. Above all, the existence of the individual is restricted by time because to exist necessitates to be in a definite place and time. Here, one can compare and contrast existence with essence once again as essences are ageless qualities that cannot be framed with any specific time. When taken as a scientific concept, finiteness is a medium for estimation and measurement, thus, entirely impartial to the perception of the individual. From an existentialist point of view, however, it is a highly subjective notion that refers to two significant conditions of human existence. First, finiteness highlights the fact that human existence is surely ephemeral. Second, it also signifies that the individual is conscious of his being finite, and therefore he can "transcend" the ephemerality of his existence (Tillich, 1956: 73). Knowing the transitory nature of his being, as much as it grants him with a somewhat supertemporal quality, severely affects the individual since it also means facing the fact that he will eventually die. Among the limits that restrain the human being, death is the most devastating one for him. The idea of death discomforts every human being because each of them knows that overcoming death or escaping it is not possible. Still, existential philosophy requires human beings to accept death as an unchangeable part of their lives despite the distressing feelings it awakes (Gray, 1951: 118). When one faces this factuality, he will also understand the subjectivity and individualness of death. As existentialist thinkers declare, the death of a human being is unique to him. What he undergoes when he dies cannot be undergone by any other person. For that reason, even though being mortal is a common characteristic of human beings, every one of them is lonesome when he meets his end. Due to this individualness of death, the human being is able to comprehend what death means through thinking of his death rather than the death of others (119).

To summarise what has been said so far on existential ontology, human beings differ from other beings in the opinion of the existentialists as they are utterly free and responsible subjects who establish their essence all through their existence until their death. Along with portraying what a human being is, existentialism also deals with how a human being feels as a subject. The situation of human beings, as described by existentialist philosophy, is quite challenging and dreadful. Resultantly, it immensely disturbs them and gives rise to distressing emotions such as anxiety, unrest, and

insecurity. However, one needs to touch upon "non-being" to have a greater insight into the causes of those feelings. Non-being is among the basic concepts of existential ontology. It is the opposite of being or existing. Precisely because of that, non-being plays a critical role in defining what being is since they constitute a dichotomy. In one sense, non-being announces "the hidden truth that there is no ultimate consolation, that the end of all striving is shipwreck" and realising this fact makes the individual anxious (Gray, 1951: 117). In another sense, non-being signifies the link between the real existence of human beings and their potentialities. In existential thought, the individual is considered to have a potentiality that can be realised for his essence is not established beforehand. Additional to these two senses, non-being suggests the finiteness of human existence as well. In fact, it is a "threat" for the being of the individual (Tillich, 1956: 744). Since death marks the end of one's existence and what lies beyond death is nothing according to the existentialists, non-being represents not existing in the world. Hence, it threatens the existence of the human being. As soon as one cognizes non-being, he feels angst. Yet, he cannot understand why he feels anxious because he cannot identify any specific cause as the source of the threat. What can be known about this dreadful feeling is that it emerges whenever "the subject has possibilities to lose itself in existence, not to fulfil its essential power of being" (745).

Another reason for the uneasiness of the individual originates from his not being able to find meaning in life even though he constantly searches for it. Indeed, for existentialism, searching for meaning in the world is futile because neither the world itself nor life is meaningful. After all, the human being is mortal and nothing awaits him beyond his death. The life that ends in nothing is undeniably "absurd" (Barash, 2000: 1014). Hanna Arendt depicts the pointlessness of existence in the presence of non-being with the following words: "Whatever exists … has not the slightest reason for its existence.… The fact that I can't even imagine a world in which, instead of many too many things, there would be nothing only shows the hopelessness and senselessness of man's being eternally entangled in existence" (Arendt, 1946: 227). Yet, existentialism does not present an absolutely pessimistic outlook on finding meaning in life. Even though the world and existence are pointless, one can attribute meaning to his existence and make his life meaningful. Nevertheless, constructing meaning in a meaningless world, just as forming one's own essence, is a toilsome task that lasts until the end of one's life. If human beings seek meaning in their lives, they

must generate it over and over again (Gray, 1951, 115). Attributing meaning to a pointless life, continuing to live even when he knows that it will end, ceaselessly establishing his own self, being fully responsible for his deeds and obliged to face the consequences alone, and therefore being restricted by his endless freedom are indeed challenging and distressing for the human being. Still, only through this way reaches the individual to his genuine existence according to existentialism. No matter how painful it is, the human being is to embrace his freedom, admit his liability, be conscious of his existence, and accept the difficulty of his situation in an absurd world without hesitation (Brosio, 2000: 164). In this respect, existentialism is an encouraging and motivating philosophy albeit the situation of man that it depicts is frustrating. This philosophy reminds human beings who they actually are and shows them the way to actualise what they potentially have. In the year of 1961, John Killinger regarded existentialism as "peculiarly the philosophy for our time … when human freedom and dignity in all areas are being seriously threatened by the forces of depersonalization, spoken and unspoken" (Killinger, 1961: 313). Sixty years later, human beings are still struggling with depersonalising forces. When the profound changes in today's world are taken into consideration, it can be argued that the threat of dehumanisation is more severe than at any time in history. Therefore, existentialism is still crucial today, not only because its arguments are relatable to the condition of human beings in this day and age, but also because it can help them to realise the genuine nature of being human which is forgotten in the rush of everyday life.

Together with an ontology, the existentialist philosophy also proposes ethics. As is known, existentialism sets its goal to encourage individuals to realise their authenticity which they potentially obtain. This realisation necessarily requires them to take action. Therefore, doing an act instead of remaining passive is of utmost significance for existentialism. Yet, not every action would lead the individual to the achievement of his genuine existence. The existentialist philosophers, therefore, are also interested in how a human individual should act, in addition to the genuine characteristics of human existence. They question long-standing teachings related to the right and wrong actions, and problematise the traditional and religious understanding of the moral concepts such as the good, the bad, and the valuable. Accordingly, they draw a distinction between the ideologies, behaviours, and manners that prevent the human being to attain his genuine being and those which make him

appreciate his genuine nature. In this respect, ethics is an area of concern for the philosophers of existentialism (Coates, 1953: 230). Since the authentic existence of the single human being is the chief interest of the existentialists, their views on morality are unavoidably related to it. The human subject, with his freedom, potentiality, and choices, is the centre of the existentialists' moral philosophy. Therefore, according to the existentialists, actions and decisions of the human being must be rooted not in the cultural or religious codes of morality which are imposed on him by an outer force but in his freedom from which he cannot escape. These codes prioritise the community over the solitary human being, and thus they disdain both his freedom and uniqueness. Going against the ideologies behind such standards, existential philosophy highlights the significance of the human subject's free choices and decisions as the grounds of his actions. In this respect, as Shai Frogel expresses, "the main challenge posed by this ethical position is the existential empowerment of the individual," therefore, it is "an ethics based on the power of individuals rather than on external authority" (Frogel, 2012: 157).

Just as with existential ontology, existential ethics expands basing on the criticism of traditional perspectives. First and foremost, existentialist philosophy rejects the view that aims to exhibit the universal characteristics of the essence of human beings by means of experiments and examinations. Contradictorily, the claim of the existentialists is that it is not possible to characterise the common essence of mankind for man is a free being who combines worldly and "transcendental" qualities. This transcendental side of the human subject precludes giving a broad and analytical explanation of what a human being is. Thus, those ethical schools of thought which postulate that man can be rationally explained, and deduce generalisations about the right and wrong behaviours on the strength of this postulation are decisively refused by the existentialists (Meyerhoff, 1951: 771). Similarly, according to existentialism, making an ethical decision is not a rational act on every occasion not only because some well-accepted ethical codes conflict with reason but also because there can be some conditions that what must ethically be done is completely irrational. This unreasonableness of some difficult conditions that need to be ethically resolved and of some ethical standards exclude ethics from the boundaries of logical explanations. In that respect, ethics cannot be based on reason, on this account, ideologies that rationalise ethical notions are unacceptable for existentialist thinkers (772).

Additionally, the conventional understanding of ethics which has prevailed in the moral philosophy since the times of Plato gives importance to the community rather than the solitary person, which results in the sacrifice of the particular for the sake of the general. According to this view, the single human being's existence has only numeric importance when it is compared to the majority. Therefore, he is forced to conform to the rules that are constructed in accordance with the benefits of the community. The unique sides of his being, and thus his individuality is disregarded. When the human being is reduced to a mere number who comes together with other numbers and constitutes the crowd, what is good for the crowd is also considered to be good for every single member of it. Consequently, conventional ethical codes are generated giving prominence to the general. As the crowd is prioritised over the single person, his choices and actions are expected to comply with the advantage of the crowd. An ethical action, therefore, fulfils the expectations of the community whereas the behaviours of those in opposition to the crowd are believed to be immoral and they are marginalised (Wild, 1960: 56).

This penalising attitude towards those who stand out from the crowd is a means of regulating the interconnection between the solitary person and the other. Living together and sharing a restricted place, human beings are inevitably affected by the actions of one another, which limits the freedom of each individual. The ethical norms, therefore, might be seen as a means to protect the freedom of each member of the community since they aim to diminish the possibility of any violating act towards one's freedom. However, a conflict-free relationship among the members of a group is achieved at the risk of eradicating one's uniqueness. While trying to adjust to the moral norms of the general public, the solitary human being loses his genuine personality and becomes a mere component of the population. Such an attitude degrades the solitary human being and therefore contrasts with the existentialists' emphasis on the significance of the individual's discrete existence. Reversing the ongoing supremacy of the group over its members, existentialism allocates a higher position to the individual and gives weight to the parts that separate him from others. Nevertheless, it should be noted that existentialist philosophers do not refuse to acknowledge the importance of interpersonal relationships nor they disesteem others' freedom by bringing the individual to the forefront. Quite the contrary, the other's existence, and freedom are among the main concerns of the existential philosophy

because the human individual exists together with other human and nonhuman beings. In fact, it is an important aspect of genuine existence to acknowledge this togetherness. According to existentialism, the individual cannot realise his genuine existence without recognising the freedom of other individuals (Greene, 1952: 272). Freedom, as an existential concept, denotes the potentiality, incompleteness, and also responsibility of the human being. It is a genuine characteristic of human existence which marks the difference between a human and a nonhuman being. Thus, it is not possible to acknowledge a person unless his freedom is acknowledged. Moreover, being free renders the individual entirely responsible for himself according to the existentialists. Yet, they claim that the human being's responsibility is not only for himself but also for other individuals since the consequences of his deeds are binding for his co-existents. In addition to admitting that he is totally responsible for the conduct of his life, it is necessary for the human being to recognise his blameworthiness for the impacts of his actions on others as well to attain authentic existence (Coates, 1953: 232).

As is seen, two ontological concepts of existentialism, freedom, and responsibility, provide the basis for the ethics suggested by the existentialists. Especially freedom, as the origin of man's responsibility, is the only measure accepted by the existentialists in making ethical judgements. Apart from that, existentialism denies the validity of all ethical norms, whether they are imposed by religion or philosophy. Existentialism is against each and every system that prescribes moral codes to standardise and control the relations between human beings (Daly, 1952: 117). In this respect, prescriptive ethics are rejected by existentialists. Correspondingly, existentialism itself does not propose regularising ethics which founds and advocates moral norms. Rather, it questions morality itself, discusses ethical standards, and specifies what is ethically significant. Therefore, the main concern of existential ethics is not the ethical value of the individual's decision in a particular situation. Instead of the rightness or wrongness of a choice, existentialism gives weight to whether this choice is made freely or not. When viewed from this aspect, existential ethics is a "meta-ethics" whose sole basis is the liberty of the human individual. (Khan, 2016: 62). Proposing ethics without setting forth ethical codes, existentialism does not define the good and the bad nor it puts forward right and wrong ways to behave because it argues that neither reaching objective truth nor finding value

impartial to the human being is possible. Since a universal truth outside human existence cannot be found according to existentialism, moral norms cannot be accepted as general and all-binding truths. Likewise, existentialism problematises the traditional understanding of the value and rejects all values that have been conventionally designated thus far, including moral values. For existentialism, nothing is genuinely valuable except the being of the individual, therefore, an act or decision cannot be seen of value and advocated solely because it is in harmony with the accepted ethical standards. In the same vein, it is meaningless to censure an act which is inconsistent with moral values. According to existentialism, the human being does not need such moral standards in order to act ethically. Quite the contrary, existentialism encourages human beings to make decisions without any outer restrictions because only in this way can they own their freedom and take the responsibility of their behaviours. Therefore, an ethical and valuable act originates in the human being's freedom and responsibility. Existentialism designates human beings' moral duty to acknowledge his being free in making his choices and being responsible for his decisions and acts (63).

It can be seen that existential ethics is exceedingly in relation to existential ontology. While portraying what kind of a being the human being is, the existential philosophy also examines his choices and actions and proposes freedom-based ethics which "throws human actors back on their own responsibility" (Mcbride, 2012: 260). The goal of existential ethics is the same as the aim of existential ontology; to awaken individuals from self-deceptive dreams, make them realise their potentiality and freedom, and inspire them to embrace their existence bravely until their death even if they cannot find any meaning or purpose in it. Such a goal is hard to achieve since it requires individuals to be constantly conscious of their limits together with their responsibilities, and face them resolutely. On the other hand, losing themselves in the trivialities of daily routines, refusing to be responsible for themselves as well as for others, and believing in outer authorities that control their lives are much easier. Nevertheless, even though they deliberately choose to delude themselves, every single human being suffers from pointlessness of an existence which is restricted by death. Once he becomes aware of his freedom and responsibility, his suffering is multiplied. However, trying to avoid such realities and duties does not completely mollify his agonies. For existentialism, the genuine solution for such sufferings is to choose to

embrace one's own existence as a free and responsible being full of possibilities and to find value and meaning in this choice itself. Presenting this solution and reminding the individual of the significance of his existence, both existential ontology and ethics are of significance.

CHAPTER TWO

2. EXISTENTIALISM AND LITERATURE

Existentialism, from its very beginning, has been intermingled with arts and literature. Being one of the major ideological movements in the twentieth century, existentialism has affected literary and artistic works so much so that it has been regarded as a "style" that defines the formal quality of works of artists, writers, and poets of the era (Tillich, 1967: 529). Indeed, the problems that artists and authors as modern individuals faced in the twentieth century due to the outcomes of mechanisation, international conflicts, and bloodshed correspond to the main concerns of existentialism. In such difficult times, people found themselves thrown into a meaninglessness commotion full of anguish and misery. They could not take refuge in once-glorified religious and scientific systems. Deprived of any soothing consolation, they suffered from disappointment and discontentment. The writers of the period went through those difficulties and their works reflected their weariness (Nordmeyer, 1949: 589). The concepts and ideas of existentialism were issued in the works of several writers and poets in the twentieth century. However, it is hard to find a consensus on which work or writer can be classified as an existentialist. The novels of the Czech writer Kafka and the Russian writers Tolstoi and Dostoevski, the plays of the German playwright Brecht and the Italian writer Pirandello, and the poems of the German poet Rilke have been regarded as existentialists works. The subjects covered in those literary works have still been discussed by contemporary authors (Kohn, 1984: 390). Nevertheless, the link between existentialism and literature is not limited to its being an umbrella term that incorporates artistic and literary fields. The existential philosophy itself is also thought to be deeply connected to literature. There are several reasons behind this view. Before all else, many existentialist philosophers were highly interested in literature. In their philosophical writings, they approached literature on the theoretical level, subject it to close examination, and even presented their ideal literary models. Together with that, some of them produced fiction in the forms of novels and drama in addition to their philosophical works. (Mcbride, 2012: 260). The

two leading figures of French existentialism, Sartre and Camus, have also been known for their fictitious works as much as for their existentialist thoughts. It is indubitable that the novels and plays of them bear the traces of their philosophies. For all these reasons, the lines between existentialist philosophy and literature are thought to be blurred by some critics who regard existentialism not as an autonomous philosophical system but as a trend in literature. However, as Flynn states, "existentialism is a philosophical movement with literary applications rather than a literary movement with philosophical pretensions" (Flynn, 2012: 249). Although such criticism directed towards existentialist thought undoubtfully underestimates its contributions to philosophy, it also demonstrates how profound the link between existentialist philosophy and literature is. Therefore, examining this connection is significant and necessary while dealing with existentialism. Accordingly, this part of the dissertation concentrates on Heidegger's, Sartre's, and Camus's theories related to literature.

2.1.SARTRE AND THE WRITER AS A RESPONSIBLE BEING

Sartre's theories about literature are collected in his work *What Is Literature?* Throughout the essays in this work, he asks and answers questions related to the purpose of writing and literature. He deals with writing as a human act that has its origins in human freedom. Since it is a free act, one who performs this act, namely the writer, is responsible for his action. Nonetheless, the writer is not the only actor of the act of writing according to Sartre. The writer writes his writing to be read by the reader. Thus, the reader is as crucial as the writer in the act of writing. While he is writing, the writer is responsible for himself as well as for the others. What to write and how to write therefore require detailed consideration. Accordingly, Sartre scrutinises the act of writing, the writer, and the reader in terms of freedom and responsibility. In this way, he exhibits his theory of literature which centres upon the writer's being responsible for everyone. This approach of him demarks the frame of literature, attributes a purpose to it, and therefore burdens the writer with an ethical duty. In this respect, Sartre's theory of literature is strongly connected to his ethics.

Sartre differs from those who advocate that art is in itself valuable and it is not obliged to serve a function. However, he makes a division between literature and other

fields of art and attributes a social and ethical function to the former. According to Sartre, visual and auditory arts lack the ability to represent meaning when they are compared and contrasted with literature. Painting, for instance, cannot completely reflect its creator's feelings because its medium of representation is colours that always blur the significance of sensations (Sartre, 1988: 26). Even though artworks carry a meaning, this meaning is no other than their own. In other words, they are themselves meaningful but they do not manifest any other meaning. Contrarily, literature has the ability to convey a message other than itself because it is emblematic. While works of art only demonstrate objects without directing the interpretation of the observer, objects are deliberately used in literary works to arouse certain feelings in the reader with the aim of indicating a meaning apart from the actual meaning of those objects (27). Encapsulating and transmitting messages is a feature of literature. Visual and auditory arts are deprived of such a characteristic. As it is not the task of the artist to convey a meaning, he cannot be held responsible for his creation. "One does not paint meanings; one does not put them to music. Under these conditions, who would dare require that the painter or musician commit himself?" asks Sartre (28). Literature, however, represents meanings in such a way that it can stimulate its reader. Due to this quality of it, literature cannot be produced for its own sake. Conveying meaning inevitably requires literature to construe the life itself which takes place in a certain environment at a certain time. Therefore, he is against the concept of literature as an activity detached from its time. Quite the contrary, literature is inescapably attached to its time, therefore, it is a necessity for those who deal with literature to accept their commitment and take the responsibility of creating literature (Nordmeyer, 1949: 591).

In this way, the writer is given an ethical duty and his creation is differentiated from other creative productions since he articulates life for his reader, and therefore he is responsible. Yet, Sartre also emphasises the indispensability of making another separation within the literature. In terms of form, literary works are categorised as prose and verse. Although they both consist of words, the distinction between them is more than the style of combining words. Rather, the main difference between prose and verse is related to the function of words in these two forms. According to Sartre, a work written in verse does not convey meaning as the way that a prose work does because words are not different from objects for the poet. Words in poems do not have the function to signify meaning. Therefore, Sartre asserts that "poets are men who

refuse to utilise language" since they adopt "the poetic attitude which considers words as things and not as signs" (Sartre, 1988: 29). When the words are seen as objects and not given meaning, they inevitably lose their vocal integrity and become mere voices that are uttered or forms on paper. Such an attitude towards words detracts them from the context of the language which is strongly tied to the state of the human being in the world. Due to the gap between the words he uses and the context of the language, Sartre declares that "the poet is outside language" because his "language is a structure of the external world," on the other hand, "the speaker is in a situation in language …. he feels them [words] as if they were his body; he is surrounded by a verbal body which he is hardly conscious of and which extends his action upon the world" (30). Unlike the poet, the prose writer uses words as signs and through this usage, he engages in the world. For that reason, "the writer is a *speaker*; he designates, demonstrates, orders, refuses, interpolates, begs, insults, persuades, insinuates" (34). Accordingly, Sartre elevates prose over poetry and investigates it as the prime form of literature in his literary theory.

Sartre attaches utmost importance to prose due to its method of employing language. As opposed to the objects of art and words of poetry, language used in a prose work is an action because it labels the things that are discussed in the work. By giving an expression to a subject, the writer defines it and unveils what that subject really is. He brings the things that are hidden into the surface of consciousness. This unveiling is not only for the writer himself but also for the world, therefore, it has the power to alter the world. Those who are unaware of a reality related to themselves or the world can realise it when they come across it in a literary work. Sartre explains this impact of language with the following words:

> If you name the behaviour of an individual, you reveal it to him; he sees himself. And since you are at the same time naming it to all others, he knows that he is seen at the moment he sees himself. The furtive gesture, which he forgot while making it, begins to exist enormously, to exist for everybody; it is integrated into the objective mind; it takes on new dimensions; it is retrieved. After that, how can you expect him to act in the same way? Either he will persist in his behaviour out of obstinacy and with full knowledge of what he is doing, or he will give it up. Thus, by speaking, I reveal the situation by my very intention of changing it; I reveal it to myself and to others in order to change it. I strike at its very heart, I transfix it, and I display it in full view; at present I dispose of it; with every word I utter, I involve myself a little more in the world, and by the same token I emerge from it a little more, since I go beyond it towards the future. (Sartre, 1988: 37)

As his words illustrate, language can evoke change in people for it shows them who they are and what their world is. Embodying this characteristic of language, writing

cannot be just a depiction of the world. It has an impact on the reader, it contains in itself the potential to change the reader and reform the world, and therefore it is indeed an act. “The writer has chosen to reveal the world and particularly to reveal man to other men so that the latter may assume full responsibility before the object which has been thus laid bare” says Sartre (38). This reformist quality of prose writing connotes the writer’s freedom, responsibility, and engagement together with his connection with the reader.

To recall Sartre’s ontology and ethics, the essence of the individual is not predetermined, rather, he continually constructs his essence until the end of his existence by way of making decisions and choices. In this respect, the individual is free but he is also responsible for himself and others. When considered in this context, writing as an act is in fact a choice that the writer freely makes for “no one is obliged to choose himself as a writer. Still, this choice naturally renders him accountable for this act of writing. Just the same as any other act, writing does not solely affect its actor, it has consequences for everyone. Yet, in addition to this wide-ranging effect of it, writing also burdens the writer with a communal duty because he is, as a person whose work is read by other people, subjected to others’ expectations. Therefore, the writer is “a man whom other men consider as a writer, that is, who has to respond to a certain demand and who has been invested, whether he likes it or not, with a certain social function” (Sartre, 1988: 77). When a person chooses to write and aims to be recognised by others as a writer, his decision inevitably gains a societal dimension, which ties him to his reader and characterises the task of literature. Indeed, for Sartre, the reader is as crucial as the writer for the production of a literary work. Beyond anything else, the writer does not produce his work solely for himself. It is undoubtful that the urge to write arises from the writer’s desire to connect himself to the environment that he exists in. As a creative activity, writing requires the writer to deliberately create his work “by condensing relationships, by introducing order where there was none, by imposing the unity of mind on the diversity of things,” and consequently, the writer is satisfied with himself as the indispensable part of his production (49). Nevertheless, the writer does not keep his work to himself, he presents it to the world because he creates his work to be read, not to be hidden in the dark. According to Sartre, for the writer “to make [his work] come into view a concrete act called reading is necessary, and it lasts only as long as this act can last. Beyond that,

there are only black marks on paper," however, this act must be done by a person other than the writer himself because "the writer cannot read what he writes" (50). Since it is not possible for the writer to read his own work in a detached manner, the writer needs the reader to bring his creation to the fore by means of the reader's action. To read, for Sartre, is more than to understand what the writer has created. It is also a creative activity because the reader can pass beyond the limits of the things that are written in a work and ascribe meaning when the writer is silent. The writer's work is an entity in itself, however, it still necessitates the involvement of the reader. The organisational integrity of the work constitutes a base for the reader to create his own interpretation of it, thus, "reading is directed creation" (53). In this respect, the reader's involvement is a foundational part of literature. Due to this fundamental position of the reader in engendrure of literary work, the writer and the reader is strongly connected and this connection grounds freedom.

Needless to say, both the writer and the reader, as human beings, are autonomous in their actions, and therefore their acts of writing and reading are naturally free. Nonetheless, in terms of literature, freedom signifies more than the reader's or the writer's being free while making decisions. It was formerly mentioned that writing is a free choice that the writer makes. His creation, therefore, bases on his freedom, and his creation is completed with the "directed creation" of the reader. Since the reader is also a creator, he involves in the creation process of work as freely as the writer. His action of reading, just as with the writer, stems from his freedom. Thus, a piece of literature is not only established on the freedom of both the writer and the reader, but it also connects them. This connection is elucidated in the following words of Sartre,

> Since the creation can find its fulfilment only in reading, since the artist must entrust to another the job of carrying out what he has begun, since it is only through the consciousness of the reader that he can regard himself as essential to his work, all literary work is an appeal. To write is to make an appeal to the reader that he lead into objective existence the revelation which I have undertaken by means of language. And if it should be asked to what the writer is appealing, the answer is simple…. since this directed creation is an absolute beginning, it is therefore brought about by the freedom of the reader, and by what is purest in that freedom. Thus, the writer appeals to the reader's freedom to collaborate in the production of his work. (Sartre, 1988: 77)

According to Sartre, literature is a call of one freedom to another and it is constituted through an alliance of freedoms. This alliance firstly makes the active participation of the reader a prerequisite for the production of literature. Secondly, it necessitates the

writer to acknowledge the reader's freedom. "If I appeal to my reader so that we may carry to a successful conclusion the enterprise which I have begun, it is self-evident that I consider him as a pure freedom, as an unconditioned activity," says Sartre and he adds, "in no case can I address myself to his passiveness, that is, try to affect him, to communicate to him, from the very first, emotions of fear, desire, or anger" because "freedom is alienated in the state of passion" (56). With these words, Sartre begins to define the boundaries of his understanding of literature. As his words demonstrate, good literature must not aim to evoke strong feelings in the reader for such a kind of directing would render him passive, and therefore his involvement would not be as free as it must be. In contrast, the writer should address the freedom of the reader. Freedom, therefore, is the core of literary production for Sartre.

As the creation of a literary work depends on both writing and reading which are free actions and necessitate one another, it is essential to acknowledge and respect both the writer's and the reader's freedom. For that reason, literature requires a mutual appreciation of the writer's and the reader's acting in freedom. The writer must accept the vital role of readers in the generation of his work to address their freedom. By introducing his work to the world, the writer demonstrates his respect for the freedom of those who read his work. Along the same line, the reader's decision to read a literary work is an indicator of his appreciation of the freedom of the creator of the work. Both of them, therefore, trust each other's freedom and responsibility. Due to this reciprocal trust and respect, Sartre, forging a bond between literature and ethics, states that "at the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative" and he describes the literary output which requires acknowledgment of freedom "as an imaginary presentation of the world" (Sartre, 1988: 67). In this respect, Sartre's views on literature are highly tied to his ethics firstly because he accepts freedom as the foundation of literature, and secondly because he believes that the writer has moral obligations for his work which has an impact on people. Literature, for him, must emerge out of the coming together of free beings who need and appreciate one another's freedom. As writing and reading are actions that originate in freedom, the acting subjects of these actions are responsible for them. In the creation of a literary work, both the writer and the reader have their own duties. However, since the writer sets the framework of the reader's creation and he creates his work to be shared with the world, Sartre emphasises the importance of the writer's acceptance of his social

responsibilities. As is mentioned above, a piece of literature that is born out of a collaboration of freedoms represents the world according to Sartre, therefore, what the writer writes introduces the world to the reader. Sartre claims that the writer must be aware of this fact and must not go after "the impossible dream of giving an impartial picture of Society and the human condition," rather, he must acknowledge that he is "committed" (37). The writer cannot isolate himself and his work from the world as well as from the relationship between him and his readers. Sartre believes that this engagement puts the liability of creating his work "in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say that he is innocent of what it's all about" on the writer, hence, he must write knowing that he is responsible for everyone and bearing in his mind the following question; "'What would happen if everybody read what I wrote?' (38). As is seen, Sartre attributes literature an exceedingly ethical aspect. He considers writing as a way of engagement in the world, and therefore he rejects the view that supports the detachedness of literature. He conversely considers both the writer and the readers responsible for their actions and expects them to embrace their responsibilities. Especially the writer cannot avoid being liable for the impacts of his work on other people. Thus, he is socially and morally responsible and he must create what he creates with the awareness of his situation as a writer.

2.2. CAMUS AND THE LITERATURE OF REVOLT

Together with Heidegger and Sartre, another name that can be considered among the existentialists who concern themselves with literature is Camus. The third chapter of his famous work *The Myth of Sisyphus* is spared to the discussion of artistic creation. In parallel to Sartre, Camus foregrounds literature and analyse creative production by focusing on the novel genre. His understanding of literature is centred on his concept of the absurd. His goal is to discover the characteristics of a work that can be called absurd if such a work can be created. With this aim, Camus begins his investigation by explaining the connection and oppositions between philosophy and literature, especially the genre of novel. According to him, great novels cannot be generated without reasoning because they are created in accordance with a plan. Thus, literature is necessarily in relation with thought to a certain degree but it must not

aspire to explain which is a method of reasoning. What makes a piece of literature efficient for Camus is imagery and adumbration rather than explanation. Then, he tries to explore whether an absurd individual who embraces living even though it is pointless can find a motivation to create a meaningless and rootless work or not by analysing a character of Dostoevsky's work *The Possessed*. Throughout this analysis, the traits of the absurd work are displayed. Quite like his thoughts related to human existence, Camus asserts that an absurd work must not present a remedy for the absurd feelings that characters have by giving hope related to the future. On the contrary, the work is absurd as long as it holds on to absurdity. Camus finally concentrates on the relationship between the creator and his creation. According to him, an absurd work rises out of its author's awareness that his creation is transient. In this respect, absurd creation requires consciousness and acceptance of the hopelessness, and therefore futurelessness of his production. Continuing to create even after such consciousness is indeed a rebellious act, which resembles the absurd individual's embracing his life even though it is completely meaningless. Camus's views on literature, therefore, are in line with his philosophy of the absurd which necessitates revolt against the absurdity of life.

Literature has an important place in Camus' thought since he sees literature as the creation of "the most absurd character" in the world (Camus, 1979: 85). Accordingly, he analyses literature, the writer, and the work in terms of their relations to the absurd. In the first part of "Absurd Creation" chapter of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus presents literature as a way to cope with the troublesome condition of human beings who are in a continuous struggle with the absurdity of their existences. Man's revolting against his absurd situation is an exhausting and endless war that might easily devastate him. Moreover, man cannot take comfort in hope for victory over absurdity because, for Camus, it is such a war that cannot be won. Still, even with an awareness of the endlessness and fruitlessness of this fight, some people persist in fighting. One of the things that empower them to continue their struggle is creating art according to Camus. Just as the tireless fight of devoted soldiers who do not abstain from fighting in the middle of a war because they know that they have to fight for their lives or perish in the war, "so it is with the absurd: it is a question of breathing with it, of recognizing its lessons and recovering their flesh. In this regard, the absurd joy par excellence is creation" (86). Producing art or encountering an artwork is a joy because art provides

the individual with a space to demonstrate his life and maintain his awareness in the midst of his abiding struggle which causes him distress. Although Camus advocates ceaselessly revolting against the absurd to make life meaningful, this revolt can only continue owing to the conflict between the individual and absurdity and this conflict severely affects the individual. “In this universe the work of art is then the sole chance of keeping his consciousness and of fixing its adventures” says Camus and adds, “creating is living doubly” (87). Thanks to the artistic creation, the human being can find the energy to go on his rebellion. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that artistic production eases the distress of the individual by giving him a shelter. Then, dealing with art would mean hiding from the absurdity of human existence, and therefore being defeated by it. In contrast, Camus declares that art is absurd because, for Camus, artistic production starts when “absurd reasoning” ends and it engenders “absurd passions.” Besides, it also reveals to human beings their exitless situation. Thus, as it is stated by Camus that “it does not offer an escape for the intellectual ailment. Rather, it is one of the symptoms of that ailment which reflects it throughout a man's whole thought” (88).

After explaining the role of art in human existence, Camus turns to investigate the similarities between art and absurd philosophy. He begins by comparing and contrasting the artist and the philosopher to unveil the traces of absurd reasoning in art. According to Camus, the artist and the philosopher share the same paradoxes. Both art and philosophy originate in the same source such as the agony of the human being due to his confrontation with the absurd. Therefore, they are connected with absurdity from their very beginning. Still, “among all the thoughts that start from the absurd, I have seen that very few remain within it,” claims Sartre and he sees it necessary to ask this question; “is an absurd work of art possible?” (Camus, 1979: 88). Camus asserts that the first requisite for a piece of art to be absurd is to include reasoning in such a way that reasoning should manage the organisation of the work but it should not be recognisable. Although this relationship between reasoning and artwork is at first seems contradictory, it is again related to absurdity for Camus since the rise of artwork is initiated when the intellect rejects to subject existing objects to logical thinking. Instead of the abstract notions of reasoning, the physical is elevated in the piece of art because the physical is depicted as it is without being ascribed meanings irrelevant to it by means of explanation. For that reason, though art is generated by and connected

to reasoning, it also denies thinking. The creator must be aware of this connection between art and reasoning and he must not attribute his creation any meaning greater than itself. His production "cannot be the end, the meaning, and the consolation of a life" because "creating or not creating changes nothing. The absurd creator does not prize his work. He could repudiate it" says Camus (90). An absurd artwork, therefore, does not provide a meaning to its composer's life. The artist must acknowledge this and must not glorify his creation by assigning an illusionary meaning to it. Similarly, he cannot use his creation as a means of a getaway that frees him from the absurd feeling that torments him throughout his existence.

Camus later narrows his research interest down and focuses on the novel and the absurd. Again, he draws a parallel between thinkers and novelists in terms of the organisation of their productions. What the thinker does is quite similar to what a novelist does. They both design a world that is weaved with images in accordance with a definite chain of events. In this respect, among literary genres, novel resembles philosophy the most and therefore it gives a rational character to creation. The works of the prominent novelists involve are created based on reason, thus, they involve arguments, judgements, adumbration, and prerequisites. To exemplify those leading novelists, Camus mentions some names such as Dostoevsky, Balzac, Kafka, and Stendhal. For him, they are "philosophical novelists, that is the contrary of thesis-writers" since each of them "has given up telling 'stories' and creates his universe" just as a philosopher does (Camus, 1979: 92). All those prominent novelists use imagery instead of explanatory reasonings while creating their works. They believe that to explicate is impractical for their creation but they give importance to the didactic quality of the tangible. For them, their creation is both dawn and dusk, which, again, reflects the philosophical value of their work. In this way, Camus correlates novel and philosophy, which leads him to approach creating novels in the context of the baselessness of all actions in a meaningless universe. As it might be recalled, Camus's philosophy revolves around the pointlessness of human existence and the frustration of the meaning-seeking human being when he confronts the world which offers neither meaning nor purpose. If the individual cannot find any purpose in this world, then, there is no point in doing anything including creating a work. However, if one recalls, Camus' philosophy by no means justifies being overwhelmed and impoverished by this absurdness of existence. On the contrary, Camus defends insurrection against this

very futileness of life. Thus, according to him, one must go on living even if there is nothing in this life to motivate him to live. Basing on this, Camus problematises the motivations behind the creation of a novel and aims to see the possibility of generating a literary work when the creator is aware of the fact that there is no point in creating (93). To test his claim, he analyses Dostoevsky's work in terms of his characters' attitudes towards the absurd by focusing on one particular character, namely Kirilov, and correlating his actions with the other characters of the Russian writer.

Camus' analysis of Dostoevsky's character Kirilov has the aim of demonstrating if a novel can be continuously persistent with reacting against the absurd without resignation. Such a kind of work, according to Camus, must be consistent with his philosophy of the absurd and must not give any explanation to the absurd situation "for the absurd man it is not a matter of explaining and solving, but of experiencing and describing … that is the last ambition of an absurd thought" (Camus, 1979: 87). Camus prioritises description over explanation in a literary work since the description is nothing more than reflecting something as it is whereas explanation is to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between two things, and therefore it is to provide a base for the explained object. Explanation, therefore, is contradictory with Camus' thought which stresses the baselessness of the world. Also, to explain can be seen as a way of attempting to escape the absurd feeling for it aims to attribute meaning when the meaning of a thing is not understood. In this respect, for those who cannot bear the heaviness of this absurd existence, to explain can be irresistible even though it is only self-deception. "There is so much stubborn hope in the human heart. The most destitute men often end up by accepting illusion," states Camus and it might apply to the novelist, in whose work "the temptation to exp1ain is the strongest" (94). The novelist, however, must resist to this temptation and include not promises for better days but an unending rebellion against absurdity because, as Camus states, "if the commandments of the absurd are not respected, if the work does not illustrate divorce and revolt, if it sacrifices to illusions and arouses hope, it ceases to be gratuitous" (93-94). A literary work, thus, must be baseless just like life itself. Accordingly, Camus searches for these characteristics in Dostoevsky's work. Camus chooses the characters created by the Russian novelist because he claims that those characters problematise the purpose of their existence. Through these characters, Dostoevsky not only demonstrates how hollow and perpetual existence is but he also

depicts how these characteristics of existence affect human beings (95). Camus especially concentrates on Dostoevsky's concept of "logical suicide," which stands for deciding to end one's life solely on the ground that life is absurd. Dostoevsky's characters indicate that to maintain this absurd existence is pointless if one realises the absence of an afterlife and cannot be content with the deceptions of the crowds. Besides, the individual has the power to do with his existence whatever he wants to do because he is alone in this absurd existence without the guidance of any outer authority. One can put an end to this absurdity and manifest his power via ending his existence by his own decision. To kill oneself is therefore a means of reacting against the absurd. In a similar vein, Kirilov decides to declare his indomitability by committing suicide. For Camus, "It is for an idea, a thought that he is getting ready for death. This is the superior suicide" (96).

Although Kirilov's suicide is a superior one as his goal with this deed is to profess his reaction against the meaninglessness of his existence, Camus finds a paradox in his taking his own life. Above all, Kirilov grounds his suicide on the absence of a deity. According to Camus, by means of his suicide, Kirilov desires to murder and replace God so that he can affirm his freedom. "But if this metaphysical crime is enough for man's fulfilment, why add suicide? Why kill oneself and leave this world after having won freedom?" asks Camus, since Kirilov is already free in a world where God is absent. (Camus, 1979: 98). He believes that Kirilov also knows this paradox but he is nevertheless determined to end his life. This consciousness of Kirilov gives another dimension to his deed according to Camus. He ends his life to guide others who exist in the same world but does not realise what Kirilov has already understood. Camus accordingly states that "Kirilov must kill himself out of love for humanity. He must show his brothers a royal and difficult path on which he will be the first… This theme of suicide in Dostoievsky, then, is indeed an absurd theme" (99). Even though Dostoevsky's approach to suicide is absurd and it can be exemplified with Kirilov's self-murder, Camus claims that Dostoevsky eventually fails to produce absurd creation since he provides an explanation for the absurdity of existence in his later works. It must be noted here that Camus asserts that the creation of an artist is a combination of every single work that he creates until the end of his life. It is the same with a novelist. Each and every writing of a novelist are in connection with one

another, and therefore it would be wrong to analyse his works separately. Camus elucidates this continuation of the creator's work as follows:

> A profound thought is in a constant state of becoming; it adopts the experience of a life and assumes its shape. Likewise, a man's sole creation is strengthened in its successive and multiple aspects: his works. One after another, they complement one another, correct or overtake one another, contradict one another too. If something brings creation to an end, it is not the victorious and illusory cry of the blinded artist: 'I have said everything', but the death of the creator which closes his experience and the book of his genius. (103-104)

In this respect, it is not possible to regard Dostoevsky's creation as absurd only by looking to Kirilov's suicide according to Camus. He, therefore, investigates other works of the Russian novelist in terms of their approach to the absurdness of human existence. He claims that Dostoevsky's other characters such as Nikolai Stavrogin of *The Possessed* and Ivan Karamazov of *The Brothers Karamazov* follow the footsteps of Kirilov but there are also others who could not realise the message that Kirilov's suicide conveys. Towards the end of *The Brothers Karamazov,* Alexei declares his faith in the afterlife and gives hope to children with his words, which is a way of resigning to the absurd instead of revolting against it. "Consequently, it is not an absurd novelist addressing us but an existential novelist…. It is not an absurd work that is involved here but a work that propounds the absurd problem" according to Camus (101).

In the last part of the "Absurd Creation" chapter, Camus depicts the implications of his analysis of Dostoevsky's work. He claims that the failure of the novels that he analyses comes from their optimism about the future. Being hopeful is a self-delusion, yet, it "cannot be eluded for ever and that it can beset even those who wanted to be free of it" (Camus, 1979: 102). However, Camus also maintains that what should be deduced from this dominance of hope in literature is that absurd creation requires strong self-discipline and constant vigilance. These qualities can only be achieved through a denying attitude that one adopts towards his creation. The absurd novelist must deny the significance of both his production and the efforts he makes while producing it. Being conscious of the fact that his production will fade away, the absurd novelist is the one who nullifies his work but continues to create. What the absurd writer does is, for Camus, to "give the void its colours" (103). The creation made by the absurd novelist, therefore, is different from the ones which are written to evince the righteousness of an opinion. Camus openly expresses his disapproval of

such novels that propound an argument and aim to give substance to it. He calls them "thesis-novel … the most hateful of all" and describes their writers as "philosophers, ashamed of themselves" while he qualifies absurd novelists as "lucid thinkers [who] raise up the images of their works like the obvious symbols of a limited, mortal, and rebellious thought" (105). As opposed to the thesis-novel, the absurd novel does not deal with judgements or abstract ideas, rather, they describe the corporeal which is finite and temporary. In this respect, Camus' expectations from the creation of writers are in line with his expectations from the creation of thinkers. Just as the absurd thought, the absurd novel must be independent, defiant, and divergent. Producing such a work also makes the individual rebellious, thus, writing is "a discipline that will make up the greatest of his strengths" (106).

CHAPTER THREE

3. UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA

For a 21st century reader, the words utopia and dystopia are quite familiar. Yet, there are some misconceptions of utopia and dystopia which narrow the significance of these terms. Utopia is commonly known as perfect communities while dystopia is believed to be the contrary of utopia**.** Besides, since many utopian and dystopian works are fictitious, utopia and dystopia are seen as the research subjects of only one discipline, which is literature. First of all, both utopia and dystopia have an important position in various branches of knowledge including architecture, sociology, history, art, and of course, literature. Since those different fields adopt different approaches toward utopia and dystopia, it is very hard to come up with an extensive description that can embrace the perspectives of all the fields interested in these two terms (Claeys, 2013: 9). Beyond doubt, generalisations related to them diminish the significance of these terms. Although such overgeneralising views are inaccurate as well as insufficient to express the wide range of meaning that utopia and dystopia possess, it is believed that the terms themselves might cause the appearance of those views. It is a generally known fact that the word utopia was coined by Thomas More in 1516 with the publication of his much-debated work *Utopia.* Etymological examinations demonstrate that More's coinage consists of two nouns such as "ou" and "topos" which are the Greek counterparts of "not" and "place" respectively, and the suffix "-ia" which attaches the word the quality of being the name of a certain location. Utopia, therefore, means "noplace." Some scholars also suggest that More deliberately created such a word because the pronunciation of utopia connotes not only "outopia" but also "eutopia" whose prefix "-eu" signifies "good" (Ruitinga, 2011: 49). Hence, the word utopia indicates a pleasant place that does not exist. On the other hand, the word dystopia was firstly uttered in 1868 by John Stuart Mill while he was giving a speech in parliament. Mill's aim was to indicate the reversed version of utopia and he denominated it following Jeremy Bentham's coinage "cacotopia." Just like utopia,

both cacotopia and dystopia have Greek origins for “caco” and “dys” derive from Greek adjectives “kako” and “dus”, the former means “undesirable” while the latter means “rotten” (Vieira, 2010: 16). Dystopias, from this point of view, can be regarded as repulsive places in which no one would want to live.

When the etymological roots of the words are taken into consideration, common misinterpretations of utopia and dystopia seem unsurprising. Still, it is necessary to liberate utopia and dystopia from those reducing misconceptions. To begin with the distinction between utopia and dystopia, it must be stated that dystopias and utopias are not antithetical as opposed to general belief. In fact, they share many characteristics. First of all, they describe social organisations which are non-existent in this world. Despite of the fact that those organisations are imaginary, they do not contradict the laws of reason, and therefore they are apt to be actualised. What makes the difference between these two patterns is that utopias offer a desirable life for human beings while the idea of living in a dystopia is abominable. As is seen, the structure that dystopia represents is not the opposite of a utopian organisation. The antithesis of utopia is disorder and mayhem. However, dystopias do not depict a disrupted, unorganised and chaotic world. On the contrary, in dystopias, order is an important element that is achieved through oppressive control over individuals (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 16). The close relation between utopia and dystopia is expressed by Gordin, Tilley, and Prakash as, “[dystopia] is a utopia that has gone wrong or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society” (Gordin et al., 2010: 1). It is clearly understood from this quotation that utopia is a broader term that embodies dystopia. For this reason, some scholars classify dystopia as a sub-category of utopia. However, this classification is problematic because it opposes dystopia with “eutopia”, another sub-category of utopia. According to this view, every utopian work produced before the development of dystopia can be regarded as a eutopia since the term dystopia appeared in 1868 following the changing conditions in the lives of urbanites (Mihailescu, 1991: 214). There are also other approaches to the relation between utopia and dystopia. Another viewpoint, for instance, expands dystopia’s connection to utopia by claiming that utopia adapted to the changing attitudes towards the long-established institutions and eventually transformed into a dystopia in the 20th century (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 17). In compliance with the historical development and alteration of the

terms, this chapter firstly focuses on utopia, and then, dystopia will be discussed in detail.

3.1. UTOPIA

3.1.1. Utopia: A Hope for Change

Being included in various fields, utopia seems to be a complex term that requires a close examination. Even the meaning of the word creates a debate among scholars. As it was mentioned earlier, utopia is etymologically associated with Greek "ou" and "eu", the former means "not" and the latter means "good". Accordingly, utopia has two-fold meanings such as "no-place" and "good-place." In other words, it depicts a non-existent place whose inhabitants are content with their lives. What makes the places described in utopias favourable is not geographical advantages or any other spatiotemporal supremacy but ideal social orders constructed by collective human reason. Thence, society always precedes the individual in social models that utopias display. Yet, such a place is unattainable given that it does not exist. Being excellent but unreachable, therefore, utopia connotes both negative and positive meanings (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 7). This situation causes an ambiguity that complicates the studies on utopia. Apart from that, since the day Thomas More created the word utopia, its meaning has altered and broadened day by day as it has been issued by more writers and scholars. As the scope of utopia has widened, new terms were needed and those terms such as eutopia, anti-utopia, dystopia, ecotopia, and heterotopia were constructed deriving from the word utopia. Consequently, the frame that encapsulates the term utopia has changed (Vieira, 2010: 3). Pursuant to those semantic alterations, there are disparate approaches to what is called utopian. Some scholars believe that a structure must be flawless to be called utopian while others search if there is any connection between the works and organisations they analyse and the work of Thomas (Houston, 2007: 426). In a similar manner, several different definitions of utopia exist together. Those definitions are of utmost importance since they introduce general characteristics of utopia as well.

J. Max Patrick's definition, for instance, prioritises the bond between Thomas More's work and the other utopian systems. Patrick asserts that

> A Utopia conforms to certain basic features of More's Libellus, which gave the genre its name. A Utopia should describe in a variety of aspects and with some consistency an imaginary state or society which is regarded as better, in some respects at least, than the one in which its author lives. He does not ordinarily claim that the fictitious society and its people are perfect in all respects and that he is propounding a total ideal or model to strive toward or imitate; most Utopias are presented not as models of unrealistic perfection but as alternatives to the familiar, as norms by which to judge existing societies, as exercises in extrapolation to discover the social and other implications of realizing certain theories, principles and projects (qtd. in Sargent, 1994: 5).

Apart from the emphasis on More's work *Utopia*, his words above demonstrate that utopias are not always regarded as excellent and exemplary societies even though they portray more desirable organisations than the existent ones. Rather, they are seen by some scholars as criticisms of the real societies in which they are written. When viewed from this aspect, the function of guiding real societies towards a superior future can be attributed to utopias. In analogy to Patrick's definition, Darko Suvin's approach to utopia bases on the relation between the real structures and the fictional ones depicted in utopias. Suvin defines utopia as

> The verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis (qtd. in Ferns, 1999: 11).

As one can understand from the definition above, Suvin correlates utopian systems with existing social systems. In this respect, the writer's perspective towards the period and structure he or she lives in form the basis of the utopian organisation he or she creates. A similar idea is observed in the description suggested by Joyce Hertzler. Yet, while Suvin concentrates on the basis of utopian systems, Hertzler foregrounds the method. According to him, "the very essence of the various Utopias was the delineation of the means whereby the writer's vision of social perfection is to be realized" (qtd. in Fitting, 2009: 123). Based on the descriptions stated by Patrick, Suvin, and Hertzler, it can be said that utopias are imaginary social and political organisations deliberately created to show the deficiencies of the real civilisations through portraying better ways of life. However, this point of view results in thd degradation of the concept of utopia in two ways. Firstly, there is a general tendency to use the word utopia as an equivalent of adjectives such as "impracticable" or "impossible" because it connotes non-existent places. Any idea or aim which is believed to be unreachable is labelled as utopian. Nevertheless, the term utopia refers to rational designs that criticise existing flawed systems and offer other

options. Even though these designs are future-oriented, they are strongly connected to current systems on earth. They outline new and superior worlds which ensure each individual an ideal life without the problems that occur in existing societies. In that respect, the criticism in utopias is not direct. It comes into view in the form of a comparison between actual systems and their utopian substitutes. (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 6). Secondly, utopia is limited to well-designed but unreal societies depicted in philosophical and literary texts. In other words, it is regarded as a form of literature. The fact that utopia comes to the light in its fullest sense in the form of literary and philosophical works is by no means indisputable. The notion represented by the term utopia, though, is much more extensive and comprehensive (Quarta and Procida, 1996: 154).

In today's scholarly research, there are also other approaches to utopia which have genuinely widened the scope of the term and brought new perspectives to utopian studies. Rather than the works similar to More's utopia, such approaches focus on the drive and ideology behind contemplating alternative ways of life and depicting them on paper. Though they differ from one another, those studies share the same objective to develop a theoretical base for the common desire of people to imagine the means to establish a perfect community. Hence, they can be collected under the same title as "utopian theory" (Ruitinga, 20011: 49). Investigating the origins of creating utopian works, those studies provide an important insight into the concept of utopia, and therefore, it is essential to mention them.

3.1.2. Utopian Thought and Theory

Since time immemorial, individuals have believed that going beyond and altering the present actuality is possible. This belief forms the basis for the search of people for happiness and a finer mode of existence, and triggers the ideas to reach better conditions. Big or small, all those ideas and quests are in fact in close connection with utopian thought. Therefore, it is a very comprehensive concept whose reflections can be found in every culture throughout human history. Yet, utopian thought gains prominence and comes into view in the form of utopian works especially in times of

crisis and transition such as the Hellenistic period, the humanist movement, the Renaissance period, and the Industrial Revolution (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 3). Beginning in the twentieth century, both utopian works and utopian thought have been subjected to academic research. Scholars from various fields such as Lyman Tower Sargent, Russell Jacoby, Joyce Hertzler, Frederick Polak, and Ernst Bloch aim to establish a theoretical explanation of utopia.

To start with, Lyman Tower Sargent's ideas contribute to a great degree to utopian scholarship. He argues that the word utopia does not only refer to the written works, at the same time, but it also represents a cast of mind, namely "utopianism," which bases on people's desire to enhance present conditions. Sargent claims that human beings are creatures who have many needs and they are in a constant struggle to fulfil them. For that reason, every person experiences discontentment in his or her life and wishes for fulfilment. The feeling of dissatisfaction arises not only from bodily or psychological needs; malfunctions in social and political structures also give rise to discomfort and urge people to dream and seek solutions for development. Evolving out of a desire which is inherent to all individuals, utopianism possesses universality. Yet, this desire goes beyond the limits of individuals and gains a societal aspect because mankind are communal beings and they pay attention to the needs of others. Thus, he foregrounds the social aspect of the term and states that utopianism "is social dreaming- the dreams and nightmares that concern how groups of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society than the one in which the dreamers live" (Sargent, 1994: 3). Written utopian texts undoubtedly reflect this "social dreaming" but the echo of utopianism can be recognised in many other human activities. Due to that reason, the artistic productions and compositions apart from literature can also be classified under the term utopia. Some architectural designs offer an alternative lifestyle, some paintings that reflect the imagined world created by their artists, and some social groups and settlements formed by intellectuals who tried to actualise their concept of the ideal life. All these works and attempts can find a place in the study of utopianism although they are not included in the literary tradition of utopia (Sargent, 2005: 154-155). To give a detailed perspective, Sargent distinguishes literary utopias from other works and concepts that can be associated with utopian thought and he categorises utopianism into three main sections such as "communitarianism", "utopian social theory" and "utopian literature" (Sargent, 1994:

4). Under the headline of "communitarianism", Sargent investigates non-fictional utopian social organisations. To elucidate communitarianism, he also introduces another term; intentional societies. An intentional society is formed by at least five individuals who have the same or similar aims and principles in life and deliberately cohabit to realise them. What makes those societies differ from other crowds is the common ideal that unites each member to one another (Sargent, 1994: 15). Such communities are associated with utopianism since they reflect a desire for an alternative way of living. It is possible to see the examples of intentional societies especially after the Enlightenment period which put forward humanity as perfect beings. With the intention of ameliorating former social organisations that fell short of satisfying the requirements of "perfect" human beings, some prominent people and intellectuals assembled and outlined their ideal communities. For instance, "Pantisocracy" was planned towards the end of the eighteenth century by a group of intellectuals including Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. They planned to build their utopian design in America, on the shore of the River Susquehanna. Even though it was a well-organised plan, "Pantisocracy" did not come to fruition due to disagreements and disunities between the Pantisocrats (Garrett, 1972: 121-122). On the other hand, there were also other utopian ventures which came into existence and functioned for some time even though they eventually collapsed. Among them, "Brook Farm" and "Fruitlands" have their origins in Transcendentalist thinking. "Brook Farm" was an outcome of gatherings in which some Transcendentalists including William Henry Channing and George Ripley shared their ideas on forming a society of well-read people that enables its members to live a happier life thanks to the division of labour. After a couple of trials, Brook Farm was established in 1841 by Ripley and it accommodated many leading figures of the Transcendentalist Movement such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, George William Curtis, and Theodore Parker. The initial aim of its founders was to create a balance between the time spared for working and the time spared for intellectual development, which required every member of the community to do their share. Even though a small part of the community carried the weight of it, Brook Farm continued functioning until 1847 (Shealy, 1985: 29). Two years after the foundation of Brook Farm, encouraged by James Greaves whose ideal was to reform education, Bronson Alcott and his friends established "Fruitlands" in Harvard, Massachusetts in 1843 (Blanding, 1971: 3). The

community mainly depended on agriculture but Alcott and the other residents were more intellectuals than farmers. For that reason, his utopian enterprise "Fruitlands" came to an end in the last month of the same year (6-7). All these intentional societies can be associated with "literary utopianism" according to Sargent. For those which could not be actualised, the link between literary utopias and them is clear as their schemes were planned on paper. As for the ones that were brought into being, it is possible to detect some aspects they share with literary utopias such as their aspiration to demonstrate a better way to live as a society. Sargent himself illustrates the relation between intentional societies and literary utopias with the following words, "Writers communicate their dreams by writing them down and publishing them, however poor the writing may sometimes be; communards communicate their dreams by trying to put them into practice, however tentative, unsuccessful, or limited that practice may be" (Sargent, 1994: 18).

While communitarianism and utopian literature constitute the concrete reflections of utopianism, utopian social theory deals with its conceptual foundations. Two sources stimulate utopian social theory; the idea of progress and anti-utopianism. The former indicates the generally accepted opinion that human life has been in continual improvement from the very beginning, and eventually, it will become flawless. On this basis builds up the view that individuals are able to modify their social reality in a good way. The second origin of utopian social theory, anti-utopianism, exhibits the opposite of the idea of progress. It is asserted by anti-utopians that mankind cannot make progress, hence, any utopian thought is pointless. From an ecclesiastical perspective, anti-utopianism can be linked with the fall of man and ancestral sin. Yet, there is also a non-religious ground of anti-utopianism which rejects the belief that progress brings prosperity to humankind. Quite the contrary, the so-called improvement towards perfection has the potential to end up with demolition and ravaging according to anti-utopians (Sargent, 1994: 21- 22). As can be observed, anti-utopianism, as well as the idea of progresss, set utopianism side by side with perfection, which causes misjudgements about utopia and utopianism. Regardless of this opinion, perfectness is not a fundamental feature of utopian thought. Neither utopian works nor theories aim to achieve the state of perfection since they acknowledge man as a flawed being. Still, they advocate that enhancing or worsening the current conditions of mankind is accomplishable by means of new orders and

institutions which regulate social and governmental systems. Aiming to provide a free and just social order which is in harmony with human nature, the utopian possesses a moral purpose. Accordingly, instead of individuality, the community is stressed in utopian thought because it prescribes that enhancement in humanity could be achieved only in a social structure (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 5). Due to this emphasis on community in utopian studies, political systems and their reflections on existing societies are associated with utopianism as well. In historical and political scholarship, some administrative designs are considered utopian. The urge and motivation behind those designs are also treated by historians. Two types of utopianism are correspondingly asserted by Russell Jacoby such as blueprint utopianism and iconoclastic utopianism. The former is concerning with utopian political schemes and their actualisation in real life. It can be observed in the governmental systems of collectivist countries. The latter, however, denotes the human desideratum for dreaming about better ways of living (Greene, 2011: 2). This desideratum forms a common ground for the fields dealing with utopianism. According to Joyce Hertzler, utopianism is an animating force that arises from anticipation for a brighter future. It is this very force that urges human beings to desire more than they have and take action to change their reality and reach their ideals whether on an individual or social scale. In this respect, utopias come to the fore as a way of dreaming and taking steps to improve social realities. The animating force, in other words, utopianism, forms the impulse behind the creation of utopias (Fitting, 2009: 123-124). Born out of dreaming, utopias play a significant role in constructing the future according to Frederick L. Polak. He argues that how human beings fancy their future has a remarkable influence on the way of life in the times yet to be experienced. Human beings dream about better futures for themselves and depict their ideas in the form of utopias. Then, those utopias point them the way through which they can go beyond the actual past and present. Although fully actualising the social and political structures outlined in utopias may not be possible, mankind tends to shape the future in compliance with the paths that utopias pave for them. In addition, Polak claims that the development of Western culture depends on people's willingness to imagine a finer world to live in and create scenarios for the future. Owing to utopias, human beings can gain a critical stance towards social and political structures, and therefore, these works are of utmost importance for advancement (Sargent, 1994: 25).

All these theories mentioned above approach utopia and utopian thought from a socio-political perspective. There are also other theories that shift their focus from communal and governmental organisations to the human being itself. These theories relate the emergence of utopias with the inborn characteristics of human beings. From an anthropological stance, one view asserts that the utopian has been inherent in the individual from the very beginning of the evolutionary progress of the human species. When the evolution of humans is taken into consideration, it is seen that they have never confined themselves to their present situation. They have ceaselessly sought for alternatives, looked for different means of nourishment, and discovered new places. They have never hesitated to be on the move towards the unfamiliar. All of these indicate that humans as species have always been in quest for better conditions. It is indeed an urge in human beings to have knowledge of the unexplored, pass beyond the limits of what they already have, and improve their current situation. Such desires cannot be found in another species on earth. Therefore, according to this view, humans as species are quintessentially utopian. "It is precisely because of this primordial and unsuppressible impulse to know that humanity should be called not only sapiens, but also utopicus" (Quarta and Procida, 1996: 160). A similar perspective towards humankind is set forth by Ernst Bloch who discusses the notions of hope and utopia in his works. Bloch considers the individual as an unfinished being whose aim is to complete his self. This aim of the human being leads him to dream of a superior life, which is daydreaming. According to Bloch, daydreaming is the most significant aspect of human life since it is related to the future instead of the present or the past, and therefore it engenders hope which is the main factor that directs human life. For Bloch, hope is indeed important because human beings doubtlessly need to be hopeful about tomorrow to continue living, or else, they would lack the motivation to maintain even the routine of daily life. Bloch asserts that utopia represents this hope, therefore, it is a necessity for human beings. In contrast to the other beings in the world, humankind is projected towards the future by consciously hoping and desiring one thing and not the other. In this respect, human beings are utopian (Toprak, 2019: 80-82).

These views indicate that utopia signifies more than well-designed systems that reflect the ideal. It is an essential aspect of being human which provides individuals with the stimulus to live and change the existing situation. The emergence of utopian systems and works is also nourished from the same motivation. With the aim of

enhancing the present condition, people have imagined better alternatives for their current situation and created utopias in addition to making actual changes in their lives throughout history. Born out of imagination, utopia has a fictitious character as Sargent says that "all Utopias are fictions of a particular type. On the highest level of generalization, Utopian thought can be considered as a form of 'fictive activity'" (Sargent, 1994: 22). This fictional aspect of utopia blurs the lines between various systems that can be regarded as utopian such as literary works, social organisations, and philosophical sketches. It is therefore indispensable to distinguish literary utopias from other forms of utopias by clarifying the essential qualities of utopia as a literary genre, which is the main concern of the next section.

3.1.3. Literary Utopia

Although the term utopia is generally known by its literary examples, to characterise utopian literature as a literary genre is a challenging task because, as is seen in the previous chapter, it is possible to perceive a utopian drive in almost all human activities. Such a drive might be seen in the majority of literary texts as well, which leads to misevaluations of texts as literary utopias. As a result, the criterions used to determine whether a text is utopian or not are still open to debate (Fitting, 2009: 126). Nonetheless, identifying the common features of the well-accepted utopian literary works can be seen as a way to specify the general characteristics of the utopian genre in literature in order to be able to differentiate literary utopias from other written utopian systems. The most basic distinction of literary utopias is that it reflects people's wishes, including the author's wishes, through fictional characters living in an imaginary world (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 10). This desire of human beings is associated with their discontentment with being in a disunited world where they cannot reach harmony. Their situation in such a world contrasts with the notion of living in a completely unified and conflict-free environment. Neither the world can be conflict-free nor this notion of reaching the best possible condition can be realised, yet, the contrariety between them nourishes human beings' wish to reach optimal harmony in their lives. Literary utopian works portray and detail imaginary answers to their wishes (De Vries, 2012: 48-49). As the emphasis on unity and harmony connotes, the major

concern of utopian literary works is non-existent communities rather than the lives of individual characters. Utopian works give a comprehensive depiction of fictional communal organisations constituted by groups of human beings. In terms of form, utopias are mainly written in prose rather than verse due to this depictive quality of them, and among the forms of prose fiction, the most suitable forms for utopias are those that enable the description to be foregrounded (Sargent, 1994: 7). Also, as the emphasis is on the description of dreamed-up societies in utopias, utopian works give prominence to the relatedness and interdependence between the members of those societies instead of the individual lives of their members. Though there are some examples of utopian texts which issue the ideal world of a person secluded from others, focusing on the societal relationship between people who come together and form a community is one of the essential aspects of literary utopian works (13).

Literary utopias, then, are the description of phantasmal communities whose system is sustained by means of the communication and connection between people. As much as the members' contact with one another in a fictional society, where and when those communities take place are also of significance while characterising the utopian works. The word utopia itself, with its base "topia," exhibits that setting, in terms of both locale and time, is a definitive aspect of utopias (Doll, 2010: 207). Since utopias portray phantasmic communities, the setting elements of them are accordingly phantasmic. Nevertheless, an imaginary setting is a common characteristic of literary works in general. Therefore, what makes a utopian setting distinctive is not its being non-existent, rather, its being noticeably pleasant or unpleasant for the reader of the period. However, it should not be forgotten that notions such as the desirable and the undesirable are dynamic since they depend on the cultural and ideological codes which vary from one period to another. As Sargent says, "most sixteenth-century eutopias horrify today's reader.… On the other hand, most twentieth-century eutopias would be considered dystopias by a sixteenth-century reader and many of them would in all likelihood be burnt as works of the devil" (Sargent, 1994: 5). In this respect, it is important to evaluate utopian settings in terms of the period they are written. Imaginary communities depicted in utopias might be situated in a completely different universe or in an unknown remote land in this world. In terms of time, utopias can illustrate previous ages which are believed to be the glorious times of humankind. They might also be set in a time ahead, or, in the present, especially if they take place in unexplored

regions of the world (Greene, 2011: 2). Since setting elements have a crucial role in utopias, there is a tendency to categorise literary utopian texts in terms of time and space such as "temporal" utopias and "spatial" utopias. The former refers to the utopian works which recount exceptionally pleasant social systems that are supposedly achieved in days to come. They are superior versions of the present condition, thus, they are generally located in life-like places. On the other hand, utopias of the second category deal with unreal social systems that are attained by exotic societies in undiscovered locales. In contrast to the temporal utopias, they take place in today instead of tomorrow (Doll, 2010: 209). Those foreign societies can be sited in a remote and uncharted isle, canyon, country, or continent, and they are generally introduced to the civilisations of the known world generally by a voyager who narrates his adventures to his countrymen when he comes back from unexplored lands that he has coincidentally encountered with. People who live in the known world and do not have the knowledge of the existence of such exotic lands become familiar with the communal system and lifestyles in those lands through the narration of the voyager whose interaction with his compatriots plays a key role in unveiling the display of utopian systems (Hutchinson, 1987: 172).

Together with that, some scholars approach utopian works by concentrating on the formation process of utopian social systems and define four distinct categories in terms of how those systems come into being. In this classification, utopian states are firstly divided into two such as self-formed ones and those that are attained through the endeavour of human beings. "The paradise" and "the externally altered world" are the subcategories of the first group; the former heralds the possibility of better conditions that take place now in a faraway locale while the latter is ingenerated as a consequence of an unexpected incident. On the contrary, "the willed transformation" and "the technological transformation" occur thanks to human intervention. Still, in all these four types of utopias, the established system is foregrounded rather than its formation process (Williams, 1978: 203-204). Whether it is formed by means of human endeavour or not, or, whether it is spatial or temporal, a utopian work points to the ongoing problems in contemporary societies and they offer solutions since it presents other ways to organise a society. Therefore, utopias can be seen as a criticism of the ongoing societal systems. On the one hand, temporal utopias demonstrate enhanced variations of the present situation of real communities while spatial utopias

denote different options for prevailing social systems in existing civilisations. In either case, the ongoing system is contrasted with a better system whose managerial hierarchy, laws, and constraints that regulate the common life are profoundly different. Utopian literary works thereby manifest that another way of communal life is possible, and therefore the present system is open to change even though the general belief of people is that the ongoing system is unalterable (Doll, 2010: 210).

Taken this manifestation into consideration, the purpose of utopian works can be defined as to change the already existing reality. Moreover, as the systems described in utopias provide solutions for the existing problems such as poverty, inequality, diseases as well as the weaknesses of human beings, it can be argued that literary utopian works pave the way for changes on a social basis. However, utopian works do not introduce the means that are used to construct those enhanced civilisations. The focus is rather on the structural organisation of utopian societies by which every aspect of common life is regulated, and on the duties and responsibilities of individuals as members of these communities (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 11). Thus, without drawing much attention to the instruments that facilitate the establishment of superior civilisations, the rules and conditions that operate already-established mechanisms are elucidated in utopias with the aim of altering the present and laying the foundations for the future. In this way, the problematic sides of existing societies are underlined and the ways that can solve them are demonstrated. As is mentioned earlier, social structures have always been in change, and together with them, the expectations of people and problems that they face change as well. Following them, utopian works undergo a change over the course of time. The next section aims to reflect this evolution of the utopian genre.

3.1.4. The Development of The Utopian Genre

The characteristics of utopias differ from one period to another as they alter alongside the changes in human life and civilisation. Correspondingly, it would be constructive to investigate the utopian works in terms of the periods in which they were created. There are four major periods that must be mentioned to display the

evolution of the utopian genre such as the Ancient period, the Renaissance period, the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century. It is known that utopia, as a concept, appeared in the sixteenth century with the publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* and literary utopian works have been created thenceforward. However, the urge that motivates human beings to create utopias has always been innate to them and they have articulated their desire to have more pleasant conditions in different forms since the early ages of history. It is possible to find examples of utopian narratives, especially in the Ancient Greek tradition. These narratives express people's longing for a better world that ensures happy and pleasant life. In this sense, the accounts of such utopian worlds that emerged in the Ancient Greek tradition have established the ground for the classical utopian works (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 7). Therefore, it is important to briefly mention the aspects of utopian narratives that emerged prior to the appearance of the term utopia.

According to Sargent, two different practices in utopian literature lead the way to the development of literary utopias. He names the first group "the body Utopia" which are the early examples of utopias that come into existence in the forms of songs, legends, and narratives composed vocally. Legends and mythical tales are the oldest exemplars of utopias and they generally narrate the old times in which people were believed to live happier lives such as the Golden Age or Arcadia. They also depict heavenly or hellish places either in this world or in the afterlife such as Eden. These mythical narratives share several aspects which are designated by Sargent as "simplicity, unity, security, immortality or an easy death, unity with God or the gods, abundance without labor, and no enmity between homo sapiens and the other animals" (Sargent, 1994: 10). In addition, they are not constructed by human individuals, instead, they are endowed by deities or by mother nature. As time progressed and people became less reliant on outer forces, utopian projections started to exhibit the powerful and capable position of humankind as the designer of the ideal. Eventually, together with human beings' "taking control of [their] dreams," utopian narratives have evolved into what Sargent calls "Utopia of human contrivance or the city Utopia," of which the first example is the *Republic* of Plato (10-11). Since then, city utopias designed by human beings have gradually substituted early utopian myths and narratives.

Some aspects of early utopian narratives and works, including Plato's governmental design, are also shared by the classical utopias that appeared in the sixteenth century and after. First of all, both the early works and the classical utopias mostly attempt to sketch an ideal life on earth by focusing on social and governmental structures. Secondly, some of the early utopian narratives give a comparison between real places and imaginary places, the former reflects unpleasant and undesirable conditions of life whereas the latter represents the pleasant and desirable ones. The classical utopian works also portray a similar opposition between the existing and fictional locations with an aim of criticising the former. Thirdly, the works of both periods put emphasis on equality, collaboration, and collective ownership. However, utopian narratives of the Ancient Greek tradition differ from the classical utopias as they find the ideal state of human existence in former ages. Unlike the classical utopias, they do not depict an alternative present or a brighter future but reveal a nostalgia for previous times. In this respect, they do not pursue a change in the existing social structure, which also deviates them from the classical utopias (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 7-8). Later, in the sixteenth century, with the publication of More's *Utopia*, utopian works gained different characteristics in addition to those mentioned above. The main topic of utopias of this period is finding a new and formerly unheard-of country in which a more desirable way of life is achieved. When the developments of the period are taken into consideration, this topic is not surprising. It was the age of great expeditions through which people passed beyond the limits of the known world, which triggered their imaginative faculties and impelled them to think about the possibility of better societies existing somewhere on earth. The classical utopias accordingly reflect the world "as open to human discoveries and hospitable to utopian ventures" (De Vries, 2012: 43).

If the world is not entirely discovered, then there is a chance that some communities might achieve a good and just social structure that is quite different from the systems in the societies of the known world. However, if such systems can exist, they must be formed in distant lands secluded from the effects of the known world. Therefore, the classical utopias are set in remote and isolated places, mostly islands as in the case of the three prominent utopias of the period such as More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *The City of The Sun*, and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, that are not often visited by strangers. Time, on the other hand, is not the past or future but the present.

Therefore, classical utopias are spatial utopias in which a better social order is attained in the same age that the work is written but in a different place. Thus, two distinct places, such as the known world and the newly-discovered land, are depicted in comparison with one another in the classical utopias. As opposed to the existing systems in actual places, social structures in those unknown lands are in every aspect ideal and each unit of them functions without any defects. This emphasis on perfect order and operation of the society can be associated with the yearning of people for harmony, discipline, and peace after experiencing the tumultuous outcomes of the Middle Ages (Toprak and Şar, 2019:13). The classical utopias mirror the humanist point of view of the Renaissance period in which they came in view. The humanist philosophy, as it puts human beings above other things, prioritises the development and contentment of the human individual. Correspondingly, finding ways to advance the conditions to make human beings improved and happier is the main concern of classical utopia writers. Looking at the problems in existing systems, the writers of the period created imaginary societies and criticised their societies by making a comparison between the real and the fictional. In this way, they used literature as a means of criticising social and governmental structures without being subjected to political oppression. In addition to this, they could enlighten people about both the ongoing social problems and the methods that can be adopted to solve them (Köseoğlu, 2019: 102-103).

Following the grand changes that occurred towards the end of the eighteenth and in the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, people's desires and expectations have changed as well and utopian works have had their share from this transformation. It was a complex age in which many opposite views existed together. On the one hand, the Industrial Revolution took place and heralded the superior position of mankind over nature while on the other hand, it also had horrible consequences. People experienced both great improvements and extremely harsh conditions at the same time. This indicated that the existing conditions could indeed be enhanced when required changes were made, and therefore establishing a utopian society on earth was achievable. However, it was also seen that the existing situation could be worsened so much so that the world itself could be turned into a hell. Such utopian and dystopian potentials of the new life were reflected in the texts of the period, which caused an increase in the number of utopian works (Widdiecombe, 1990: 98). While utopias

continued to be created, the classical utopian tradition which valued the impeccable functioning of communal order above all else was started to be questioned since the individual, and his creativity and genius gained importance as a consequence of the Enlightenment movement. The scientific and technological developments brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the improvements in the daily lives of people in consequence of them made people believe that the future would be trouble-free thanks to science and technology. The impact of this belief on utopian works can be seen in the shift from spatial utopias to temporal utopias. As the concepts of progress and advancement which arose as a result of the developments in science and technology pointed to a brighter future in which the problems of today's world would be overcome, the nineteenth-century utopian works portrayed the ideal societies of the future that would be achieved owing to scientific and technological developments (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 14).

Motivated by the improvements in the nineteenth century, the utopias of the period assumed a future that is shaped by science and technology. Dreaming such a future is indeed engendered by a utopian impulse, however, some of those utopian works also questioned the constant progression of scientific and technological developments, and unavoidably turned from utopia to dystopia. This transformation can be seen in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Well's *The Time Machine* since they are both inspired by the scientific and technological improvements and depict the enthusiasm of the period for making progress towards a better future but the schemes they present are more dystopian than utopian (Coşar Çelik, 2019: 137). Moreover, there were also other utopian works, namely socialist utopias, which focused on the other side of the coin; the bitter consequences of the Industrial Revolution. As the capitalistic system became dominant, the exploitation of the working class by the moneyed class increased, and the gap between them deepened, which resulted in severe impoverishment. The inhuman living and working conditions of the working class impelled the writers of the period to create socialist utopias by which they proposed solutions for social injustice and inequality. Though all these socialist utopias voiced criticism against the imbalanced distribution of wealth which was always to the advantage of the moneyed-class, they differed in their utopian solutions. In this respect, they did not constitute a uniform reaction against capitalism or industrialism, which also separated them from Marxist and communist ideologies

(138). Unlike those which dealt with the scientific and technological progression, socialist utopias of the nineteenth century did not include a shift from utopia to dystopia. Rather, aiming to enlighten people about the problematic sides of the existing societies, they portrayed alternative social structures (154). The nineteenth-century socialist utopias, then, are similar to the utopias of the Renaissance period as the works of both periods criticised the ongoing social problems. The scientific utopias, too, challenge the idea of progress which was promoted by the dominant system in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the scientific utopias, in a sense, also brought criticism towards the era they were written in. However, the dystopian turn in them distinguishes the scientific utopias both from the classical and the socialist utopias. This shift intensified in the following century and utopias eventually underwent a drastic change in accordance with the dreadful situations, crises, and extremely rapid transformation of daily life.

Just as the nineteenth century, the twentieth century was the time of major novelties that affected every aspect of life. However, in contrast to the previous century, the changes that occurred in the new age did not raise people's hopes about a brighter and happier future. Quite the contrary, people of the era suffered from anxiety, fear, and despair as they experienced nightmarish incidents such as two massive wars, unending conflicts among nations, civil wars, genocides and massacres, exploitation, oppression, increase in brute force, and environmental crisis. Needless to say, trust and faith in humanity were lost in such an epoch full of horrid incidents, which not only drove human beings to despair but also affected utopian literature. "More than any past age the twentieth century has appeared to reject hope," says Sargent and he continues; "this has led to pessimism about the ability of the human race to achieve a better society, and the dystopia -warning that things could get even worse- became the dominant Utopian form" (Sargent, 1994: 26). As the hopes for realising a just and happier system were shattered and replaced by the fear of the possibility of undergoing more dreadful days in the future, utopian projections have yielded to dystopian schemes in the twentieth century. This regress in the creation of utopian works can also be associated with the growing concerns about technical developments. The irrepressible progression of technology has distressed people and made them believe that the future would be full of disorder, turmoil, and social instability. Along with experiencing horrid problems in the social level and being concerned about the effects

of technology on daily life, people of the period have constantly faced the reality of death because of the brutal incidents that occurred throughout the era. The idea of being ephemeral has also changed the perspective of people towards the future and become one of the predominant topics of utopian literature (Hadomi: 1995, 87).

Mirroring the impact of all these hardships on human beings, the examples of utopian literature in the twentieth century differ greatly from the utopian works written in the previous eras. In this new age full of tribulations, giving a depiction of an ideal society that can be actualised in the present by means of reforming the existing structure or in the future by virtue of everlasting progress of science and technology was not the prime interest of the writers. Rather, they expressed the hopelessness, disquietude, and disappointment of human beings who had to live through wars, conflicts, violence, and environmental crises in the form of dystopias. Since this new form differs in some aspects from the utopian tradition, it requires a deeper exploration, which is the main interest of the second part of this chapter. Yet, prior to that, the following section, which is again reserved to utopia, aims to discuss utopias in terms of ethics. Such an examination is needed to understand the position of the individual in both utopian and dystopian systems.

3.1.5. Utopian and Ethics

Utopia and ethics are two concepts that are tightly linked to one another. The word utopia itself, when it is taken as the "good-place," connotes the relation between utopia and ethics which investigates what is good and what is bad as well as which action is right and which one is wrong. Besides, criticising the problems in existing social structures such as inequality and injustice, utopias also determine the right and wrong way of acting by comparing and contrasting what it is with what it should be and therefore suggest ethical standards for the existing social systems. As Quarta and Procida state, "the Utopian project is not the fruit of unbridled fantasy … but is born of a deep moral conscience, which pushes humanity to dedicate itself to changing the present state of things, insofar as they are unjust or unacceptable" (Quarta and Procida, 1996: 163). Also, as mentioned several times in the former sections, utopias illustrate

exemplary social structures whose mechanisms operate extremely orderly and efficiently to ensure that every member can live a happy and struggle-free life. Forming such a kind of structure undoubtfully requires setting strict standards which clearly define what is right and what is wrong. Moreover, those structures can only survive when members accept such standards, know what to do and what not to do, and act in accordance with them. In this respect, utopian structures inevitably encapsulate ethical systems to be able to protect their maintenance. Therefore, ethics has a fundamental place in utopian schemes.

Nevertheless, since the aim is to form a society that is exemplary from almost every angle, systems introduced in utopias, including ethical systems, must place importance on the peace in the community, which problematises the place of the individual in utopian systems. As the society is put above the solitary member in utopian social designs, it can be said that the space that is left for the individuality of people in utopian schemes is disputable and this situation triggers opposing views against utopias. Criticisms made against utopian schemes generally point to the means that are required to conserve the ideal order and centred on the following question; how and at what expense do utopian systems keep their continuity? According to Karl Popper, for instance, a utopian system necessarily turns into tyranny due to the impossibility of finding a rational ground for a flawless order. Popper asserts that, just as with any social structure, it is first indispensable to specify the purpose of a utopian society prior to design and form it. Once the objective of such design is designated, the second stage is to identify the instruments and processes through which the structure can be made concrete. It is the logical progression of building a social and governmental system. If something is logical, it means that it is constituted in accordance with the laws of reason which are universal and objective. Accordingly, the purpose of a social design and the instruments used to construct it are rational when they are agreed on by everyone. Since utopias aspire to form the ultimate society and the concept of the ultimate may differ from person to person, a utopian society cannot be "utopian" for every single human being, and therefore, it cannot be based on logical foundations. Establishing and sustaining a system that is not considered to be ideal for all can only be possible by suppressing the opposing views. Consequently, the methods that are employed to organise a utopian community are inevitably oppressive and forcible to prevent any contradiction, which resembles it to a totalitarian system

(Popper, 1989: 156-157). Indeed, an ideal system cannot be attained and preserved without a controlling mechanism that ensures the maximum obedience of people to the standards and rules that regulate the system. Having a controlling mechanism, utopian designs inevitably embody coercion and oppression because to control means to inhibit and punish the conducts and behaviours which disturb the order of the system. Constant coercion is believed to be necessary to protect the structure against deterioration as it is the only means to discourage people to challenge the system or to perform improper actions and disorderly conduct. Therefore, utopias are considered to be tyrannical and oppressive social systems that can stay in power by means of using violence (Sargent, 1994: 24). Such reactions against utopias might indeed be seen as excessive and unreasonable especially when the ideological and anthropological foundations of utopianism that were discussed in the former sections are taken into consideration. Nevertheless, the significance of the points that are made by those criticisms related to the place of the individual in utopias is undeniable.

Utopian schemes may not be entirely dictatorial, yet, it is beyond doubt that contrariety and divergence are not tolerated in utopias because they prioritise solidarity, harmony, and consistency. According to Frank Van Dun and Hans Crombag, social quarrels have their source in "plurality, diversity, scarcity, and unrestricted access" and utopias present "unity, consensus, abundance, and 'righteousness'" as a panacea for the problems in societies (De Vries, 2012: 51). In this respect, moral codes play an important role in the achievement of cohesion in utopian societies. Thus, ethical systems introduced in utopias are formed to support the maintenance of the social order. By determining strict moral codes, people are expected to contribute to the functioning of the communal system not only by the duties and roles that are given to them but also by their choices and actions. For instance, in More's *Utopia*, morality is an important factor in organisation of the society, therefore, it serves to the governing force. Righteousness is associated with human reason and is believed to be inherent in human nature. The essence of morality is determined as "enjoyment of life" which is "synonymous with virtuous" as long as "we don't pursue our own interests at the expense of other people's" (More, 1965: 92). Even though "the enjoyment of life" as the fundamental principle of the ethical system, at first glance, seems to cherish the Utopians' happiness, they are given not enough space to do what they individually want to do to be happy since they are under constant

control; “Everyone has his eye on you, so you’re practically forced to get on with your job, and make some proper use of your spare time” (85). Besides, being ethical is linked to respecting the rules and regulations of the government for it is accepted as a noble behaviour to seek happiness to the extent permitted by law. The traveller Raphael Hythloday explains it as follows:

> They think it right to keep one’s promises in private life, and also to obey public laws for regulating the distribution of ‘goods’ - by which I mean the raw materials of pleasure - provided such laws have been properly made by a wise ruler, or passed by common consent of a whole population, which has not been subjected to any form of violence or deception. Within these limits they say it’s sensible to consult one’s own interests, and a moral duty to consult those of the community as well. (92-93)

Despite the fact that the Utopians do not suffer from brute force, whether they can enjoy their lives as they want to or not is questionable. In *Utopia*, every member is given a specific duty and expected to fulfil it, which is essential for the functioning of the total arrangement. Actions that fall outside of expectations might therefore be seen as a threat to the community. Moreover, it is an ethical responsibility of every Utopian to take the happiness of others into consideration before making a decision. Thus, by looking at the ethics in More’s *Utopia*, it can be claimed that moral codes in utopian societies are formed to secure the interest of the majority, therefore, they benefit to the social order.

Ethical systems in utopias can be linked to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s views related to morality. Similar to moral systems in utopias, Kant’s ethics centres on the obligation of the individual to others. Kant introduces universal ethics which is based on duty and respect, and rooted in human reason. According to Kant, the rational faculty of human beings is both theoretical and practical, which means that reason not only enables human beings to comprehend and theorise the world but it also guides their actions. Individuals have the knowledge of what to do and how to act thanks to their practical reason (Heimsoeth, 2016: 67). They are free to act but they inwardly feel the commands of their reason to do good actions and to avoid bad actions. Through those commands, reason demonstrates to human beings what to do and that what not to do, and regulates their actions and deeds (108-109). Kant’s claim that knowledge of how to act is contained in human reason also means that the right way of acting is known prior to face an ethical dilemma. This implies the universality and objectivity of Kant’s ethics. Since ethical actions and decisions follow the

commands of human reason, they are independent of personal and subjective conditions of human beings, or particular incidents that necessitate a choice. Purging moral decisions from anything subjective, Kant forms ethics that binds every single human being regardless of regional, cultural, and national differences. For Kant, therefore, everyone is coequally responsible for their actions and deeds in terms of morality (Obiagwu and Onuoha A., 2019: 33). Since the focus is on the universal rather than the subjective, identifying various moral codes in accordance with which people must act is not the major concern of Kant's ethics. Similarly, Kant rejects ideologies that establish ethical standards following their profit and attribute ethical value to the actions and decisions whose outcomes are beneficial. Contrary to them, he asserts that ethical value can only be found in the principle which takes its source in reason initiates the action. This principle is the basic standard of Kant's ethics and is called the "categorical imperative." As opposed to the "hypothetical imperative" which is outcome-oriented for it shows what to do to achieve a specific goal, the categorical imperative commands the individual to do an act regardless of its consequences. One must act not for the sake of the outcomes but for the sake of acting itself. For Kant, acting for the sake of gaining one's ends can by no means be regarded as moral because it is profit-driven. On the other hand, an act that is done for the sake of acting itself is the proof that one is conscious of his duty, and therefore it is ethically valuable (Russel, 2017: 384-386). Therefore, an ethical individual is the one who obeys the command of his reason which reminds him of his duty and exhorts him not to pursue his interest. An action of such a person is the result of the categorical imperative, and therefore it is ethical in itself.

The categorical imperative, then, can be seen as a fundamental and general moral standard that can be applied to all situations. In his *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant articulates the categorical imperative with the following words: "so act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation" (Kant, 2002: 45). This imperative is the sole law of ethics that encapsulates all the commands of reason. According to Kant, it is the root of all ethical standards that have ever been formulated. Formulating this general rule, Kant maintains that the motivation behind every action must be so free from the personal interest that one can wish this motivation to stimulate every individual on earth to act. Accordingly, people must act in such a way that their motivating force can be a universal rule which can

regulate the actions of every single human being (Heimsoeth, 2016: 123-124). This also means that one should not do anything that he does not wish to be done to himself. The categorical imperative, therefore, is related not only to the actions of individuals but also to the social connection between them. Living in a society, people are constantly in interaction with one another. Kant sees human beings as equally valuable and respectable and believes that every human person deserves to be respected. He advocates that one must show respect for other individuals in his actions. The categorical imperative is grounded on this feeling of respect for others. Thus, he gives another interpretation of the categorical imperative; "so act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, always at the same time as an end, and never merely as a means" (qtd in Aderibigbe, 2015: 154). As his words illustrate, human beings must take cognizance of the humanness of others when making a decision. Just as the categorical imperative advocates abolishing personal profits, using people as an agent to attain personal goals is found unethical.

In the same vein, one must also respect himself as a human being and act showing regard for his own humanness. Consequently, respecting the nobility of humankind is an essential criterion for Kant's ethics. Having respect for themselves and for one another motivates individuals to fulfil their duty which is commanded by their reason. According to Kant, the feeling and consciousness of duty differentiate human beings from other creatures. In addition to desires and tendencies that are common in both animals and human beings, the human individual feels his task, the imperative to act, and he takes action as he respects himself and others. However, Kant also emphasises the indispensability of respecting ethical law. A moral action originates in the respect for the duty itself together with the respect for the nobility of human beings (Heimsoeth, 2016: 125). Therefore, in Kant's ethics, it is essential to be aware of the task, show regard for the task itself as well as for the humanness of individuals, and act in conformity with the categorical imperative without any personal interest to be moral. On account of this, actions that conflict with duty are considered to be unethical and must be avoided even if they gladden and please them. On the other hand, actions that are regarded as ethical since they comply with the duty must be performed although they are not delightful nor pleasing. In this respect, to be seen as ethical, individuals must fulfil their task no matter how disagreeable it is (Obiagwu and Onuoha, 2019: 37). Such a kind of approach to ethics can be seen as quite rigorous.

It does not give importance to the subjective desires, personal goals, and bodily drives and instincts of human beings for Kant designates reason as the root of the ethical law. He expects people to abandon their inclinations and act ethically by respecting and complying with the imperatives of reason because, as Schrader states, "over and over Kant gives us examples to show that, no matter what our impulses may be, we can follow the dictates of reason" (Schrader, 1968: 693). Since every individual possesses practical reason which bids them what to do and requires the fulfilment of duty, excuses for immoral acts seem unacceptable. Grounded on reason, the ethical law encompasses all, and therefore it is objective and above the personal happiness of the individual. Each and every human being must obey the ethical law and have due regard for humanity in general. When the ethical law is carried out by every single individual, the tie that binds them to one another would be the feeling of respect, which would pave the way for an ideal unity among them (Öktem, 2007: 5). Therefore, it can be said that Kant's ethics also aims to regulate and refine the social cohesion of people.

Those characteristics of Kant's ethics portrayed above have much in common with the moral systems in utopias. The concepts that are emphasised by Kant such as duty, respect, and social unity have a crucial place in utopias, too. To start with, the notion of duty is one of the essential elements that give the means to the organisation of a utopian social order. Each member is given a specific duty and it is of vital importance for the operation of the communal system to fulfil it. Although the task of individuals is determined by the system in utopias rather than prescribed by human reason as Kant suggests, individuals in utopian systems are ethically encouraged to accomplish their duties just as in Kantian ethics. Similar to Kant's ideas, to act as necessitated by the duty is regarded as morally right in utopias. Likewise, in both Kantian and utopian ethics the emphasis on the togetherness of human beings as opposed to the personal contentment of individuals. The chief principle of Kant's ethics, the categorical imperative, dictates to respect humankind and the ethical law. Human beings must always take others into consideration while making decisions, which necessitates giving up self-interest for others. Utopian societies are built on this Kantian idea of mutual respect. In utopian systems, individuals are expected to know their limits and acknowledge the priority of the social order over their interests. Besides, Kant's emphasis on the significance of respecting the ethical law is also in parallel with the expectations of utopian societies from individuals. Due to the

cruciality of fulfilment of duty for the maintenance of social order, individuals must perform their tasks even if they do not wish to do so. Therefore, in the same vein as Kant's teachings, respecting the duty and accomplishing their tasks for the sake of the task itself is seen as the right thing to do, and therefore morally right in utopias. As is seen, both Kantian and utopian ethics advocate that individuals' actions must not disturb the togetherness and unity of the society, quite the opposite, they must be in line with the social mechanism. Indeed, individuals are expected to act for the sake of society, not for themselves, in order to achieve an ideal social system. Consequently, just as in Kant's ethics, utopian social systems do not leave sufficient space for the individuality of human beings in terms of morality. It can therefore be claimed that utopian systems ethically oppress individuals while trying to reach and sustain the ideal social order

Literary utopias reflect the limited space given to the individual in utopian systems. As their aim is to set an ideal example for the current social structures, the focus is on the processes and methods for establishing and maintaining the utopian communal structure rather than the private lives of the members that constitute those societies. While characteristics, elements, and rules of utopian social organisations are portrayed in detail, it is hardly possible to find a sufficient depiction of the personal experiences, struggles, and desires of individuals. Hence, the communal system overshadows the characters in utopias. Humphrey Tonkin explains this situation as follows

> Utopia constitutes an ideal form of social order. Obviously, the only way of combining characterization and utopia in a fiction is by setting one's char acters within such a social order. But then there immediately arises a pull of conflicting concerns; we are less interested in the psychology of the characters than in the society to which they belong, less interested in psychological realism than in the novel's setting. (Tonkin, 1970: 387)

Nevertheless, how they should behave and which actions they should keep away from are thoroughly described firstly because the so-called right actions are of utmost significance for the functioning of social mechanisms, and secondly, the wrong actions have the potential to damage it. Since those well-built organisations cannot tolerate alterations, their moral codes encourage people to act in harmony with their duties and restrict any action that would disrupt the general operation of the society. In such communities, the members are not allowed to reveal their unique sides which differentiates them from the rest of the crowd nor can they behave as the way they

want since uniqueness collides with uniformity which is fundamental to the ideal social order. Morality, then, is a way of oppressing the individual in utopian systems and utopian literature depicts this oppression by means of characterisation. On the other hand, dystopias and dystopian works approach the individual and his position in society from a different perspective, which will be explained in the following part of this chapter.

3.2. DYSTOPIA

Together with the grand changes and novelties in nineteenth-century Western life, people's ideas related to and expectations from the future have undergone a change as well. Especially in the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, when the unpleasant consequences of these changes started to be seen and felt, positive and confident views on what lies ahead have given way to doubts, fears, and unrestfulness. People's gloomy outlook on the future has ineluctably redounded to the utopias produced in this period, which created a contrast between them and the previous utopias. With the eruption of WW1 at the beginning of the twentieth century and the profound destruction it brought, the distress and concerns of people for the future multiplied and the paradisal communities in utopian schemes have transformed into atrocious social systems which reflect individuals' anxiety about the probable catastrophic results of scientific and technological developments. Those dreadful designs have been called dystopias, a term that signifies the sharp opposition between them and the exemplary organisation in utopias. However, this polarity between utopias and dystopias has caused misnomenclatures of the latter such as "negative utopias" and "anti-utopias" (Claeys, 2010: 107). To clarify this misnomenclatures and give a better insight to dystopias, it is necessary to provide a terminological explanation to both dystopia and other terms that have been used to describe dystopian designs.

As formerly discussed, the earliest usage of the word dystopia was documented in the second half of the nineteenth century in John Stuart Mill's address in the parliament. In a similar sense Having nearly the same meaning as Bentham's coinage

"cacotopia", the word dystopia was employed by him to describe a system that is "too bad to be practicable" as antithetical to a utopian scheme which is "too good to be practicable" (Vieira, 2010: 16). The prefixes "caco-" and "dys-" had a similar meaning in Ancient Greek language and were employed to create words that signify the opposite of those words that start with the prefix "eu-" which adds a positive sense. To give some examples, the prefix "eu-" might add the meanings of fine, patrician, pleasing, exhilarative, facile, or abounding to the words it is augmented. On the other hand, "caco-" and "dys-" completely reverse those meanings when they are employed instead of "eu-". However, although they have the same function, the usage of the prefix "dys-" was more common than "caco-" in Ancient Greek and therefore in the terms and expressions that have reached the present (Lederer, 1976: 1135). When utopian tradition adopted a pessimistic attitude towards the future and utopian designs evolved to darker and gloomy structures in the twentieth century, it became indispensable to produce new categories of utopia. Accordingly, deriving from the Ancient Greek prefixes, the terms "eutopia" and "dystopia" were suggested by John Max Patrick in his *The Quest for Utopia* which was published in 1952 to separate the desirable state from the undesirable state (Gottlieb, 2001: 4). Together with this distinction, the term dystopia has been used to refer to the despairing outlooks for the future whereas the term eutopia has been used to describe the ideal social orders. In this respect, utopia has been divided into two main subcategories. While dystopia is a relatively new category of utopia, eutopia is the traditional form of utopia which dominated the utopian designs until the rise of dystopia (Mihailescu, 1991: 214).

Despite this major difference between them, as they both are the subcategories of utopia, eutopia and dystopia are in harmony with one another in terms of their functions. The social systems that are represented in both eutopia and dystopia demonstrate that the current system can change either in a positive or a negative direction and that individuals, as the members of existing societies, are accountable to realise this change. While eutopias illustrate that a more desirable social life is attainable by means of improving the organisational structure of a society and that the individuals have the power to enhance the current conditions, dystopias portray a gloomy, displeasing, and distressing future and remind individuals that they are the one to blame if the current situation results in such a horrible way (Schmeink, 2016: 65). In this respect, both eutopia and dystopia bring criticism to existing social

structures by revealing the troublesome parts in the systems that are and continue to be the cause of the social problems. For this very reason, characterising dystopias as "negative utopias" or "anti-utopias" is problematic. Dystopia is by no means a depiction of the opposite of a utopian system since the opposite of utopia means refusal to change. It that sense, it does not negate or invalidate the desire for renewal that marks utopias. Quite the contrary, dystopias display the same longing for transformation though the atmosphere it depicts is considerably unpleasant. Therefore, dystopias are not "anti-utopias" that advocate the existing situation and object to any modification (Fitting, 2010: 141). Criticising the ongoing state, dystopias have much in common with traditional utopian schemes. In this respect, one wonders whether it is possible to investigate dystopia as an ideological, social, and literary concept just as utopia was investigated by Sargent.

As reviewed in the previous part of this chapter, the theoretical background of utopias is treated as a research field distinct from utopian works. Concordantly, the intrinsic drives that prompt people to sketch utopian projections as well as the different philosophical notions behind utopian designs have been scrutinised by scholars. Thus, it is possible to detect a range of different utopian ideologies. Similarly, since utopias depict how an ideal society must be organised and therefore examine and criticise the current societies, utopian works are also included in social and historical studies. Apart from all these fields, utopia is also analysed as a literary genre. However, this multifariousness of utopianism cannot be found in the term dystopia. Literature is the main field that concerns itself with dystopia. Therefore, the general tendency is to equate dystopia with literary works which portray horrific scenarios for the future state of the present societies. Furthermore, as Gregory Claeys indicates, "we do not normally speak of dystopianism, and we recognize no dystopian ideologies as such," however, "the adjective dystopian implies fearful futures where chaos and ruin prevail. So there are non-literary, empirical usages of the term" (Claeys, 2017: 5). Fatima Vieira similarly emphasises that dystopia is a term that signifies both "imaginary places that were worse than real places" and "works describing places such as these (Vieira, 2010: 17). In this respect, even though it is not possible to discuss "dystopianism" at least today, dystopian designs stand for more than a subject of literature. Nevertheless, in accordance with the aim of the study, dystopia is dealt with as a literary genre in this chapter.

3.2.1.Dystopia: A Dreadful Warning Call

To understand what dystopia is and how the dystopian literary works voice criticism to the existing systems, it is necessary to take a closer look to the changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which utopian designs gradually yielded to the dystopian ones. In this regard, examining the situation of England in the nineteenth century would be informative as it "was the first machine-based society … [whose] experience served as a prototype of what everyone else would undergo in the next century or so" (Claeys, 2017: 313). The nineteenth-century England was moulded by the effects of the Industrial Revolution. Along with the establishment of factories which increased in number day by day, cities became the centres of production, and therefore, the economy. As a result, numbers of people migrated to cities from rural districts to find a job and make money. This new way of making money inevitably affected the social structure, which resulted in the emergence of a new class of factory owners. As they possessed the production centres and mechanisms, the members of this moneyed class supported everything that would enhance the production, especially the technological developments. While they were hardly affected by the detrimental impacts of this production-based economy and life, the workers underwent immense hardships due to the exhausting and unsafe working conditions. Alongside the difficulties and risks they faced in the workplace, working in factories turned workers into machines since this work required a strict routine, recurrence, and sameness instead of creativity and rational thinking. Due to this monotonous practice, workers were subjected to standardisation, their daily acts were systematised, and consequently, they lost their determination in life as well as their enthusiasm and motivation for innovation. Developments in science and technology, therefore, worried those who were aware of the severe impacts of industrialisation on workers. Though they raised their concerns, industrialisation and mechanisation continued to increase (313-314).

Yet, the fast growth of industries affected not only the working-class people and their living conditions but also the plans of towns and nature. As the centre of the economy had shifted from the agricultural areas to the towns and cities in which factories were built, the majority of the population started to live in cities. This rapid

expansion of cities gave rise to several problems. First of all, waste management was quite troublesome. On the one hand, discarding human waste became problematic due to the sudden increase in the number of inhabitants, and on the other hand, factories continuously produced waste and polluted the air and the earth. Getting rid of such an amount of waste was problematic, which paved the way for environmental problems (Stableford, 2010: 263). Besides, city plans also reflected the huge gap between factory owners and workers. As opposed to the comfortable and orderly living quarters of the moneyed class, working-class people had to survive in abominable houses in horrible regions which were disarranged, rotten and dilapidated (264). These problems that people had to face in the nineteenth century as a result of industrialism and mechanisation were believed to be saved by science and technology, or a new social organisation. Despite the fact that the Industrial Revolution itself which had abominable consequences occurred and manufactories expanded and spread owing to scientific and technological developments, it was believed that science and technology could bring a solution for the working-class people's destitution. In addition to that, a socialist governmental system was suggested as a remedy that could close the gap between the poor and the rich, and cease social unjustness. Thus, in the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, it was expected that the hardships would eventually come to an end in this new era with the help of scientific developments and the establishment of a just social system. Erika Gottlieb resembles science and socialism to "a secular Messiah" that "throughout the nineteenth century the world awaited," but what came in the twentieth century was "a false Messiah: state dictatorship" (Gottlieb, 2001: 5). Indeed, totalitarian regimes caused disappointment and fear in individuals. Among them, the Russian communist reign can be given as the most extreme example. Due to their strict rules, people's lives almost turned into hell. The situation of people in capitalist structures, on the other hand, was not admirable as well. Although capitalist societies had several advantages when compared to communist ones, living in neither the former nor the latter was desirable for the individual since they can become very controlling and brutal when governed by the wrong hands (Booker, 1994: 20). Either capitalist or communist, the governmental systems in the twentieth century exercised power over individuals and restricted their lives in many aspects. However, they were just one hardship that humankind had to encounter during the new era.

Just as the political systems, science turned out to be a frustration in the twentieth century. The First World War which took place at the beginning of the century illustrated that scientific and technological developments that were thought to be beneficial to human lives could be extremely harmful. The weapons that killed millions and destroyed cities were the productions of the same science that people trusted to bring prosperity and ease to them. The Second World War was even more catastrophic than the first one with the advent of more advanced weapons. The concerns related to the disastrous effects of science peaked with the possibility of using the most powerful armament, the atom bomb, in WWII against the Japanese. Prior to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in August 1945, a group of nuclear scientists who were aware of the extensive damage the bomb could cause prepared "The Franck Report" and presented it to the War Department of the USA. The report depicted the dangers of using the atom bomb as a weapon and suggested exploding it in the wilderness and giving the authority of using atomic energy to an international organisation in order to diminish the harmful effects of the already-made bomb and prevent the emergence of the new ones in the future (Russel, 1998: 18). The scientists of the period continuously articulated how cataclysmic the consequences of atomic bombing could be by stressing its power to destroy all the living creatures not only in the bombing area but also in the immediate environment because of the dispersion of radioactive materials. Besides, they foresaw the possibility of producing deadlier bombs in the not-too-distant future with the enhancements in science and technology (19). Their concerns were proved right when the hydrogen bomb which was almost a hundred times more damaging than the atom bomb was tested in one of the Bikini Islands in 1952. Unlike the atom bomb, radioactive materials could scatter in the sky, and therefore over the world. By gradually falling on the earth, those materials could pollute basic necessities of living such as water, air, and crops, thus, imperil the lives of human beings as well as the existence of flora and fauna (26-27).

With the production of hydrogen bombs, a nuclear war has been a serious threat that can excessively harm human beings and other creatures, if not put an end to the life on earth. All those deadly weapons were the outcomes of scientific and technological studies. In this respect, science and technology did not bring wealth and comfort, instead, they became a source of fear and anxiety in people. Of course, science itself was not responsible for the outbreaks of these massive wars nor the

destruction they caused. It has been up to humankind to use science, and power as well, for good or bad. The wars and totalitarian regimes were the most extreme proofs that humankind might not be capable of establishing a social system that ensures equality and prosperity. Accordingly, people who went through those dreadful situations in the twentieth century have given up hope on reaching a brighter future, which resulted in a shift from utopia to dystopia as Vieira explains; "the twentieth century was predominantly characterized by man's disappointment – and even incredulity – at the perception of his own nature…. In this context, utopian ideals seemed absurd; and the floor was inevitably left to dystopian discourse" which was nourished by "on the one hand, the idea of totalitarianism; on the other hand, the idea of scientific and technological progress which, instead of impelling humanity to prosper, has sometimes been instrumental in the establishment of dictatorships" (Vieira, 2010: 18). Similarly, M. Keith Booker states that "the modern turn to dystopian fiction is largely attributable to perceived inadequacies in existing social and political systems," and designates repressive governmental orders such as "bourgeois capitalism (exemplified by the United States) and Communism (exemplified by the Soviet Union)" as the main reason behind the transformation of utopian schemes into dystopias (Booker, 1994: 20). Living in an age that was full of grand catastrophic incidents, individuals had fears about both their present conditions and their future. As they lived under strict regimes, experienced two global wars which lasted for years, and witnessed the devastating outcomes of scientific and technological developments, they constantly confronted with restrictions, oppression, and even the danger of death.

Such a worryful life was doubtlessly frustrating and this frustration reflected on the way individuals view the future. As opposed to the optimism of people in the previous centuries which was manifested in their utopian future projects, the twentieth-century individuals generally believed that the future would be worse than the present. The idea that existing conditions could be advanced in the coming times became a false hope. Accordingly, negative opinions towards utopianism and utopian projects started to arise. Utopian societies were criticised to be unfeasible and inoperable. Emphasising the fancied and make-believe qualities of utopia, some argued that utopian schemes could not be a means of enhancing the conditions of the existing societies because they were unsubstantial. In a similar vein, some others claimed that utopianism contributed to the maintenance of the existing social structures since

utopias propounded dream-like societies which enabled people to forget about the ongoing social problems rather than motivating them to challenge and change the existing systems to solve predicaments. Therefore, by presenting the opportunity of a virtual experience of living in the ideal social order, and thus giving individuals the means to leave their daily worries behind at least for a while, utopian projections caused "escapism" (Doll, 2010: 2011). On the other hand, other critics expressed their concerns related to the realisability of utopian designs. According to them, the problematic side of utopias was not their being imaginary communities whose actualisation was impossible but being tyrannical ones, which would turn individuals' lives into misery when actualised. Robert C. Elliot accordingly states that "utopia is a bad word today not because we despair of being able to achieve it but because we fear it. Utopia itself (in a special sense of the term) has become the enemy" (qtd.in Booker, 1994: 16). This fear was indeed not baseless when totalitarian regimes and the consequences of advancements in science and technology in the twentieth century are considered. As Gottlieb asserts, the age-old dream of socialism was a utopia incorporating the universal premises of humanism and therefore had an extremely wide appeal" (Gottlieb, 2001: 9). Although it was designed and dreamed of as a utopian system, the actualisation of socialism and the ultimate version of it, communism, was far from providing individuals a desirable social order, let alone providing the ideal society. With its tyrannical and repressive rule which overwhelms individuals, socialist and communist systems were unfortunately proved to be very disappointing. Likewise, the utopian expectations of the nineteenth-century people from science and technology to initiate a better life in the future were shattered by the harmful effects of the misuse of scientific and technological improvements in the two world wars and during the Cold War period. In this respect, a general cynicism against utopian thought and projections arose in the twentieth century, which could be seen as another reason that caused the decline of utopian designs and their replacement with dystopian schemes in this period.

On the other hand, losing faith in utopias, or worse, being afraid of the possibility of utopias, is seen as equally problematic because such thoughts are associated with loss of hope, a fundamental feeling that motivates the individual to live and take pleasure in life. Indeed, the human person needs to have hopes for better days to come to endure the hardships of the present. A hopeless life drives the

individual to unhappiness and leads to disquietude and pessimism. Thus, the unsettling problem of lack of utopian impulse is highlighted by Quarta and Procida as follows; "Without the Utopian spirit, which has hope as its moving force and the future as its ever-moving horizon, promising the better, homo sapiens would have staggered and fallen under the weight of the anxiety" (Quarta and Procida, 1996: 161). Indeed, the condition of people in the twentieth century was very much in line with their assessment since human beings lived through the frustration of undergoing troublesome experiences without believing that their lives could get better in the future. It can be said that this frustration engendered by despair added to the miseries of the twentieth-century people. Furthermore, since being hopeless is frustrating for individuals, they are demotivated and disheartened for change and improvement. The impacts of despair for the future, therefore, are greater at the social level. "History and utopia either stand together or fall together since there can be no history without projects. And this is why we should regard any dissolution of the Utopian tension as the sound of an alarm bell for humanity," say Quarta and Procida and indicate how significant the utopian drive is for the futurity of humankind (164). By looking at the hopelessness that dominated the twentieth century as well as the decrease in the interest in creating utopian schemes and the crescendo of dystopian projects, it can be argued that "an alarm bell for humanity" has been ringing since the 1900s onward. The resonance of the bell can be noticed in the fear of the twentieth-century people for their tomorrow, and in the dystopian schemes they imagined.

Although dystopias do not depict an ideal future and motivate people as the way utopias do to enhance the existing situation by means of adjusting the corrupted sides of it, they reflect the fear and anxiety of individuals who encountered quite a few catastrophic incidents throughout the twentieth century because of humans' abuse of power and scientific as well as technological developments. The future depicted in dystopias is in many ways unpleasant and even intolerable for today's individuals. Even though such dreadful portrayals of the future in dystopian projects are exceedingly extreme, they are not utterly impossible. Quite the contrary, dystopian scenarios of the future demonstrate how worse current problems can get in the coming times if people do not start to work towards solutions for those issues. Thus, dystopias make individuals aware of the dangers they possibly face in the future and stress the immediate necessity of change and reform. According to Sargent, this emphasis on

change is necessarily related to the ability of human beings to choose between the right and the wrong. “Can we make correct choices? This is the question raised by the dystopians,” states Sargent and places the individual’s potential to change by means of making choices to the core of questioning in dystopias (Sargent, 1994: 26). From that point of view, dystopias are the problematisation of human beings’ choice to design utopias and seek change towards the ideal. Together with the major changes that occurred in the twentieth century due to the new practices of social rule and advancements in science and technology, it has been understood that utopian schemes were not fantastic narratives but a possibility whose actualisation is up to the decisions and actions of human beings. Nikolai Berdyaev observes that “utopias seem very much more realizable than we had formerly supposed. Now we find ourselves facing a question which is painful in a new kind of way: how to avoid their actual realization” (qtd. in Fitting, 2010: 140). Dystopian projections include this concern and signal the dangers of putting ideal social orders into practice since they “question the nature of eutopia and what price should be paid to obtain it” (Sargent, 1994: 22). Or, dystopias can also be considered as the depictions of the consequences of the decision to remain the same. Therefore, they function as a guide for people to make the right decisions through their route is paved with fear and misery. Sargent accordingly adds that “many dystopias are self-consciously warnings. A warning implies that choice, and therefore hope, are still possible” (26). Then, dystopias also connote optimism related to the future. If human beings still exist and they have the means to prevent the feared end, then it is still not too late. Even though human beings have faced numerous calamities, the future of humanity is not hopeless.

Having this optimism, dystopias not only illustrate the possible consequences of human beings’ actions but also remind them that there is still time to change the course of events. In doing so, dystopian designs aim to raise doubts about the choices of human beings and the impacts of their actions and decisions both on themselves and the life on earth in the long view. In this respect, the function of dystopia is in parallel with the function of utopia which is to draw attention to the ongoing problems and invite human beings to change the existing situation (Schmeink, 2016: 65). In addition to this, for Sargent, due to this emphasis on making alterations, dystopias echo the freedom of human beings since one needs to be free to be able to change. He mentions this link between dystopia and utopia in terms of freedom as follows:

> Freedom means that we are able to perceive alternatives and act to realize preferences. Utopia presents alternatives colored to make them desirable, or, in the case of dystopia, undesirable. Utopia caters to our ability to dream, to recognize that things are not quite what they should be, and to assert that improvement is possible. The dystopian is stating that things could get worse unless we act, and most Utopias suggest that whether life gets better or worse depends on the choices made by people exercising their freedom. (Sargent, 1994: 26)

Thus, the stress on making choices and freedom is an important aspect of both dystopias and utopias. Dystopian designs, along with alerting people about the possible outcomes of their current decisions and actions, also show them their power to take a different path and change the direction of the future.

3..2.2. The Development of the Dystopian Genre

Earlier in this chapter, it was indicated that utopia started to undergo a change in the nineteenth century in accordance with the sociological, economic, political, and scientific developments. The dominant pessimism and mistrustfulness of the nineteenth and twentieth-century people affected the utopian visions of the future and the dystopian genre emerged as a consequence of this change. This new genre has also been under the impact of rapidly changing social and political conditions as well as of sudden transformations in daily life that took place due to the improvements in science and technology. Along with those changes, dystopian projections have also changed throughout the twentieth century and onward especially in terms of themes they employ. Yet, it is possible to find the roots of this new genre in the works produced in the previous centuries.

Since apprising readers about the failing aspects of the existing societies and raising the alarm for probable hazardous outcomes of rapid changes in social and daily life have been among the main concerns of authors, it is not surprising that many works throughout history have reflected the common worries of the writers of dystopias related to the present and the future of humanity. For instance, the sceptical approach of the twentieth-century dystopian writers towards scientific and technological novelties has been shared by many utopians from the very early examples of utopian writing. A problematisation of the development of science and technology can be seen in The Laws of Plato which investigates the necessary conditions for the establishment of the best possible social order (Booker, 1994: 5). Some utopian works produced in

the subsequent eras can also be associated with dystopian projections of the twentieth century. In the Enlightenment period when human reason was prioritised and fields dominated by reason such as science were promoted, some authors among which Jonathan Swift was included expressed their concerns about the riskiness of fast growth of science and technology as a consequence of reason-centredness (6). Likewise, the motives behind some utopias of this period are considered to be similar to the reasons that urged the twentieth century people to envision dystopian futures. Fatima Vieira, by characterising dystopia as the "dark side" of utopia, draws a parallel between dystopias and "satirical utopias" as well as "anti-utopias" of the 18th century which are the subcategories of the utopian genre that adopt a critical approach towards utopia itself (Vieira, 2010: 15). Unlike the classical utopias which put forward the means and methods of forming and maintaining ideal social structures which do not have surreal characteristics although actualising such structures in this world are hardly feasible, satirical utopias depict unreal communities situated in phantasmagorical locations. Both the classic and the satirical utopian communities are generally discovered by a voyager but the emphasis is on the voyager's experiences in satirical utopias instead of the mechanism of societies because the aim is not to criticise the current societies by setting an example for an ideal social rule. Rather, fictitious societies are set as an antithesis to the existing conditions in a way to demonstrate that the fictitious world is unreliable and questionable while the existing order is significant and worthwhile. In like manner, anti-utopias which reflect the doubts of the literati and culturati of the period related to abrupt transformations in everyday life go against utopianism by manifesting that utopian social organisations are not only inapplicable to the real societies but they are also self-contradictory. Thus, giving the message that actualisation of a utopian way of social rule can be more problematic than the existing societies, anti-utopian works illustrate the incredulity towards utopian thinking (16).

Those pessimist and cynic views reflected in the eighteenth-century works towards scientific and technological innovations, and utopian ideals constitute the initial base for the dystopian works of the later periods. However, drifting from utopian thinking to dystopian perspectives started in the second half of the nineteenth century in which the lives of human beings drastically changed due to the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of a new social class, and the dominant capital-centred economy. The new dynamics of economic and social life in urban areas, different

points of view towards the human being, and the critical remarks of thinkers led people to question the current state as well as the progression of this new way of life. Among them, concerns related to "the application of Darwin's theory of natural selection to society … the looming threat of revolution from the burgeoning socialist movement; and the growing challenge to the humanity of mechanization" were of utmost importance in drift from utopian designs to dystopian visions according to Claeys (Claeys, 2017: 295). The adjustment of Darwin's evolutionary ideas that bring forth the notion of survival of the fittest into social relations gave support to eugenics; genetic studies on advancing the human race by investigating the ways of augmenting the possibility of beneficial hereditary characteristics in next generations. This was of course an intervention to the natural course of life and caused some eyebrows to raise. While the probable consequences of such an interference with human nature and the question of who would use it for what purposes concerned some intellectuals of the period, in the meantime, socialist ideas were developed as a solution to growing injustice in social life. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, socialism became a well-ordered governmental scheme that aimed at ensuring the social and legislative equality of every individual, and therefore it was unconventional, all-inclusive, reformist, and radical. Since its rules must be strict and binding for every individual in order to achieve equitability, the applicability of such a regime and its potential dangers was also questioned. Thus, both socialist ideas and genetic studies caused some to think about the possible problems they would encounter in coming times, and dystopian visions of the nineteenth-century people reflected this concern of them. For the topics of the nineteenth century dystopian works, Claeys indicates that "combined with Social Darwinism, a peculiar melange of themes resulted in collectivist politics spilling over into collectivist eugenics.… the scenario that revolution would induce dictatorship and social decline became the most common dystopian projection" (302). In this respect, dystopias of the period reflected the concerns and fears of people related to a regime change that could bring discrimination and tyranny with it.

Along with the political concerns, the nineteenth-century utopian works also discussed the disappointment of people in science and the disquieting transformation of working conditions following the expanding industrialisation and scientific developments. Firstly, overly trust in human reason's boundless capability of solving all the problems was shattered by science itself as the hypothesis of Darwin related to

evolution demonstrated the biological restrictions of humankind and studies in physics proved that entropy, in other words, deterioration, is inevitable. While at the beginning of the century science and technology were elevated as supreme endeavours that could cure all problems, this optimism was challenged towards the end of the century as the negative effects of scientific and technological improvements on human life started to be seen. The frustration with scientific and technological progress was issued in the utopian designs of the period. Samuel Butler, for instance, adopted a critical stance towards science and technology in his *Erewhon*. Due to their threatening potential of domineering over humankind, this imaginary country excluded machines (Booker, 1994: 6). Some scientific utopias of this century, too, included the questioning of the progress of science and technology and depicted the disillusionment of the nineteenth-century individuals with the current harmful state of once-glorified science. To give an example, H.G. Wells' work *Time Machine* reflected both the nineteenth-century people's enthusiasm for and frustration with scientific and technological progress by depicting a future world in which this progress did not result in an ideal system. This world portrayed in Well's novella was, therefore, more dystopian than utopian (Coşar Çelik, 2019: 137).

Similarly, in sharp contrast to the former views that scientific developments would liberate human beings, science and technology turned out to be one of the factors that restricted them in the nineteenth century. As factories and cities in which they were established became the centre of the economy with the Industrial Revolution, the working-class people experienced a completely new way of working as well as a new way of life. Working for very long hours, workers spent the majority of their time in factories doing repetitive tasks among mechanical instruments which were constituted owing to the scientific and technological developments. Eventually, the life of the working-class people was mainly detached from nature; not only from the mother earth herself but also from the unique sides that form human nature. In this new way of existence, workers were gradually subjected to mechanisation. Brian Stableford delineates this mechanisation of workers as follows:

> … The lives of the factory workers are excessively regulated by the nature of their labour and their shift-patterns, to the point where they become mechanized themselves. This was a well-established nineteenth-century anxiety, dating back to the Romantic movements. When Thomas Carlyle suggested in 'Signs of the Times' (1829) that the modern era ought to be characterized as an 'Age of Machinery', he complained bitterly that 'mechanical genius' had

> not restricted itself to the management of physical and external factors but had invaded the internal and spiritual aspects of human life. (Stableford, 2010: 264)

Surrounded by machines and working like machines, not only the activities of the workers were systematised but also their psychologies were affected as the quotation above depictures. This new capitalist and industrialist economic system standardised workers' lives and effaced their individuality. Day by day, workers became more and more similar to machines they operated and alienated from themselves. Nevertheless, this was not the only estrangement that individuals had to go through in the nineteenth century. The new economic model required people to work in unnatural places such as factories and manufacturing sites, and to live in crowded cities in which they had limited contact with nature. Consequently, working individuals were separated from nature. This disengagement from nature was found quite hazardous to human beings and treated as "the most fundamental social evil" and "the essential seed of dystopia" in depictions of the future of the nineteenth-century people (266).

Prior to the twentieth century, people already started to question the existing social and political state as well as the progress of science and technology, and to express their anxieties related to the future in their utopian schemes. In the twentieth century, dystopian visions were separated from utopias and became a new genre. Since humankind lived through a variety of cataclysmic events which had never happened before and witnessed numerous novelties in many aspects of everyday life, new concerns and therefore new themes were added to the dystopian imagination of the future. Still, the concerns of people in the previous era that triggered the transformation of utopia to dystopia were valid at the beginning of the new century. To begin with, the view that socialist regimes could turn into despotism became stronger in the twentieth century as it was proved by real examples such as the Russian Federation. This view shaped the works of twentieth-century dystopianists. According to Erika Gottlieb,

> The greatest fear of the authors of such [dystopian] fiction was that the totalitarian dictatorship operating in the Soviet Union and later in the Soviet bloc could too readily be condoned in the West precisely because the Western intelligentsia could not, or would not, recognize that it was terror that this allegedly socialist regime shared with its allegedly greatest opponent, fascism. (Gottlieb, 2001: 9).

It is seen in Gottlieb's words that a tyrannical system of government was indeed a real threat not only for those living under socialism but also for the Western people living under non-socialist governmental systems since oppression and fear were the mediums

which could be employed by any authority to ensure its continuity. With the dystopian projections they created, the dystopianists of the period aimed to make people aware of such a possibility and how its actualisation could affect society as well as the individual. Gottlieb regards George Orwell as one of these writers. Orwell's famous work *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as it illustrated "a hellscape from which the inhabitants can no longer return," pointed to the existing problems in political and social systems to make individuals understand the necessity of social reform (4). In addition to the threat of despotism, worrying developments in genetic studies were issued in dystopias written in the first half of the twentieth century. Just as the opponents of eugenics in the previous era, the writers in the twentieth century were uneasy about the power that eugenic studies could give to despotic authorities and they questioned this side of genetic improvements in the dystopian projects they created. Especially intervening in the natural way of giving birth to a human child and regulating the processes of human breeding were mostly discussed in the dystopian works written after the First World War (Claeys: 2017: 308). Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, for instance, gave a demonstration of a future society in which childbirth and breeding is completely controlled by the government.

Scientific and technological developments came to be much more disquieting in the middle and during the second half of the century due to the advanced technological weapons used in the Second World War and grand investments made throughout the Cold War period in scientific and technological studies. With those developments, people found themselves worried about the possibilities that they could not imagine before. They became to be afraid "of the recreation of [their] selves in the image of [their] machines, and of their eventual domination over [them]" (Claeys, 2017: 9). The dystopias of this period mirrored not only this fear of individuals' being mechanised but also the cruel treatments in Nazi camps. Later, with the rise of computer technology, robotics, and artificial intelligence, the relation between the human subject who was the creator and the machine which was the creation became much more complex. The improvement of machines which were initially made as instruments to ease human work indicated the danger that "machines might evolve beyond their human designers," and therefore "satire and hope had given way to deep alarm" in dystopian works (315-316). While on the one hand science and technology continued to grow at a frightening pace and threaten the individuality of human beings,

on the other hand, the results of scientific and technological developments, expanding urbanisation, and insatiable capitalism paved the way for the occurrence of another threat to human and natural life; ecological problems. Ever since the nineteenth century in which the new urban life and the new economic model flourished, humanistic understanding which places human beings above nature and other creatures has given shape to every field of human life including governmental, social, and economic systems (Schmeink, 2016: 4). Consequently, the world itself has been seen as being at the disposal of humankind. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed numerous events that destroyed natural life at the regional level such as the atomic bombardment in Hiroshima and the testings of the hydrogen bomb. In addition to the ruination caused by scientific experiments, mass production and overconsumption had hazardous impacts on the balance of nature. Because of the industrial and capitalist economy, nature was considered to be a property of human beings which obliged to meet their demands. This view was problematised by the authors since they were aware of the danger of irreversibly destroying nature which was not a servant to humankind but their home. Thus, "the notion that a world ruled by the principles of classical economics was doomed to spoliation, and ultimately to self-destruction, became increasingly common in futuristic fiction" (Stableford, 2010: 274).

Environmental problems engendered by human-centred views and abuse of nature became overtly detectable towards the millennium. One result of seeing nature as inferior to humankind was the changes in atmospheric conditions. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the signs of climate change worried many writers and triggered the creation of "apocalyptic scenarios … [which] provide the most compelling and persuasive means of persuading its audience, not only of the devastation being wreaked upon global ecosystems but of the human consequences of that devastation" (Hughes and Wheeler, 2013: 2). Such scenarios are undoubtedly designed to warn people against the terrifying risks of continuing to treat nature as a possession of human beings. However, according to the authors of such catastrophic schemes, it is too late to preclude an environmental disaster. They do not even seem to believe in the chance of decelerating the developing process of such a crisis. In this respect, they differ from the twentieth-century dystopia writers who "were not trying to predict the future but to prevent it" (Stableford, 2010: 278). This divergence might

result from the scientific knowledge that has been gained through observing the changes in weather and natural life, and estimations made in accordance with this knowledge. Being aware of the scientific proves of the unstoppable end, contemporary dystopian works generally conclude that "that dystopia has already arrived, in embryo, and that its progress to maturity is unavoidable" (279). Apart from the feared environmental apocalypse, dystopian works also deal with many other problems that the twenty-first-century individuals faced due to the rapid and drastic changes in their daily lives in parallel with scientific and technological innovations, political imbalances, overcrowding of cities, and financial crises. Science and technology have had a determining role in everyday life. Genetic researches have enabled scientists to interfere with human genes. Studies on artificial intelligence and robotics have progressed rapidly. Smartphones and the internet have not only become an addiction but they have also violated people's privacy. All these developments have been problematised by the authors in their dystopian works from the beginning of this century (Voigts, 2015: 2).

In the light of these thematic changes in dystopian works through the course of time it can be said that dystopias demonstrated the uneasiness of the writers who, just as other individuals, are worried for their future since they realise the future risks of current social, political, and environmental problems. The gloomy atmosphere of the future visioned by the dystopianists, therefore, creates a juxtaposition between the power that seems to be bestowed to the individual by the new way of life thanks to the scientific and technological novelties, and the possibility of humankind's becoming more helpless because of the hazards those novelties might cause. Creating such dark visions for the future, the writers aim to make the readers question both the present situation and the troubles that might lie ahead if they do not take action immediately. However, neither criticising the current state nor giving a depiction of the future is a unique feature of dystopian works since science fiction works and utopias share these aspects, too. Therefore, to understand what dystopian literature is and how it is differentiated from other genres, it is important to discuss the similarities and differences between science fiction and utopia, and dystopia. Concordantly, in the next two sections, dystopia as a literary genre will be compared and contrasted with science fiction and utopia, respectively.

3.2.3. The Comparison of Dystopia and Science Fiction

Ever since science and technology have started to affect the lives of human beings and hinted the possibility of enhancing human life by means of various novelties, they have become one of the topics issued in literary works, especially in the works that force the reader's imagination. Among all literary genres, science fiction and dystopian literature are perhaps the ones that most concerned with science and technology. As they both deal with scientific and technological innovations, and depict imaginative worlds and places, these two branches of literature are generally associated with one another even though they differ in some aspects. To elucidate the points they share and the points they diverge from each other, it is first necessary to briefly touch upon what kind of a genre science fiction is. It is believed that the American writer and editor Hugo Gernsback laid the foundations of the term with the magazine *Amazing Stories* which was established by him in 1926. This magazine was initially subtitled "The Magazine of Scientifiction" and some years later, it was switched to "The Magazine of Science Fiction" (Stableford, 2006: 463). Gernsback also gave a formula of science fiction such as "75 percent literature interwoven with 25 percent science" (qtd. in Claeys, 2017: 284). However, before the emergence of the term, there had already been some works that could be counted as science fiction. *Frankenstein* of Mary Shelley which was written in the beginning of the nineteenth century is generally regarded as the first example of the science fiction genre which grew rapidly towards the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, generally merged with other genres, science fiction was not an autonomous genre before the twentieth century. Together with the beginning of the new era, science fiction considerably developed and grew into an independent genre of literature that comprehended other similar literary genres (285).

As in the case with utopia and dystopia, describing the term science fiction is a challenging task and scholars have not decided yet on a particular explanation of it. Therefore, it is possible to come across various and different definitions (Fitting, 2010: 135). In *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction in Literature,* Keith Booker explains science fiction as "speculative fiction set in worlds that differ from our own in

fundamental ways, usually because of specific scientific and technological developments beyond those present in our world, but always with a rational explanation" (Booker, 2015: 1). On the other hand, Darko Suvin stresses the literary tools used in science fiction such as defamiliarization in his definition; "SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (qtd. in Fitting, 2010: 136). It can be understood from these definitions that science fiction, as a form of literature, depicts imaginative worlds in which science and technology have a significant part, and through this depiction, the real world is juxtaposed with another possible way of living. Thus, readers are presented with a different point of view to the world they live in.

Foregrounding scientific and technological novelties and suggesting alternative perspectives to the ongoing state, the science fiction genre is highly linked to the idea of change. When the conditions of the period in which science fiction works flourished are taken into consideration, it is seen that this link is not unexpected. The early twentieth century in which science fiction came to the fore as a literary genre was characterised by novelties in many areas of life, especially in science. Newness and modernness which were supported by the anthropocentric views dominated this period and aiming at newness and innovativeness naturally resulted in alterations in daily life. These ideas had a great impact on science fiction works (Schmeink, 2016: 6). Since science fiction works have reflected this spirit of change by depicting alternative worlds, the science fiction genre itself has become an important means of visualising the limits of human potential. In this respect, these works have a social function as Csicsery-Ronay states that "however much sf texts vary in artistic quality, intellectual sophistication, and their capacity to give pleasure, they share a mass social energy, a desire to imagine a collective future for the human species and the world" (qtd. in Schmeink, 2016: 19). When considered from this point of view, science fiction might be resembled to utopia which is also created with a similar desire. Although the future visioned in dystopias is not desirable, dystopias also envision a collective future for a society, or sometimes, for the whole world. Thus, on one level, science fiction might be related to dystopia in terms of having a sense of community. However, the emphasis on collectiveness in utopia as well as in dystopia has a different function

since utopian and dystopian works involve criticism of existing social structures. Such a kind of criticism is not the main concern of science fiction although communal and governmental structures are minorly touched upon in science fiction works (Claeys, 2017: 285).

On the other hand, Peter Fitting claims that there are some points that utopia and science fiction intersect since science fiction denotes social change by means of scientific and technological innovations. For Fitting, an important aspect of the latter is that it can demonstrate human beings' aspirations and concerns related to the future. Generally, in science fiction texts, scientific and technological developments are the means that generate both optimistic and pessimistic views of individuals towards the time ahead. This aspect of science fiction is shared by utopia according to Fitting. Even though the classical utopias did not depict a future society, together with the emergence of temporal utopias towards the end of the eighteenth century, utopian texts have started to depict ideal societies that are achieved in the future. Since then, it has been understood that the future bears the potential of change. Despite the fact that a desirable communal order has been attained yet does not mean that it can never be actualised someday. Thus, temporal utopias manifest the possibility of social change in the future, just as science fiction works (Fitting, 2010: 138). A way of reaching such an altered world is through scientific and technological novelties. As utopias aim to criticise the real situation by comparing and contrasting it with the organisation of an unreal society, a connection must be made between these two worlds. This connection is customarily made by a traveller who visits the unknown society and brings the information related to this society to his homeland. Whereas in spatial utopias the traveller goes to the unknown place via familiar ways of transportation such as sea voyage, journeys of travellers in temporal utopias indubitably require more complex methods. Scientific and technological innovations such as a device that makes travelling in time possible. Therefore, science and technology have an important role in temporal utopias. However, Fitting asserts that the function of science and technology in utopias is more than giving the means of a voyage to the future. A desired social order or a better future that cannot be realised because of the inefficiency of existing conditions can be achieved when those conditions are enhanced through science and technology. In this respect, science and technology can be as crucial for utopia as they are for science fiction (139).

Although dystopias, too, voice criticism against the existing systems, they generally do not depict the experiences of an outsider in an undesirable future. Instead of combining the present with the future employing a traveller, dystopias give an account of the feared end. Still, science and technology can have a significant place in dystopias as well. What generates nightmarish future designs might be science and technology. In this case, dystopias reflect the potentiality to change by way of science and fiction, though this change is a negative one. Therefore, Fitting's views related to the correspondence between science fiction and utopia can be eligible for dystopia as well. Nevertheless, science fiction and dystopias differ from one another since the role that science and technology play in science fiction works is much more crucial. Science and technology are at the core of the narration in science fiction works. On the other hand, dystopia only focuses on the effects of science and technology on human beings. Rather than the characteristics of scientific and technological developments, the emphasis is on the purpose of their employment. As Claeys states that "the issue is not whether we imagine ray guns, infinite power sources, or space travel. It is whether we use them as instruments of oppression and destruction" (Claeys, 2017: 286). Together with the function of science and technology, the dystopian genre and science fiction genre are also compared and contrasted in terms of their way of dealing with reality. There are conflicting views on how realistic science fiction works are. When scientific innovations portrayed in works are highly fanciful, then science fiction might not be seen as verisimilar to reality. In this case, science fiction and dystopia hardly intersect since there are dystopian works in which the employment of science has secondary importance. Yet, there are also other critics which claim that the science fiction genre has a strong connection with reality. Named after the famous Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, the "Atwood principle" reflect this view as it manifests that "science fiction is 'fiction in which things happen that are not possible today,' including the portrayal of 'technologies we have not yet developed,'" (285) but it is "not beyond the bounds of plausibility," (475) and it does not contain any scientific or technological innovations "that do not already exist, are not under construction, or are not possible in theory" (qtd. in Claeys, 2017: 482). When considered from this point of view, it is possible to make a connection between science fiction and the dystopian genre which includes realistic elements as it brings criticism to the current situation.

In addition, this perspective also draws another correlation between these two genres for it foregrounds the estranging role of science fiction. As in the case with dystopia, fictitious worlds illustrated in science fiction works form a contrast to the real world, and therefore give readers the opportunity of perceiving their world from an external perspective. Readers are estranged from the usual and they can notice the deficiencies in the ordinary functioning of their world. This aspect of science fiction is associates with the alienation effect of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and also with Russian Formalism (Jameson, 2005: XIV). Such a realisation is quite hard for the people who lose themselves in the flow of everyday life, thus, this alienation from the normal that is triggered owing to science fiction is important in terms of social change. The estranging function of science fiction works is also shared by dystopia. Even though they illustrate an imaginative future that is unpleasant for human beings in many ways, what is emphasised in dystopias is the problems in the real world. Juxtaposing the current state with its much worse version, the dystopian genre, too, makes readers realise the flaws of the real world which must be eliminated to prevent the realisation of those nightmarish scenarios depicted in dystopias. Therefore, similar to science fiction, estrangement is an important aspect of the dystopian genre (Booker, 1994: 19). Moreover, some science fiction works written in the second half of the twentieth century resemble dystopian works in terms of their pessimistic attitude towards scientific and technological developments. Although the science fiction genre essentially mirrors an enthusiasm for the improvements in science and technology and therefore has a positive approach towards scientific and technological progress which has been believed to empower humankind to overcome social issues, the catastrophic events that occurred as a consequence of scientific and technological progress such as the atomic bombardment of Hiroshima, and the growing fears of the possible eruption of a nuclear war have affected the perspective of science fiction writers. Accordingly, the science fiction genre has grown more pessimistic about the future because of the worrying progression of science and technology, thus, become more dystopian (Fitting, 2010: 141).

Due to these similar aspects of science fiction and dystopia, they are seen intermingled with one another, and sometimes the latter is categorised under the former. According to Booker, “dystopian fiction can be defined as the subgenre of science fiction that uses its negative portrayal of an alternative society to stimulate new

critical insights into real-world societies" (qtd. in Claeys, 2017: 289). Nevertheless, he elsewhere makes a distinction between the two genres in terms of their approach to social and governmental problems as he states that "dystopian fiction differs from science fiction in the specificity of its attention to social and political critique. In this sense, dystopian fiction is more like the projects of social and cultural critics" (Booker, 1994: 19). Booker's words illustrate that the main difference between dystopia and science fiction is that it foregrounds the criticism of the current social and governmental situation. Such criticism can also be found in science fiction works but not necessarily so. Science fiction portrays a future state that can happen and this portrayal might include social or political criticism. On the other hand, dystopias depict a future state that must be avoided, thus, the criticism of problematic conditions that can pave the way for such a future is the core of the dystopian genre. Yet, these two genres can intersect with one another "where science fiction becomes *political*" (Claeys, 2017: 286). As is seen, although the lines between science fiction and dystopia can be blurred sometimes due to the similar characteristics they share, they differ from one another in terms of the ways they employ science and social criticism. Therefore, it is possible to deal with dystopia as a genre other than science fiction.

3.2.4. The Comparison of Dystopian and Utopia

The link between dystopia and utopia is undeniable. As mentioned earlier, dystopia emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century and matured in the following era in accordance with the major changes that took place in these periods, and their frustrating and depressing effects on human beings. The conditions that gave birth to dystopia also caused the utopian spirit to diminish gradually, though this spirit has not completely faded away. Utopia's giving place to dystopia in the twentieth century might connote that dystopia is a continuation of utopia. Yet, these two genres are highly related to one another not only because dystopia is seen as a continuation of utopia in the twentieth century or regarded as one of the subcategories of utopia but they also share many essential common characteristics and contribute to one another. Taking dystopia and eutopia as contrasting genres, Erika Gottlieb states that "the "good place" of eutopia cannot be fully understood without its counter-image, the "bad

place" of the writer's own time and place, from whose flaws he would like to escape" (Gottlieb, 2001: 26). Since they form a binary opposition with their emphasis on conflicting concepts such as the good and the bad, the desirable and the undesirable, and the hoped-for and the feared-for, dystopia and eutopia make each other meaningful. Utopia and dystopia are so tied to one another that deciding whether a work is dystopian or utopian might be quite baffling sometimes. Claeys comments on the ambiguous boundaries between utopia and dystopia that "just as one person's terrorist is another's freedom-fighter, so is one person's utopia another's dystopia. Indisputably, thus, whether a given text can be described as a dystopia or utopia will depend on one's perspective of the narrative outcome" (Claeys, 2010: 108). Therefore, to disambiguate the boundaries between these two genres and understand how a change of perspective can determine the classification of a work as dystopian or utopian, the similarities and differences between utopia and dystopia must be clarified.

The dystopian genre employs many traits of the utopian genre. To begin with, when one's optimistic and the other's pessimistic attitude are set aside, they both picture non-existent communities which are set in the future or unknown regions. Secondly, in both utopian and dystopian works, the stress is mainly on governmental and social structures of these communities, and ruling systems are more often than not quite strict and domineering since every aspect of life, both at the individual level and the social level, is managed by them. Thirdly, similar to utopian works, dystopia also aims at achieving more desirable conditions in the time ahead. Although utopia and dystopia point to different directions as the former shows the possibility of a brighter future whereas the latter raises the alarm for the probability of a more dreadful one, "what remains the same is a progressive movement towards the future" (Nebioğlu, 2018: 27). In this respect, utopia and dystopia have the same purpose and function. Just as utopias, dystopian works voice criticism against the problems of the present situation and they provide the reader with foresight of possible developments that can bring harm to social life in the future. Thus, giving a warning to human beings related to the possible dangers that they can encounter in the coming times, dystopias have a social function, which endows them with a constructive characteristic (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 18-19). Also, as utopian and dystopian works criticise the real world and juxtapose it with an alternative world, they both express the indispensability of change. In order to change, it is required to take action as well as responsibility. Generally, this

change must be done at a social level to be able to enhance social organisations in the case of utopia and to preclude possible dangers that can affect every human being in the case of dystopia. Still, such a change cannot be realised without the efforts of each individual. Therefore, utopian and dystopian works also remind their audience that each of them has a role in this change (Schmeink, 2016: 65). Moreover, utopian and dystopian texts are similar also in terms of the characteristics of the public of the communities they depict. The inhabitants of utopian and dystopian societies live in perfect harmony with the social order and also with each other. After all, social and governmental systems in dystopias and utopias can only remain standing by means of cooperation and collaboration of people. Yet, even though every individual's contribution to the functioning of such powerful systems is essential, as Claeys observes, "equality and plenty are enjoyed by some groups at the expense of others" (Claeys, 2017: 8). In this respect, justice and equality might be seen as problematic in both utopian and dystopian social systems. Nevertheless, although dystopia and utopia are similar to one another in some respects, the ways these genres deal with such issues depart from one another.

Utopias, as discussed in depth in the first part of this chapter, are designed as a guideline for a better social organisation. Accordingly, social structures and governmental order are the focal points of utopias. In utopian societies, individuals form a significant part of the functioning of the mechanisms that make those societies ideal. Since the main concern is the achievement and maintenance of ideal social order, social life precedes personal life in utopias. The individuality of the inhabitants has secondary importance when compared to the flawless operation of the social system because the ultimate aim is to ensure a peaceful, equalitarian, and just society in which people can live in contentment. In accordance with this aim, social rules and norms, as well as penal sanctions that are imposed in case of violation of them, are clearly defined. Every member has to know their place in society, act accordingly, and obey the rules. Personal desires, dreams, and goals that constitute the uniqueness of a human being are pushed into the background if they are inconsistent with or against the social rules and norms to protect the operation of social systems. Indeed, disregarding the uniqueness and distinctiveness of individuals can be seen as a way of equalising people in a society because the unique sides of individuals are exceptional and rules do not comprehend exceptions, yet, they are binding for every member. Besides, every

member's contribution to social mechanisms is seen as equally indispensable. Equality, justice, and peace, therefore, are ensured in utopias utilizing strict and repressive rules, an effective punishment system, and suppression of the individuality of people. These three factors can be found in dystopias as well. However, in contrast to utopias which prescribe them as a method to attain an ideal social order, they are at the core of criticism in dystopias. According to Andrei Mihailescu, dystopia can be considered as "a satire on eutopia" and he remarks on this difference between utopia and dystopia as follows:

> [Dystopias] present egalitarianism as mere illusion: it is a well-organized hierarchy of power that holds the world together by denying individuals their "natural" freedom. Whereas eutopias, either classic (Tommaso Campanella's 1602 City of the Sun) or modern (B. F. Skinner's Waiden Two), see in the leveling of individualities the major warranty for enduring happiness, dystopias acknowledge the demise of individual differences as a way of keeping order in power and power in order. (Mihailescu, 1991: 216)

Therefore, by questioning the methods of utopias to provide equality, dystopia also questions the idealness of utopian social orders. In utopian societies, freedom and distinctiveness are indeed problematic.

From the point of view of an individual who lives in such a society, utopia might as well be seen as a nightmare. Dystopias bring forth this possibility and criticise the utopian order for being oppressive and tyrannical. What is elevated in utopias as a means of providing equality and happiness for their inhabitants are presented in dystopias as repressive forces against people's individuality and freedom. This constitutes the main difference between utopia and dystopia (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 18). While utopia prioritises the continuity of social mechanisms and therefore ignores or eliminates everything that can pose a threat to it, dystopia demonstrates how destructive the realisation of utopia can be in terms of the position of the individual. Dystopian works generally portray social structures that are similar to utopias. Society is valued over the individual, the rules are extremely strict, the punishment of disobedience is exceedingly severe, and the individual is not given enough space to perform his freedom. However, what differs from dystopia from utopia is that such a social structure is given in dystopias as a dreadful alternative for the present situation that must be kept from happening while this structure is illustrated as a goal to be achieved in utopias. Thus, dystopias call attention to the possibility of utopia's being dystopian rather than standing for the ideal. In terms of freedom, utopian orders are far

away from setting a good example as Sargent states, “many utopias are, from the perspective of individual freedom, dystopias” (Sargent, 1982: 573). Inhabitants of utopian societies are not treated as individuals but merely as members of the crowd. They are not allowed to be different or act in an unusual way. Marie Louise Berneri explains the characteristics of people in utopian societies with the following words:

> Utopian men are uniform creatures with identical wants and reactions and deprived of emotions and passions, for these would be the expressions of individuality. This uniformity is reflected in every aspect of Utopian life, from the clothes to the time-table, from moral behaviour to intellectual interests. (qtd. in Beauchamp, 1974: 467)

The sameness of inhabitants echoes the supremacy and hegemony of social order over the individual. It demonstrates that common safety is preferred to personal benefits. To protect the social order, individuals give up on their uniqueness.

This self-denying attitude of the crowd is the same with dystopian societies. Just like utopian people, inhabitants of dystopias are almost identical to one another. They are generally very much obedient to the rules and norms and they do not challenge the authority by going after their interests. Again, similar to utopias, people in dystopias are interdependent on one another. Nonetheless, the dystopian crowd is different from the utopian crowd because, while the relationship between individuals is “voluntary and freely engaged in” in utopias, it is defined as “compulsory solidarity” in dystopias (Claeys, 2017: 8). Utopian systems assume the willful participation of their inhabitants in social life since the goal of such systems is to provide a peaceful and pleasant social environment. Therefore, the unity in a utopian system seems to be formed by individuals who are aware of the necessity of obeying the rules to protect the system which enables them to live harmoniously together, and who obey the commands without questioning them. The cohesion of people in dystopias has a different source. A dystopian order, as reflecting the threatening impacts of a tyrannical system such as a utopian social system, is indeed a despotic and oppressive order which can use all kinds of means to assimilate or extinguish the unsubmissive ones. Individuals are given no choice but to yield to the command of the regime and they behave in obedience to the rules and out of fear. Thus, social cohesion among people in dystopian societies is a consequence of obligation. Lastly, utopia and dystopia also differ from one another in terms of their perspective of their approach to the existing problems they criticise. Although the need to change and reform is highlighted in both genres, dystopian works, unlike utopias, do not usually suggest an

alternative order whose mechanisms can be used to transform the present condition. Because of that, dystopian works are considered to have a more pessimistic tone than utopian works (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 19). Instead of offering a solution to current deficiencies, they sketch possible consequences if people do not take action now and start to change the state of affairs. Although dystopias present the readers the worst possible scenario and therefore have a rather depressed mood, they still inherit hope as much as utopias do. Yet, they greatly depart from each other especially in terms of their attitude towards the position of the individual in an authoritarian social order. Even though both utopian and dystopian systems do not acknowledge the individuality and freedom of their inhabitants, utopias present this attitude as a means of protecting social order while dystopias bring criticism to it. From this point of view, utopia might be seen as more dystopian than dystopia itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

As the differences between dystopian works from science fiction and utopian works are put forth, it is now possible to investigate dystopian literature as an independent genre. From its emergence until today, the dystopian genre has changed following the rapid transformation of everyday life, and correspondingly of people's concerns for their present and the future. The characteristics of dystopian works and their way of dealing with the problems of the current world may differ from one text to another. Some dystopian works greatly concentrate on criticising existing governmental and social systems and therefore place much importance on manifesting ideas instead of literary creativity. On the other hand, other dystopian works are more layered in terms of plotting and characterisation. Since dystopian works are in some ways dissimilar to one another, putting forward the distinguishing characteristics of the dystopian genre is rather difficult (Claeys, 2017: 273). In this respect, there are divergent approaches to literary dystopias, which highlight different aspects of it and therefore enrich the studies of the dystopian literary genre. Raymond Williams, for instance, identifies four distinct forms of dystopias such as

> (a) the hell, in which a more wretched kind of life is described as existing elsewhere; (b) the externally altered world, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by an unlooked-for or uncontrollable natural event; (c) the willed transformation, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by social degeneration, by the emergence or re-emergence of harmful kinds of social order, or by the unforeseen yet disastrous consequences of an effort at social improvement; (d) the technological transformation, in which the conditions of life have been worsened by technical development. (Williams, 1978: 203-204)

Apart from "the hell" which does not take place in a future time but in an imaginary place just as spatial utopias, Williams' categorisation signifies that the scenarios of unpleasant future depicted in dystopias are mostly caused by environmental problems, alterations in governmental and social structures, or the negative effects of scientific and technological improvements. A similar classification is made by Claeys who separates dystopias into three categories such as "the political dystopia; the environmental dystopia; and finally, the technological dystopia, where science and

technology ultimately threaten to dominate or destroy humanity" (Claeys, 2017: 5). While the categorisations of both Williams and Claeys underline the sources that trigger the feared conditions, Leah Hadomi approaches dystopian works from another perspective and groups them in terms of the characters' internal and external quests in parallel with the concept of genuine existence. According to Hadomi, there are two kinds of dystopias; "the existentiell" in which "the disposition of the characters is mainly to activity in the social domain. The protagonist rebels primarily in the context of cognitive doubts as to the possibility of overcoming the hora incerta," and "the existential" in which "the characters are mainly engaged in exploring the paradoxes of being as an ongoing search for 'authenticity,' struggling to free themselves from the resulting 'constant tranquilization of every dayness'" (Hadomi, 1995: 94-95). All these classifications demonstrate how the dystopian genre differs in itself, yet, they also guide one to understand the multifarious aspects of dystopian literature. With the aim of shedding light to dystopian literature, this chapter focuses on the characterisation of dystopian novels and drama, and the delineation of the link between dystopian drama and existentialist philosophy. The first section is devoted to the characteristics of the dystopian novel, then in the second section, in what ways dystopian drama can be connected to the existentialist ontology and ethics will be discussed.

4.1. DYSTOPIAN NOVEL

When the dystopian works written so far are surveyed, it is seen that the dominant genre of dystopian literature is the novel genre. In this respect, examining the general attributes of dystopian works written in the form of the novel would undoubtedly provide important insight into dystopian literature. Especially the classical dystopian novels, since they set the pace for the subsequent dystopian works, help one to identify particularities of the dystopian genre. Among the early examples of dystopian works, *We* of the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, *Brave New World* of Aldous Huxley, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* of George Orwell are regarded as the classics of the dystopian novel. All three works give a depiction of a tyrannical regime that make use of science and technology as a mechanism to hegemonize people who are expected to surrender to the order (Claeys, 2010: 109). Adding *Fahrenheit 451* of

Ray Bradbury and *The Handmaid's Tale* of Margaret Atwood to them, Gottlieb sees these dystopian classics as "political satires" which not only voice criticism of the despotic rules in Russia and other European countries in the twentieth century but also express the anxieties of the authors that such an authoritarian regime might be established in their societies as well (Gottlieb, 2001: 7). In this respect, by investigating governmental and social malfunctions in capitalistic and tyrannical orders, the purpose of these works is to demonstrate to readers that seemly egalitarian governments in the West bear the risk to adopt similar means to oppress them. Therefore, these works are written for the inhabitants of Western countries (10). Such tyrannical systems portrayed in these dystopian works are nothing less than a hellish torment for the solitary individual. Gottlieb describes those social structures with the following words:

> We are faced here with societies in the throes of a collective nightmare. As in a nightmare, the individual has become a victim, experiencing loss of control over his or her destiny in the face of a monstrous, suprahuman force that can no longer be overcome or, in many cases, even comprehended by reason. (11)

Indeed, to be a citizen of such a society is undeniably torturous since tyrannical governmental systems do not allow people to live, decide, or act freely.

Although the social systems narrated in the dystopian classics might seem as a remote, though threatening, possibility for the readers who live under democratic regimes, the citizens of the radical socialist regimes experienced those fearful restrictions in actuality. They had to face many hardships and oppression because of the domineering place given to the communal over the individual and their situation is represented in the classical dystopias. These topics of despotism and its effects on the individual have also been employed in other dystopian novels. Especially the works written in between 1924 and 1949 can be associated with Russian communism. Based on this point of view, some scholars assert that dystopias are not about the probable dangers which can occur in the future but about the ongoing problems of the era in which they are written, mostly totalitarianism (Akman, 2015: 75). This view is supported by the decrease in the number of dystopian works which illustrate nightmarish societies (78). If the dystopian genre is reduced to the works that discuss totalitarianism and despotism to question communist regimes in the USSR and other countries in the world, this claim might be accepted as true. However, such works constitute only one type of dystopias. There are also other dystopian works that do not

concern themselves with totalitarianism, yet, still, give expression to current problems as well as people's anxieties about them.

Following the path that the classical dystopias paved for them, dystopian novels have flourished in time and diversified in terms of the subjects they explore. In parallel with the changes in social and daily life, dystopian novels concern themselves with the hardships that people might undergo today or tomorrow due to social, political, environmental, or technological developments. Accordingly, the topics treated in the works range from social planning to natural disasters and can be listed as follows; strict social planning which separates citizens into groups and represses them through class distinction, improvements in science and technology which control and occupy human life, mechanisation of individuals through distorting and exploiting their minds, human beings' excessive domination over nature. In addition to them, dystopian works also problematise the limits of individuals' being free, independent in their choices, and their reaction against authoritarian systems (Mahida, 2011: 2). The topics issued in dystopian works also determine which type of dystopia they belong to. The subjugation of human beings by dictatorial systems is the main topic of "modern dystopias," whereas the detrimental effects of scientific and technological developments on human life and wildlife are discussed in "science-oriented dystopias" which concentrate on dehumanisation of people in consequence of technological improvements and "science fiction dystopias" which give a portrayal of imaginative technological and scientific developments that cannot be achieved today (Claeys, 2017: 290). The theme of mechanisation of human beings which has been a long-standing threat that emerged following the Industrial Revolution has evolved into another theme; the mastery of machinery over human beings as a consequence of unstoppable progress of scientific studies and quick transformation of technological devices. Now, the threat is even more distressing since technological developments point to the possibility that robots might "actually rule over us" since they will be able "to think not just like us, but for us" (355). Apart from the power of machinery over human beings, scientific and technological developments pose another grand threat not only to human life but also to every living creature on earth. There is a view that human beings' insatiable appetite for scientific and technological improvements will eventually cause the destruction of life on earth. This catastrophic view is also discussed in dystopian novels (Mahida, 2011: 2).

Dealing with those topics mentioned above, dystopian novels give a depiction of a future in which the conditions will be worse than the present state. In this respect, dystopian novelists generally make use of time as a device to set their imaginary societies. This is a technique employed in "euchronias" which stand for imaginary ideal societies that are achieved in a different time rather than a different place. Therefore, dystopian novels adopt setting techniques of the utopian genre (Vieira, 2010: 17). In terms of the scope of dystopian societies, some dystopian novels also follow the methods used in the utopian genre as the unpleasant future condition depicted in these works is not limited to a certain place but affect every individual on the earth. Yet, it is not an essential characteristic of dystopian novels since there are also other works that comprehend only certain groups of people in certain places (Mihailescu, 1991: 217).

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dystopian novels question the limits of human beings. For instance, the dystopian works which examine scientific and technological advances and their possible harms demonstrate that human beings might not change at the same pace with science and technology, therefore they might not be capable of taking the responsibility of using them yet (Toprak and Şar, 2019: 18). Similarly, dystopian novels also problematise human beings' ability to manage power in an ideal social system. A system and order are undoubtedly indispensable for a peaceful social life, however, establishing order means having power over the masses. The despotic rulers of dystopias reflect that such power can be easily abused. Therefore, dystopian works raise doubts about the capability of human beings to form and maintain a utopian system (19). In this respect, dystopian novels intend to raise ethical questions related to human nature and actions in the mind of the readers to remind them of their weaknesses and imperfections but also their capacity to transform and develop. Though they foresee gloomy and terrifying scenarios for the future, dystopian works aim to demonstrate that humankind is not destined to experience such a horrible future, they have the potential to change. Thus, as Vieira states, "their true vocation is to make man realize that, since it is impossible for him to build an ideal society, then he must be committed to the construction of a better one" (Vieira, 2010: 17). These aspects and aims of dystopian novels can also be found in dystopian drama which will be dealt with from an existentialist perspective in the following section.

4.2.DYSTOPIAN DRAMA AND EXISTENTIALISM

The existentialist philosophy has always been in strong connection with literature. Not only the prominent philosophers and thinkers produced literary works which reflect their existentialist ideas but the main concepts of the existentialist philosophy, since it mainly deals with what it is to be a human being, are also frequently discussed in literary texts. Accordingly, many works written in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries are analysed from an existentialist perspective. Dystopian drama, too, can be related to existentialist philosophy from many aspects. Especially the questions that dystopian plays raise are in line with existential ontology and ethics. Prior to investigating the link between dystopian drama and existentialism,

briefly touching upon the place of existentialism in literature might be useful as existentialist philosophy is deeply tied to literature.

The problems that human beings underwent throughout the twentieth century due to industrialism, capitalism, the world wars, social upheavals, regional conflicts, financial troubles, worrying scientific experiments, technologies advancing at an alarming rate, and environmental and climatic changes, affected both the literature and the philosophy of the period. Writers and existentialist philosophers, as they among the masses of individuals who experienced those hardships, witnessed similar circumstances and they reflected their situation in their works. What people lived through in those troublesome times was quite in parallel with the human condition that was described by existentialist thinkers. Nordmeyer depicts this human situation in the twentieth century with the following sentences:

> Now imagine the neurotic condition of modern society, the frustration, the disillusionment, the disgust, the nausea that are not entirely hidden by the pomp and circumstance of our industrial civilization-what a religionist could read in the mind of man in the blessed peaceful days of a hundred years ago is overwhelmingly confirmed in the psychic experience of sensitive writers like Rilke, Kafka, Camus, or Sartre. The war has driven the individual out of the shelter of time-honored institutions, out of the stream of holy traditions: fear, cynicism, gloom, despair are threatening to engulf millions, mankind itself is in an existential situation. (Nordmeyer, 1949: 589)

Thus, problematising the same condition of the human individual, the works of some writers are in accord with the concerns of existentialism. Along with the two leading figures of existentialism, as Nordmeyer mentions, Rainer Maria Rilke's and Franz Kafka's works depict the existential situation and therefore they are associated with existentialism. Moreover, literature is also believed to be one of the sources that feed existentialist thought. Again, Rilke and Kafka are counted among writers who have a crucial impact on the philosophical views of Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus. In addition to them, the influence of Dostoevsky's writing on existentialist philosophers is also eminent (Kaufmann, 1960: 49). Furthermore, some literary works are the articulation of existentialist thought. After all, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus are also novelists and playwrights in addition to being existentialist thinkers. *Nausea* of Sartre and *The Stranger* of Camus are regarded not only as works of literature but also of existentialism that one can refer to have a better understanding of existentialist thought (Malpas, 2012: 291). Together with the novels of existentialist thinkers, their plays, too, display their ideas related to human existence. As it is

nourished by literature, concerned itself with similar issues that affected the writers of the period and it also influences literary works, it can be claimed that existentialist philosophy has an important place in literature. According to Jeff Malpas, "existentialism can thus be viewed as naming not only a philosophical attitude or approach but also a certain literary genre or style" (295). This generic and stylistic influence of existentialism especially stands out in twentieth-century drama.

There are particularly two trends in twentieth-century drama that have a close connection to existentialist thought; the existentialist theatre and the absurd theatre. The former refers to the movement which originates in French theatre towards the middle of the twentieth century. Sartre, who was one of the leading dramatists of the existentialist theatre, explains in his essay "Forgers of Myths" that "All [the existentialist theatre] seeks to do is to explore the state of man in its entirety and to present to the modern man a portrait of himself, his problems, his hopes, and his struggles" (Sartre, 1976: 38). Therefore, the existentialist theatre focuses on situations rather than creating suspense by means of a portrayal of a chain of incidents that follow one another or questioning the motives of the characters' actions. This is very much in line with the existentialists' view that existing in this world means being in a situation. For existentialist philosophers, human beings cannot avoid being in a situation, which necessitates them to choose and act. According to Sartre, plays should express these aspects of human existence. In his essay titled "For a Theatre of Situations" Sartre states that

> … if it's true that man is free in a given situation and that in and through that situation he chooses what he will be, then what we have to show in the theater are simple and human situations and free individuals in these situations choosing what they will be. The character comes later, after the curtain has fallen. It is only the hardening of choice, its arteriosclerosis; it is what Kierkegaard called repetition. The most moving thing the theater can show is a character creating himself, the moment of choice, of the free decision which commits him to a moral code and a whole way of life. The situation is an appeal: it surrounds us, offering us solutions which it's up to us to choose. And in order for the decision to be deeply human, in order for it to bring the whole man into play, we have to stage limit situations, that is, situations which present alternatives one of which leads to death. Thus freedom is revealed in its highest degree, since it agrees to lose itself in order to be able to affirm itself. And since there is theater only if all the spectators are united, situations must be found which are so general that they are common to all. Immerse men in these universal and extreme situations which leave them only a couple of ways out, arrange things so that in choosing the way out they choose themselves, and you've won—the play is good. (4)

As his words illustrate, the existentialist theatre aims to exhibit that human individuals build their essence and that, although they inevitably find themselves in situations,

they possess the freedom to decide for themselves and take action. The notions of situation, freedom, choice, and action are naturally tied with existential ethics. In this respect, “the existentialist play is organized around its ethical substance; its structure is dictated by the "extreme situation" of moral choice” (Vowles, 1953: 216). Portraying characters in situations that oblige them to make ethical decisions, the existentialist theatre raises ethical questions and therefore has a social purpose. One of the techniques employed in existentialist theatre is “distancing” which, unlike the verfremdungseffekt of Brecht, aims at moral detachment (219).

The absurd theatre, another theatrical movement that is associated with existentialism, explores similar existentialist issues. In his article titled “The Theatre of the Absurd” Martin Esslin points to the corresponding aspects of some plays written playwrights like by Beckett, Ionesco, and Adamov and suggests a new trend in theatre. These works are quite uncustomary and experimental as they stage “wildly irrational, often nonsensical goings-on that seem to go counter to all accepted standards of stage convention,” with “characters [who] hardly have any individuality,” and whose dialogue tends to “degenerate into lists of words and phrases from a dictionary or traveler's conversation book, or to get bogged down in endless repetitions like a phonograph record stuck in one groove” (Esslin, 1960: 3). They have received a great deal of attention despite the fact that they are in every respect out of the ordinary. According to Esslin, the plays of these writers have had a significant impact on the readers and the audience because they illustrate the senselessness, in other words, the absurdity of existence that torments modern people. As Esslin indicates, these plays “give expression to some of the basic issues and problems of our age, in a uniquely efficient and meaningful manner, so that they meet some of the deepest needs and unexpressed yearnings of their audience,” as “they all share the same deep sense of human isolation and of the irremediable character of the human condition” (Esslin, 1960: 4). The human situation that the theatre of the absurd intends to present as it echoes the existentialist understanding of human existence in a meaningless world. It especially corresponds to Camus’ views on the absurd feeling that originates in the relationship between the individual who yearns for sense and value and the world which does not satisfy his search for meaning. From this point, the absurd theatre resembles the existentialist theatre. Again, similar to the existentialist theatre, the theatre of the absurd also makes use of the alienation effect to prevent the readers and

the audience from emphatising with the characters. Rather, the aim is to lead them to perceive what is depicted in the plays with a critical attitude as an outsider. By employing atypical and bizarre theatrical techniques together with the alienation effect, the plays of the absurd theatre "reveal the irrationality of the human condition and the illusion of what we thought was its apparent logical structure" (5).

As these two movements demonstrate, the concepts of existentialist thoughts are given an important place in twentieth-century drama. The existentialist concepts and questions can also be found in dystopian drama which also denotes the situation of the modern and contemporary individual in a terrifyingly changing world. The calamities that took place in the twentieth century caused people to question themselves, the meaning of their lives and existence, their actions, and their role in the establishment of the future. All these questionings form the basis for both the existentialist philosophy and dystopian projections in theatre. Questioning the sources of the troublesome situation of humankind, dystopian plays have adopted a critical approach towards the ongoing systems. In this respect, they could not ignore the deficiencies in social and governmental structure which have caused the catastrophes that humankind encountered. As they have brought criticism to existing social and governmental systems, dystopian plays have been regarded as a branch of political drama. Yet, as time progresses, the human situation in this world has gained new dimensions as new problems have emerged and this change has reflected in dystopian drama as Carlo Vareschi observes, "in a world in which traditional social and political oppositions (capital and labour, right and left) seem to be outdated, dystopian theatre … [shifted] its focus from day-to-day politics to the human condition, regardless of time and space" (Vareschi, 2017: 190). The human condition has become more problematic together with the new political and financial attitudes such as laissez-faire capitalism, new challenges in social life that emerged due to new technologies, and new dangers engendered by scientific improvements. According to Trish Reid, the situation of the contemporary human being in this new life with its new problems is reflected in dystopian plays which follow the path of the twentieth century dystopian and science fiction classic, and intends to demonstrate the terror of the current situation (Brusberg-Kiermeier et al, 2019: 8). Influenced by dystopian novels and science fiction works, dystopian plays utilise many characteristics of them. Above all, they express the fears and distress of people for the future by means of picturing distressing

possibilities that might become reality in coming times. By doing so, dystopian plays not only articulate the human condition but they also draw attention to the problematic sides of the present, point to the indispensability of taking action to change those sides, and remind people of their responsibility in establishing both the existing and the future state. Therefore, "such plays can produce empathy and have a strong ethical as well as emotional impact on their audiences" (9).

Also, just as dystopian novels and science fiction works, they deal with scientific and technological advancements and their effects on the life and existence of humans as well as other beings in the world since scientific and technological studies have had a decisive role in everyday human life since the Industrial Revolution. According to Arnold Aronson, drama changes in parallel with the technological novelties since it is formed "through transformations in consciousness and modes of perception which may, however, be significantly affected by technology" (qtd. in Lavender, 2006: 551). Correspondingly, dystopian theatre demonstrates the changing ideas of individuals towards technology as well as science. The potential dangers that scientific and technological developments became a serious concern of the twentieth-century people, especially after the invention of the atom bomb and the disaster it caused in Japan. However, the uneasiness of people related to the destructive effects of science and technology on human life and nature have doubled as it is understood that not only a possible nuclear war but also the excessive use of nonrenewable fuel sources and other natural sources in contemporary urban life might bring destruction to the planet. Along with ecological threats of this new citified existence based on scientific devising and technological products, studies on human genes which proclaim the possibilities of changing the genome of human beings, determining the genetic characteristics of foetuses, and even asexually producing humans through cloning have given rise to controversies among people. Affecting contemporary life and causing distress, scientific and technological developments are discussed in contemporary drama, especially when they bear the risk of bringing a nightmarish future (Higgins, 2008: 225). Contemporary dystopian plays manifest all these anxieties of people related to the future state of humankind.

Dystopian drama, as it concentrates on the human situation and human actions, coincides with existentialism in many respects, particularly with existential ontology

and ethics. Here, a brief reminder of the main concerns and ideas of existential philosophy which sets forth both an ontology and ethics is necessary to demonstrate the connection between dystopian drama and existentialism. The existential philosophy centres on the individual and his existence in the world. For existentialism, every individual is a unique being who must reach his genuine existence by means of taking responsibility for his idiosyncratic existence. In this respect, all types of systems that ignore the uniqueness of the individual and reduce him to a mere member of a group are questioned and criticised by existentialist philosophers, including religion, moralities, and science. Therefore, rather than manifesting universal truths related to human existence, existential philosophy appreciates the individuality of individuals and encourages them to recognise their authentic existence. A similar criticism and questioning can be seen in dystopian plays as well. Whether the unpleasant future scenario is generated by a totalitarian regime or devastating outcomes of scientific and technological inventions, the unique sides of the individual are at best ignored, and at worst removed in dystopian works. Despotic government systems regard individuals as nothing more than a mass of people to be ruled. In the same vein, for science and science-based rules, individuals are mere experimental objects, or, productions of science. In all cases, people are regarded as, to quote Kierkegaard again, "a number instead of a self" (Kierkegaard, 1980: 33). By revealing the degraded situation of the individual in such systems, dystopian plays raise doubts about social and political institutions as well as overvaluation of science and technology, and touch upon the significance of individuals' uniqueness just as the existentialist philosophy.

Valuing the existence of the human individual, existential philosophy seeks to put forth the distinctive characteristics of human beings that differentiate them from other beings, hence emerges the existential ontology which investigates what kind of a being a human being is. In existential ontology, human beings are perceived as beings who come to the world without a pre-determined essence. The claim of the existentialists is that human beings find themselves existing in this world to which they do not feel themselves belonging. Therefore, human beings exist first, and then, they build their essence throughout their course of life. From this postulation, the existential ontology concludes that human beings are inevitably free, yet, existing in this world, they are constantly in situations. Being free and in a situation brings about the obligation of taking action and being responsible for their actions. Thus, from the

existential ontological perspective, the individual is utterly free, and therefore responsible for himself but he is left without a guide, in a universe that is alien to him. Feeling isolated and alone, the individual wishes to find meaning in his existence but he fails since he is a stranger to this world. Consequently, he suffers from an absurd feeling which arises from the conflict of his eagerness to find meaning and the muteness of the world. Due to all of these reasons, the individual feels anxious and distressed. More by token, the individual is a finite being who is limited by the situations and time, and he is aware of his finitude. The reality of death, particularly his own death, is very disturbing for him because death is the opposite of existence; it is nothingness. Thus, facing death means facing nothingness. Usually, human beings cannot endure this awareness for a long time and they choose to ignore the fact that they are free, responsible, and mortal. However, they experience several limit situations in life that remind them of their finitude. Together with those limit situations, the forgotten anxiety comes back. This rather distressful situation of human beings presented by the existential ontology is quite similar to the human condition revealed in the dystopian drama. In the plays, characters find themselves in systems that they cannot fit in due to their individuality and uniqueness. They are isolated strangers who can perceive the system from the outside. As a result of this, some characters in dystopian plays challenge the system while some are led to question their existence. Nonetheless, the anxious feeling triggered by this alienation is the same with all of them. Also, since they demonstrate the calamities which threaten human life or individuality, dystopian situations can be seen as limit situations. In dystopian works, characters face the possibility of death, or sometimes of the annihilation of the whole of humankind. Therefore, characters are reminded that they are perishable, which causes fear and anxiety in them.

However, existential ontology does not have a completely pessimistic attitude towards the human condition. According to existential ontology, since their essence is constantly in the process of formation, human beings are open to change. Human existence encapsulates numerous possibilities. From the perspective of existential ontology, human beings are not destined to live one particular way of life, they bear the potential to transform and change the course of their life. Sartre accordingly states that

> No matter what circle of hell we are living in, I think we are free to break out of it. And if people do not break out, again, they are staying there of their own free will. So that of their own free will they put themselves in hell. (Sartre: 1976: 200)

Sartre's words point to the freedom and potentiality of human existence. As he emphasises, change is possible but refusing to change is also a free decision. In other words, what individuals have become is their own doings; they might remain the same, or, they can transform by actualising another possibility. This is very much in line with the message that is given in dystopian plays. Although they illustrate very dark visions for the future, dystopian plays aim to remind the readers and the audience that they possess the power to prevent such a kind of horrible future by changing the present. In this respect, both existentialism and dystopian drama share the same motive which is to prompt people to take action and realise their potentiality.

To take action inevitably connotes morality. It is demonstrated by existential ontology that the human being is free and his freedom obliges him to be responsible for his choices through which he builds his essence. According to existential ethics, however, a human being is not only completely responsible for himself but also for others because he is not alone in the world. Whatever he chooses, his choice affects all humanity. Therefore, he must choose and act with an awareness of the impact that his decisions and actions might have on himself and others. However, existential ethics does not propound moral codes that human beings can base their actions. All kinds of moral systems are rejected by existentialism because of the fact they aim to standardise human behaviour and disregard the wishes and desires of the individual. Similarly, existential ethics also differs from Kantian ethics which, although does not suggests a set of ethical rules, prioritises the wellbeing of communities. Existential ethics, on the other hand, does not place much importance on achieving peace at the social scale by regulating the actions of individuals through moral codes. What is important for existential ethics is individuals' taking responsibility for their actions without hesitation. In the same vein, dystopian plays raise ethical questions about human choices and actions. By depicting alternative future scenarios, the dystopian drama reminds the readers and the audience of the possible consequences of their past and present actions, and therefore urges them to question themselves. Just as the claim of existential ethics, the decisions of some people affect others, sometimes even the whole of humankind, in dystopian plays. After all, the protagonists do not choose to

live through those troubles and miseries, yet, they are affected by the results of the choices of others. Together with that, the dystopian drama also invites people to take responsibility of their actions as it aims to evoke change. To avoid experiencing those dystopian scenarios in the future, people must accept their blameworthiness in the current situation and start to act with the awareness of their being responsible for themselves and others. Therefore, dystopian plays share the ideas of existential ethics in addition to portraying the concepts of existential ontology.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.TRACES OF EXISTENTIALISM IN DYSTOPIAN PLAYS

As indicated in the previous chapter, dystopian drama bears many characteristics that can be associated with existentialism. Accordingly, three dystopian plays will be analysed in this chapter from an existential perspective. The first two plays, Karel Čapek's *Rossum's Universal Robots* and Caryl Churchill's *A Number*, are dealt with by focusing on their connection to the existential ontology. Both Čapek's and Churchill's work investigate the essential qualities and limits of human beings. They raise ontological questions related to being human by comparing and contrasting humankind with other forms of being. In *Rossum's Universal Robots*, Čapek introduces human-like automatons named "robots" which, after being added more human-specific attributes, revolt against their creators and put an end to the existence of humankind on earth. The development of robots and their unexpected reaction against being inhumanely treated by human beings raise doubts about what makes people human. Though written long after Čapek's play, Churchill's *A Number* includes a similar ontological questioning. The play depicts the confrontation of a father with his sons, one of them is his biological son while the other is a clone of him. Being aware of one another's existence makes both the original and the clone unsure about their uniqueness and individuality. Consequently, they doubt their identity and humanness. As they question themselves, the ontological borders between a human and a clone are investigated. While Čapek's and Churchill's plays reflect many aspects of the existential ontology, Edward Bond's trilogy *The War Plays* illustrates the teachings of existential ethics. Bond's work gives a demonstration of a dystopian future in which nuclear explosions destroy civilisation on earth. Such an end is an outcome of growing violence among human individuals and their irresponsible actions. Portraying both the pre-apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic world, Bond's trilogy puts emphasis on how influential human actions can be on their future. As a way of preventing such a catastrophic end, *The War Plays* prescribe accepting the

responsibility of outcomes of actions and acting in accordance with one's personal morals instead of the ethical codes of social systems.

5.1. *ROSSUM'S UNIVERSAL ROBOTS*

The Czech writer Karel Čapek's play *Rossum's Universal Robots* portrays a dystopian projection for the future which foresees the end of humanity because of the overdevelopment of technological inventions. Written in 1921, the play takes place in a distant future when human beings are able to mass-produce human-like machines which can work more efficiently than human workers. These machines resemble human beings in many aspects as they have mental and emotional capacities. In this respect, as Ivan Klima states, "*R.U.R.* presented a theme extremely unusual for its time: an artificial human being, a brilliant worker" (Klima, 2004: xi). As Čapek illustrates in his play scientific and technological achievements that are ahead of his time, some critics consider the play to be a "dystopian science fiction" (Claeys, 2017: 333). Science and technology indeed have a crucial place in the play since robots, an output of very complex scientific and technological studies, constitute the main means through which the work raises questions about humankind. Together with that, the play concentrates on the destructive effects of science and technology on human existence. Producing synthetic human beings in a large number and commercialising them cause many problems at both individual and social level, and ultimately, bring destruction to the human race. Thus, on the one hand, *Rossum's Universal Robots* brings criticism to scientific and technological developments as well as capitalistic and materialistic ideals. On the other hand, it calls the distinctive characteristics of human beings and the consequences of their decisions into question. Such an approach to human existence and actions is in parallel with existentialism, particularly existential ontology.

The title of the play, *Rossum's Universal Robots,* is also the name of the company that produces synthetic human beings. As specified in the advertising posters, the company offers "Cheapest Labor" to those who are "Looking to Cut Production Cost" with their humanoid machines which can substitute human workers

in many fields of life (Čapek, 2004: 3). The operation of this factory is also mainly based on an artificial workforce, except from the management team which consists of a director, an engineer, two scientists, a marketing director, and a builder who have devoted their lives to the progress of manufacturing robots. Being a manufacturing facility, Rossum's Universal Robots is undoubtedly a fortress of industrialism. Yet, the goods that are produced in it are the latest and the most successful improvements of science and technology. It is, at the same time, a centre of scientific and technological studies. Therefore, Rossum's Universal Robots represents the capitalistic understanding and reliance on science that dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It can be seen in the historical process of the company. The word "Rossum" in its name stands for two people; the genius scientist old Rossum and his engineer son, young Rossum. Old Rossum "discovered a substance that behaved exactly like a living matter although it was of a different chemical composition" in the year 1932 (6) and "set out to manufacture a human being" (7). He desired to create a human being and by doing so, he aimed "to somehow scientifically dethrone God" (7). What he wished to produce was an artificial man that is identical to a human being in every aspect. As a consequence of ten years of work, he finally achieved to make "a thing [that] had all the stuff a person has" but he failed to keep this thing alive for a long time (8). However, his efforts were found redundant by his son who believed that producing an artificial man that has exact physiological and mental characteristics with actual human beings is useless because some aspects of human beings are useless. "A human being. That's something that feels joy, plays the violin, wants to go for a walk, in general, requires a lot of things that—that are, in effect, superfluous" while "a gasoline engine doesn't need tassels and ornaments" (9). Still, he found it profitable to manufacture synthetic people which must be purified from the unnecessary sides of human beings. Quite contrary to his father, young Rossum's goal was to produce "the cheapest" workers "with the fewest needs" (9). Thus, he built Rossum's Universal Robots which is now directed by Domin. Though they do not correspond to one another, the views of old Rossum and his son illustrate how industrialism and science degrade human beings to the level of objects and disregard their different and unique sides which form their individuality. In addition to that, since they juxtapose human beings with artificial men, Rossums' conflicting attitudes towards human beings also

give some hints about the human-specific qualities that differentiate human individuals from other beings.

Young Rossum devalued the uniqueness of each human individual because he gave importance to work and production at which human beings are not as good as robots. On the other hand, old Rossum's experiments show that he valued humankind so much so that he spent his years creating one of them. Nevertheless, producing a human being who is completely identical to a real human being brings to mind the following questions: Are these two being the same? Do human beings still possess different qualities from their artificial versions? If not, what is the significance of being human? These questions are similar to the questions the existentialist philosophers ask to set forth the distinction between a subject and an object. According to existential ontology, human subjects are beings for themselves while other beings are beings in themselves. The fundamental difference between them is that beings in themselves possess an essence before they come to existence whereas it is the opposite for beings for themselves. They are created to fulfil a purpose, thus, they cannot change and form their essence. On the contrary, beings for themselves are able to change and develop their essence. From this perspective, the creators old Rossum and young Rossum are beings for themselves and their creations are beings in themselves because their purpose of creation is determined before they are created. However, in the case of Čapek's play, designating artificial men which are produced by human subjects as beings in themselves would be insufficient to indicate how human beings differ from their creation. After all, creating a human being is more complex than creating a gasoline engine. When the development of artificial human beings in the play is taken into consideration, manifesting the distinction between them and their creators becomes much more problematic.

The establishment of Rossum's Universal Robots in the 1900s by old Rossum and his son is depicted by Domin. In his time, robots are more improved than their prototypes and they are cheaper to produce, thus, they are sold and employed all over the world. Together with the involvement of robots in the daily life of people, contradictory views related to the state of those artificial human beings emerge. Some people see robots as profanity to God. According to them, "every human being has to hate 'em" because "they're worse'n beasts" (Čapek, 2004: 26). For Domin and his

colleagues, robots are nothing more than just a man-made production, therefore, they are completely different than human beings. Though they don't hate the robots since they produce and make profit from them, they despise them. In the prologue section of the play, Domin and the other men explain the characteristics of robots to the president's daughter Helena Glory who comes to the factory as a guest to see how robots are manufactured and treated in their production place. In terms of physiology, robots look very much alike to human beings owing to the improvements in robotic science and technology, so much so that no one would "never guess she was made from a different substance than we are" (10). Moreover, they can move and talk just as human beings do. Their cognitive abilities sometimes leave behind humans as Domin explains, "they are mechanically more perfect than we are, they have an astounding intellectual capacity" (9). For instance, Robot Sulla whose appearance and manners make Helena believe that "Sulla is a young woman just like [her]" who is compelled by the company managers "to act as a living advertisement for them" can speak and write in Czech, French, German, and English (11). Helena, therefore, has difficulty to differentiate them from real people. Besides, she believes that robots are human-like beings and they deserve to be treated as human individuals. The language she uses while talking to robots demonstrates that she regards them as fellow human beings. When she unconsciously uses a derogatory word against robots, she corrects herself:

> HELENA. I saw the first Robots back home. The township bought them…. I mean hired--
>
> DOMIN. Bought, my dear Miss Glory, Robots are bought.
>
> HELENA. We acquired them, as street-cleaners. I've seen them sweeping. They are so strange, so quiet. (10)

In the last line, Helena depicts the robot workers in her hometown as if they are human beings who are different than others only in terms of their unusual personalities.

Other people in Europe share her ideas. They even gather around and establish the League of Humanity," a union to demand and defend the rights of robots, which "already has more than two hundred thousand members" (Čapek, 2004: 15-16). Helena is one of them and her real motive to come to the factory is "to incite the robots" against cruel attitudes of human individuals towards them (17). When Domin orders Robot Marius to take Sulla to be cut open to prove to Helena that Sulla is not a person

but a robot, Helena is terrified and she tries to persuade Sulla to react against Domin who gives orders to put an end to her existence:

> HELENA. You want to have her killed?
>
> DOMIN. Machines cannot be killed.
>
> HELENA. Don't be frightened, Sulla. I won't let them hurt you! Tell me, darling, is everyone so inhumane to you? You mustn't put up with that, do you hear?
>
> SULLA. I am a Robot.
>
> HELENA. That makes no difference. Robots are every bit as good people as we are… (11-12)

This valuing attitude of Helena towards robots is not approved by Domin and others. Throughout the prologue, they explain to Helena that robots cannot be treated as if they are human individuals because they do not possess the characteristics that make a being a human being although they can operate, talk, work, and look like humans. It is frequently stated by Domin that robots "have no soul," which is the central difference between them and human beings (9). Also, they do not possess free will nor any desire for anything in the world, including the desire to live. As Domin indicates, "Robots do not cling to life. They can't. They don't have the means—no soul, no pleasures. Grass has more will to live than they do" (12). Besides, "they have no sense of taste. They have no interest in anything" (18). Even though they are equipped with a significant ability to remember, robots cannot develop ideas and "never think up anything original" (14). In addition, they do not possess a sense of humour as Dr. Hallemaier who is in charge of the psychology and education of robots asserts that "no one's ever seen a Robot smile" (18). Most importantly, they are not capable of love and sympathy since they "love nothing, not even themselves," and "feel almost no physical pain" (19). From the point of view of the executives of the company, robots cannot be equal to human beings due to these reasons. They finally achieve to convince Helena that robots are only machines who are programmed by humans to work for them.

Indeed, Domin's and his colleagues' arguments about robots seem quite convincing. After all, human beings are more than mere creatures who can memorise things, learn languages, and work. As Domin's words suggest, human beings are not soulless in contrast to robots. Yet, it is a challenging task to specify what this "soul"

of human beings that makes them different than other beings really is. According to the existentialist philosophy, humans' being incomplete, free, responsible, and limited separates them from other modes of existence. They have both rational and irrational faculties such as emotions, and each of them has unique characteristics since they themselves create their own essence. In addition, they are aware of their limitedness and finiteness. They have the potential to change but at the same time, the consciousness of their freedom, responsibility, and mortality makes them feel distressed. Thus, for existentialism, what makes human beings different and valuable is their potential to realise their authentic existence by consciously accepting their freedom and finiteness, taking action, taking the responsibility of their lives, embracing their individuality, and resolutely continue to live even though they cannot find any meaning in their finite existence. In this respect, it can be said from an existentialist perspective that the "soul" of human beings comes from the potential of human beings to realise their genuine existence. However, as the existentialists claims, the realisation of authentic existence is a potential, not an essentiality of human existence as human beings come to the world without essence and develop their essence by themselves. Those who cannot cope with the anxiety caused by being conscious of their human condition and therefore refuse their incompleteness, freedom, and responsibility cannot actualise their authenticity. It might therefore be claimed that some human beings who reject to realise their authentic existence might also lack a "soul" for existentialism, which also blurs the boundaries between robots and human individuals.

In the prologue of the play, the representation of robots as soulless, emotionless, and work-oriented creations corresponds to the existentialist concept of being-in-itself. They are only the objects of human beings produced to fulfil a purpose in accordance with a formula that was developed by the Rossums. Robots' essence is determined prior to their existence; they are produced to work. Thus, the meaning of their existence is to substitute human labour to enable people to have more leisure time. As their essence comes before their existence, robots cannot change nor go beyond what is given to them. They only perform their duty and cannot decide and take action freely, which means that they do not possess potentiality nor individuality. In this respect, despite the fact that they resemble to human beings in appearance and in their movements, robots are not more than gasoline engines at the beginning of the

play. However, they only have one characteristic that makes their actions slightly unpredictable:

> HALLEMAIER. … Occasionally they go crazy somehow. Something like epilepsy, you know? We call it Robotic Palsy. All of a sudden one of them goes and breaks whatever it has in its hand, stop working, gnashes its teeth—and we have to send it to the stamping mill. Evidently a breakdown in the organism.
>
> DOMIN. A flaw in production.
>
> HELENA. No, no, that's a soul! (Čapek, 2004:19)

While Dr. Hallemaier and Domin believe that this unexpected situation is a deficiency that must be eliminated, Helena sees this as robots' reaction against their creators, thus, as a proof of their free will and action. Although at this stage in the play robots are depicted as beings for themselves, this behaviour of robots signifies more than just a "flaw in the production" in the following acts together with Dr. Gall's new experiments.

The first and the second acts of the play take place precisely ten years after the day Helena visits the factory. In these ten years, humankind witnessed many changes due to the mass production and employment of robots in almost every aspect of life. Helena summarises the developments with the following words: "workers rose up against the Robots and destroyed them … people gave the Robots weapons to defend themselves and the Robots killed so many people … governments began using Robots as soldiers and there were so many wars" (Čapek, 2004:19). Helena's words demonstrate that robots are no longer the soulless machines depicted in the prologue that do not have free will. They transform into another form of being which is indubitably more than a gasoline engine. Using weapons against their creators and killing them are indeed actions that are beyond what these machines are programmed for. Such an act, therefore, connotes that robots become able to make decisions by themselves and perform those decisions freely. In that respect, ontologically, the aspects of being-in-itself fall short to characterise robots. Nonetheless, it would be a hasty conclusion to identify robots as beings for themselves just as human beings. In order to understand if robots are still different from human beings after their transformation, it is necessary to look at how they have changed as well as what caused them to change.

In contrast to the usefulness and productiveness of the old robots, the new robots resist working for human beings, and in fact, become dangerous. They come together, establish a league for themselves, and start to slaughter people. According to a news in the newspaper, "they have assassinated more than seven hundred thousand people apparently on the order of their commander" (Čapek, 2004: 32). Such an act indicates that robots are able to think critically. They can compare and contrast themselves with human beings, assess their situation, and conclude that they must rebel against humanity. However, not every robot shows these signs of change. Performing an individual act and commanding others are special to some of them. Others are still obedient and act in accordance with the commands of their leaders. Radius, a robot serving in the factory, is one of those robots which have the ability to reasoning and going beyond what it was created for. His dialogue with Helena demonstrates the change in him:

> HELENA. Radius, you poor thing, has it happened to you, too? Now they'll send you to the stamping-mill! You don't want to talk?— Look, Radius, you're better than the others. Doctor Gall took such pains to make you different!
>
> RADIUS. Send me to the stamping-mill.
>
> HELENA. I am so sorry that you'll be put to death! Why weren't you more careful?
>
> RADIUS. I will not work for you.
>
> HELENA. Why do you hate us?
>
> RADIUS. You are not like Robots. You are not as capable as Robots are. Robots do everything. You only give orders—utter empty words.
>
> HELENA. That's nonsense, Radius. Tell me, has someone offended you? I want so much for you to understand me.
>
> RADIUS. Empty words.
>
> HELENA. You are talking that way on purpose. Doctor Gall gave you more brains than he gave the others, more than we have. He gave you the greatest brain on earth. You're not like the other Robots, Radius. You quite understand me.
>
> RADIUS. I do not want a master. I know everything. (36-37).

Here, Radius not only shows disobedience to his master Helena, but his words also reveal that he knows what he wants as well as what he does not want. He chooses not to serve Helena and acts in accordance with his wishes, not with Helena's orders. This

attitude of Radius can be seen as an indicator of new robots' having free will. However, it should be noted that robots have not developed these abilities by themselves. Their improvement is an outcome of Helena's wish to equalise robots with human beings and of scientific and technological studies of Doctor Gall at her request. They aimed to make robots more human-like to equalise them with human beings. "I wanted you to prove the whole world that Robots are our equals," says Helena to Radius (37). He "changed the Robots' character" (56) and "transformed them into people" but his experiments resulted in making them more capable than human beings in some aspects, as he says, "they're already superior to us. They're stronger than we are" (57). Being aware of his capabilities, Radius situates himself above human beings and finds serving to human beings as a degradation. Rather, he sees himself worthy of being obeyed and he accordingly states, "I want to be the master of people" (37). Radius is the most advanced robot that Rossum's Universal Robots has ever produced, yet, there are also other improved robots who are conscious of their capabilities and rebel against humanity, as the papers announce, "in Le Havre the first union of Robots has been instituted—and has sent out an invitation to the Robots of the world" (43). Together with this invitation, numerous robots from all over the world unite and proclaim their rebellion to the rest of the world via pamphlets: "Robots of the world! We, the first union of Rossum's Universal Robots, declare man our enemy and outcasts in the universe" (47-48).

It can be understood from this action of robots that they want to alter their situation as servants of people. They have decided to alter it and started to take action for realising it. Thus, in addition to having awareness and free will, they also have the ability to make decisions independently and change their pre-determined destiny. Although robots have gained such a potential to change owing to an intervention of human beings in their creation process, they are the ones who actualise their potentialities. New robots, then, are capable of making decisions and taking actions freely, change, performing their free will, transforming themselves, and realising their potentials. These characteristics correspond to the attributes of being-for-itself, in other words, the human individual. Nevertheless, the people who created them still think that they are only objects, not individuals. Helena, for instance, does not give weight to Radius' words when he expresses his desire to rule human beings. Even though she claims that she wishes to make other humans understand that robots can be

their equals, the idea of being ruled by a robot exceedingly annoys her and she wants to teach him his place as a creature whose existence and annihilation depends on the decision of the human creators: “Do you think that we’re afraid of a lunatic like you? No, not at all. Radius, give this note to Central Director Domin. It instructs them not to send you to the stamping-mill” (Čapek, 2004: 37). Similarly, Domin reacts very harshly when he reads the robots’ pamphlet which announces their rebellion against humankind. “This is nonsense. They go on to assert that they are higher than men on the evolutionary scale. That they are stronger and more intelligent. That man lives off them like a parasite. This is simply heinous” (48).

Whether they do not accept robots as evolved beings that are ontologically equal to them, robots eventually achieve their plan to exterminate human life on earth under Radius’ leadership, slaughtering every human being in the world except Alquist who is the chief builder in the factory. His life is spared because robots consider him as one of them since “he works with his hands like a Robot. He builds houses. He can work” (Čapek, 2004: 70). This emphasis on the importance of work is also seen in their declaration they promulgated before ending the human race. The order was as follows: “Do not spare the men. Do not spare the women. Preserve only the factories, railroads, machines, mines, and raw materials. Destroy everything else. Then return to work. Work must not cease” (48). The emphasis on work in these quotations recalls the initial purpose of their existence, which is to work for human beings. Robots may eradicate human beings and conquer the world, yet, they continue to work and manufacture without slowing down. Quite the contrary, they begin to work more than ever, which results in overproduction and storage problems. “We have increased productivity. There is nowhere left to put all we have produced,” says one robot to Alquist after a while after the annihilation of people (73). However, there is no need for them to work this much for they have enough sustenance to ensure their existence. Besides, since they pass beyond the limits of the initial purpose of their production, their existence becomes purposeless. Thus, robot’s toil to work is meaningless but they never cease working. They chose not to work for people, therefore, they might as well choose not to work at all. Nonetheless, they choose to work and produce without a break. Their determination to continue what they know best to do even if it is pointless can be likened to the persistence of Sisyphus in Camus’ interpretation of the Sisyphus myth. Camus believes that Sisyphus who is punished by gods to a pointless task such

as pushing a rock up to a hill over and over again is content with his struggle because, through embracing this struggle, he himself becomes the one who gives meaning to his existence. Similar to Sisyphus, robots persist in working and manufacturing, which is the only thing that gives their existence a purpose.

Production is important for robots also because no matter how much they are improved, they still cannot breed naturally as the way human beings produce their offspring. In this respect, Rossum's Universal Robots which is the only factory in the world that has the means to manufacture robots is of the utmost value for them. Yet, they cannot produce more robots even though they own the factory since they do not know how to do it. The secret formula developed by the Rossums was destroyed by Helena after she sensed that "as though something were happening to [them] and to everything here—something irreversible—" (Čapek, 2004: 30) because she thought that, for humanity, "it [was] already too late to turn back" to the times when they did not have robots (40). She burnt the formula to put an end to the manufacturing of more robots. Knowing that it was a human achievement, robots expect Alquist, the only living human on earth, to redevelop the formula:

> FIRST ROBOT (RADIUS). Sir, the machines cannot work. We cannot reproduce.
>
> ALQUIST. Call in people.
>
> RADIUS. There are no people.
>
> ALQUIST. Only people can reproduce life. Don't waste my time.
>
> SECOND ROBOT. Sir, take pity on us. A great terror has come over us. We will set right everything we have done.
>
> THIRD ROBOT. We have increased productivity. There is nowhere left to put all we have produced.
> ALQUIST. For whom?
>
> THIRD ROBOT. For the next generation.
>
> RADIUS. The only thing we cannot produce is Robots. The machines are turning nothing but bloody chunks of meat. The skin does not stick to the flesh and the flesh does not cling to the bones. Only amorphous lumps pour out of the machines.
>
> THIRD ROBOT. People knew the secret of life. Tell us their secret.
>
> FOURTH ROBOT. If you do not tell us we will perish. (73)

The robots' words depict that they are aware of the fact that they will be extinct if new robots cannot be manufactured and the idea of annihilation makes them quite uneasy. Their kind's not being able to exist is indeed a great terror for them. Such awareness and disquietude caused by it point to an important change in robots. Old robots were completely indifferent to the idea of death, whether it is the death of their own or of other robots. Robot Sulla Marius' answers to the questions of Domin in the prologue related to death reveal that death did not bear significance for robots:

> DOMIN. Would you put Sulla in the dissecting room?
>
> MARIUS. Yes.
>
> DOMIN. Would you be sorry for her?
>
> MARIUS. I do not know "sorry."
>
> DOMIN. What would happen to her?
>
> MARIUS. She would stop moving. She would be sent to the stamping-mill.
>
> DOMIN. That is death, Marius. Do you fear death?
>
> MARIUS. No.
>
> DOMIN. So you see, Miss Glory. Robots do not cling to life. They can't. They don't have the means—no soul, no pleasures…. (12)

As explained by Domin in the last line, old robots lacked what makes human beings "cling to life." In contrast to them, new robots have fear of death and desire to live. Hence, they desperately try to find a solution for the problem of not being able to produce the next generations. This is in parallel with the existentialists' claim that to exist, even this existence is deeply sunk in misery and suffering, is always better than not to exist. According to existentialism, the awareness of being finitude is an important factor that designates the human condition. It causes deep anxiety in them because death means nonexistence, in other words, nothingness. The idea of death in a general sense might give uneasiness to human beings. However, for Heidegger, one's own death is particularly terrifying for him. Although death is also one of the aspects that make a human being unique since every human individual can only die his death and not another's, the consciousness of dissolving in nothingness after death agitates the individual. New robots' will to exist and fear of death are also echoed in the words of Damon who offers his body to be cut and analysed by Alquist to help him understand the essential requirements to produce robots. Though he courageously

defies death in the beginning and convinces Alquist to gashes him, he deeply relieves when Alquist cannot go on and kill him. “I am al-alive! It—it—it is better to live,” says Damon and adds, “Life—I want—to live! It is better—” (78).

In addition to valuing their existence and being afraid of death, new robots can develop feelings for one another. In contrast to the indifference of old robots to the pains of themselves and others, new robots are able to be sympathetic and affectionate to one another. The contrast that the two robot couples in the play create portrays how much robots have emotionally developed. Robot Sulla and Robot Marius, which were named after two famous Roman commanders whom the executives of the company “thought that Marius and Sulla were lovers,” lacked feelings and sympathy. On the other hand, the second couple introduced in the last act of the play, namely Helena and Primus, love and care for one another. When Alquist says that he will anatomise Helena, Primus does whatever he can to stop him, including offering his own body:

> ALQUIST. … Take the girl into the dissecting room. I’m going to dissect her.
>
> PRIMUS. Helena?
>
> ALQUIST. Of course. Go get everything ready. Well, what are you waiting for? Do I have to call someone else to take her in?
>
> PRIMUS [*grabs a heavy mallet*]. If you move I’ll smash your head in!
>
> ALQUIST. Smash! Smash away! What will the Robots do then?
>
> PRIMUS [falls on his knees]. Sir, take me instead! I was made exactly like her, from the same batch, on the same day! Take my life, sir! [He opens his jacket] Cut here, here!
>
> ALQUIST. Go, I want to dissect Helena. Make haste.
>
> PRIMUS. Take me instead of her. Cut into this breast—I won’t scream, not even sigh! Take my life a hundred times—
>
> ALQUIST. Steady, boy. Take it easy. Can it be that you don’t want to live?
>
> PRIMUS. Without her, no. Without her I don’t, sir…. (Čapek, 2004: 82)

Alquist’s aim here is not to cut and analyse the bodies of these robots, rather, he wants to see how they react when they learn that their lives are in danger. Thus, he also tells Helena that he is going to kill him. Helena reacts the same way as Primus and says that she will “jump out of the window” if he dies because, as Primus adds, they “belong to each other” (83). Alquist deceives them because he notices that they are different than other robots and he wants to be sure whether they have developed human-specific

characteristics or not. Indeed, Primus and Helena can be seen as emotionally most human-like robots in the play. Prior to being subjected to Alquist's deception, they talk to each other about the strange feeling of being alive. "I feel so peculiar, I don't know what it is. I'm so silly, like I've lost my head—my body hurts, my heart, I hurt all over… Primus, I think I'm dying," says Helena, and Primus's reply echoes her uneasiness: "Tell me, Helena, aren't there times when you feel it would be better to die" (80). The feeling they express with these words connotes the absurd feeling that human beings feel, which is one of the concerns of the existentialist philosophy. It originates from being thrown to an alien world and having a finite existence. Some people cannot endure this absurd feeling and believes that it is better to die rather than living with this absurdity. This question of whether to continue living despite this heavy and depressing feeling or not is the main question of philosophy according to Camus. For him, one must revolt against this feeling and the meaninglessness of existence by continuing to live. Primus and Helena, too, feel this absurdity and continue to exist although being ready to sacrifice their lives for one another without hesitation.

Revolting against their essence, being aware of their finiteness, and having such feelings are indeed the signs that new robots cannot be labelled as beings in themselves. It is beyond doubt that such a transformation could not happen if Doctor Gall did not improve their qualities to give them souls. However, this interference did not change every robot in the same manner. Although they all have developed, it is possible to detect differences among new robots. For instance, Radius is the most intelligent creature in the world but he does not offer his body to be anatomised by Alquist while Damon volunteers to do so. Likewise, Helena is more interested in the beauties of life whereas Primus is more into books (Čapek, 2004: 79). It can therefore be claimed that Doctor Gall's intervention does not add the same qualities to the robots, rather, it bestows them the potentiality to change. What makes them actualise their potentiality is expressed by a robot who defends his kind against Alquist's disparagement of them:

> ALQUIST. Robots are not life. Robots are machines.
>
> SECOND ROBOT. We were machines, sir, but from horror and suffering we've become…

ALQUIST. What?

SECOND ROBOT. We've become beings with souls.

FOURTH ROBOT. Something is struggling within us. There are moments when something gets into us. Thoughts come to us that are not our own. (75)

Those lines above demonstrate that what really changes robots is "horror and suffering." After living through dread and pain, robots have broken the limits of being mere objects of human beings and realised what they potentially have. This transformation is accordant with Jaspers' concept of limit situations. It is one of the fundamental claims of existentialism that human beings are inescapably in a situation throughout their existence. However, Jaspers asserts that some situations have much more impact on human beings than others, so much so that they cause human beings to remember their limits and finitude. Such situations are generally painful and terrifying, and very challenging to go through. Yet, for Jaspers, they can also be a path that leads people to actualise their authentic existence if they can endure the pain and take a step to change. In parallel with Jaspers' ideas, robots' undergoing fear and misery make them question their situation, understand the necessity to transform, and eventually realise their potentials.

Moreover, new robots are also aware of the consequences of their actions and they take responsibility for them. As quoted earlier, one of the robots states that "we will set right everything we have done" (Čapek, 2004: 73). They are conscious of the fact that the calamity which came upon them was their own doing, and that they alone are to be held responsible for it. Accordingly, they try to do whatever they can do to rectify what they have caused. Of course, this calamity is not the destruction of humanity. They could not possess the formula but slaughtered those who could find a way to produce robots though they knew that they themselves were not capable of developing a new formula. This is the main reason why they have to face annihilation. In the same vein, the calamity that came upon human beings was a consequence of their faults. The new age enabled by the robots produced in Rossum's Universal Robots was Domin's and his colleagues' utopia, except for Alquist. Their aim was to free people from the obligation to work to gain money to live. By replacing the human workforce with a robot workforce, they wanted to bring the limitless amount of wealth

to humanity, and therefore to ensure equality among them. The dialogue below demonstrates this utopia and how they plan to actualise it:

> DOMIN. … But within the next ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much wheat, so much cloth, so much everything that things will no longer have any value. Everyone will be able to take as much as he needs. There'll be no more poverty. Yes, people will be out of work, but by then there'll be no work left to be done. Everything will be done by living machines. People will do only what they enjoy. They will live only to perfect themselves.
>
> HELENA. Will it really be so?
>
> DOMIN. It will. It can't be otherwise. But before that some awful things may happen, Miss Glory. That just can't be avoided. But then the subjugation of man by man and the enslavement of man by matter will cease. Never again will anyone pay for his bread with hatred and his life. There'll be no more laborers, no more secretaries. No one will have to mine coal or slave over someone else's machines. No longer will man need to destroy his soul doing work that he hates. (21)

With its solutions to poverty and inequality, their utopia gives the impression that it would be a very pleasant system to live in. However, as Domin himself indicates, such a system cannot be achieved without doing awful things. In addition to that, to work is not necessarily undesirable. For some people, working is a meritorious occupation. "There was something good in the act of serving, something great in humility… there was some kind of virtue in work and fatigue," says Alquist, who experiences the satisfaction of being useful as he is a builder (21). The intention of Domin and his colleagues was far from being harmful, nevertheless, taking work out of people's hands and giving them plenty of free time did not end as the way they expected. There were severe consequences of not working. The most important one was infertility. According to Alquist, women cannot bear children "because human labor has become unnecessary, because suffering has become unnecessary, because man needs nothing, nothing, nothing but to enjoy… there is nothing more terrible than giving people paradise on earth" (35). In this respect, humankind has already faced the possibility of extinction before they were slaughtered by robots. Yet, enhancing robots and treating them as if they were objects realised this possibility. Thus, their destruction was nothing but an outcome of their attempts to establish their utopian system.

Nevertheless, they were not eager to accept their responsibility in this catastrophe. According to Hallemeier, "no one's to blame. It's just that the Robots,"

while Alquist believed that all of them were equally responsible: “I blame science! I blame technology! Domin! Myself! All of us” (Čapek, 2004: 56). On the other hand, Busman claimed that the whole of humanity was to blame because they got used to the comfort that robots brought to their lives: “The whole world wanted its Robots. My boy, we did nothing but ride the avalanche of demand” (59). Even though Doctor Gall and Helena accepted that they were responsible for the revolt of robots against humanity since they wanted them to be more human-like, they did not have much time to correct what they had done, nor had they done prior to robots’ uprising. Apart from them and Alquist, the others did not see themselves blameworthy for the calamity that all humankind encountered. Instead of accepting that they chose and act freely, they blamed others or the general state of affairs. Therefore, from an existential perspective, they could not actualise their genuine existence. This avoidant attitude of human characters to freedom and responsibility juxtaposes with robots’ acceptance of their blameworthiness in the outcomes of their actions. While human subjects as beings for themselves hesitate to shoulder their freedom and responsibility, and therefore cannot change nor actualise their authentic existence, their creations have transformed greatly. Robots’ transformation is indeed a marvellous one. The formerly mechanical productions which were produced to work for humankind now possess free will and feelings, choose freely and accept being responsible for their actions. Through the contrast of this change in robots and stability of human beings, Čapek’s play echoes the aim of the existential philosophy: to remind human individuals’ their potentiality to change.

5.2. *A NUMBER*

Similar to Čapek’s *Rossum’s Universal Robots*, Caryl Churchill’s play *A Number* presents a depiction of how scientific improvements can affect human existence. As genealogical studies began to gain pace towards the end of the twentieth century, new possibilities that can empower human beings to interfere with natural processes of human life emerged. Since then, there have been debates about how troublesome the actualisation of those possibilities might be for human individuals. According to Michael Reiss, “genetic engineering raises issues about the nature of life

itself, about what it is to be human, about the future of the human race, and about our rights to knowledge and privacy" (qtd. in Schmeink: 2016: 4). As Reiss indicates, the abilities that genetics have bestowed to human beings have brought about many questions related to human existence, both on the level of the human race and the individual. Human cloning is one of the possibilities that raises both ontological and ethical questions. In *A Number,* Churchill deals with this issue by focusing on the situation of three individuals who have the same genetics. The play takes place in a time when human cloning is a scientific achievement that can be done for money. Issuing such a scientific topic, *A Number* is regarded as dystopian science fiction although the main concern of the play is not science but its negative impacts on the individual, (Higgins, 2008: 238). All through the five scenes, a father who had his son cloned and raised the clone instead of his son confronts his son, the clone that he has raised, and another clone that he newly met. While he faces the consequences of his choice, his sons face the reality that they are not genetically unique. Through such confrontations, the individuality and uniqueness of individuals as well as the consequences of their actions are problematised. These topics are among the main concerns of existential ontology which gives utmost weight to human individuals' uniqueness.

The play begins with the conversation between Salter and his son Bernard (B2) who has just learned that he has clones, which means that there are other men on earth who have the same genes as him. Learning such an important information is undoubtedly horrifying, devastating, and confusing for an individual who has lived his life knowing that there is no one like him in the world. Indeed, everyone has an idiosyncratic genetic structure that differentiates him from the rest of the world and makes him an unrepeatable, a unique being. However, the existence of other beings with whom an individual is genetically indistinguishable spoils his uniqueness and renders him repeatable. Thus, cloning might be seen as a threat to the individuality and uniqueness of individuals. It poses several problems related to the being of human subjects. Are the original and the clone ontologically identical? If not, what are the differences between the original and the clone? Is it possible to accept clones as human individuals? Or, are they merely copies of the original? The situation of Bernard (B2) and Bernard (B1) after learning the reality about their existence reflects how those

problems overwhelm the original and the clone. To begin with B2, he feels terrified and puzzled:

> B2. no it was stupid, it was shock, I'd known for a week before I went to the hospital but it was still
>
> SALTER. It is, I am, the shocking thing is that there *are* these, not how many but at all
>
> B2. even one
>
> SALTER. exactly, even one, a twin would be a shock
>
> B2. A twin would be a surprise but a number
>
> SALTER. a number, any number is a shock. (Churchill, 2004: 10-11)

As is seen in the dialogue above, learning the existence of his clones appals him because it is the proof that he is not the only one in the world, at least in terms of genetics. Just as he says, even one clone makes his existence repeatable. Yet, he has a number of clones, which threatens his individuality by making B2 himself "a number." His name also mirrors this situation; B2 stands for Bernard the second. Consequently, his sense of self is shattered and he himself gains doubts about his individuality, which causes disquietude and distress in him.

His uneasiness is not groundless from the point of existentialism. As is known, the fundamental assumption of existential philosophy is that existence comes before essence. Accordingly, human beings create their essence by means of their own decisions and actions. Since human beings cannot escape from being in a situation and each of them is in different situations, their choices and acts are dissimilar. Thus, their essences are non-identical, which means that every human individual is unique. Uniqueness is also an indispensable characteristic of being-for-itself. In contrast to being-for-itself, being-in-itself comes into being in compliance with its essence. Since the essence is fixed and determined prior to its existence, there can be identical beings in themselves that are created to fulfil the same purpose. However, such a kind of reproduction is not possible for human subjects from an existential perspective. Moreover, the existential concept of authenticity also emphasises the significance of individuality and uniqueness of the individual. Being authentic connotes, in a sense, being original. It is advocated by the existentialists that individuals should realise their authentic existence by embracing their freedom, responsibilities, choices, and actions which inevitably make each existence special. Moreover, a person who realises his

authentic existence undoubtedly has control of his life as a free being. He himself is the one who leads his life freely, and his path is unique to himself. Uniqueness, therefore, has a crucial place in one's existence according to existentialism. When it is threatened, one's essence and authenticity are inevitably threatened as well. In such a case, he would be proceeding on someone else's path, in other words, he would be a repetition.

The frustration of B2, therefore, is understandable. What he has gone through is very suffering because he is not certain about his unique self, his individuality, and his freedom. "It is horrible, I don't feel myself," says him (Churchill, 2004: 38). What he has believed about himself until now is contrasted with the fact that he is not genetically unique. Other clones exist and their existence makes him question his life and individuality. It is indeed horrible to be conscious of being copied. Yet, what might be more dreadful is to be conscious of being the copied one. In the beginning of the play, B2 seems that he thinks that he is the original one and others were duplicated by him. However, he suspects that he might be a clone of another person and this possibility is exceedingly disturbing for him because it means that he is a repetition of another person. The possibility of being a clone damages his freedom and essence and therefore degrades him to the level of a product, a being-for-itself. Salter's degrading attitude towards clones echoes their inferiority:

B2. You said things, these things

SALTER. I said?

B2. you called them things. I think we'll find they're people.

SALTER. Yes of course they are, they are of course.

B2. Because I'm one.

SALTER. No.

B2. Yes. Why not? Yes.

SALTER. Because they're copies

B2. copies? they're not

SALTER. copies of you which some mad scientist has illegally

B2. how do you know that?

SALTER. I don't but

B2. what if someone else is the one, the first one, the real one and I'm

SALTER. no because

B2. not that I'm *not* real which is why I'm saying they're not things, don't call them

SALTER. just wait, because I'm your father. (11-12)

Salter does not regard them as human individuals and calls them "copies" and "things," which confirms B2's worries that being a clone is being an object. Therefore, he corrects his father whenever he mentions the clones as things. He wants to be accepted as a human subject even if he is a clone of a person. Although he says that he is also "real," he is afraid that being a clone would take something from his reality, in other words, his authenticity. Thus, he tries to convince himself and his father that whether the original or the clones, they "just happen to have identical be identical identical genetic" structure and "they are all still people like twins are all, quins are all" (12). He needs to see himself, and to be seen by others, as a unique individual.

However, B2 knows that he, too, must accept the others as unique subjects rather than replicas of himself if he wants to be accepted as an individual. Even though he forces himself and his father to see them not as objects but as humans, he inwardly denies the individuality of others. "Of course I want them to be things, I do think they're things," says him and he adds, "I don't think they're, of course I do think they're them just as much as I'm me but I. I don't know what I think, I feel terrible." (Churchill, 2004: 12). His fragmented sentences portray that he is thoroughly confused about what to think about himself and others. Seeing others as things provides him an illusionary superiority over them, yet, he also understands that it also proves his being an object because he is one of them. He cannot bear the heaviness of this confusion and sinks into horror and uneasiness. From an existential point of view, what B2 goes through after finding out the existence of the clones is a limit situation. According to Jaspers, a limit situation is a situation that devastates individuals by reminding them of their limits. When a person experiences a limit situation, he faces who he really is and who he is not, which is very overwhelming for him. In such a case, the individual might react in two ways; deceiving himself by ignoring and denying the situation to ease his agony, or, accepting the situation and seeing it as an opportunity to change and realise his authentic existence. Learning that there are other people genetically identical to him shows him that he is not unique and makes him question his identity. Salter tries to visualise what his son experienced in the hospital and the imaginary

scenario he creates demonstrates how shocking and devastating the situation that B2 is in:

> SALTER. So you didn't suddenly suddenly see
>
> B2. what suddenly see myself coming round the corner
>
> SALTER. because that could be
>
> B2. like seeing yourself on the camera in a shop or you hear yourself on the answering machine and you think god is that what I
>
> SALTER. but more than that, it'd be it'd be
>
> B2. don't they say you die if you meet yourself?
>
> SALTER. walk round the corner and see yourself you could get a heart attack. Because if that's me over there who am I?
>
> B2. Yes but it's not me over there
>
> SALTER. no I know
>
> B2. it's like having a twin that's all it's just
>
> SALTER. I know what it is. (15-16)

Just as the fright that emerges from realising that the person coming towards him is he himself, knowing that there are a number of people who have the same genes as B2 terrifies him. As if looking at himself from outside, he becomes aware of who he is. It is indeed as frightening as death since his sense of self is attacked. Though he says that "it's not me over there," B2 is not sure if he can prove that he is different from the others.

His devastation grows later in the first scene when he learns that he is the clone. Salter, at first, denies the existence of an original one whose genes were copied and tries to persuade B2 that he is not a clone. When B2 expresses his fears that he might be the clone and not the original because he was told in the hospital that "none of [them] was the original," Salter says that "I think you are mistaken because you're confused" (Churchill, 2004: 17). After the insistence of B2 to tell him the truth, Salter mentions his first son and explains what happened, however, his explanation is rather deceptive:

> B2. So what about this original? I don't quite I don't
>
> SALTER. There was someone.
>
> B2. There was what kind of someone?

SALTER. There was a son.

B2. A son of yours?

SALTER. Yes.

B2. So when was that?

SALTER. That was some time earlier.

B2. Some time before I was born there was

SALTER. another son, yes, a first

B2. who what, who died

SALTER. who died, yes

B2. and you wanted to replace him

SALTER. I wanted (19-20)

It is understood from his words that he has a detached attitude towards the original one. He does not mention him as "my son" or "my first child," but as "a son" or "a first." He is also dishonest about the existence of this "another" son. Although B2 is convinced that the original is dead, he is still very much annoyed with the fact that he is not the original. Besides, Salter's explanation proves that his existence was deliberately brought into existence to fulfil a purpose which is to substitute the first one:

B2. so I'm just him over again.

SALTER. No but you are you because that's who you are but I wanted one just the same because that seemed to me the most perfect

B2. but another child might have been better

SALTER. no I wanted the same

B2. but I'm not him

SALTER. no but you're just the way I wanted

B2. but I could have been a different person not like him I

SALTER. how could you? if I'd had a different child that wouldn't be you, would it. You're this one.

B2. I'm just a copy. I'm not the real one. (21)

As Salter very openly indicates, he didn't want another child but the same child "over again." Therefore, B2's existence has a purpose. Though unconsciously, he spends his whole life fulfilling that purpose by being the son of Salter. His essence, then, was

determined before he came to existence. Thus, He questions his freedom in his decisions and actions, and his position in his own life. He feels that he has lost control of his existence. Being a clone also means that he is an artifact and a product of science. Furthermore, he is one of the clones of the original son of Salter. There are also others who were produced in accordance with the same essence. This is mass production. His very humanness is shattered.

Yet, B2 is not the only one who goes through this devastation. Bernard (B1) also experiences a limit situation as a consequence of learning the existence of his clones. Though suffering from similar threats to his uniqueness and authenticity, B1's devastation differs from B2's since he is the original and the unwanted one. Although B1 does not have any doubts about his existence as a human being, his uniqueness is crushed when he learns that a number of artificial people were made by using his genetic structure. He is as disturbed as B2 about the existence of the others, but especially the existence of B2. His uneasiness is seen in the second scene when he faces Salter:

> B1. and he looked just like me did he indistinguishable from
>
> SALTER. yes
>
> B1. so it worked out very well. And this son lives and breathes?
>
> SALTER. yes
>
> B1. talks and fucks? eats and walks? swims and dreams and exists somewhere right now yes does he? exist now?
>
> SALTER. yes
>
> B1. still exists
>
> SALTER. yes of course
>
> B1. happily?
>
> SALTER. well mostly you could say (Churchill, 2004: 27)

It is very painful for B1 to know that there is another person identical to him who replaces his own life. Besides, it was his father's choice to create exactly the same child while he already had one. Thus, in addition to the devastation caused by losing his uniqueness, B1 also undergoes the frustration of being abandoned by his father and being replaced by a copy of him. B1 tries several ways to prove to his father that his plan of raising the same child did not work because he is different than the clone. First,

he mentions some details about his life such as his rather unhappy relationship with dogs (29). Then, he talks about one of his childhood habits to make Slater remember their relationship before he sent him away. “When I was there in the dark. I’d be shouting,” (31) says him and adds, “I want to know if you could hear me or not because I never knew were you hearing me and not coming or could you not hear me and if I shouted loud enough you’d come” (32). His aim is to make Salter understands that he was a bad father even before he decided to have him cloned. Later, he implies that he can make B2’s life miserable by saying that “if he had [a child] I’d kill it” (34).

B2, too, understands that B1 poses a danger to his life. He himself is also annoyed by B1’s existence. In the third scene, after meeting B1, he tells his father that “I don’t want to be anywhere near him” (Churchill, 2004: 38). Therefore, he decides to move to another country to be away from B1 and the other clones of him. In this way, he can live as if he was not a clone of somebody and does not have to prove his uniqueness. “If I go away by myself I might feel all right,” says him (39). It is undoubtedly difficult for him to live near a person who is genetically identical to him and who is a threat to his existence. However, B2 also wants to be away from Salter who had him produced to be exactly the same as B1. The life he has now is not the life he has built for himself, he lives in accordance with the path Salter decided for him before he came into existence. Besides, Salter always emphasises how much he resembles B1. As B2 needs to be recognised as a unique being, this emphasis adds to his uneasiness:

> SALTER. You remind me of him.
>
> B2. I remind myself of him. We both hate you.
>
> SALTER. I thought you
>
> B2. I don’t blame you it’s not your fault but what you’ve been like what you’re like I can’t help it.
>
> SALTER. Yes of course.
>
> B2. Except what he feels as hate and what I feel as hate are completely different because what you did to him and what you did to me are different things.
>
> SALTER. I was nice to you. (45)

As B2 stresses, both he and B1 hate Salter because he was the one who decided to clone B1, deprived them of their uniqueness, which led them to experience limit

situations. Yet, as he also mentions, they hate Salter for different reasons; one hates him for cloning him and sending him away, and the other hates him for bereaving of his authenticity. Although B1 and B2 suffer from different limit situations since the former is the original and the latter is the clone, their reactions to these agonising situations are similar. B2's decision to leave the country to start a new life is indeed a rebellious action against what he was produced for, in other words, his essence. In a different place, B2 can have the opportunity to lead his life through his own and free will, choices, and actions. Thus, he can create his essence. Nevertheless, by going away to a place in which he is not known as a clone and he does not need to see others, he avoids the fact that he is a clone and there are people that are genetically identical to him. To overcome this limit situation, he should accept his reality instead of avoiding it. Besides, he does not need to go to another place to perform his freedom. Therefore, moving to another country means ignoring his reality. B1 also has an avoidant attitude towards the limit situation he is in. To be able to substantiate his uniqueness and to punish his father, he extinguishes what threatens his individuality; he follows B2 and kills him (48). By doing so, B1 avoids the fact that he was cloned.

Nonetheless, B1's killing B2 is an important action since it raises questions about the individuality of one's death. According to Heidegger, death has a very significant place in one's life not only because it means nothingness, but it is also one of the factors that make one's existence idiosyncratic. No one is able to die instead of another. Therefore, every death is unique. Also, when one dies, he ceases to exist once and for all, thus, he is deprived of possibilities. However, having a number of clones complicates the issue of death. The following questions can accordingly be asked: Is the death of a clone unique if clones can replace the original and one another? Or, if one's life is replaced by his clone, does his death bear any significance? Salter's words after his sons' death while talking to Michael who is another clone of B1 echo this problematisation of death:

> SALTER. I didn't feel I'd lost him when I sent him away because I had the second chance. And when the second one my son the second son was murdered it wasn't so bad as you'd think because it seemed fair. I was back with the first one.
>
> MICHAEL. But now
>
> SALTER. now he's killed himself

MICHAEL. now you feel

SALTER. now I've lost him, I've lost

MICHAEL. Yes

SALTER. now I can't put it right any more. (Churchill, 2004: 61)

Since B2 is the replacement of B1, B1's absence is not very significant for Salter. In the same vein, B2's death is also trivial for him because B1, the original one, is still alive. Yet, B1's death bears utmost significance because it means that Salter is deprived of the chance to rectify what he had done wrong. Then, in the eyes of Salter who chose to clone his son to have another chance with him, the death of a replica does not carry any weight. On the other hand, the death of his original son means the end of possibilities not only for B1 but also for their relationship. Salter's comments on the deaths of his sons re-echo the predetermined essence of the clones. In the first place, B2 was made to substitute B1. If his death is not important for Salter as long as his son the original is alive, B2's existence is indeed reduced to the level of a being-in-itself. Nonetheless, although B2 is replaceable for Salter, his death is still unique to him since he dies his own death and not B1's or any other clone's. Just like B1's death, B2's death signifies the end of his potentiality. In addition, his relationship with both B1 and B2 was intimate since he is the father of the former and he raised the latter. Although there are other clones of B1, they cannot be his sons because he does not know them. He therefore states:

SALTER. I miss him so much. I missed them both.

MICHAEL. There's nineteen more of us.

SALTER. That's not the same. (62)

In this respect, both B1 and B2 are special for him. What he has shared with them cannot be shared with other clones as he states that "I don't love the others" (50). Likewise, his relationship with B1 is different from his relationship with B2. Therefore, B1's and B2's deaths must be separately significant for Salter, which also validates the uniqueness of their death.

B1 and B2's unique relationship with Salter can also be seen as a proof of their individuality. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that what initially engenders the limit situations that B1 and B2 experience is Salter's decision to have his son cloned and live with his clone instead of him. By doing so, Salter does not only cause their

individuality to be threatened but he also leaves one fatherless and forces the other to live a life that belongs to another person. His choice to clone B1 is the reason why they were subjected to scientific studies, which also damages their humanness by making them the objects of science. In this respect, Salter is also responsible for the miseries of B1 and B2. However, he does not take responsibility for his decision and he blames the scientists for making more clones than one: "that wasn't part of the deal. They were meant to make one of you not a whole number, they stole that" (Churchill, 2004: 21). He even tries to persuade B2 and later B1 to sue the hospital and take money as a punishment for harming their "identity" (14; 50). Nevertheless, one clone is enough to discomfort B1, and as for B2, the original's existence is too problematic for him that he is not highly worried about the other clones. Thus, what they go through is an outcome of his choice and his choice is a deliberate and a very puzzling one. He could easily have another child but Salter "wanted one just the same because that seemed to [him] the most perfect" (21). To want to be the father of the same child, however, is not reasonable since he already had that child. Salter's cloning B1 and choosing to raise the clone indicates that he wanted to have another chance with him because he is aware of the fact that he was not a good father to him. "I know I could have managed better because I did with you because I stopped, shut myself away, gave it all up came off it all while I waited for you," says him to B2 (42). His relationship with B2 undoubtedly validates that he has changed. However, by deciding to prove his capability of change by taking care of another version of the same child, Salter denied his son's capability of change, in other words, his freedom. Therefore, B1 was degraded to the level of an object in the eyes of his father even before he was cloned. In terms of existentialism, Salter's choice demonstrates that he is not an authentic individual, although his uniqueness is unquestionable, as he does not accept his son's potentiality and freedom as well as his blameworthiness in the outcomes of his decision. Though he has changed his attitude as a father, he achieved this change by replacing his child with his clone. In this respect, he has not realised his potentiality and his authentic existence.

Comparing and contrasting clones and human beings, Churchill's work investigates existentialist concepts such as the human way of existence, individuality, authenticity, subject and object dichotomy, potentiality, and death. On the one hand, B2 suffers from the reality that he is a replica of a human being, which makes him

question his own humanness. On the other hand, B1 is wretched by the fact that he was cloned by the scientists and left by his father who looked after a clone while he grew up fatherless. Though one is the original and the other is the clone, they both feel that their individuality and uniqueness are endangered by the existence of one another. Through the sufferings of these characters, *A Number* raises a number of questions related to human cloning whose answers might also help one to understand what it is to be human.

5.3. *THE WAR PLAYS*

The War Plays is a trilogy of Edward Bond which comprises of three parts, *Red, Black, and Ignorant, The Tin Can People*, and *Great Peace*. As a whole, the trilogy mainly concentrates on human actions and their consequences, especially brutal and cruel actions, by foreseeing a dystopian future in which humankind comes to the edge of extinction after a series of massive violence and bloodshed, including nuclear wars. Edward Bond believes that the major problem in today's world is violence and it seriously threatens the future of humankind as he states that "violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future." (Bond, 1998: 11). According to him, brutality is not a natural human behaviour, in other words, human beings are not necessarily violent. Rather, it emerges as a consequence of the capitalist system which generates artificial necessities for human life and obliges human subjects to live for the fulfilment of them (Biçer, 2008: 60). This divergence from human nature which triggers violent actions is criticised and the indispensability to change for humankind to have a future is emphasised in *The War Plays* trilogy. By questioning human actions in different situations and problematising what is right and wrong, *The War Plays* indicates that such a change can only be attained when human beings reject conforming to the behavioural patterns forced by consumerist social systems and act in freedom and responsibility. In this respect, Bond's trilogy recapitulates the concepts of existential ethics which foreground the importance of free choices and actions of human beings who are completely responsible for themselves. As it is put forth by the existentialists that human beings are responsible not only for themselves but also for each other, thus, their actions and decisions affect one another.

Therefore, according to existential ethics, human actions and choices are ethical as long as they are grounded on human freedom, which requires being aware of and taking responsibility for the possible and actual outcomes of actions and decisions. These ideas of existential ethics are issued throughout all three parts of *The War Plays* which give a demonstration of how unfree choices and irresponsible acts of human beings can lead to deterioration and eventually destroy their future.

The three parts of the trilogy depict different times in humankind's downward progression towards the calamity caused by a nuclear holocaust. The first part, *Red, Black, and Ignorant* demonstrates how violence and wars supported by the capitalist system pave the way for the destruction of the world. The second part, *The Tin Can People*, takes place seventeen years after the nuclear catastrophe, portraying the primitive attempts of those who have survived to start a social life. Finally, *The Great Peace* presents both before and years after the explosions by focusing on the choices and sufferings of one character. The ruination of the world is proclaimed in the very beginning of the first part, *Red, Black, and Ignorant*, by the two main characters, the Mother and her son the Monster. The Mother narrates what happened when the bombs blew up:

> In the past there were survivors to tell that suddenly the world became a place of toys
> A huge red ball inflated in the sky
> Houses shook as doll's houses shake when they're carried by children
> Small things became big and big things vanished
> Many reported that the cloud glowed like a bonfire
> And that the wounded babbled in the strange tongues spoken by children when they pretend to be foreigners
> …
> That morning the child had moved in my womb as if it wanted to run away from the world
> Through the womb's wall it had felt the world's fear (Bond, 1985 (*Red*): 5)

In her depiction, the Mother resembles the catastrophe to a children's game. Just like children recklessly play with their toys, people have played with the world without considering the consequences. However, unlike a children's game, one cannot start over as if nothing ever happened when the toy is the world itself. There can be severe consequences, and in this case, this dangerous play ends by terminating the world which is already so ruined that babies are afraid to be born. The Mother's words,

therefore, point to the fact that human beings cannot escape from the consequences of their actions which might affect even the future of humankind. This idea constitutes the core of existential ethics which is quite related to existential ontology. Since they come to existence without an essence, and therefore they are utterly free to form their essence through their own choices and actions, human beings are entirely responsible for what they choose and how they act. This does not only mean that they are responsible for who they are, but it also signifies that they solely are to blame for the results of their decisions and actions. Existential ethics, therefore, advocates that one must act being aware of his responsibility for both his actions and their consequences. Such consequences might be as problematic as to devastate humankind. Even then, one must accept his responsibility, or else, he would deny his freedom, and therefore, his authentic existence. In parallel with existential ethics, Bond's *The War Plays* demonstrates how cataclysmic the results of irresponsible actions can be.

Shortly after the Mother utters her words, the trilogy's aim, which is to show people that their end is destruction if they don't change and continue to act irresponsibly, is articulated by her son:

> Now we will show you scenes from the life I did not live
> If what happens seems such that human beings would not allow it to happen you have not read the histories of your time (Bond, 1985 (*Red*): 6)

Indeed, violence and wars have dominated human history and a change is necessary to stop the rot. Otherwise, destruction is inevitable. For Bond, the source of brutality and conflict is the social structures themselves because, in such systems, people are forced to act in a way that conforms with the codes and orders of those systems. In fact, those codes and laws are constituted to preserve the maintenance of systems and prevent individuals' free choices and actions. To make people act in accordance with social codes, systems use education and military force. The examples of this situation can be seen in both the first and the third part of the trilogy. In the second scene of *Red, Black, and Ignorant* which is titles "Learning," a boy accidentally spits on the Monster. Learning the accident, the Teacher orders the Monster what to do:

> You are to go to Robinson and tell him
> 'It is against school rules to spit in the school buildings or the school playground
> Spitting is unhygienic and loutish
> Furthermore it may lead to unforeseeable circumstances

By this spit you might have forfeited my friendship'
Then you will spit on Robinson's sleeve
After that you will both shake hands (7)

Although spitting is not allowed in school because it is not healthy and has the potential to start an unpredictable event, the Teacher instructs him to commit the crime for the sake of the rule and expects the Monster and the boy to have an agreement on the wrongness of their actions. However, instead of reaching an agreement, they start fighting when the Monster spits on the boy as he is told. Thus, an accident is punished for the "wrong" action itself, which results in an act of violence.

How systems use education as a means to shape people's decisions and actions is once again depicted in the fifth scene of the first part when the Buyer comes to buy the Monster's child who newly begins to talk in the name of the government because "training must begin early to have full effect" (Bond, 1985 (*Red*): 10). By buying children from their parents at very early ages and undertaking their education, the system in *Red, Black, and Ignorant* aims to ensure the conformity of the children's future actions with its benefits. The Buyer accordingly states:

BUYER. The good citizen is satisfied more by serving than being served

MONSTER. That's what you'll train him to think

BUYER. Certainly
And then he wont object will he?
His opinions will be formed even before he knows the subjects on which he holds them
Could life be more trouble-free? (11)

Thus, through educating young generations to obey the codes and laws, the system intends to provide a "trouble-free" environment. However, what is good and right for the system can cause disagreements and conflicts as in the case of the fight between the Monster and Robinson, and sometimes bloodshed, especially when military forces are assigned to assure the obedience of people.

In the eighth scene of *Red, Black, and Ignorant* which is titled "No one can willingly give up the name of human," the Monster's son who becomes a soldier comes back to his hometown to perform what he is ordered; to kill a civilian due to the massive famine. As a soldier, it is his job to obey the rules no matter how violent consequences they can have. Besides, the punishment of disobedience is death.

Nevertheless, such an order does not cause uneasiness in the Monster's son. Quite the contrary, he is content to fulfil his duty and he states that,

> I like the army
> When you're a soldier all your problems are solved by training
> Kill or be killed
> No apologies or explanations
> You always gab about right and wrong
> Do what's right? –its as much use as an overcoat to a corpse
> …
> Im not ashamed to tell you why Im here
> Every squaddie's been sent back to his own street to shoot one civvie-corpse (Bond, 1985 (*Red*): 15)

It can be understood from his words that the Son is content because he first thinks that what is ordered must be obeyed without question, and secondly, he believes that he cannot be responsible for his actions since he is a member of the army and "in the end, the army's doing this for the public good" (15). Due to his indifferent attitude towards such a violent act, his father the Monster questions his humanness. "He sits there in human clothes and speaks our language," says him and asks, "Doesn't the food humans eat poison you?" (16). The same attitude is seen in the third scene of *Great Peace*. In fact, it resembles the eighth scene of *Red, Black, and Ignorant*. Again, a soldier comes to his town to perform a violent task and he explains this task to his mother:

> SON. I've got t' kill a child
>
> WOMAN. What? You've got t' kill a child?
>
> SON. Its an order
>
> …
>
> WOMAN. Kill a kid? What kid?
>
> SON. Any kid
>
> WOMAN. Yer cant
>
> SON. Its an order
>
> WOMAN. They cant give you an order like that
>
> SON. The army can
>
> Kids eat too much—you two are all right, I drop you the thins—you must've seen the others are starving!
> Its gonna get worse
> They'd die anyway (Bond, 1985 (*Great*): 10).

Just as the other son, the son in *Great Peace* does not find killing a person ethically problematic since it is his duty as a soldier. He, too, acts as he is instructed to act without questioning the possible consequences of it and leaves the responsibility to the system. However, according to existential ethics, such an attitude means denying one's free will, and therefore, his humanness. Since a human individual is completely free in his choices and actions, he necessarily responsible for them. He cannot free himself from being responsible for himself and others. Thus, even though these soldiers believe that such violent acts are not a choice but a duty that they have to perform, they are the subjects of those acts from the existential perspective. It is not possible for them to rid themselves of the blameworthiness of their actions. If a person does not accept that he is not responsible for the duties that he has to perform, he accepts that he is dependant on those who give orders to him and that he is not free, and therefore he denies being a being-for-itself. No matter how much he ignores his responsibility, he is still fully responsible for his choices and actions according to existential ethics. The Monster's reaction to his son corresponds to this claim of existential ethics. Taking responsibility for his actions is one of the important aspects of being human. His sons' attitude, therefore, is inhuman for him.

Even though being extremely barbarous, the two sons' behaviours are not peculiar to them. It is quite common among human beings to avoid the responsibility of their actions and choices by hiding behind duties and obligations. Especially in domineering social systems which use force against their inhabitants, people are more likely to accept to behave following the rules imposed on them even when such behaviours contrast to their personal morals. Claeys clarifies this relation between being oppressed and putting the responsibility on the system's shoulder as follows:

> When groups provide us with a mask they allow us to feign having no free will. Thus, pointing the finger elsewhere, we can escape some or even all of the consequences of our actions. So 'we do together things that would be unthinkable when we are acting as responsible individuals. We are swept away by a contagion. We even sacrifice our own interests to those of the group.' … The more powerless and vulnerable we feel, the more likely we will be to utilize this device. For it neatly inverts our powerlessness, making us vehicles of the greatest powers, and thus returning power to the vacuum. We may describe this as a process of ethical exchange: we give up our private ethical standards and replace them with what the group commends. It is often a poor bargain. Frequently we must close our eyes and inwardly ask whether the group's morality is really superior. We blush to think it is not, but, shamefully biting our tongues in the process, comply anyway. This is what power demands. In the most exceptional cases we claim so far to transcend everyday morality in the name of collective necessity that we can perform almost any form of action, including mass murder. (Claeys, 2017: 51)

Then, although people know that the codes of the oppressing system are by no means greater than their own moral standards, they tend to reject being responsible for their actions and they might do brutal acts for the sake of social harmony. Especially when being threatened with the use of force, not obeying the social rules might not be seen as an option. Nonetheless, to put the blame on others instead of accepting liability for actions is not an ethical act according to existential ethics. What is important for existential ethics, then, is not unhesitatingly submitting to the moral codes of social systems, but prioritising personal moral principles and being aware of the responsibilities of actions. Thus, to act ethically, one must act in freedom and take responsibility for his action. Besides, existential ethics rejects all ethical systems because they disregard the unique and individual aspects such as their personal ideas, desires, and morals to ensure a "trouble-free" society.

The message conveyed in Bond's trilogy is in accord with existential ethics. Similar to existentialism's rejection of all the systems that ignore the individuality of the individual, *The War Plays* trilogy advocates that what social systems impose on individuals must be refused since they do not bring equality and justice but intolerance and violence. The Monster, therefore, states, "The World isn't just! Justice is made by people" (Bond, 1985 (*Red*): 13). In this respect, individuals must behave in conformity with their own ethical standards because they are the ones who are responsible for the results of their actions. The Monster repeats the significance of free choices and actions towards the end of *Red, Black, and Ignorant*:

> For all of us there is a time when we must know ourself
> No natural laws or legal codes will guide us
> Notions of good and evil will say nothing
> The problems these things solve are not serious
> We stand more naked than when we were born
> Our life can be crushed as easily as an ant by an army
> But at this time we could not be crushed even by the weight of the continent on which the army marched
> We know ourself and say: I cannot give up the name of human
> All that is needed is to define rightly what it is to be human
> If we define it wrongly we die
> If we define it and teach it rightly we shall live (18)

As it is delineated by The Monster, to define who they really are and to know themselves are a matter of life and death for human beings since the present state of the world is likely to be succeeded by a dystopian future. For existentialism, a human

being is free, responsible, and able to change. Such a possibility would be the outcome of today's actions, which means that today's actions can make future generations suffer. Continuing to act without considering future generations collides with the teachings of existential ethics which necessitate that the freedom of every human individual, including those who are not born yet, must be respected while making a decision. Accordingly, Bond's plays manifest the cruciality of change for human beings through accepting their freedom and responsibility in their actions to prevent the ruination of humankind. Such a time that individuals must know themselves comes after the explosions in *The War Plays*, which is portrayed both in *The Tin Can People* and *Great Peace*. Just as the Monster foresees, those who do not know what being human is perish while those who know themselves continue to flourish.

The second part of the trilogy, *The Tin Can People*, presents the first depiction of the outcomes of the deterioration and violence among people which are problematised in *Red, Black, and Ignorant*. Violence reaches the point of massacring numerous amounts of people via nuclear bombardment, which ends in the destruction of the world. The aftermath of the holocaust is illustrated by the First Chorus in the beginning:

> Years later a dust as white as old people's hair settled on everything
> The world looked like a drawing in lead on white paper
> Hours after the explosions I walked over a bridge
> The thirst caused by the fires was so severe that even the drowning called for water
> People fled in all directions from one hell into another
> I thought the explosions had thrown strange sea creatures onto the bridge whose ancestors had long ago retreated under the ocean (Bond, 1985 (*Tin*): 33)

In such a world, the minority of survivors face nothing but death and destruction. They try to remain alive in horrible conditions that not all of them could endure. As the Second Woman illustrates:

> There's been so much dying
> We all gave up counting bodies in the first ten minutes
> Then no one died for years—not even from radiation
> Perhaps the bombs would even make us live longer—who could tell?
> They didnt: we've been dead since they fell
> So many died their deaths even counted for those who went on living
> We're watches ticking on dead people's wrists (34)

Nevertheless, those who have not died come together in a place where people hid tones of tin cans before the explosions and establish a primitive community. If the ruination of the wildlife is not taken into consideration, their new life in the barrenness can even be resembled to a utopia. The Second Man expresses how they live in isolation without a worry although they do not have anything except the tin cans:

> Nothing grows: the dust of so many dead has stifled the earth
> The animals are dead: their bones lie in the fields like broken traps
> If a few live they keep out of our way
> Yet we're in paradise
> There's no need to work: we only do that when we dig tombs in the rocks to show respect for our dead
> We have tins: millions: enough to live on for a thousand years
> There's no exploitation—and so there are no enemies
> If others came why should they attack us?
> The pillar of the house doesnt pull down the other pillars
> We wouldn't want anything from them except that they should be alive (34)

Indeed, it is a "paradise in hell" just as the name of the first scene. Since they do not fear from famine and nor violence because they need one another as social beings, those survivors can enjoy the rest of their lives in this barren paradise without struggling for their basic needs.

This is a chance for them to start a new social system, or at least not to repeat the wrongs of the times before the explosions, which requires to know what a human being is and act accordingly. After all, they had experienced a catastrophe that almost exterminated life on earth, they must have learned to take responsibility for their actions. However, their attitude towards the First Man who newly joins them demonstrates that they have not changed even after they suffered greatly because of the outcomes of the previous generations' choices. Shortly after the First Man comes to their living site, the Third Woman suddenly dies and the only suspect is a contagious disease that is brought by the First Man. At first, they decide to put him in quarantine but later, the Second Man proclaims that they will "have to kill him" because he believes that the First Man's disease might cause more death in their paradise (Bond, 1985 (*Tin*): 41). The others agree with him except for the First Woman. She tries to dissuade other women by reminding them of their ethical responsibility, however, they still believe that this act is necessary for the wellbeing of their community, and

therefore they cannot be responsible for it. The dialogue below depicts the contrast between the First Woman and the others:

> FIRST WOMAN. We could be the last people on earth
> If we killed him it would be like committing the crime the bombs were dropped to punish
>
> SECOND WOMAN. Well god knows we were punished so we're entitled to commit the crime
> …
> I don't want to kill anyone but what sense does it make to worry about one death anymore?
> …
> We live in dead people's clothes—eat their food—we took the storekeys from dead soldier's pockets
> One more wont make the skeletons cry (42)

According to the Second Woman, the First Man must be killed although she is well aware that killing is a "crime" because his existence poses a threat to their community. Moreover, she tries to justify their plan by normalising death. Living in the ruins of a post-apocalyptic world, they indeed face death every day. Nevertheless, for the First woman, it does not make them less responsible for committing such a crime. The Second Man, too, intends to give a justification for this crime by accepting it as a social action as he says to the others that "we must al be responsible for the action we make today" (42). He volunteers to kill him and by doing so, he sees himself as a soldier who fights for his nation:

> The soldier should kill quickly and cleanly so as to limit the enemy's sufferings to the necessary minimum
> But the soldier's main concern must be self-preservation: cant risk three deaths in a week!
> When I've killed him I'll break the spear and live on my own for six month
> Not out of guilt: he has to be killed for the community's sake
> Six months will be a sign of the respect we owe all the dead (43)

Regarding himself as the saviour of the community is a self-deception. The Second Man wishes to avoid the blameworthiness of killing a human being by deceiving himself and others. What the Second Man and others do is the same as what people did before the explosions; to act without giving weight to the consequences and not to acknowledge any responsibility. They still have an avoidant attitude towards their responsibilities, which brought destruction to the world. In accordance with the Monster's foresight, the Second Man dies. Yet, this part of the trilogy ends in hope for

the future of human beings. The Fourth Woman accordingly manifests that "we don't learn from other people's mistakes—not even from most of our own. But knowledge is collected and tools handed on. We cant go back to the beginning, but we can change the future" (51).

The devastating outcomes of people's rejection of being responsible for their actions are also dealt with in the last part of the trilogy, *Great Peace* in which both the times before and after the explosions are demonstrated. This part begins shortly before the nuclear holocaust, with the Captain's order for the soldiers to kill a baby because they do not have enough food for everyone and children "waste" too much "valuable energy and supplies (Bond, 1985 (*Great*): 5). As it was mentioned earlier, one of the soldiers goes back to his hometown to find a child to murder and present its corpse to his superiors, which terrifies his mother, namely the Woman. With this order, not only the soldier's actions but also the Woman's reactions to this crime are questioned. Being a mother of two, she at first tries to convince her son not to perform such a terrible task. "You must say no—leave the army—run away," says her to her firstborn, yet, it is understood that she does not detest the idea of killing a child as she states that "Why our street? What about the streets that cause trouble? … What about the terrorists 'oo maim kids with bombs? Their children ought t' suffer first" (10). Her words indicate that soldiers' murdering children is not wrong as long as they do not kill her own children. For her, it seems justifiable to slaughter the children of the terrorists whose bombs injured numbers of kids. Again, a crime is tried to be rectified by another crime. However, the order is that soldiers must kill a child from their streets and there are two children in his street; his baby sister and their neighbour's baby of which the Woman takes care of when her mother goes to work. Knowing that his son will kill either her child or her neighbour's baby, she tries to protect both of them. However, she yields to her son's persistence and lets him to choose one of the babies, hoping that he won't kill her own child; "Make sure you've got the right one" (12). Though he takes the neighbour's baby, he cannot kill her. Instead, he chokes his own baby sister "with the floorcloth" when his mother is washing his shirt and runs away before she understands what he has done (19). He fulfils his duty by choosing to kill his own sister. As is seen, neither the solder nor his mother questions the rule.

However, killing his sister leads him to change his avoidant attitude. When the Son goes back to the military camp, he refuses to obey the order of the Corporal to pick a cigarette packet up from the ground. He is well aware that he will have to bear the outcomes of his disobedience, yet, he consistently rejects performing his task. "'E don't wanna pick it up, 'e's entitled t' a bit of freedom," says one of his soldier friends to the Corporal (Bond, 1985 (*Great*): 22). Indeed, his refusal originates from his innate freedom and he takes responsibility for the consequences of such an action. The punishment of his insubordination is death because, as the Captain indicates, his disloyalty challenges the principles of the system:

> We cannot carry liabilities
> I could've sent him back to the quarry and your corporal would've arranged an accident
> …
> My military honour forbids me to deceive men when I may have to ask anyone of them for his life
> We're in a war to defend the standards of our society and I refuse to betray them to the very men who're waging that war (24)

In contrast to the Captain who avoids taking the responsibility for his choice to punish him with death and hides behind the requirements of social standards, the Son revolts again the system being conscious of the results of his action. He does not deny his responsibility in the consequence of his refusal. It is his free choice to disobey the rules. In this respect, his action is an ethical one from the existential perspective.

His mother, too, undergoes a similar change after surviving the catastrophe. Yet, this change in her takes place years after the murder of her baby. After the holocaust, the Woman starts to wander in the wilderness with a bundle in her arms which stands for her dead child. She adapts to the brutal conditions in the barren world and survives for the sake of her imaginary child. She even leaves a newborn and motherless baby in the wilderness because she thinks that she cannot feed both the baby and her bundle (Bond, 1985 (*Great*): 28). This decision of her shows that the Woman still does not care about the lives of other children as long as her child is taken care of, even though it is a piece of cloth. However, years later she left the baby to die, the Woman encounters an ill woman and her young daughter. The Daughter asks the Woman to take care of her mother while she goes to find the group of people who are believed to have electricity. The Woman accepts to look after the mother. When the

daughter leaves them, the Woman decides to murder the mother in order not to look after her. At that moment, she suddenly realises the possible consequences of killing her:

> ‘Er daughter comes back an she’s dead?
> What could she do in this place?
> If justice ‘erself came ‘ere she’d beg me for something t’ eat
> She’d flog ‘er sword an scales t’ the rag man for a glass of water… (47)

Being aware of the harm she could cause to the daughter by killing her mother, the Woman gives up her decision, instead, she chooses to look after her kindly. From this moment on, she starts to make her choices in freedom and she accepts the responsibility of their outcomes. Later, the Daughter comes and brings other people with her to be able to carry the two old women to the place where they established a peaceful community. They accept everyone who survives the holocaust and take care of them. The words of the Man who comes with the Daughter reflect their non-violent attitude towards others:

> It’s a great day for us when we find more people
> We want t’ put our arms round yer an thank yer just for bein alive!
> Everyone ‘oo comes out of the wilderness knows so much!
> Its amazin the knowledge your people ‘ad!
> Its not like findin scrolls in the sand—but findin the people ‘oo wrote em!
> We’re lucky t’ be young enough t’ do the ‘ard work—but we need your generation t’ teach us t’ understand! (50)

This New Community creates a contradiction with the community in *The Tin Can People*. As opposed to ones who built a “paradise in hell,” these people do not choose to be violent to those who are not one of them. Rather, they heal them, look after them, and learn from their experiences. Thus, it can be said that they are eager to know what it means to be a human being, and develop their society by taking lessons from the wrongs of the past:

> … they ‘ad t’ start killin their kids even before they ‘ad enough words to beg mercy
> We dont ‘ave t’live in their sort of society—keep t’ their laws—pray t’ their gods—work for their owners: so we dont ‘ave t’ be trained t’ eat the owners’ shit
> Why should we vomit at the only ideas that can let us live? (56)

People of the New Community are aware of the problems of the old societies and how these problems brought troubles to humanity and the world. What the old people had

gone through teaches them that they cannot ignore the possible results of their decisions and actions and that they are responsible not only for themselves but also for others. They also know that they have the potential to change. It can therefore be claimed that the New Community is based on the teachings of existential ethics.

Although this peaceful community is ready to welcome the Woman, she rejects to live them and chooses to live on her own in the wasteland because she believes that one of the men that comes with the Daughter is her son who killed her baby. She cannot bear the idea of living with the murderer to whom she gave birth:

> Bombs don't wipe out what 'e did, they make a memorial to it!
> I wouldnt be buried in the same earth as 'im if there was another!
> I cant even look where 'e stands—if our lives depended on it I couldnt tell yer what 'e was doing!
> Take that torment from my side!
> That's my 'appiness—and I want it
> I can live in this 'ell—not 'is paradise!
> …
> Im content (Bond, 1985 (*Great*): 54)

The Woman cannot forgive her son because, for her, his was the worst action that can ever be done. Therefore, her personal morals do not let her enjoy the comfort and care in the community that the murderer of her baby established. Rather than paradise, she chooses hell but she knows that it is her hell and she is happy in it even though it is full of hardships. In fact, the man is not her son and he tries to prove that he is not to convince her to come with them because he thinks that she is too old to cope with hunger and cold in the wilderness. Nevertheless, she resists changing her decision and declares; "this may be my last winter—I'll choose 'ow I live it" (62). Just as her son, the Woman makes her choices freely and consciously by embracing the responsibility of their consequences. Her decision to live her life in accordance with her morals and face its consequences alone is ethical in terms of existentialism.

Drawing attention to the connection of the problems of humankind with the codes and rules of capitalist social systems, *The War Plays* trilogy exhibits how violence and conflict among people which bear the risk of bringing devastation to the world are triggered by such social systems which pressure individuals to act against their own moral standards. People are expected to give up their individuality and perform what is right for the common good. However, as is exemplified in all three

parts of the trilogy that the tasks that are required to be fulfilled are generally crimes that, in one way or another, harm people. Foreseeing a dystopian future, the plays demonstrate that the level of brutality will continue to increase until it reaches the point of destruction of humanity if individuals do not change their attitude and start to acknowledge being responsible for their actions and the future of humankind. All these ideas that are raised in Bond's trilogy mirror the theories of existentialism related to morality. Existentialism, too, stresses the importance of free acts and choices that are made with the consciousness of responsibility. As it is asserted by the existentialists that individuals must respect others and take responsibility for their actions. Moreover, human beings are capable of changing themselves for they do not have an already-established essence. If they do not choose and act in freedom and responsibility and this situation threatens their future, they can always and in every condition change and prevent the actualisation of possible catastrophes. Accordingly, *The War Plays* trilogy presents two different scenarios for the future of humanity. *The Tin Can People* is the first one that shows that people are doomed to destruction if they continue to behave irresponsibly. On the other hand, *Great Peace* illustrates that people can start again, even in the worst conditions, if they realise that "children cant pay for their parents' crimes" (Bond: 1985 (*Great*): 10). Only then humankind can have a better future.

CONCLUSION

Focusing on individuals and foregrounding characters, the theatre has always been in strong connection with the human situation. From the very first examples of the drama genre until today, human beings and various situations they are in have been dealt with on paper and stage. Indeed, as existentialists declare, human beings are bound to be in a situation that changes through time and place. Beginning from the twentieth century, the human situation in the West has changed as a result of the new, modern, fast-changing, and technology-based way of life which is full of calamities, problems, and risks that shake human beings to their cores and trigger them to question themselves and their actions. This worrying and questioning situation of modern and contemporary individuals has been the main concern of existentialist philosophy and dystopian drama. Centring on the situation of the individual in an unstable and insensible world, both existentialism and dystopian plays express the fear and anxiety that the new life evokes in human beings, explore the limits of human beings and their actions, and accentuate the necessity to acknowledge and embrace their responsibility and potentiality. Having much in common, dystopian drama is closely linked to existentialism. The ontological and ethical concepts of existentialism are included and issued in dystopian plays as in the case with *Rossum's Universal Robots*, *A Number*, and *The War Plays*.

The existentialist philosophy has human beings' existence on earth as its starting point, and concentrates on mainly two issues; what the human mode of existence is and how human individuals realise their existence through choices and actions. In terms of ontology, existentialism insists that human existence does not have a pre-determined purpose, to put it another way, the essence of human beings is not certain. Rather, human individuals happen to exist in the world in which they are perpetually in situations that spatially and temporarily limit them. Nevertheless, human beings are not confined to these limitations since the purposelessness of their existence renders them utterly free and open to change. Together with that, they need to take action to be able to change their situation and go beyond the limitations.

Through the decisions they make in these situations and their actions, human beings gradually and constantly form their essence until their final and unsurpassable limitation, their death. As their essence is not determined, their existence possesses limitless possibilities. Consequently, each human being has unique aspects which make his existence individual and distinctive. On the other hand, this also means that they themselves determine who they are, in other words, they are solely responsible for their selves, their existence, and also decisions and actions. In addition to being responsible for themselves, human individuals are also responsible for others due to the fact that they coexist in situations, which necessitates them to consider others before taking an action. Whatever a person does inevitably affects others. Moreover, for the human mode of being is essenceless, each and every human being is unquestionably free. Therefore, when a person disregards others' freedom, he denies his own freedom as well. Yet, people sometimes willingly deny their freedom to be discharged from such heavy responsibilities. Despite their denial, human beings cannot elude being free. For existentialism, renouncing freedom is equal to deny being human. Still, this denying attitude of them is not baseless according to existentialism. Being conscious of the fact that they are limited, relentlessly free, and entirely responsible for their actions and decisions leads to anxiety and terror. Besides, human beings are also aware of the certainty of death, which adds to their uneasiness. To be able to feel relieved, they choose to ignore their freedom. Though understandable, this attitude is self-denial and useless deception because no matter how persistently they ignore their freedom and responsibility, such denial does not genuinely extinguish their disquietude since they inwardly know that they are free and responsible.

On the other hand, nonhuman beings, or in existentialist terms, being-in-itself, come to existence to fulfil their essence which is already determined. Having an essence before coming to existence, these beings cannot change themselves. Thus, they are not free to form their essence nor responsible for their existence, and therefore, their existence is not unique. Also, they are not conscious of their selves. Then, for the existential ontology, the human mode of existence is different from other modes of existence. If so, what makes beings human according to existentialism can be summed up as follows; to be essenceless, to face the purposelessness of their existence, to be aware of their potentiality and freedom to form their essence, to accept their freedom and responsibility no matter how tormenting this acceptance is, to embrace their

uniqueness and individuality, to respect the freedom of their own and others, to decide and act with the awareness that their decisions and actions have effects on both themselves and others, to feel the burden of all these that create the human condition, even then, not to deny their freedom, to continue to live and form their essence consciously and ardently despite the meaninglessness and absurdity of existing in an alien world, and by doing so, to realise their authentic existence.

To be human, then, necessitates acting with the awareness of freedom and responsibility. Therefore, existential ethics is highly connected to existential ontology and has the same goal which is to encourage human beings to achieve their authentic existence by means of acting freely and responsibly. As opposed to traditional ethics, existential ethics does not elaborately explain right and wrong actions. Quite the contrary, the concepts of right and wrong, and good and bad are problematised. Accordingly, existential ethics gives more importance to personal moral principles than universal ethical standards. What is right and what is wrong, therefore, depend on the individual. However, this does not mean that every action or decision is ethical according to existential ethics. Ethical actions and decisions are those that originate from freedom and that are made by being aware of one's responsibility in their possible consequences. The ethical person, then, is the one who accepts his freedom and responsibility in his decisions and actions, respects his and others' humanness, takes responsibility for probable effects of his actions and decisions on himself and others, and by no means ignore his blameworthiness if the consequences are undesirable. Only by doing so can he attain his genuine existence.

Any system, institution, or ideology which diverts individuals from realising their authenticity, disregards their individuality, and devalues their humanness by objectifying them is protested by the existentialists. Especially oppressive social and governmental structures, ethical systems, and overvaluation of science and technology are objected since they have a considerable impact on the human individual. Domineering social systems do not give enough space for individuals to be themselves. The aim is to grind the unique sides of individuals so that they can fit in the behavioural patterns that are determined by the systems. Setting moral standards and expecting individuals to act in accordance with them is one of the ways that are employed by social systems to control the actions of individuals. Standardising right and wrong

actions for everyone, ethical systems invalidate personal moral standards of individuals and therefore disregard their individuality. Similarly, science excludes subjective sides of human beings since it aims to reach the objective and the universal. Indeed, science sees human beings not as subjects but as representatives of a species. Being subjected to scientific studies, human beings become the object of science. Together with the overdevelopment of science and technology, improvement becomes more important than human life. Human beings are not only objectified by scientific and technological studies, they are also put in danger by them. Rejecting such degrading attitudes towards human subjects, existentialism highlights that human beings should know themselves and act responsibly to achieve authenticity.

The ontological and ethical claims of existentialism are reverberated in dystopian plays. *Rossum's Universal Robots* and *A Number* delve into the idiosyncratic aspects of being human by presenting a comparison between humans and nonhuman beings, in other words, beings for themselves and beings in themselves. In *Rossum's Universal Robots*, the evolution of robots not only endangers the future of humankind but also challenges the ontological superiority of human beings as beings for themselves. At first, an artificial human being was made by old Rossum to prove that human beings, too, can create life. Out of his experiments, the first robots were produced by his son as self-sustained tools to work for human beings. Owing to scientific and technological developments, these automatons are improved and they become almost unrecognisable from human beings in terms of physiology and intelligence. However, as a result of Doctor Gall's studies to make them more human, robots undergo a change and start to question and later challenge the way they are treated by human beings. By challenging their creators, robots also challenge their essence which is to serve humans. In the beginning of the play, robots were mere objects of human subjects which are incapable of change. However, their rebellion against human beings is the prove that robots are surely more than beings in themselves since it is indeed an act of free choice. Though initially being created for a purpose, they reject to fulfil it, decide to change it, and take action to actualise this change. Such an act implies their freedom, essencelessness, and ability to change. This evolution and revolt of robots blur the ontological lines between human subjects and their creations. Indeed, making free decisions, questioning their selves, being able to change, and taking action are among the unique characteristics of human beings

according to existentialism. Although regarding robots as being-for-itself is still problematic, their change and attitude raise many questions about being human and also demonstrate that ability to change is indeed one of the things that make a being human.

In the same vein, *A Number* resonates with the ontological questionings of existentialism. This play, however, generally concentrates on the individuality of human existence which is a concept of existential ontology. The terror that B1 and B2 experience after realising that they are not genetically unique connotes that being unique is an important aspect of being human. The mere fact of the existence of a clone of them imperils the individuality of their existence, therefore, spoils their humanness. As one of them is the original and the other is the clone, what they go through are different from one another, yet, they both find themselves in a limit situation that reminds them of their limits. B2 faces the reality of being a clone, in other words, an artificial being, one of the twenty clones of B1 that were produced in a laboratory. However, unlike the other clones who have their own different lives, B2 lives the life that originally belongs to B1. He was produced to replace him, therefore, his existence came after his essence. It is indicated through the suffering of B2 that to have a pre-determined essence is rather disquieting for human individuals because it poses a threat to their freedom and potentiality. What B1 is confronted with is the reality that he was cloned, in other words, subjected to a scientific experience. Thus, he becomes an object of science. Moreover, he was cloned because his father wanted to replace him, which means that he was unwanted by his father. His agonies reveal that objectification of human beings by others, since it spoils their subjectivity, alienates human beings from themselves. Their death also raises doubts about both the individuality of death and the significance of clones' existence. Just as *Rossum's Universal Robots*, *A Number*, too, questions what it means to be a human being, and the human characteristics investigated in the play echo the ontological concepts of the existentialist philosophy.

The last work analysed in this dissertation, *The War Plays* trilogy, employs an existential approach to morality. The trilogy depicts how a domineering social system teaches and uses the codes of behaviour to control human beings, and these codes in fact cause violence which can even bring destruction to humanity as in the case of the second and third parts of the trilogy in which nuclear bombardments nearly put an end

to human existence. Such tyrannical systems are utopias of their rulers. Therefore, the ethical systems adopted by them are in line with utopian ethics which gives weight to the wellbeing of the community while at the same time restricts the individual. In sharp contrast to utopian ethics, existential ethics attaches importance to the free and responsible acts of individuals. *The War Plays* trilogy, by portraying how the ethical codes of oppressive social systems ignore the individuality of human beings, emphasises that individuals must act following their own morals rather than the codes and rules of systems. Therefore, it repeats the ideas of existential ethics and criticises utopian ethics which bears resemblance to Kantian ethics. According to Kant, human beings feel the necessity of doing what is right because they are ordered by their reason which also prompts them to do their duty. His categorical imperative which forms the core of his ethics commands human beings to act in a way that this act can be accepted as a universal law. This means that to act for the sake of personal benefit is immoral. For him, rather than the consequences of the actions, performing the actions themselves is important. Thus, the duty must be respected and obeyed. In accordance with Kant's ethics, utopian ethics emphasises the necessity of giving up one's own personal interests and respect the duty without questioning. The acts that conform with the interests of the social mechanisms are regarded as ethical while those that are inconsistent with duty are punished.

Such an ethics does not let individuals be themselves and act in freedom. Existential ethics is against this suppressive approach of utopian ethics towards the individual. According to existential ethics, people can act as they want as long as they accept being fully responsible for their actions. Acting as the duty commands is by no means ethical because it cannot be a free act nor a responsible one since individuals tend to put the responsibility of their actions on the authority which commands them to perform their duty. The soldiers' performing their tasks to kill people without questioning them in both *Red, Black, and Ignorant* and *Great Peace* reflects this tendency. In accordance with existential ethics, *The War Plays* demonstrate that the codes and rules of the systems clash with personal wills. *Red, Black, and Ignorant* includes several examples of how human beings are forced to commit crimes to protect the wellbeing of the social organisation. Although they feel uneasy about acting in conformity with the orders, the characters choose to perform their duty, no matter how violent these acts are, instead of revolting against the system, acting in freedom, and

taking responsibility for their actions. As a consequence, humanity experiences a dreadful catastrophe from which very few people survive. Yet, the Son and the Woman eventually acknowledge their freedom and responsibility. At the end of *Great Peace*, the New Community people illustrate that a better future is possible for humanity if human beings immediately start to accept their blameworthiness in the course of events and change their attitudes and actions.

Through foreseeing dystopian futures for humankind, all the works analysed in this dissertation criticise the existing problems and warn the readers against the possible consequences of avoiding freedom and responsibility. They point to the fact that if human beings continue to see themselves as not responsible for their actions and for the consequences of such actions that can harm others, they might have to experience the feared end. They, therefore, declare that change is indispensable. As these works deal with the problems of their times and give the message of the necessity to change, they also conform to Sartre's views on literature. According to him, literary works cannot be detached from the time they are written and they must express an idea to evoke change. It can be said that the playwrights of these works, from a Sartrean perspective, chose to write to prompt people to change, and by doing so accepted their commitment and fulfilled their ethical responsibility as writers. With the imaginary futures they depict, their plays recapitulate the existential concept of potentiality; humankind is not dead yet, change is still possible.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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