



To my father, mother, and sister

&

To Merlin

SITUATING ISLAMIC EXISTENTIALISM IN TURKEY: KEY  
EXISTENTIALIST CONCEPTS IN SEZAI KARAKOÇ'S WORKS

Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by  
GÖZDE ÇİTLER

In Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

SEPTEMBER 2022

I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science degree.

---

Associate Prof. Dr. Daniel Just  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

---

Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar  
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science degree.

---

Associate Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan  
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science degree.

---

Associate Prof. Dr. Jale Özata Dirlikyapan  
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and found that it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science degree.

-----  
Prof. Dr. Mnire Kevser Ba  
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

-----  
Prof. Dr. Refet Grkaynak, Director

## ABSTRACT

### SITUATING ISLAMIC EXISTENTIALISM IN TURKEY: KEY EXISTENTIALIST CONCEPTS IN SEZAI KARAKOÇ'S WORKS

Çitler, Gözde

Ph.D., Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Just

September 2022

The purpose of this dissertation is to put forward an analytical account that Sezai Karakoç, a conservative Muslim intellectual, author, and one of the founders of the Second New movement in Turkish poetry, created a *sui generis* characterisation of what this study calls Islamic existentialism in Turkey. An important literary figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karakoç utilises the existentialist concepts of death, freedom, authenticity, and isolation while following the Islamic and Sufistic doctrines since he preoccupied himself with the same philosophical questions existentialism asks and attempted to find their answers from a different angle and source, that was Islam.

In this study, it is argued that Karakoc professes Islamic existentialism, primarily by stating that it is imperative to (i) overcome the anguish and despair of this life by accepting the reality of death and being willing to move past it to be reunited with Allah as the only Creator; (ii) pursue an authentic life by being a true believer, (iii) achieve the ultimate freedom-seeking for the divine love and by abiding by Islamic principles and rules

heralded by the prophets, and (iv) transform the individual's alienation by attempting to become a soldier of resurrection within Karakoç's doctrine of the resurrection. While this study does not argue that Karakoç is an existentialist, it does argue that existentialism and its core concepts are resonated in his worldview and thoughts on what a true individual is, how to live an authentic and honest life, how to create the ultimate, Islamic, civilisation, and eventually how to unite with God as a sincere believer.

This dissertation aims to contribute to the literature by conceptualising Karakoç's doctrine of resurrection, encompassing the four concepts of existentialism and the teachings of Islam, which permeated his poems, essays, and worldview as such.

Keywords: Islamic existentialism, death, freedom, authenticity, alienation, Second New poetry, Sezai Karakoç.

## ÖZET

### TÜRKİYE'DE İSLAMİ VAROLUŞÇULUK: SEZAI KARAKOÇ'UN ESERLERİNDE VAROLUŞÇU KAVRAMLAR

Çitler, Gözde

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Daniel Just

Eylül 2022

Bu tezin amacı, Müslüman ve muhafazakar bir entelektüel, yazar ve Türk şiirinde İkinci Yeni akımının kurucularından biri olan Sezai Karakoç'un, varoluşçuluğun dört ana kavramı olan ölüm, özgürlük, otantiklik ve yabancılaşma kavramlarını İslam ve tasavvuf çerçevesinde ele alarak bu çalışmanın İslami varoluşçuluk olarak adlandırdığı *sui generis* bir nitelendirme oluşturduğuna dair analitik bir açıklama ortaya koymaktır. Araştırma, Karakoç'un şiir ve düzyazılarından yola çıkılarak varoluşçuluğun da sorduğu aynı felsefi sorularla meşgul olduğunu fakat bu soruların cevaplarını İslam ve tasavvufi literatürü kaynak kullanarak bulmaya çalıştığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu çalışma, Karakoç'un, (i) dünyevi hayatın ıstırabını ve umutsuzluğunu yenmek suretiyle tek yaratıcı olan Allah'a ulaşmak amacıyla ölüm gerçeğini kabul ederek; (ii) gerçek bir mümin olarak sahil bir hayat sürmek için çabalayarak, (iii) ilahi aşkı bulmak suretiyle nihai özgürlüğe

kavuşmak için peygamberlerin ve İslam'ın müjdelediği ilke ve kaidelere riayet eden bir inanan olmak, ve (iv) bireyin yabancılaşmasını sona erdirmek ve nihai medeniyet olan İslam medeniyetine ulaşmak için diriliş eri olma görevini kabul etmek gerektiğini belirterek İslami varoluşçuluğun çerçevesini çizmektedir .

Bu çalışma Karakoç'un varoluşçu bir yazar ve düşünür olduğunu iddia etmemekle birlikte, Karakoç'un, gerçek birey olmanın ne anlama geldiği, nasıl otantik ve dürüst bir yaşam sürüleceği, İslam medeniyetine erişmek ve nihayetinde samimi bir mümin olarak Allah'a kavuşmak yolunda neler yapılması gerektiği gibi sorulara varoluşçuluğun temel kavramlarını kullanarak yanıt verdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu tez, Karakoç'un şiirlerine, denemelerine ve dünya görüşüne nüfuz eden diriliş doktrinini varoluşçuluğun dört kavramı ile İslam ve tasavvuf öğretileri çerçevesinde kavramsallaştırarak literatüre katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslami varoluşçuluk, ölüm, özgürlük, otantiklik, yabancılaşma, İkinci Yeni şiiri, Sezai Karakoç.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I used to think that writing the acknowledgements part of this dissertation would be a much easier task than drafting and finalising the text itself. Now that this task is upon me, I realise how difficult it is indeed and how indebted I am to several very important people in my life, without whom this dissertation would not have been completed, and my dream would not have come true.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my father, who always believed in me and my academic career and never once failed in his faith that I would be successful and become a doctor; my mother, who patiently walked on the path I have set for myself along with me, supporting all my endeavours through the years; and my sister, who not only continuously encouraged me during this time but did it with an ever lovely and humorous demeanour. Without them, I would not have been where I am now; neither in life, nor in my career.

I am forever indebted to Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar, who tirelessly led me in the right direction from the time she graciously offered me to be a part of her research team and encouraged me to further research and write on the subject of Islam, existentialism, and Sezai Karakoç, to the time I finished my dissertation. All the while, she was there for me whenever I needed, not only as a jury member but also as a mentor and guide. She is one of the main reasons why I could complete this dissertation with success.

I also want to thank my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Just, for politely accepting me as a doctoral candidate when I knocked on his door without a concrete idea on my mind for my thesis. To have witnessed his seemingly never-ending knowledge of literature, prompted me to further research and distil my interest in the subject, reaching a point where a solid topic is shaped.

Along the way, I had to correct some mistakes so that this dissertation could see the light of day. I would like to thank Assoc. Dr. Barış Parkan, for kindly accepting to be a jury member almost halfway along my candidacy. Her serene existence allowed me to continue writing my thesis, and I am thankful our paths crossed. I am also grateful to have met Prof. Dr. Kevser Baş, a leading Karakoç scholar, from whom I learnt a lot and integrated this knowledge, which carried this dissertation to another level. Similarly, I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jale Özata Dirlikyapan for her kind acceptance to be a jury member; her research helped me greatly while shaping the first part of this dissertation.

I never had many friends in life, however, the ones that I have proved that one does not need to have multitudes of people around. Rather, it is worth having a few people who contain multitudes. Pınar Akdeniz, who is a dear friend and colleague, has been one of these people who is always there for me since we first met in Sweden. I am thankful to have her as a friend for knowing I will find her by my side through thick and thin. I would also like to thank my dear friend Mélissa Capiot, the proof-reader of my thesis, for always supporting me in the effort to finalise this enormous task, giving me reassuring talks whenever I lost faith in myself and believing in me when I did not. And to Cemre Soysal, step-by-step, for showing me the way to overcome a seemingly impossible task and taught me there is no impossible when a person truly believes in herself.

People always think about other people when they think back to see who was there for them when they accomplished a big task. Besides the people I have in my life, I am also blessed to have a furry companion to whom this dissertation is also dedicated. My cat, Merlin, who found me during the first year of my doctoral candidacy; silently witnessed all the ups and downs along the way, all losses and renewals of faith I had in my dissertation and in myself, and offered nothing but a constant will to me to live, to write, to do more, and to see through what I promised myself. I cannot express how grateful I am to have him and his presence in my life.

Finally, yet importantly, this should be noted: verily, even lonesome deeds reflect immense necessities, as a dark elf would say.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
INTRODUCTION .....	10
<b>1 EXAMINING THE EXISTING LITERATURE: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1.1 The Emergence of Existentialism in Turkey and the <i>Second New Movement</i> .....</b>	<b>22</b>
1.1.1 Turkish Political Scenery during the Cold War: The Conflict of the Right vs the Left .....	26
1.1.2 A New Perspective in Turkish Poetry.....	31
1.1.3 The <i>Secular</i> Poets of the Second New Movement.....	38
<b>1.2 A Dissident of the <i>Second New Poetry</i>: Sezai Karakoç, Religion, and Islamic Existentialism.....</b>	<b>73</b>
1.2.1 Karakoç's Doctrine of Resurrection .....	78
<b>2 ISLAMIC EXISTENTIALISM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>2.1 Religious Existentialisms and Islam as a Component of Islamic Existentialism .....</b>	<b>86</b>
2.1.1 Christian Existentialism.....	88
2.1.2 Islam and Existentialism.....	96
<b>2.2 The Existentialism Component of Islamic Existentialism.....</b>	<b>110</b>
2.2.1 French Existentialism.....	110
<b>2.3 The Four Concepts of Existentialism .....</b>	<b>118</b>

2.3.1	Death.....	120
2.3.2	Freedom .....	127
2.3.3	Authenticity.....	133
2.3.4	Alienation.....	140
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Methodology of the Dissertation.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>DEATH .....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Death as an Existential Concept in the Works of Karakoç.....</b>	<b>149</b>
3.1.1	<i>Monna Rosa II – Ölüm ve Çerçeveler.....</i>	150
3.1.2	<i>Köpük.....</i>	160
3.1.3	<i>Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine.....</i>	165
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>FREEDOM.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Freedom, Divine Love and Sufism .....</b>	<b>179</b>
4.1.1	<i>Hızırla Kırk Saat.....</i>	185
4.1.2	<i>Leylâ ile Mecnun.....</i>	196
4.1.3	<i>Esir Kentten Özülke'ye.....</i>	204
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>AUTHENTICITY.....</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Authenticity and the Idea of Resurrection .....</b>	<b>212</b>
5.1.1	The Concept of Resurrection in Islamic and Christian Connotations....	215
5.1.2	The Idea of Self and the Soldier of Resurrection.....	218
<b>5.2</b>	<b>The City-Civilisation Relation and the <i>City of Resurrection</i> .....</b>	<b>224</b>
5.2.1	<i>Alinyazısı Saati.....</i>	226
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ALIENATION.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Critique of the Dependence on Commodities.....</b>	<b>241</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Critique of the Materialisms.....</b>	<b>243</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Critique of Absolutisms.....</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Critique of West, Westernisation, and Modernisation.....</b>	<b>250</b>
6.4.1	<i>Masal.....</i>	252
6.4.2	<i>Çeşmeler and Ayinler.....</i>	262

6.5 Conclusion .....	268
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>POEMS IN TURKISH .....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 POEMS.....</b>	<b>278</b>
<i>MEÇHUL ÖĞRENCİ ANITI (ECE AYHAN).....</i>	<i>278</i>
<i>NE BÖYLE SEVDALAR GÖRDÜM NE BÖYLE AYRILIKLAR (İLHAN BERK)</i>	
.....	279
<i>ŞİİR (İLHAN BERK) .....</i>	<i>279</i>
<i>YERÇEKİMLİ KARANFİL (EDİP CANSEVER) .....</i>	<i>280</i>
<i>YUNUS Kİ SÜTDİŞLERİYLE TÜRKÇENİN (CEMAL SÜREYA).....</i>	<i>281</i>
<i>ÜVERCİKA (CEMAL SÜREYA) .....</i>	<i>281</i>
<i>GEYİKLİ GECE (TURGUT UYAR).....</i>	<i>282</i>
<b>CHAPTER 3 POEMS.....</b>	<b>283</b>
<i>MONNA ROSA -II- ÖLÜM VE ÇERÇEVELER.....</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>KÖPÜK.....</i>	<i>285</i>
<i>SÜRGÜN ÜLKEDEN BAŞKENTLER BAŞKENTİNE .....</i>	<i>286</i>
<b>CHAPTER 4 POEMS.....</b>	<b>288</b>
<i>HIZIRLA KIRK SAAT .....</i>	<i>288</i>
<i>LEYLÂ İLE MECNUN .....</i>	<i>291</i>
<i>ESİR KENT'TEN ÖZÜLKE'YE .....</i>	<i>293</i>
<b>CHAPTER 5 POEMS.....</b>	<b>294</b>
<i>ALINYAZISI SAATİ.....</i>	<i>294</i>
<b>CHAPTER 6 POEMS.....</b>	<b>296</b>
<i>MASAL .....</i>	<i>296</i>
<i>AYINLER.....</i>	<i>299</i>
<i>ÇEŞMELER.....</i>	<i>300</i>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>301</b>

## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to put forward an analytical account that Sezai Karakoç, as one of the founders of the Second New movement in modern Turkish poetry, created a *sui generis* characterisation of Islamic existentialism in Turkey through the utilisation of existentialist concepts such as death, freedom, authenticity and isolation whilst following the doctrines of Islam and Sufism.

Sezai Karakoç (1933-2021) was one of the most important figures of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Turkish poetry and literature and a conservative-Muslim intellectual and critic who sought to apply the principles of Muslim belief in his life and works. This dissertation refers to Karakoç as a pioneer of Islamic existentialism in Turkey as he profoundly used the central themes of existentialism in his poems and essays. Karakoç professes Islamic existentialism, this dissertation argues, primarily by arguing that it is necessary to (i) exceed the angst and despair of this life by embracing the reality of death and willingness to go beyond it, (ii) pursue an authentic life by being a true believer, (iii) achieving the ultimate freedom in the afterlife by adhering to Islamic principles and rules, and (iv) transform the alienation of the individual by seeking to become a soldier of resurrection.

Combining the principles of primarily secular philosophies such as existentialism and Islam teaching is rare in Turkey. While there is no substantial body of work concerning Islamic existentialism in Turkey, the dominant scholarly position is that existentialism and Islam cannot coexist because they are widely believed to be mutually exclusive. However, as this dissertation argues, the concepts of

existentialism are present in Karakoç's poems and essays. It is essential to underline that this dissertation does not argue that Karakoç is an existentialist. Instead, it argues that existentialism and its core concepts influence his worldview and thoughts on what a true individual is, how to live an authentic and honest life, how to create the ultimate civilisation, and eventually how to unite with God as a sincere believer. It is important to note that there is no unilateral impact of existentialism as a Western philosophy on Karakoç since the questions raised by existentialism are also raised by Karakoç inherently. Karakoç was brought up with a similar background as his contemporaries, receiving the modern schooling and education that the Republic provided, allowing the hybridisation of Western and local knowledge. Knowing and reading the French language and literature, he was exposed to how existentialism interpreted the same queries; however, he was also preoccupied with the same inquiries as his modern education provided him with the rationality in which he interpreted the *bigger* questions with which humanity concerns itself. The debates in this period allowed the local intellectuals, Karakoç included, to rise in finding a way to develop their own language and understanding of the era's queries, as existentialism also did in the West. The significance here lies in that both existentialists and Karakoç ask the same questions at a similar time and in a similar socio-political context but come up with different sources to find the answers. This dissertation, thus, aims to use Islamic existentialism, which helps interpret Karakoç's works, which are from time to time challenging to interpret, as the imagery is heavy in poems and essays, containing several layered meanings.

The preoccupation with the same concepts is supported by Karakoç's own words, where he claims his poetry aimed to "capture the tragic humour at the points such as love, freedom, living and death, where existence is dynamited, the absolute immersed in the irrational and the absurd. My poetry wants to do this more and more."<sup>1</sup> When examined, the poems of Karakoç, which were included in the Second New movement, while it remained a significant movement in Turkish poetry, are rife with existentialist themes and ideas.

---

<sup>1</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. "Sanat Görüşü, Şiirimiz - Akımlar, Toplum ve Şair Hakkında" in Edebiyat Yazıları II - Dişimizin Zarı. 5th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2014, p.45.

The *Second New Movement* (İkinci Yeni Hareketi) is a poetry movement that became prominent in Turkish literature during the 1950s and 1960s. According to the *Second New*, the traditional ways of writing poetry, such as using meaningful words or structured verses, should be abandoned. The poets of this movement started to ignore grammatical rules, leading to deformation in their language. The deformed language allowed the poets to transcend the mind's boundaries and create more surreal and imagist poems.<sup>2</sup> The Second New did not appear as a poetry movement by agreement, publishing a joint statement, or by being aggregated in a particular journal as its predecessors. Unbeknownst to each other, pioneers such as İlhan Berk, Edip Cansever, Cemal Süreya, Turgut Uyar, Sezai Karakoç and Ece Ayhan published poems in the first half of the 1950s. These poems, published in periodicals and literary journals like *İstanbul*, *A*, and *Pazar Postası*, were radically distinct from other poems in terms of language, form, substance, and topic. The poets of Second New also claim that this innovation and movement emerged spontaneously at first without their knowledge or consent.<sup>3</sup> The worldview and self-image that underlie Karakoç's works are different from those of other Second New poets, yet he is one of the movement's forerunners regarding language, discourse, and form. It is crucial to note that Necip Fazıl Kısakürek<sup>4</sup>, who attempted to re-establish relations with the tradition of Sufi poetry, was someone Karakoç attempted to mimic in the initial era of his poetry. This sets Karakoç apart from his peers in the same movement since it contradicts the prevailing politics and poetics of the day. Karaca argues that "this religious/mystical source from which his poems are fed" distinguishes Karakoç from the other Second New poets because "other than him, no Second New poet draws primarily on religion, mysticism, or the legacy of Divan poetry."<sup>5</sup> This inclination, as this dissertation

---

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Second New Movement, please see [sub-chapter 1.1.2.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Karaca, Alaattin. *İkinci Yeni Poetikası*. Hece Yayınları, 2019, p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904-1983) was a prominent poet of Islamic mysticism in Turkish poetry, Islamist ideologue and playwright. For more information about Necip Fazıl and his influence on Sezai Karakoç, please see [sub-chapters 1.1.2.](#) and [1.2.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Karaca, p. 115.

argues<sup>6</sup>, also allowed Karakoç to merge the concepts of existentialism and the teachings of Islam. Karakoç was able to incorporate the themes of accepting death as a way to truly achieve freedom, freedom that is attained by loving God and being willing to be one with Him, being an authentic individual by becoming a soldier of resurrection, and thus transforming the alienation and isolation that the age brings because he was influenced by religion and mysticism.

Following this introductory chapter, the first chapter focuses on the existing literature about the emergence of the Second New movement within a new socio-political environment. As an ally of the Western superpower governed by the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in a bipolar world, Turkey suddenly gained relevance and a significant role in international affairs, profoundly impacting Turkey's social, cultural, and literary life. During the early Cold War years, Turkish poetry begins to diversify by broadening its focus and becoming more receptive to outside influence. The Democrat Party's (DP) win in the 1950 elections, which marked the end of Turkey's transition to a multi-party system, strengthened its dominance. The critical social developments of the DP period include the shift to multi-party politics, emigration from rural to urban areas, industrialisation, capitalism, and individualisation.<sup>7</sup> The pressures and ideological disputes on art also become apparent throughout the DP period, although they initially go unnoticed. Besides the global and national factors, Second New was also impacted by Western philosophies and ideologies. The first is existentialism, a philosophy that acknowledges the reality of alienated, unhappy, and restless people in a culture that has lost faith in the past and the future. Ritter<sup>8</sup> argues that this usually happens when the person is in danger, loses all significance and loses his sense of self. The symptoms include anxiety, separation,

---

<sup>6</sup> Parts of this dissertation has been re-written and published as an article to provide publication requirements in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree earned. The article, first published online in 2020, can be found at: Çitler, Gözde. '[Islam and Existentialism in Turkey during the Cold War in the Works of Sezai Karakoç](#)'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2022, pp. 70–85.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> Ritter in Bezirci, Asım. *İkinci Yeni Olayı: İnceleme, Örnekleme*. Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2013, p. 55.

anxiety, loneliness, and hopelessness. It was during this time that Western authors like Sartre, Camus, Beckett, Ionesco, Kafka, and Kierkegaard began to be translated<sup>9</sup>. These authors deal with the themes of alienation and the meaninglessness of human existence, being pushed into nothingness and absurdity, and falling into suffocation and loneliness in various forms and angles.

Moreover, it is hardly coincidental that existentialist-inspired stories were written by regional authors like Demir Özlü and Ferit Edgü. The effects of existentialism also can be traced in poems of the Second New's most significant poets. While Berk concentrates on the meaninglessness of existence, Süreya on idolatry and death, and Uyar, Cansever, and Ayhan on individual loneliness, isolation, and alienation, these themes are relayed through the stylistic choices of their poetry. Karakoç's poetry deals with concepts key to existentialist philosophy like his contemporaries.

The second chapter creates a framework for the idea of Islamic existentialism by segmenting the two components that constitute it. The first part focuses on religious existentialism, concentrating on Christian existentialism, Sufism, and Arab existentialism, while the second part explains Western existentialism and the settings in which it emerges. In this regard, this dissertation defines Islamic existentialism as the process of comprehending Islamic teachings in light of the following existentialist themes: death, despair and angst; liberation and freedom; authenticity; and alienation and isolation. After a detailed account of Christian existentialism, which defines and examines man using many focuses from which man's quest to understand his existence originates, arguing that people have an inbuilt desire to seek God or to utilise their religion to close the gap between themselves and the omnipotent God, the relation between Islam and existentialism is also examined. A term similar to Islamic existentialism was used before by the French philosopher Abdennour Bidar, according to whom each person is God's heir on earth, acquiring eternal presence and guaranteeing historical immortality beyond the traditional metaphysical interpretations, which is a declaration of intellectual, as opposed to just personal, spirituality, constituting his self-Islam approach. This dissertation, on the other hand,

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

proposes that the phenomenon that is Islamic existentialism in Turkey appears uniquely in Karakoç's poems and writings, where he employs religion, mysticism, and Sufism as the foundations of his soldier of resurrection ideal, which becomes a philosophy in the 1980s after the publishing of the journal *Diriliş*.

Karakoç primarily draws inspiration from Sufism for his worldview, which gives rise to the *Diriliş* (resurrection) concept aimed for the Muslim believer to have and hold all his life. It is essential to note that a significant thought process went into choosing the closest translation of the Turkish word, *diriliş*. In Turkish, *diriliş* can be translated both as *resurrection* and *revival*. While *resurrection* has a spiritual resonance and is connected to religion (e.g., the bodily resurrection after death, the soul's resurrection after Judgment Day), *revival* has more worldly connotations, i.e., the revival of the Islamic civilisation, reviving the old ways of living taught to people by mystics and Sufis. In the end, a conscious choice is made, and the word *resurrection* is used throughout the text because *diriliş* ultimately is concerned with the life after death, the resurrection of the body and soul in Allah's presence. In this sense, Karakoç's idea of the resurrection can be traced to the Sufistic concept of *vüsûl*. It can be interpreted within the relation between Islam and mysticism, in which the concepts of existentialism are also prevalent. Sufism, or *tasavvuf*, is described as the spiritual and inner lifestyle lived within the framework of Islam's external and internal rules<sup>10</sup> and as "the process of becoming a Sufi"<sup>11</sup>. *Vüsûl*, in turn, to reach, to meet with one's beloved, i.e., Allah, and is the opposite of the word *hijran*, which means to leave, to separate<sup>12</sup>. It can be argued that the concepts with which Karakoç and existentialism alike are preoccupied can be traced back to ecclesiastical history, which also has an ambivalent relationship with mysticism that came forward centuries before

---

<sup>10</sup> '[Tasavvuf](#)'. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 13 Aug. 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Buehler, Arthur F. *Recognizing Sufism: Contemplation in the Islamic Tradition*. I.B. Tauris, 2016, p. 4. Buehler further states that it is difficult to have singular description of Sufism as "the reason for this situation is intrinsic to the sufi experience itself, because it goes beyond the very narrow confines of rationality. Most people reading and writing about sufism are not even aware that this vast universe beyond the dualistic mind even exists, except perhaps a vague concept." For a detailed discussion on Sufism, please see [sub-chapter 2.1.2.1](#).

<sup>12</sup> '[Vüsûl](#)'. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 11 Sept. 2022.

existentialism as a systematic philosophy appeared. Therefore, it can be argued that the idea of the resurrection, the foundation of Karakoç's doctrine of the same name, bridges the gap between the levels of divinity. Combining the ideas of existentialism and the teachings of Islam, Karakoç perceives Islam as a method of genuine emancipation and liberation through love for God, which Sufism fundamentally influences. The foundation of Sufism is love and fear of Allah, two concepts complementary to one another because the love for Allah also gives rise to a fear of Him.

The idea of resurrection resonated very strongly in Karakoç that he formulated it within a political project that was the political party he founded. *Diriliş Partisi* (Resurrection Party) or DİRİ-P was founded in 1990 by Karakoç as a political endeavour and as part of the doctrine of the resurrection. Thus, this dissertation's contribution to the political science field can be found in the analyses of the existential themes conceptualising Karakoç's doctrine of resurrection, which was built to encompass the political standing and views of Karakoç. Such an endeavour follows both the tradition of sultans of the Ottoman Empire who were interested in literature as political figures and the effect of the Islamist poets, such as Necip Fazıl and İsmet Özel, in current discussions in contemporary Turkish politics, especially in discussions of Westernisation.

Following the accounts for religious existentialism, the second part focuses on French existentialism, which re-emerged as an influential ideology during the Cold War and Second World War in France. According to Crowell<sup>13</sup>, as a result of Jean-Paul Sartre's explicit adoption of the term as a self-description and the widespread publication of the post-war literary and philosophical works of Sartre and his collaborators, particularly Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus, existentialism came to be associated with a cultural movement that grew in popularity in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s. This section aims to provide a historical overview

---

<sup>13</sup> Crowell, Steven. '[Existentialism](#)'. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

of the development of French, or atheist, existentialism in Sartre and Camus' writings. In his foundational work *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which was later published as a book based on a lecture at Club Maintenant in Paris on October 29, 1945, Sartre explains his perspective on existentialism as *atheist existentialism*. He claims that he is a member of the first category of *existential atheists*, which includes Heidegger and the other existentialists of French origin. Sartre lists thinkers like Marcel and Jaspers in the second group, which consists of Christians.

Furthermore, in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre attempts to prove this through a transcendental argument, but he eventually abandoned it in favour of the more humble stance that the writer must always take a position on *the side of freedom*. According to the philosophy of *engaged literature* outlined in “*What is Literature?*” an author always acts to envision methods to overcome real *unfreedoms* like racism and commercial exploitation or to close them off when building a fictional universe.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Camus forcibly distanced himself from existentialism, although he is still regarded as one of the most significant existentialists, and his discussion of suicide is one of the most well-known existentialist issues of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the concepts of existentialism that this dissertation focuses on are based on the French existentialism developed through Sartre and Camus's writings.

This dissertation focuses on four existentialist themes: death, freedom, authenticity, and alienation. The classification is carried out following the model set by eminent American psychotherapist Irvin D. Yalom, who provides a comparable categorisation of three themes: death, freedom, and isolation in his seminal book *Existential Psychotherapy*. Since authenticity is essential to Sartre's interpretation of existentialism, it is added as a separate theme in this dissertation. Following detailed explanations of each concept, the conceptual framework chapter is closed by describing the dissertation's methodology.

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Aronson, Ronald. ‘[Albert Camus](#)’. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Following the chapter on the conceptual framework, the second section of the dissertation concentrates on assessments of each of the four existentialist themes as they are presented mainly in Karakoç's poems. As the poetry is constructed with strong imagery per the principles of the Second New, the writings of Karakoç published in the journal of *Diriliş* and elsewhere (which were later collected and published as separate books) are also used. The third chapter is an analysis of the existential concept of death, together with notions of angst and despair, which are discussed using the poems *Monna Rosa II – Ölüm ve Çerçeveler*, *Köpük*, and *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine* all of which are preoccupied with the notion of death.

The fourth chapter, entitled *Freedom*, explores Karakoç's interpretation of the idea that the believer can obtain liberty by expressing his love for Allah as his Creator. This interpretation is related to the Sufistic approach to the concept of the love of God. The following poems are used in this chapter's discussion of the ideas of freedom and liberation: *Hızırla Kırk Saat*, *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, and *Esir Kentten Özüлке'ye*, all of which reflect on subjects such as prophets, human, celestial, and mystical creatures, angels, good and evil, historical transformations, the states and contradictions of society, significant events in the history of Islam and religions based on Sufistic narratives, as ways of approaching God in order to achieve the genuine freedom and liberation.

The existential subject of authenticity as approached by Karakoç permeates the fifth chapter. Living authentically is central to Karakoç's understanding of resurrection and how to become a true soldier of resurrection; as such, it necessitates a dedication despite external pressures or social sanctions. Karakoç emphasises the need to achieve the authentic civilisation, Islamic civilisation, and commends the soldier of resurrection for carrying out this duty. The investigation of the Islamic civilisation's foundations through cities is a crucial component of Karakoç's *Diriliş* philosophy. For Karakoç, cities are seen as the lifeblood and spirit of civilisations. He advocates for the concept of the City of the Resurrection, believing in the establishment of the true Islamic civilisation, which can be accomplished through the construction of this city.

The concept of authenticity is analysed by examining the ideas of civilisation and the soldier of resurrection through Karakoç's essays and the poem *Alinyazısı Saati*.

The last of the analysis chapters discuss the existentialist concept of alienation and the individual's isolation. Karakoç claims that modernisation brought about by the West and Westernisation results from man's alienation and isolation as an individual. The matters of modernity and Westernisation are discussed by analysis of Karakoç's poems, *Masal*, *Çeşmeler*, and *Ayinler*, using the poet's various critiques of materialisms, dependence on commodities, and absolutisms as conceptions of Western civilisation.

The conclusion chapter will summarise the main points of the analysis chapters in the context of the literature review and conceptual framework chapters. It will also discuss why these discussions are essential for locating Islamic existentialism in Turkey by drawing on key existentialist ideas from Karakoç's writings.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1 EXAMINING THE EXISTING LITERATURE: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Through the existing literature, this chapter reviews the social, cultural, and political context of the Cold War in France and Turkey to better understand the increasing oppression and constraints on the individual and individuality. This constraint has been reflected in the political and social events of the era as well as in the cultural and philosophical works of the authors and poets of the time. Through a predominantly historical study of the early Cold War years in Turkey and France, this sub-chapter seeks to understand how existentialism has gained significance in its trials to locate the individual. At this point in time, individuals were increasingly left alone within an atmosphere that required one of the poles, i.e. Atlanticist/American or Communist/Soviet, in this new world order. Therefore, this chapter aims to discover the overall conjecture of the era to appreciate the significance of existentialism and how it affected the cultural and literary movements in Europe, particularly in Turkey.

It is argued in this chapter that within existentialist thought, the believers of Christianity try to tackle the individuality question as much as the non-believers/atheists do. A similar trend is seen in the Islamic scholars, specifically within Arab existentialism. To that end, this chapter seeks to determine how existentialism as a philosophy has flourished in order to deal with the Cold War

mentality, as well as the comparative consequences of the bi-polarity of the Cold War years in France and Turkey. It is argued within the literature that the Cold War mentality slowly crushed the individual and their individuality; it oppressed individuals to exist, think, and act like themselves. Instead, people's individuality started to disappear within the absolute ideologies and regimes; they were virtually forced to choose one side rather than freely express their own beliefs and states of mind.

This is followed by examining Turkey's political scenery during the early Cold War. Turkey has a unique case since the country has stayed neutral throughout the Second World War and hence has not experienced the destruction of the war as much as France did. Nevertheless, with the beginning of the Cold War, Turkey had to choose between being either on the Western or the Eastern bloc of the new world. The Turkish case is studied to discover how existentialist thought has affected the literary movements in the country while it dealt with its own political struggles and the struggles of international politics and diplomacy. To this end, the existentialist influence on Turkish literature is explained through a religious and non-religious perspective by looking at the works of five atheist/non-believer poets, namely Ece Ayhan, İlhan Berk, Edip Cansever, Cemal Süreya, and Turgut Uyar who heavily applied existentialist themes to their poems to the extent that they created a new movement in Turkish poetry, the *Second New* whose roots and development is explored in [sub-chapter 1.1.2](#). Furthermore, this chapter elucidates the life and works of the sole religious poet, Sezai Karakoç, who, although initially belonging to the list of names mentioned above as a creator of the said new movement, also developed his own doctrine of resurrection, which initially fuses Islam and existentialist thought, believing in God as the sole creator, His prophets and the importance to follow the Islam's tenets, ways, and rules while applying the concepts of existentialist thought to his works.

## 1.1 The Emergence of Existentialism in Turkey and the *Second New Movement*

The rise of existentialism in Turkey coincides with several other historical instances. It was in the 1950s that the effects of the Second World War and the Cold War started to impact Turkish political, social, and literary life. It is discussed in the existing literature that even though Turkey was not a direct participant in the Second World War, it was nevertheless influenced by the war. The Cold War, then, had a much more profound effect on all aspects of life in Turkey since Turkey's transformation into a multi-party system, with the Democrat Party's landslide victory in the 1950 elections against the Republican People's Party (RPP), coincides with the beginning of the Cold War when Turkey was located on the pro-American/Atlanticist side of the world as state policy. In other words, Turkey had chosen allyship with the United States in a world which saw a power shift whereby two superpowers governed it. This transition was fully completed when Turkey announced its NATO in 1952. Being a member of NATO also meant becoming a strategic ally by sharing the longest border with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Thus, Turkey was put into the spotlight as a participant of the Western alliance against the Soviet expansion and the Communist threat. This sudden significance and the critical role Turkey had assumed in world politics deeply affected Turkey's social, cultural, and literary life. Therefore, Turkish poetry started to diversify by extending its scope and opening to foreign influence during the early Cold War. With such influence, the simple language in the poetry disappeared, following the traditional Divan poetry and early-Republican poetry was abandoned, and more abstract meaning in style became popular. The political content of social-realist poems was replaced with a multi-layered, abstract, and dark imaginary with an experimentalist and existentialist exploration of self in the *Second New*, which was also impacted by artistic and literary movements such as Dadaism and surrealism.

The poets of the prominent *Second New* movement, including Karakoç, lived through these momentous times of Turkish politics while the whole system had changed and Turkey's neutrality during the Second World War could not continue during the Cold

War years. On the contrary, the controversial policy of Turkey's neutrality<sup>16</sup> was exposed to criticism by the victors of the war. After the war, the ruling circles in Turkey have become worried that Turkey would remain alone in the new emerging structure, particularly against the threat of Soviet expansionism. This feeling of loneliness created a need to position an urge to locate Turkey in one of the poles of the new world order. The Cold War years in Turkey, partly due to this need to belong to one or the other side of the divided world, have created a detached country on many fronts. The pro-Westernist or pro-Sovietic sentiments have generated such a powerful division in Turkey that its repercussions in politics and economics are still to be felt in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The literary movements oftentimes act as a unification point during these divisive times, as Çınar demonstrates in her article where she discusses the debilitation of the citizen and the demands for a post-patriarchal state of the public during the Gezi protests of 2013, stating that the wide use of the poem of Turgut Uyar (a prominent representative of the *Second New* movement, discussed in detail in sub-chapter [1.1.3.5](#)) in the context of Gezi is political in the sense that “it implies dissent against the state that has constantly been telling its *infantilized* citizens how to behave and what to do” where the citizens were united around the poem with “a joyful and optimistic attitude and a very individualistic act.”<sup>17</sup>

It can be argued that the tradition of combining politics and literature was, and still is, actively resonant in Turkey. Since before the Ottoman Empire, Turkish poetry and literature have always been a focal point of occupation by political figures. Çoban<sup>18</sup> states, “[p]oets contributed to the formation of the Turkish political tradition by their articles, actions, and attitudes.” Similarly, most politicians, including the Sultans,

---

<sup>16</sup>C. Göktepe and Süleyman Seydi, ‘Soğuk Savaş Başlangıcında Türk Dış Politikası’ *Kutadgubilig*, 72 (2015), p. 198.

<sup>17</sup> Çınar, Alev. ‘[Negotiating the Foundations of the Modern State: The Emasculated Citizen and the Call for a Post-Patriarchal State at Gezi Protests](#)’. *Theory and Society*, vol. 48, no. 3, June 2019, pp. 475-76.

<sup>18</sup>F. Çoban, ‘İslamcılığın Fikri Taşıyıcısı Olarak Türkiye Siyasi Hayatında Necip Fazıl’, *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 39 (2015), 29.

were at the same time poets and/or novelists. Gencer<sup>19</sup> calls this tradition *the tradition of litterateurs*<sup>20</sup> and states that “[t]he tradition of litterateurs corresponds to the phenomenon that there is a class of literary men presents within the writers in the Turkish political history from past to present”, and “it is possible to find the origins of this tradition in the corpus of poetry which had been developed in or around the patronage of Bâb-ı Âli.”<sup>21</sup> This tradition remained as influential as before, even though the landscape of politics had undergone a significant change during the 1910s and Republican era. In any social and political event where Turkish people wished to raise their voice and highlight the importance of being an individual against any form of an overbearing policy, they used some form of literature in their protests from various artists’ work.

Sezai Karakoç, whose occupation was first and foremost a poet, a thinker and a critic, was not exempted from this rule. The founder and vigorous advocate of the doctrine of *resurrection*, his work has always gone hand-in-hand with his political belief. So much so that Karakoç founded *Diriliş Partisi (Resurrection Party)* in 1990, and upon the party’s closure in 1997, on the grounds of the party’s absence from two consecutive general elections, it was re-founded under the name of *Yüce Diriliş Partisi (Supreme Resurrection Party)* in 2007. Resurrection Party is an existing minor political party in Turkish politics and advocates the ideal of *resurrection* itself in its programme: “We define resurrection as the pre-eminence of our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and will to reach the highest pace that society needs, starting from the most fundamental depth of our soul, taking our identity beyond development, rooting our

---

<sup>19</sup>B. Gencer, Şariatçılıktan Medeniyetçiliğe İslâmcılık: Bir İslamcılık Tipolojisine Doğru, İsmail Kara and Asım Öz, eds. Türkiye’de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi ve Hareketi Sempozyum Tebliğleri, (İstanbul: 2013): 75.

<sup>20</sup>*Üdebâ* geleneği. While the *üdebâ* consisted of the literary minds in the Ottoman court, the *ulemâ* consisted of the religious scholars with deep knowledge of Islamic rules and theology. Both acted as advisors of the Sultans.

<sup>21</sup>The tradition of literature was born and developed within the boundaries and under the influence of the Ottoman Palace, which ‘opened the way for poetry to converge politically with the central authority.’ in Gencer, Türkiye’de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi, p. 75.

existence and progress.”<sup>22</sup> Karakoç, influenced by existentialism in the 1950s, has utilised existentialist themes and re-interpreted them into his own analysis of Islam, which has allowed him to carry this doctrine onto a political platform. Thus, the doctrine of resurrection does not remain only as an intellectual discussion but also serves as a basis for a political movement.

Karakoç’s development as a poet and an intellectual coincided with Turkey’s own development as a young country that was also affected by the Cold War. “[T]he period of Karakoç’s youth coincided with the destruction of Europe in the Second World War, the emergence of Cold War global politics, and the post-war period of decolonisation in Muslim-majority countries all over Asia and Africa”, Aydın and Duran maintain, and that the early expression of his political ideas has concurred with the first attempt of democratisation of the multiparty politics in Turkey.<sup>23</sup>

In 1950, the RPP’s 27-year-long single-party rule officially ended with the DP’s victory, with the majority of the votes from the newly-emerging bourgeoisie class of rural Anatolia.<sup>24</sup> Besides this, the social opposition in Turkey that accumulated for many years and the failure to achieve economic prosperity can be regarded as one of the factors that generated the DP rule. The DP, a centre-right party, promised liberal

---

<sup>22</sup>Yüce Diriliş Partisi, ‘Parti Programı, Article 9, Yüce Diriliş Partisi’, <http://yuceDirilis.org.tr/parti-programi/> (accessed May 15, 2018).

<sup>23</sup>C. Aydın and Burhanettin Duran, ‘Arnold J. Toynbee and Islamism in Cold War–Era Turkey: Civilisationism in the Writings of Sezai Karakoç’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 35 (2015), p. 311.

<sup>24</sup>The founders of the DP, who were a group of politicians initially from the RPP, ‘accused their former party of curtailing religious i.e. Islamic freedom as well as ruining the Turkish economy by excessive central planning’. Besides this, the social opposition in Turkey that accumulated for many years and the failure to achieve economic prosperity can be regarded among the factors that generated the DP rule. For more information on the DP rule please see: İ. Aytürk, ‘Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944–69’ *Middle Eastern Studies* 50 (September 2014), p. 697, and R. Babaoğlu, review of *Ve İhtilal*, by Altan Öymen. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* XV, 30 (Spring 2015), p. 369.

economic reforms and a more lenient attitude towards Islam.<sup>25</sup> Even though it is argued that the promise of liberalisation by the DP was fulfilled to some extent, its policies have created dissonance with some intellectuals. It is essential to look at the discussions regarding the DP rule from a comparative perspective, i.e. centre-right vs leftist opinions. Additionally, the critical economic and cultural changes that were taking place in the early DP rule can be attributed to the economic reforms it pursued. These came in different shapes and forms, which can be summarised as the gradual change to the free market economy, an American way of life that can also be linked to the Westernisation efforts during the Cold War years, and by proxy, the development of a more consumption- and consumer-oriented society. All these changes in the society and the economy started to de-emphasise the uniqueness of the individual, and, in turn, it has affected the route the *Second New* movement took, which resonated in the existentialist themes that can be found in the character and the psyche of this new current of poetry.

### **1.1.1 Turkish Political Scenery during the Cold War: The Conflict of the Right vs the Left**

The DP era is regarded as a transition era in Turkish politics. Although the aims of the policies have remained the same with the İnönü<sup>26</sup> era, the DP played a more active

---

<sup>25</sup>This initiative can be seen in the party program of the DP which was also uttered in a speech by chairman Adnan Menderes in several principals: '[t]o take all the measures to ensure that private enterprise feels legal and de facto secure and to assist its rapid development, to fulfil and complete the requirements of the wide use of foreign enterprise capital and technology, to save the life of procurement from all kinds of bureaucratic obstacles and harmful intervention of the state.'

Extract from Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 'I. Menderes Hükümeti Programı',

<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/hukumetler/HP19.htm> (accessed May 10, 2018).

<sup>26</sup>İsmet İnönü (1844-1973) was a prominent Turkish states- and military-man who served as the second president of the Turkish Republic from 1938 to 1950's military coup, as well as the second president of the RPP after Atatürk's death. For more information on İnönü please see: Ş. Turan, *İsmet İnönü: Yaşamı, Dönemi ve Kişiliği* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2003), M. Heper, *İsmet İnönü:*

role in foreign policy. In order to defend the communist threat and to cooperate with the West in the sense of security in the context of regional pacts, [the DP] did not avoid taking the initiative to become a significant player in the regional sense of Cold War politics.<sup>27</sup> This ever-challenging global atmosphere and willingness to become a central actor in post-Second World War politics steered the DP to create a repressive rule in domestic politics. As a result, a depressive, weary and isolated individual started to appear, which was also demonstrated in the literary works and movements and in the pioneers of these movements who did not lose the tradition of *litterateurs*. Not surprisingly, the *Second New* movement has appeared during this transition time in Turkey where, due to the political and social oppression of the Cold War era, the influence of individualism, surrealism and existentialism have become prominent in the works of poets and authors of the period. Kara argues that

[t]he poets of the *Second New* presented their understanding of art at a time when the war was over, and new poles in the society had started to emerge. This movement in poetry was accepted by many literary critics as the latest and most original breakthrough of contemporary Turkish poetry, and for some, it was regarded as a scandal in literature.<sup>28</sup>

It can be argued that such a breakthrough has emerged because the poets of the time had an increasing feeling of repression in daily life, which translated into their works that began to shift the structure of their poetry. Some described the transition to the multi-party system and democratic rule in Turkey as a counter-revolution, and these discussions were almost always carried out through religion versus secularism debate. It was argued that it was too early to transfer to democracy; that the spirit of the republic had not yet reached the young generation, and even if it did, it got hold of only a few of them; or that the goals of Westernisation have not been achieved, in

---

*The Making of A Turkish Statesman* (Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 1998), Ş. Süreya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam: İsmet İnönü* (İstanbul : Remzi Kitabevi, 1966).

<sup>27</sup>Göktepe and Seydi, Soğuk Savaş Başlangıcında Türk Dış Politikası, p. 198.

<sup>28</sup> Kara, Ömer Tuğrul. ‘Türkçenin Kuralları Dışına Çıkan Bir Topluluk: *İkinci Yeniciler*’. [Journal of History School \(JOHS\)](#), vol. 6, no. 15, Sept. 2013, p. 455.

fact, this effort has resulted in failure.<sup>29</sup> Islamist mobilisation has flourished in such an environment, primarily through extensively distributed and read literary magazines. Aygün argues

[a]t the end of the 1940s and with the beginning of the 1950s, the struggle against communism due to political polarization in the world, as well as the political atmosphere in Turkey, gained an international dimension. As a result, conservative and nationalist groups within the country would start to stand out, and conservative values and Islam started to be emphasized.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, “[the early Islamists] effectively engaged with and within the political field, mobilising through and around various publications and the two right-wing political parties, namely the mainstream Democrat Party.”<sup>31</sup> Islamist activism and mobilisation were carried out by a large number of Islamist magazines and their authors among which Necip Fazıl Kısakürek stands out “thanks, particularly to [his] charismatic persona and frequent conferences in Anatolia.”<sup>32</sup> Karakoç also starts creating his own doctrine, which discusses what Islam means for the Eastern world and how it is equal to the civilisation *itself* and not only a part of the civilisation process, by tracing Necip Fazıl’s footsteps both as an intellectual and as a *warrior* of Islam. Although Karakoç’s doctrine of resurrection has its specific characteristics and cannot be defined as a full extension of Necip Fazıl’s *Büyük Doğu (Grand East)* movement, it is apparent that this ideal and, in turn heavily influenced it, influenced other Islamist thinkers such as İsmet Özel<sup>33</sup> who, in the 1990s “would come closer to

---

<sup>29</sup> M.H. Akın, ‘Türkiye Modernleşmesi Karşısında Dini Gruplar, 7 (January 2017), p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> M. Aygün, ‘Türkiye’de Anti-Komünizmin Kaynakları - 4: 1950’lerde Anti-Komünizmin Uluslararasılaşması Ve Muhafazakâr Güçlerin Mücadeleye Dâhil Olması’, *Sosyologca* 5 (2013), p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> M. Çınar and İ. Gencil Sezgin, ‘Islamist Political Engagement in the Early Years of Multi-Party Politics in Turkey: 1945–60’ *Turkish Studies* 14, (June 2013), p. 330.

<sup>32</sup> Çınar and Gencil Sezgin, p. 332.

<sup>33</sup> İsmet Özel (b. 1944) is a Turkish poet and scholar. Özel declared that he is a Muslim with a poem that was published in Sezai Karakoç’s *Diriliş* journal and for a time he supported socialism.

Karakoç's idea of *tradition*, recognising that the climax of Islam was reached during the glorious Ottoman era."<sup>34</sup> Necip Fazıl, Nurettin Topçu<sup>35</sup>, Sezai Karakoç and İsmet Özel constitute the four most well-known intellectuals of the Islamic front from different spectres in Turkish politics and literature with their strong political positions, influential literary works, and contributions to the modernity discussions.

On the other hand, the leftist intellectuals, who favour Atatürk's principles and reforms, and the new regime he introduced, harshly criticised the DP's way of governing. Asım Bezirci<sup>36</sup> reprimands the politics of the DP as dishonest and oppressive. He argues that the DP promised to bring liberalism and freedom to the

---

For more information about his life and works please see: Scott Morrison, 'To Be a Believer in Republican Turkey: Three Allegories of İsmet Özel', *Muslim World*, 96, (2006), pp. 507-21; Abdullah Özkan, *İsmet Özel*, 1966; Engin Çağman et al., 'Certain Existentialist Themes in İsmet Özel's Image of City', *Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları*, 13 (2017).

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed analysis see: Michelangelo, Guida, 'A 'Communist and Muslim' Poet in Contemporary Turkey: The Works of İsmet Özel', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 41 (2014), p. 124.

<sup>35</sup> Nurettin Topçu (1909 - 1975) is a Turkish author, academician, and intellectual. Topçu is one of the most prominent names within the Islamic ideology who advocated for pursuing an Islamic civilisation in lieu of the Western civilisation in Turkish modernisation. For more information about his life and works please see: M. Guida, 'Nurettin Topçu: the 'Reinvention' of Islamism in Republican Turkey', *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 12 (2013), pp. 15-29; H. Karaman, *Nurettin Topçu* (İstanbul, 2010); İ. Kara (ed.), *Nurettin Topçu* (Ankara, 2009); Fahri Yetim, 'Nurettin Topçu's Critique of the Thought of Islamism in Connection with the Concept of Moralism', *Journal of History and Future*, 3 (2017), pp. 10-23; B. Duran, C. Aydın, 'Competing Occidentalisms of Modern Islamist Thought: Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu on Christianity, the West and Modernity', *Muslim World*, 103 (2013), pp. 479-500.

<sup>36</sup> Bezirci (1927 – 1993), was a leftist literary critique and historian who was killed during the fire in Madımak Hotel, Sivas in 1993.

country, but ‘as the Party of Union and Progress<sup>37</sup> had done before<sup>38</sup>’, the DP started to limit the existing freedom. According to Bezirci,

[i]n order to not lose the support of the people, the DP has used the aged-hatred of the public towards the bureaucracy and Western ideology with a populist attitude. The DP sacrificed the reforms on the superstructure and the principles of Atatürk. It took advantage of religious beliefs and supported fanaticism. Between 17 March 1953 - 7 May 1958, only in 5 years, 1.161 prosecutions were carried out on the press, and 238 journalists were sentenced.<sup>39</sup>

On the same topic, Babaoğlu states that “[t]he DP, which had an overwhelming success in the elections of 1954, gradually began to show authoritarian tendencies as the internal and external conditions that gave rise to its establishment began to change.”<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Özdemir and Şendil argue that

[t]he opposition against the leftist movements, which sometimes turned into a *witch-hunt*, began in the last ruling period of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) between the years 1944-50 and reached its peak during the rule of the Democrat Party (DP) 1950-54, especially in the process of throughout the Korean War and membership to NATO.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> İttihat ve Terakki Partisi was founded as a secret society in 1889 in Ottoman Empire. The party first aimed reformation and democratisation within the Ottoman Empire however after the Balkan Wars it has gained and consolidated power which ended up in a coup d’état in 1913. The rulers of the Party of Union and Progress have been very influential in the decision to enter the First World War as an ally of the Central Powers.

<sup>38</sup> Bezirci, p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Babaoğlu, p. 377.

<sup>41</sup> E. Özdemir and A. Fatih Şendil, ‘Soğuk Savaş Dönemi Algı ile Gerçek Arasında Bir İmge Olarak Türk Solu; Demokrat Parti’nin Sol Hareketlere Yaklaşımı’, *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12, (Spring 2016), p. 329.

The opposition to the leftist movements was often based on the *Soviet threat* and the *illness of communism* and can be construed as a result of Turkey's efforts to be a part of the Western bloc. The right-wing vs left-wing division has become so common that individuality started to disappear, which, in turn, produced anxiety and ennui in the individual. This disappearance has been reflected in the works of the literary people and caused the birth of a new perspective and a new movement in Turkish poetry.

### 1.1.2 A New Perspective in Turkish Poetry

It was the Turkish poet, novelist and literary scholar Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) who diagnosed the ever-present flux and the existence of constant movements in Turkish poetry and literature in his substantive article entitled *Türk Edebiyatında Cereyanlar*, stating that “[m]odern Turkish literature begins with a civilisational crisis.”<sup>42</sup> He argues that it is imperative to “dwell on a few great realities and, above all, to keep in mind that this literature was born as a result of a civilisational change.”<sup>43</sup> According to Tanpınar, the civilisation crisis started with

the elimination of the Janissaries in 1826 and gradually reached the Europeanisation of the state institutions and society with *Tanzimat Fermanı*<sup>44</sup> in 1839. [The crisis was] recognised with the First Constitutional Period in 1876 and the Second Constitutional Period in 1908, respectively, and came up to the present state of the Turkish society in certain stages such as the declaration of the Republic in 1923, the declaration of Ankara as the capital, and Atatürk's reforms. In the wake of these stories and history, it is necessary to count important factors such as the disintegration

---

<sup>42</sup> Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi, and Zeynep Kerman. ‘Türk Edebiyatında Cereyanlar’. Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler, Dergah Yayınları, 2000, p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> The *Imperial Edict of Reorganisation* that was proclaimed by Sultan Abdülmecid I in 1839 which launched the *Tanzimat* period that saw reforms and reorganisation of in the Ottoman Empire.

of the Empire (1918), the inclusion of secularism and populism in state programs, and women's freedom.<sup>45</sup>

Tanpınar, in the same article, argues that modern Turkish literature has played an essential role in all these critical issues and in its struggles around different ideologies and has been under the strong influence of these events it sometimes has prepared itself. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Turkish poetry has created different movements since it was, up until the 1980s, “more categorical depending on certain communities, groups, political or aesthetic/poetic doctrines, and there were more common attributes [within these doctrines] that bind the poets together.”<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, Doğan states that the major crises in modern Turkish literature “progress with other crises. The crisis that heralds the distress also carries the possibilities for a solution,” and this became more apparent in Turkish poetry than anywhere else because “poetry-centred discussions mark the efforts to overcome the crisis as much as they herald the crisis.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, poetic events develop with the constant flux and movements that Tanpınar indicates or, more widely put, when attempts are made to overcome the crisis. Cemal Süreya, one of the most prominent poets of the *Second New* movement, discussed along the same lines, stating that “the law of diminishing returns is applicable in poetry as well” and labels what Tanpınar and others call a crisis as depression, perhaps more fitting to the period in which the *Second New* was born: “as the language is processed from [only one] angle, the productivity obtained in that field starts to decrease after a certain point. This causes depression. Depressions always end with discovering new areas of poetry and new angles,” he maintains.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Okay, M. Orhan. ‘Ortaasya’dan Akdeniz Kıyılarına Türkçe’nin Şiir Serüveni’. Hece, vol. 53-54–55, no. Türk Şiiri Özel Sayısı, May 2001, p. 15

<sup>47</sup> Doğan, Mehmet Can. Modern Türk Şiiri: Olgular, Eğilimler, Akımlar. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018, p. 7-8.

<sup>48</sup> Süreya, Cemal.

Whatever the reason - crises or depressions- it is evident that movements are continually present in modern Turkish literature and poetry. Some of the main movements of Turkish poetry after the period of Tanzimat can be summarised as follow: (i) the *Servet-i Fünun* movement during the Second Constitutional Era, representatives including Tevfik Fikret and Mehmet Âkif<sup>49</sup>; (ii) the *National Literature* movement (*Milli Edebiyat Akımı* which followed the ideology of Ziya Gökalp and peaked with *Beş Hececiler*, the Poets of the Pentametre); following the foundation of the Republic, (iii) *Yedi Meşaleciler* (translated verbatim as *the Seven Torches*, who are known by this name as they brought together their writings in a joint book called *Seven Torches*) peaked in 1928. With Nazım Hikmet<sup>50</sup>, who based his poetry on (iv) social realism in essence, the usage of verse as a poetry form and rhythm is destroyed, and the poem is freed from the bond of measure and metre as of the 1930s.

Thereafter, it was (v) the *Garip* movement or the *First New* movement, which became canonical in Turkish poetry.<sup>51</sup> Okay argues there is a “historical and political ground within the radical changes in Turkish modern literature and poetry” and that “the first of these can be sourced to the regime which was on the brink of the Second World War and would attempt multi-party democracy a few years later.”<sup>52</sup> The most

---

<sup>49</sup> Mehmet Âkif Ersoy (1873-1936) was a poet, academic, and politician who was born in the late-Ottoman era. Ersoy is the poet of the 10-stanzaed Turkish National Anthem who has a quintessential command of the Turkish language and widely seen as one of the premiere literary minds of the late-Ottoman and early-Republican times.

<sup>50</sup> Nazım Hikmet Ran (1902-1963) was a prominent poet, playwright and novelist. He is one of the most well-known and most-read poets of the 20th century in Turkey and also is known as the “romantic communist”. Nazım had been imprisoned on many occasions due to his political views i.e., he supported communism as a political ideology. His citizenship was revoked in 1959 due to his political beliefs and he was forced to spend most of his life as an exile. In 2009, the citizenship status was restored. Despite Turkish state’s persecution of the poet, Nazım has been revered throughout Turkey. His socialist-realist poems have great impact and is still resonant in Turkish society and he is renowned with the lyrical flow of his statements.

<sup>51</sup> *Garip* movement’s poets are Orhan Veli [Kanık] (1914 - 1950), Melih Cevdet [Anday] (1915-2002), and Oktay Rifat [Horozcu] (1914-1988).

<sup>52</sup> Okay, 15.

important breakthrough in poetry in this environment was the *Garip* movement. *Garip* dealt with natural and daily life and was against word games and poetic techniques. *Garip* poets wrote their works in response to the political and social tensions that existed at the time, mainly in the aftermath of the First World War. The poets of the *Garip* movement, who did not want to endure the hardships of the day, preferred freedom in their works that defied all clichés, Doğan maintains<sup>53</sup>. They claimed that it was vital to do away with the understandings engrained in Turkish poetry up to that point, and they opposed formalism and sentimentality, arguing that poetry should be centred on the beauty of expression.

Furthermore, the *Garip* movement argues that “[p]oetry is a rhetorical art with all its peculiarities in its attitude. So it is all about meaning. The meaning appeals to the head, not to the five senses.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, it is widely accepted that the *Garip* movement, as well as the *Second New*'s counter-action to it, played a significant influence in the development of Turkish poetry.

The *Second New* (vi), as a counter-reaction to the *Garip* movement, wanted to “fully open the doors to the image and imagery, give freedom to the literary arts, leave simplicity and mediocrity”<sup>55</sup>. Although it bears similar characteristics as the *Garip* movement, e.g., breaking with the Turkish poetry tradition in using rhyme and metre, opposing the verse poem, having an interest in the Western canon, especially with the surrealist poem, not dealing with national problems and homeland realities as the socialist poems of Nazım Hikmet did, trying to reach *pure poetry*, etc. In other words, the *Second New* movement sought to fully break from the tradition<sup>56</sup>, even more so than the poets of the *Garip* movement did. They “not only forced the traditional structure of the language (for example, the syntax), but also turned their backs on its

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Bezirci, *İkinci Yeni Olayı*, p.15.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> Some key texts of the Second New include: İlhan Berk, *Şairin Toprağı*, (İstanbul: Simavi Yayınları, 1992); Muzaffer İ. Erdost, *İkinci Yeni Yazıları*, (Ankara: Onur Yayınları, 1997); Atilla İlhan, *İkinci Yeni Savaşı*, (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1996); Edip Cansever, ‘Tek Sesli Şiirden Çok Sesli Şiire’; and Cemal Süreya, ‘Folklor Şiire Düşman’.

ongoing language values and rich connotation, and turned towards an unmeasured [usage of] *pure* Turkish.”<sup>57</sup> The poets of the *Second New* who “aim to follow Western poetry, but not imitate it” read poets such as “T.S. Eliot, Rimbaud, Lautreamont, Ezra Pound, Dylan Thomas, Apollinaire, Eluard, Rene Char” and read “the works of thinkers such as Sartre, Camus, Beckett, Ionesco, Kafka, Kierkegaard, and the like.”<sup>58</sup> They were, thus, affected by Western thoughts and movements such as surrealism, Dadaism, and existentialism. In other words, the acknowledgement of existentialism through Western European writers such as Sartre, Camus, and Kafka, as well as the French surrealists, mystic or formalist poets such as Eliot, Thomas, and Cumming, parallels the emergence of the moniker *Second New*, its establishment, and evolution. Dirlikyapan states that “by the mid-1950s, existentialism began to reach wider masses and became more controversial, with the increasing interest of young and innovative writers who pursued freedom and innovation in literature and daily life and followed Western literature; closely.”<sup>59</sup> Doğan further argues that the reference to existentialism and its defence through literature can be interpreted as the *Second New* poetry’s intellectual source and point of origin<sup>60</sup>. It is accepted in the literature that Western and international poetry of the time had a significant impact on the formation of the *Second New* as Western poetry is one of the sources for *Second New* poets who were fluent in French or another Western language.

At the beginning of the 1950s, having been affected by existentialist concepts as well as the changing political and socio-cultural circumstances in Turkey, the poets of the *Second New* movement were publishing their poems in literary journals without knowing that they were using the same style, the same usage of imageries or rhetoric as each other. The movement is later described as born in different places<sup>61</sup> yet strived

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>58</sup> Gökalp, p. 357.

<sup>59</sup> Dirlikyapan, p. 115.

<sup>60</sup> M. Can Doğan, ‘*İkinci Yeni* Söyleminin Öncüsü’, p. 737.

<sup>61</sup> Bezirci (p. 40) states that there is no agreement on whether the *Second New* is a trend or not. “Berk says, ‘the *Second New* is a trend of today’, while Ayhan states that ‘it is known that he is far from being a trend now’. Cansever, on the other hand, writes: “It would be a mistake to give the *Second New* a character of a trend. It is an area of innovation where different poets establish

to seek the same (non)style in Turkish poetry: “The first works [of the *Second New* poets] were published in literary journals like *Yeditepe*, *İstanbul*, and *Şiir Sanatı* in 1954-1955. The poets of the *Second New* started to appear [together] in *Pazar Postası* only in the midst of 1956.”<sup>62</sup> Bezirci states that the repressed political and social atmosphere had led the poets to feel more isolated and alienated from society because they observed that “they cannot realise their plans, cannot confirm their existence freely, and are often depressed, despaired, they fall into their surroundings and retreat to their shells. Thus, interest in individualism, abstractness, unrealism, irrationality, and formalism increases.”<sup>63</sup> The oppressive effects of the Cold War in the country caused depression, isolation and alienation in the poets, as Yılmaz Gruda<sup>64</sup> explains:

The DP, with great hopes attached, went through a period of pressure, a dictatorship, for various reasons. We, those who write open and individual social poetry, have turned to closeness in our poetry with the timidity that arose out of this oppression. We started to force the words' meaning and sentence structures. We have not agreed on this, though. It was a result of *sensitivity*, a temporary thing. However, this *temporary attitude*, which finds its best representative in Ece Ayhan, is named *Second New* by Muzaffer Erdost. [...] The political, economic fluctuations and social shifts in society have intensified this situation.<sup>65</sup>

---

different personalities. It is a movement in which everyone assumes the responsibility of their own poetry and meets other poets by chance.’ Süreya follows him, saying that ‘the Second New was not born as a movement. It did not have a program or a joint statement. Most of the poets did not even know each other. They were not writing to each other either. For example, I met Edip Cansever in 1956 and Turgut Uyar later. Much later with İlhan Berk... I think the [first our] texts met. However, with the participation of many people, a poetic movement was born.’”

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 220.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>64</sup> Gruda (b. 1930) is a playwright, poet, actor, and one of the lesser known members of the *Second New* Movement.

<sup>65</sup> Gruda, as quoted in Bezirci, p. 66.

The change in the poets' mentalities due to the repressive and depressive mood has not only made the constraint on the individual more apparent but also the poets of the era started to seek a much more obscure meaning in their poetry, although the *Second New* poets did not have a manifest as to how poetry should be or what it ought to do. Koçak states that "[t]he literature of experience or literature *as* an experience which in poetry was given the name *Second New* but made its first entrance in *prose*: It was not a new movement, it was the new literature itself."<sup>66</sup> After discovering that they have the same prose in poetry, the rules for the movement have become clearer and "the attention turned to the malleable and fragmented psyche."<sup>67</sup> In other words, the poets of this movement created their own words; did not pay attention to whether a word is Turkish in its roots or if it is made up (typically seen in Ayhan's, Süreya's and Berk's poems); prioritised rhetoric, non-conventional syncretism, poetry-workmanship, and style of poetry. Kara<sup>68</sup> states that while many literary critics accept this movement as the last<sup>69</sup> and most original breakthrough of contemporary Turkish poetry, it also has been subject to criticism. Because abundant changes have been made both in the sound and morphological characteristics of the words and the language in terms of syntax, critiques labelled the poetry of this movement as *abstract, meaningless, closed*, etc., and it necessitated a more well-read audience.

This poetry movement and its leading themes fit the intellectual who feels isolated and depressed due to societal poverty, the oppression they felt on their individuality during the RPP and the DP era, and the feeling of loss toward their individual freedom. The changing style of the poem is justified by the emergence of a complex human, which originated through the era's changing cultural and social conditions. To be able to decipher the intense language of poetry, they argued, the reader should be sophisticated and well-equipped.

---

<sup>66</sup> O. Koçak, 'Melih Cevdet Anday: After the *Second New*', *Red Thread*, 2, (2010), p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> Ç. Günay-Erkol, 'Issues of Ideology and Identity in Turkish Literature during the Cold War', p.10.

<sup>68</sup> Kara, p. 455.

<sup>69</sup> Gökalp states that although after 1970, poetry movements such as Third New and New Holistic Poetry emerged, they were weak, lacked critical integrity, and were not widely adopted. There is no literary movement in Turkish poetry from the 1990s onwards that can be linked to this or that movement. (Gökalp, p. 359)

As a result of the surrounding influences summarised above, the poets of this movement have started to search for the meaning of their existence, pursuing the *raison d'être* of the individual while using invented words, disarranged structure, and quite an obscure context to the point of difficulty in understanding in the first, and more often than not, the second read.

Among the main movements of Turkish poetry, the ideological Islamic poetry movement or the neo-Islamic movement also needs to be mentioned. Okay argues that Necip Fazıl takes particular importance within this movement, as briefly introduced above. Necip Fazıl's poetry had characteristics of "Islamic and Eastern mysticism that started with the *tragic human*, instigated by Western philosophy [that he read extensively], then gained an Islamic character in time and had a guiding feature for those who follow him in Turkish poetry."<sup>70</sup> Amongst his followers was Karakoç, who was accepted among the pioneers of the *Second New*, who shared and extended Necip Fazıl's worldview in a wider spectrum of ideas and poetic style.

The below sub-chapter introduces the contemporaries of Karakoç within the Second New movement, briefly mentioning their upbringing in various circumstances and its impact on their poetic styles which affected the general character of the movement. The explanation of how Karakoç is akin to them and how he differs from their lyrical style and political views follow this sub-chapter.

### **1.1.3 The *Secular* Poets of the Second New Movement**

This section introduces the representatives of the *Second New* movement while adding the word *secular* to describe further the styles of the poets of this movement within which Karakoç does not appear. For the purposes of this dissertation, and following the conceptual framework detailed in [chapter 2](#), this dissertation takes note

---

<sup>70</sup> Okay, p. 16.

of the five prominent poets of the movement, namely, Ece Ayhan Çağlar (1931–2002), İlhan Berk (1918–2008), Edip Cansever (1928–1986), Cemal Süreya (1931–1990), and Turgut Uyar (1927–1985) who are accepted as the most eminent representatives of the *Second New* movement<sup>71</sup>, as *secular* poets, while it introduces Karakoç, also a representative of the movement, as a *religious* and *conservative* poet as further explained in [sub-chapter 1.2](#).

It is essential to underline that the term *secular* does not describe the political views of these poets, who are indeed different from each other in such matters. However, it is simply used to depict these five poets of the *Second New* who, although they use religious themes, such as images of God, Prophets, angels, celestial beings, the duality of heaven and hell, the afterlife and the like, they do not do so in the same way as Karakoç does. Karakoç, a Muslim poet, inclines toward using these themes for stylistic purposes and emphasising his religious beliefs through his poetry and style. This can also be seen in his usage of folkloric themes such as *Hızır*, *Tâhâ*, *Leyla and Mecnun*, etc. in his poems while the *secular* or *civil* -if Ayhan’s description<sup>72</sup> is used- poets do not. If and when the *secular* poets mention God, this is oftentimes a direct call to Him as seen in Süreya’s poems such as *Üstü Kalsın*: “I’m dying, o God; that’s what finally happened”<sup>73</sup>, or in *Sevda Sözleri*: “But women, my God; I loved them so much [...]”<sup>74</sup> and they do not use closed imageries as Karakoç tends to use when mentioning God, leading the audience to decipher the presence of God within the imageries or ways to reach Him, i.e., through love, labour, civilisation, and the like. Similarly, when *secular* poets use themes of prophets, celestial beings and even the duality of life and death, they rarely do so with religious connotations and usually for referring to more personal and/or socio-philosophical themes. For instance, according

---

<sup>71</sup> While these five names always appear as the most prominent poets of the Second New, other poets such as Oktay Rifat, Ülkü Tamer, Ercüment Uçar, Alim Atay, Tevfik Akdağ, Seyfettin Başçılar, Yılmaz Gruda, Özdemir İnce, Kemal Özer, and Nihat Ziyalan are also counted among the Second New in the wider literature.

<sup>72</sup> Please see [sub-chapter 1.1.3.1](#) for more details on the civilian poetry.

<sup>73</sup> Süreya, Cemal. “Üstü Kalsın”, in *Üstü Kalsın, Seçme Şiirler*. 33rd ed., Yapı Kredi Yayınları. 2019, p. 255.

<sup>74</sup> Süreya, Cemal. *Sevda Sözleri: Bütün Şiirleri*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011.

to Kul, Ece Ayhan refers to Jesus in his poem *Ortodokslular* while saying “Shouting adorns a palanquin, darkened. A father-born nude<sup>75</sup>” where “he uses the concept of *father* wide enough to include *God* as an extension of the connotations centred on *power* and *authority*.”<sup>76</sup>

Karakoç, on the other hand, uses all these concepts in their religious meaning and connotations, which differentiates him as a poet and his poetic style from his contemporaries, as detailed in [sub-chapter 1.2.](#) and subsequently the analysis chapters. Karakoç’s religiosity was a significant differentiator of the poet within the *Second New* movement, so much so that Ece Ayhan stated that Karakoç was considered “a *dark poet* by the New Secularists and almost damned, living in a rented apartment with a black roof in Fatih” because his thoughts on Islamic lines were “typical examples of being left alone<sup>77</sup>.” He describes Karakoç as “silently one of the two important poets of our time.”<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, this dissertation makes a difference between the secular<sup>79</sup> and religious poets of the *Second New* movement, following the dichotomy of religious versus atheist existentialists, detailed in [sub-chapters 2.1.1.](#) and [2.2.1.](#)

---

<sup>75</sup> “Haykırarak süslüyor bir tahtirevan’ı, karartılmış. Babadan doğma bir çırılçıplak.” (referred to *Ortodoksluklar-XV*”, in Ayhan, Ece. *Bütün Yort Savul’lar! : Toplu Şiirler 1954-1997*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2019. p. 101, in *ibid*).

<sup>76</sup> Kul, Erdoğan. *Ece Ayhan’ın Şiirleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma*. Ankara Üniversitesi, 2007, p. 231.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 200.

<sup>79</sup> This classification does not follow the same nomenclature i.e. atheist vs religious as this dissertation does not study and examine the religious views and beliefs of Ayhan, Berk, Cansever, Süreya, and Uyar, thus such a designation would not have been informative and fully correct. Therefore, the denomination of secular vs religious is preferred.

### 1.1.3.1 Ece Ayhan

*“Poetry is incompatible with power. Because power neutralises. Civilian poetry cannot be found in official culture. In this country, military poetry is already customary. For my part, I do not want poetry to dominate.”<sup>80</sup>*

Ece Ayhan Çağlar (1931-2002) is one of the Second New movement's most prominent and authentic poets. Born in the south-western Turkish town of Datça, he also lived in Çanakkale and İstanbul. He continued his education in the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Ankara, known as Mülkiye<sup>81</sup>, together with his contemporaries Cemal Süreya and Sezai Karakoç. Sharing this mutual university life, and later, collective poetry movement with them, Ayhan, on the aim of the *Second New* poetry, says:

No poem is idle, save the poems of children. As for [*Second New's*] attitude and what it wants to do: I can summarise it as to open a second front, to argue that there is meaning outside of reason, to act anarchist about the rules of the poem, to go towards the meaning of meaninglessness, to transcend language because it cannot limit these realities with language rules.”<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Ayhan, Ece. ‘Bir Etikçi: Ece Ayhan’. Sivil Denemeler Kara, edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, p. 60.

<sup>81</sup> Short version of “Mekteb-i Mülkiye” a university that was first established by Sultan Abdülaziz I in İstanbul, moved to Ankara in 1936, is one of the most important and oldest faculties of social sciences in Turkey.

<sup>82</sup> Hulusi Geçgel. *İkinci Yeni* şiiri çerçevesinde Ece Ayhan. İstanbul, 2020. p. 94

Thus, for Ayhan, *Second New*'s purpose is to go beyond the traditional rules of poetry in meaning and language as seen until then. The break from the tradition started with Orhan Veli and the *Garip* movement, which was more or less limited to the rules of the language rather than the meaning. For Ayhan, the Second New poetry should be called *civilian poetry*. In this new christening, Ayhan "challenges any poetry practice or the attitude of the poet that demands power or the state-power," and his is "an effort to loudly announce the existence of a poem that is compatible with poetry and the ethical attitude of the poet."<sup>83</sup> Thus, the existence and emergence of the *Second New* poetry became the ethical standpoint of the poet and the poetry against any power struggle above the individual, regardless of the state-level or global-level as it was during the Cold War years. On this issue, Şafak<sup>84</sup> maintains

since we can discuss power, authority and the state in poetry as an artistic practice, at least some of those who write poetry reject power and the inequality it creates in their lives and poems, and at least they try to announce this rejection and pronounce it loudly, and this should be seen as an achievement for the poet and poetry.

Ayhan's poetry is seen as one of the most original poetries of this movement, then becomes in itself against the established power and authority of the state. His opposition to the established power in Turkey during the Cold War years is reflected in his poems such as *Yort Savul* and *Meçhul Öğrenci Anıtı*. These poems, which were published in the book entitled *Devlet ve Tabiat ya da Orta İkidem Ayrılan Çocuklar İçin Şiirler*<sup>85</sup> facilitated the communication of his poetry to Turkish society.

*look over here, here, under this black marble*  
*buried a child*  
*if he lived one more recess*

---

<sup>83</sup> Halim Şafak, "[Geçmiş, 'Sivil Şiir' ve Ece Ayhan](#)," accessed March 11, 2019.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> En. "State and Nature or Poems for Children who Dropped Out of Secondary School", Ece Ayhan, E Yayınları, İstanbul: 1973.

*he will have gone to the blackboard for natural history*

*he was killed in the state lecture*

*the common and wrong question of the state and nature was:*

*where does Transoxiana flow into?*

*the only and correct answer to that one finger way back:*

*into the heart of a pale uprising of the public's children, that is.*

*To suppress this too death, writes the father who was an old junkman*

*Who tied a purple embroidery with tatting shuttle around his neck:*

*That is to say, I made him believed he had toys*

*[...] <sup>86</sup>*

In this particular poem entitled *Monument of a Student Unknown*, Ayhan deals with the futility of the education the children get from the state, with questions triggering the memorisation technique such as “*where does Transoxiana flow into?*”<sup>87</sup> while the children and their families are struck with poverty where the father who collects waste cannot buy toys for his children. Ayhan calls the attention of the reader to such futile questions of the state edification curricula while there are more important questions to be asked and answered by the state itself. He, in 1988, stated that even after 30 years, the representatives of the *Second New*, albeit they moved onto different places in their life and poetry and were still in search of their rights, and they kept their resentment and anger:

Yes, maybe we were marginal, atonal... etc. in 1955-56. Thirty or so years later, and after many *sufferings*, many *pains*, many *stakes*, and

---

<sup>86</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Meçhul Öğrenci Anıtı](#).

<sup>87</sup> This was a fixed question asked especially during history and geography classes during the secondary school.

many irreparable disappointments, we came to another extreme in 1987. Again, we are questioning and scrutinising some problems with all our might (in addition, although C. Süreya and S. Karakoç graduated from Mülkiye, they are not affiliated with *Property*<sup>88</sup>). We even became human-peckers. In short, we are seeking our right, our right, albeit angrily!<sup>89</sup>

Ayhan's poetry firmly founded this attitude toward life, one that he did not lose in his older age. The poet's life philosophy is an oppositional attitude toward history, art, literature, poetry, the state, the state's dominant power, the power, biased critics, literary historians, the reader, the traditions, the system, in short, everything that is conventionally viewed in a straight and conventional manner. It can be said that it expands to a foundation, such as developing and setting on the opposition. For him, art as a whole is serious work, and one of the poet's core attributes should be the awareness of this gravity, this seriousness.

Karaca argues that in the *Second New* movement, it was Ece Ayhan who “gives the most place to the unconventional associations and illogical statements” therefore, it was Ayhan’s poems where “the poet who goes the farthest in attacking language. In almost each of his poems, there are unusual harmonisations, illogical expressions, and an upside-down syntax.”<sup>90</sup> By pushing the limits of the language and by, concentrating on language and producing unconventional images, Ayhan hopes to disrupt the average poetic perception. Seemingly an artistic choice, this shows, in reality, how the *Second New*’s foundations were bound to the socio-political conditions of the 1950s, creating a vacuum in modern Turkish poetry where it has flourished as a new movement with its emphasis on individualism, breaking from the tradition and any kind of ideology, including the state ideology. Thus, “what Ayhan

---

<sup>88</sup> Ayhan, here, makes a wordplay with the words Mülkiye (the name of the university) and Mülkiyet (property), calls the reader’s attention to how they have not been after riches or fame.

<sup>89</sup> Ayhan, Ece. ‘İkinci Yeni Akımı’. *Sivil Denemeler Kara*, edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, p. 78.

<sup>90</sup> Karaca, p. 228.

really wants to destroy is all kinds of authority”<sup>91</sup> in all his unconventionality. The poet creates what he calls a *tight-knit poem*<sup>92</sup> by weaving his poems together with connections to historical events, persons, and literature, as well as odd language and imageries. Ayhan describes the *tight-knit* poem that is *Second New* for him as follows:

[It is] poetry that does not reveal itself at first hand! And look, I do not say the *incomprehensible poetry* like those stupid critics. I have never said it anyway. The word *tight-knit* is, cross my heart, so much better!<sup>93</sup>

For him, the tight-knit poets must come to terms with power and authority and show the same opposing attitude towards the people in these power circles.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, the *tight-knit poem* (and its poets) does not and should not let the poet forget that he himself is a human being:

It is interesting that a poet forgets that he is a human being -what excuses one creates when one is stuck in this world!- too. Yes, forgetting, forgetting, and forgetting that one is (human) is probably a terribly bad thing. It is even creepy. In other words, it is the opposite of the *tight-knit* poetry of our generation. (It may also be called civilian poetry.)<sup>95</sup>

Thus, what the poets of the *Second New* do is to serve the *civilian*, or the *tight-knit* poem, which aims to evaluate both the past, the recent past, and the present from a new and contradictory standpoint, outside of the official historical narrative. Ayhan’s poetry, and by extension his understanding of the *Second New*, questions the concepts

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 230.

<sup>92</sup> Sıkı şiir.

<sup>93</sup> Ayhan, Ece. Başıbozuk Günceler. Edited by İshak Reyna, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018, p. 228

<sup>94</sup> Kul, p. 108.

<sup>95</sup> Ayhan, 2014, p. 5.

of power and authority explicitly, and in this respect, it is in constant reckoning with the *state*. The critical aspect comes to the fore in his poem, established in a structure that certain readers could only understand following the understanding that he calls *tight-knit* or *civilian* poetry<sup>96</sup>. In his article entitled *İkinci Yeni Akımı*<sup>97</sup>, Ayhan criticises the Civils<sup>98</sup> [sic] for whom they are the same as the Young Turks, except they call themselves laicistic and came into power in the 1950s. He claims that

[t]he poets of the *Second New*, especially those who started the work, the *free boarders*<sup>99</sup>, namely Cemal Süreya and Sezai Karakoç, were absolutely against these first civilians who came to power in May 1950. They were writing in the weekly *Pazar Postası* (directed by Muzaffer Erdost) which was a progressive newspaper of the time.

Thus, Ayhan, albeit indirectly, refers to the political situation in which the *Second New* was born. Moreover, he claims, “when it comes to *Pazar Postası*; I think of (more or less) three, four or five men: Muzaffer Erdost in thought; Cemal Süreya in thought and poetry; [...] İlhan Berk, Sezai Karakoç in thought and poetry.”<sup>100</sup> He entitles his article as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, appraising the critics of the *Second New* movement, stating that these critics did not and will not care for “what the poets who participated in the *Second New* investigation said and how they viewed things.”<sup>101</sup> The apocalypse for Ayhan is the coming of the *Second New*, and these names are its representatives. As if as an afterthought, he includes himself next to the *founding* names of the *Second New*, saying, “for example, 23 of the 26 poems in my first book published by Muzaffer Erdost were [also] published in the newspaper

---

<sup>96</sup> Op.cit., p. 529.

<sup>97</sup> Ayhan, 2014, p. 78.

<sup>98</sup> Differently used from, and should not be confused with, the term *civil* in “civilian poetry” of which he is an advocate and a representative.

<sup>99</sup> Students of the public boarding school, Ayhan refers to Süreya and Karakoç’s university education in Mülkiye where they attended and stayed for free as this was a part of the university facilities, mainly given to poorer students.

<sup>100</sup> Ayhan. ‘Pazar Postası ve Mahşerin Dört Atlısı’. Gergedan, June 1987, pp. 92–93.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

Pazar Postası.<sup>102</sup> ” In another essay, he again focuses on Sezai Karakoç, claiming that he is an essential poet: “No, God knows that there is Sezai Karakoç and İsmet Özel, perhaps not tight-knit anymore, are very important. Moreover, they are from the group of good ones. Especially the first one is as he seems.”<sup>103</sup> Ece Ayhan, who is of the opinion that the *Second New*’s function ends after Cemal Süreya's death, insists that the *tight-knit poetry* and *tight-knit youth* have begun with the *Second New*<sup>104</sup>, but it should not be limited to this movement alone.

In Ayhan’s poems, the state-individual relations and social problems are examined, and the understanding of political poetry comes to the fore. Despite the poet’s unique rendition in using unconventionally harmonised words, the closedness of the language, and the borderline meaninglessness in his poems that is a characteristic of what he calls the civilian poetry, which “the newspapers call the *Second New* movement, is simply a *leap* (mutation)”<sup>105</sup>, it nevertheless has brought the poet together with a broader readership. Ece Ayhan has taken his well-deserved place among the leading poets of the *Second New* as a poet “without predecessor, successor, a poet without a need of apprenticeship or foremanship”<sup>106</sup> whose poems were seen in the magazines such as *Varlık*, *Yenilik*, *Seçilmiş Hikâyeler*, *A*, and *Yeditepe* after 1956. His poems are also published as books and collections, never losing their popularity to this day, underlining his importance in Turkish poetry and literature.

---

<sup>102</sup> Ayhan, 2014, p. 78.

<sup>103</sup> Ayhan, Ece. ‘Ece Ayhan’. *Hece*, no. 53-54-55, May-June-July 2001, p. 707.

<sup>104</sup> Ayhan, 2018, p. 228.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, p. 236.

<sup>106</sup> Geçgel, p. 43.

### 1.1.3.2 İlhan Berk

*“The word love has obliterated its meaning. Like a common word, it opened its place to everything. It can no longer exist and not exist at the same time as God either. Besides, the existence of love is questionable. In reality, there is no love: we want to make it exist. This is our right too. Because we have nothing else.”<sup>107</sup>*

İlhan Berk (1918-2008) was a well-known Turkish poet who pioneered the *Second New* movement and significantly impacted modern Turkish literature and poetry. His given name was Emrullah İlhan Birsen, to which he added the surname Berk himself. He was born in Manisa and had a tumultuous childhood in poverty where his father was absent, and his mother, sister, and sister-in-law, with all of whom he had an “unhealthily close relationship”,<sup>108</sup> were his main role models. In his autobiography, *Uzun Bir Adam (Kendim Üstüne Bir Kalem Denemesi)*<sup>109</sup>, he narrates that he had a troubled childhood where he did not receive a decent first education, worked in odd jobs where he had learnt “cleaning, waking up early, shopping and work discipline”<sup>110</sup> from the dentist to whom he was an errand boy and an apprentice. Berk graduated from the Department of French Language and Literature of Ankara Gazi Education Institute in 1945 and worked as a teacher in different Turkish cities between 1945-1955. Between 1956 and 1969, he worked as a translator in the Publication Office of the General Directorate of Ziraat Bank, where he retired.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Berk, İlhan. *Uzun Bir Adam (Kendim Üstüne Bir Kalem Denemesi)*. Yazko, 1982.

<sup>108</sup> Çobanoğlu, Şaban. *Şiir Dilinin Sularında İlhan Berk*. Hece Yayınları, 201, p. 34.

<sup>109</sup> Berk.

<sup>110</sup> Çobanoğlu, p. 35.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Çobanoğlu states that Berk’s turbulent childhood “made him aware that people who could not live their childhood and youth become unbearable in their lives later”. Thus, “he tried to overcome this situation by living his childhood and youth in old age; that is why he talks about not keeping death on his agenda – probably because he wants to live for many years.”<sup>112</sup>

Berk appears to have compensated for his lost childhood years by writing. “I did not live, I wrote,” he explains<sup>113</sup>, reflecting on his efforts to write away his longing for the days he did not live while he was younger. Demir<sup>114</sup> argues that, for Berk, writing is a way of confirming the *subject* (İlhan Berk himself), as well as the objects, things, and a way to reveal [his] existence since *things* in the world confirm the existence of the *subject*, and in turn, the *subject* confirms the existence of *objects* and *things*.

Although he had a troubled relationship with the act of writing due to his troubled past<sup>115</sup>, he is one of the first names that comes to mind when considering the founding poets of the *Second New* movement. So much so that, contrary to what is known, it was Berk who suggested the name *İkinci Yeni* to Muzaffer Erdost, who then became the eponymist of the *Second New* poetry.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Demir, Ahmet. ‘Bir Şairin Kaleminden ‘Ben’e, Sanata ve Yaşama Dair Notlar: İlhan Berk’in Düz Yazıları’. Erdem, no. 60, Aug. 2011, p. 53.

<sup>115</sup> Demir states that Berk considers writing to be a hellish experience. Berk's prose, like his poems, according to Berk himself, are the products of the hell he lived in. From this comparison, it can be argued that the act of writing in Berk is charged with existentialist angst which also reflects as an isolating and alienating deed, while carrying the themes of authenticity because it is describing Berk as an author, a poet, as well as a human being. According to Berk, “the desire to write the earth is to undertake to write the earth; means living in hell, because there cannot be life without writing, and seeing life as meaningful as one's writing imprisons one in the dungeon known as writing. In other words, a person who lives under such pressure of writing and realises that he cannot justify himself in this world other than writing, does not have freedom, which is the root of unhappiness.” For more information on Berk’s relationship with his writing and prose, please see Berk in *ibid*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

Berk states that what *Second New* means is “meaning of meaninglessness” and expresses this meaninglessness in the poem with the concept of conscious-unconsciousness.<sup>117</sup> Here, it is essential to remember that Second New wishes to fully break from the tradition, destroy the search for meaning and content in poetry, and replace it with style. Berk is a pioneer of the *Second New* movement in the sense that he is opposed to the idea that poetry needs to mean something and say something. Similarly, he says that “*Second New* is opposed to the narrowing of the poetic principles of the *Garip* movement and the blockage of the socialist poetry of Nazım Hikmet, and that the *Second New* was created in order to clear the way for this monotony and congestion, to come at the mind, language, consciousness and habits; and that all this was done in the name of poetry.”<sup>118</sup>

According to Berk, poetry is a precise and repeatable text with meanings that vary according to each reader, rather than a single-meaning text generated by the poet alone, whose meaning is constrained to a particular location. This distinguishes poetry from prose and allows it to exist in a different realm. He maintains

[p]oetry doesn't actually say anything. The poetry of our time is no longer written to say something. The subject of a poem is nothing; it arises from nothing. The *Second New* is in favour of untold poetry. Those who want to understand something should read prose. Poetry should be without a plot, without a story.<sup>119</sup>

Thus, Berk is categorised among the poets of the *Second New*, who either ignore or exclude meaning, thought, statement, subject, theme, story, and description - hence the content. Polysemy in poetry is considered among the pathways of

---

<sup>117</sup> Berk in Yalçın, Esra. ‘İlhan Berk’in Poetikası ve “Siz Ne Güzeldiniz Benimle Bilemezsiniz” Üzerine Metin Merkezli Bir Bakış’. Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi, vol., no. 69, Sept. 2020, p. 249.

<sup>118</sup> Gökalp, Gonca G. ‘Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Şiiri ve Behçet Necatigil’. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, vol. 10, no. 1, July 1993, p 356.

<sup>119</sup> Bezirci, p. 20.

İlhan Berk's poetry, and thus it can be argued that he even pushed the limits of this style of poetry more than any other representative of this movement.

Because the subject and the story are barriers to forming the abstract language that must occur in poetry, he produced poems without a theme or a storyline.

The below poem, entitled *Ne Böyle Sevdalar Gördüm Ne Böyle Ayrılıklar* (I Saw Neither Such Loves Nor Such Separations), is one of Berk's well-known poems which reflects the focus and emphasis of style above meaning where no rhythm or metre is used:

*whenever I think of you*  
*A gazelle descends to drink water*  
*I see the meadows growing*  
*[...]*  
*as I think of you*  
*I'm planting roses where my hand touches*  
*I give water to the horses*  
*I love the mountains even more<sup>120</sup>*

Çobanoğlu argues that Berk's earlier poems, such as the above example, remain within the framework of "the traditional and ideal understanding of love, do not slip into excessive eroticism, and which we can accept as aesthetically and linguistically pleasing"<sup>121</sup> until the 1950s. From the 1950s on, Berk's poems alter perceptions of women and love, and romantic love gives way to physical and even sensual love while gradually emphasising the images themselves, applying the main characteristic of *Second New* poetry.

---

<sup>120</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Ne Böyle Sevdalar Gördüm Ne Böyle Ayrılıklar](#).

<sup>121</sup> Çobanoğlu, p. 70.

*Ah going for love now, you're it*  
*Magnifying our sexuality*  
*Branding, glorifying our nakedness*  
*This is how I hold you to the water, to the sky*  
*I stir you terribly now*<sup>122</sup>

At this point, the poetic style breaks fully away from tradition while the images start to get blurry and transformable as Berk associates love, sexuality and death in his poems. In his poetry, the idea of avoiding death appears to have evolved into a problem that a desire for sexuality can solve. As mentioned, image over the story in poetry is vital for Berk. He states, "we look at the poem's essence at the very last. Because to look first at what the poem says means not knowing what the poem is."<sup>123</sup> Çobanoğlu describes Berk as an *alchemist of the language* who "constantly expands the meaning and image reserve of the universe of poetry by going from the conscious to the subconscious, trying to discover the hidden history of poetry; by descending to the zero point of the language."<sup>124</sup> Indeed, symbolism, surrealism, existentialism, phenomenology, and deconstructionism, as well as poets and authors associated with these movements, influenced the development of İlhan Berk's own poetic language, which included deviation and distortion, making him one of the foremost representatives of the *Second New* movement.

---

<sup>122</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Şiir](#).

<sup>123</sup> Berk in Bezirci, p. 182.

<sup>124</sup> Çobanoğlu, p. 377.

### 1.1.3.3 Edip Cansever

*“My death was nothing new; it existed.”*<sup>125</sup>

Born in İstanbul, Edip Cansever (1928-1986) is a Turkish poet considered one of the most notable representatives of the *Second New*. Cansever’s poems and poetic style stand out when compared to his contemporaries in that he applies existentialist themes in his poems, such as alienation and isolation, more frequently and puts the emphasis more on the individual’s loneliness. Dirlikyapan argues that Cansever defends “the *poetry of thought* rather than *meaninglessness, randomness* or *exclusion of reason in the poem*”,<sup>126</sup> all of which are among the characteristics and tendencies of the *Second New* movement. Moreover, he was “opposed to the features such as *individualism* or *turning his back on society*”, while his approach to poetry was to “*establish interests with society and by emphasising evolution in poetry rather than opposing tradition.*”<sup>127</sup>

While the rules of traditional poetry are challenged in the poetry of Ayhan, Berk and Süreya, the themes and concepts of existentialism come to the fore in Cansever’s poetry much more concretely. It was Cansever who “tried to reveal the tragedy of the individual in all its dimensions”,<sup>128</sup> which is fitted to the period where Second New poetry appeared as a movement to break the tradition and gain momentum. As remarked previously, the aftermath of the Second World War on the young republic and the following Cold War years accumulated depression and isolation in the individual who was caught in between two commanding political systems. Within the

---

<sup>125</sup> Cansever, Edip. ‘Kontrbas Öğretmeni Rıza Diyor Ki’. *Yerçekimli Karanfil (Toplu Şiirleri 1)*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, p. 414.

<sup>126</sup> Dirlikyapan, Murat Devrim. “İkinci Yeni” Dışında Bir Şair: Edip Cansever. *Bilkent University*, June 2003, p. 3.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Reyhanoğulları, Gökhan. ‘Mitik Trajik’ten Modern Trajik’e Bireyin Döngüsü: Edip Cansever’in “Medüza” Şiiri Üzerine: The Cycle of the Individual from Mythical Tragic to Modern Tragic: On Edip Cansever’s “Medüza” Poetry.’ *Turkish Studies - Language & Literature*, vol. 16, no. 3, Sept. 2021, p. 1702.

framework of these fundamental truths, this era has built the text's layers of meaning, addressing the person who has lost faith and trust, rejected value systems; it is pessimistic about the future and is estranged from all aspects of existence. During this time, Cansever tried to make the tragic condition of the person concrete in his poetry. For him, it is an age of pain because "[w]hat's not painful in a way? [...] It has a very high denotation to say that man is made of pain." Cansever's view of the poetry is centred on man's alienation and loneliness, drawing strongly on the reality of the man who is in agony and alone, as he remarks, "[d]rinking, love, loneliness... What else do we have to hold on to? Others may raise hell all they want; one should know his loneliness and seize it."<sup>129</sup> The referral to the importance of loneliness also shaped Cansever's poetry where his invention of a new poem in which he makes "changes in syntax and especially in adjective and noun phrases"<sup>130</sup> amasses a unique voice, image and order in meaning by "using techniques such as dialogue and interior monologue".

Furthermore, Kul<sup>131</sup> argues that Cansever initially addresses the issue of *alienation* through self-alienation and identity crises, and he refers to the individual who emerged as a result of modernity. As such, the individuals have importance only in a *collective* presence, and they are reduced to just nouns and numerical equivalents in their singular form. In his poems, Cansever demonstrates the existential relationship that the individual forms with their *self* and the *other*, as well as their sense of time and space, while also viewing people as *a unit inside the society*<sup>132</sup>. In his poetry, he highlights how alone, unhappy, alienated, and helpless most people are because of the crises of urbanisation and modernisation.

Cansever's earlier works show the impact of the *Garip* movement, and it is argued that this was transformed when the poet published his book, *Yerçekimli Karanfil* (Gravitational Carnation). While Karabulut argues that Cansever, with this book,

---

<sup>129</sup> Cansever, Edip. *Şiiri Şiirle Ölçmek : Şiir Üzerine Yazılar, Söyleşiler, Soruşturmalar*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020, p. 59.

<sup>130</sup> Dirlikyapan, p. 14.

<sup>131</sup> Kul, Erdoğan. 'Edip Cansever'in "Çağrılmayan Yakup" Şiirinde Birey Algısı'. Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Türkoloji Dergisi, vol. 19, no. 2, 2012, pp. 45–65.

<sup>132</sup> op. cit.

exhibits a substantial change in his poetry and switches to the Second New movement where he addresses the relationship between society and the individual and vice-versa, adopting existentialism; Dirlikyapan criticises that this is a mechanical division that has been well established in the literature. Conversely, he argues that *Yerçekimli Karanfil*, as a poem and a poetry book, is “a jumping area that is not disconnected from either before or after [Cansever’s way of writing]”<sup>133</sup> when we consider that Cansever is “a poet who always emphasises *continuity* in both his prose and poems.”<sup>134</sup> Gönül<sup>135</sup> presents a midway discussion, stating that if it is agreed that Cansever's poem indeed consists of two lines, i.e., before and after the publication of *Yerçekimli Karanfil*, this collection of poems is crucial to identify both the current path consisting of his earlier works (before) and how lines are transformed within the Second New (after).

*Yerçekimli Karanfil* also started a heated discussion among the poets of the Second New. Karakoç, in his article *A Materialistic Poem*, claims that Cansever’s poetry “draws attention to the conception of people and things, emphasises that the poet “believes in nothing but the matter”<sup>136</sup>. While Karakoç consents that *Second New* breaks from tradition and the *Garip* movement with the poems of Ayhan, Berk, Süreya, and Uyar; he leaves Cansever out of the movement claiming that although he was not able to lead the new movement or serve as its creator and executive, he nonetheless profited from its power. For Karakoç, *Yerçekimli Karanfil* should be viewed as an *addition* to Oktay Rifat's *Perçemli Sokak*<sup>137</sup>.

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>135</sup> Gönül, Gizem Ece. ‘Sevgi, Aşk, Karanfil, Rakı ve Diğerleri: “Yerçekimli Karanfil” Çözümlemesinden Varoluş Sözlüğüne’. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2018, p. 1006.

<sup>136</sup> Doğan, p. 738.

<sup>137</sup> This is a rather strict approach since there was an important debate among the representatives of the Second New as to whether Rifat’s poem *Perçemli Sokak* belongs to the Second New movement. According to Bezirci, neither Berk nor Ayhan or Uyar accept this poem as part of Second New, stating that “[m]ost of the Second New poets [...] did not count Oktay Rifat as one of them, and criticised *Perçemli Sokak*.” While Berk connects Rifat to surrealism and declares that

Despite all the debates about whether *Yerçekimli Karanfil*<sup>138</sup> and its poet should be counted within the Second New Movement or not, the poem has become one of the most well-known representations of the movement.

*Do you know you live inside me a little  
Yet, there is to be beautiful with you  
For example, we drink raki, as if a carnation falls inside us  
A tree is working like clockwork near us  
My stomach, my mind, remains very little*

At first glance, Cansever's poetry seems to be all about love. Using poetic questioning to show his audience the vast world hidden behind the minimal, Gönül<sup>139</sup> sees this as writing the story of small moments<sup>140</sup>. Indeed, Cansever, in this first stanza, speaks about drinking raki with a loved one, having given his stomach and mind to his loved one and to this small moment in time. However, the audience discovers another layer of meaning when looking at Cansever's style and how he constructs his poetry since

---

"Rifat's adventure is a new adventure for himself [...] Oktay Rifat is behind the Second New", Cansever himself claims that "the success of the Second New consists of knowing what poetry is and taking a stand against Oktay Rifat and writers like him." Similarly, Uyar asserts that Oktay could not participate in the *Second New* movement with *Perçemli Sokak*: "This trend [of Second New] started long before him. That is, before his last book. [...] Oktay Rifat's poems are very bad examples of his own, let alone the new or the old." For more information on this debate, please see Bezirci, 2013, pp. 79-82.

<sup>138</sup> Cansever, p. 30.

<sup>139</sup> Gönül, p. 1007.

<sup>140</sup> Dirlikyapan also concurs that Cansever often poetises "moments" in his short poems. However, he maintains that his main poetics are to be found in his books such as "*Umutsuzlar Parkı*", "*Tragedyalar*", "*Çağrılmayan Yakup*" and "*Ben Ruhi Bey Nasılım*". He argues that, the "moments" that are poetised emerged more prominently in these longer poems, which are either problematics or series of problems. For more detailed information on these different poems, please see, Dirlikyapan, 2003.

the poet “builds his poems on the axis of philosophy and includes deep questioning in his poems. Thus, conversations in his pen reach the dimensions of both internal monologue and internal dialogue.”<sup>141</sup>

*You are inclined to carnations, here I go and give it to you  
You give it to someone else, better  
And that someone else gives it to yet someone other  
Then carnation goes hand to hand.*

The story-telling, one of the cornerstones of Cansever’s poetry, is also apparent in this stanza. Here, the audience can picture the carnation, which symbolises the poet's and his loved one's undying love, passing from hand to hand. His poetry combines lyricism with narrative, anger with love, and hope with misery. However, it is clear that the poet's subjects are all fundamentally existential. As seen in the final stanza of the poem, the poet regularly uses this topic to illustrate the issues described above combined with the concept of love:

*You see, we are growing this love with you  
I touch you, and I warm up to you; that is not it  
Look how, like seven colours cutting on white  
In silence, we unite.<sup>142</sup>*

Dirlikyapan<sup>143</sup> argues that although in *Yerçekimli Karanfil*, the experimental studies seem ahead of his other books, it will not be deep enough reception for his poetry to

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Yerçekimli Karanfil](#).

<sup>143</sup> Dirlikyapan, p. 71.

speak only about this poem since in his other poems, such as *Umutsuzlar Parkı*, Cansever's poetry of the subject is people that strive to exist in the depressions brought by modern life. While he maintains that it was Camus who claimed that "[t]he mood in which the emptiness tells a lot, the chain of daily motions is broken, the heart is looking for the link that will tie it again and cannot find it is like the first sign of disharmony" and that this resonated in Cansever's poems where he finds out the disharmony of the individual. Similarly, for Karabulut, Cansever's poem *Medüza* (The Medusa) reflects upon the bewilderment of a person left in a deep, silent void and despair<sup>144</sup> for which the individual was responsible for the individual's perplexity and inner distress, according to Sartre. Moreover, in Cansever's imageries, one can find the notions of existentialism, e.g. the poet uses imageries to reveal the human being, who could not individuate, was almost thrown to the earth, with a sense of helplessness and abandonment. The poet conveys the attitude of people who were estranged from their own reality by using terms and phrases like *given over to death* and *autumn* for such individuals who were unable to construct their own existence, know who they were, and connect with their own reality. According to Karabulut, the ideas of the dead and death come from the realm of images, which expresses the tragic conclusion to human history.<sup>145</sup> Thus, it is argued that, in *Medüza*, Cansever conveys the tragedies of the modern human whose attempts to find one's self were hindered by the destructiveness, depression and isolation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Cansever, while counted among the leading representatives of the Second New, also managed to create unique poetry. He himself did not include his style and poetry within one movement, accomplishing to "keep the distance he put between his thoughts and those who spoke on behalf of this *movement*" and reached "the height of *human values* by questioning the place of man in society, no matter what techniques he used to construct his poetry."<sup>146</sup> Sarıkaya<sup>147</sup> maintains that Cansever presents a nonconformist image in his poetry by deviating from the traditional Turkish poetry

---

<sup>144</sup> Karabulut, p. 152.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Dirlikyapan, p. 100.

<sup>147</sup> Sarıkaya, Orhan. 'Konformizm-Nonkonformizm Açısından Edip Cansever'in Şiiri'. FSM İlmî Araştırmalar: İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, vol. 2, Autumn 2013, pp. 229.

arc, attempting the untried, and rejecting the ready-made; in contrast to this attitude, his poems are about the drama of the individual who must adjust to the city life that they are in but cannot understand.

#### 1.1.3.4 Cemal Süreya

*“The day that freedom comes  
It is forbidden to die that day!”<sup>148</sup>*

Cemal Süreya (1931 - 1990) is arguably the most well-known poet among the representatives of the *Second New* movement and one of the most famous poets in Turkey. His name is usually mentioned alongside Nazım Hikmet and Orhan Veli. His contemporary Ece Ayhan refers to him as *the* tight-knit poet: “Yes, Cemal Süreya was indeed one of the most *tight-knit* poets. Civilian, weird, original, etc. He was considered equal and side by side with Nazım Hikmet.”<sup>149</sup> Born as Cemâlettin Süreyya Seber in a Kurdish and Alevi family that migrated from Pülümür to Erzincan, he lived a tumultuous childhood when his family was exiled to Bilecik during the Dersim Rebellion in 1938. Soon after, upon losing his mother, he sought to leave a troubled home and went to a public boarding school. His literary style reflects all the hardships Süreya has experienced, among which his Kurdish/Alevi roots and the family’s exile can be counted. This can be seen starting in his early works, where he frequently uses death as an existentialist theme. For instance, he wrote the following poem<sup>150</sup> upon losing his father in an accident in 1957:

---

<sup>148</sup> Süreya, Cemal. “Tek Yasak”, in Üstü Kalsın, Seçme Şiirler. 33rd ed., Yapı Kredi Yayınları. 2019, p. 145.

<sup>149</sup> Ayhan, Ece. ‘En Sıkı Şair: Cemalettin Süreyya Seber’. Sivil Denemeler Kara, edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, p. 16.

<sup>150</sup> Süreya, “Yunus Ki Süt Dişleriyle Türkçenin”, in Sevda Sözleri: Bütün Şiirleri. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011, p. 96.

*You saw it with your own eyes in '57*  
*Your father's shattered brain*  
*They put him in his grave in a paper package*  
*Maybe you could have touched it if you wanted*  
*But it was forbidden for you to cry<sup>151</sup>*

Moreover, one of the most idiosyncratic poems of Süreya, entitled *Beni Öp Sonra Doğur Beni* (Kiss Me and Then Give Birth To Me), is written for his late mother. Although Süreya does not treat death as a metaphysical or philosophical issue, as Karakoç tends to, he makes it a societal criticism topic. In his poems, the poet recognises that “people are killed and their lives are interfered with by others. He talks about the guillotines, bullets, electric chairs, axes and ropes, as methods of slaughter in his poems.”<sup>152</sup> İlhan states that the poet applies the *stream of consciousness technique* in both poems (for his father and mother) and could not forget these deaths until the end of his life.<sup>153</sup>

Although Süreya uses the theme of death in his poems, it is used from a personal experience and an individual viewpoint and not as a transcendent means to reach the afterlife or God as is seen in the poems of Karakoç. Thus, it can be argued that the existentialist themes in Süreya’s poems are more associated with Sartrean (atheist) existentialism, whereas Karakoç applies these themes in his poem more in the religious vein. Even in *Üvercinka*, which is filled with imageries of love, women, sexuality, and to an extent hope (through the possibility of love and being with one’s

---

<sup>151</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Yunus Ki Sütdeşleriyle Türkçenin](#).

<sup>152</sup> İlhan, Nilüfer. ‘Cemal Süreya’nın Şiirinde Ölüm Teması’. *Turkish Studies International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 6, no. 2, Spring 2011, p. 475.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

beloved), the poet seeks to construct his new life order with his lover, and takes his fight to a universal level by discussing love, poetry, and death altogether:

*Together we drop verses, either good or bad  
I tell you, your neck, no one can evaluate your neck as much as me  
It is as if we say one more verse, everything will be all right  
We take barely two steps, and they seize us  
Thus, once again, they catch and execute us, shooting  
They're executing us day in and day out anyway  
on all landmasses  
including Africa  
[...]*

In this part of the poem, the general theme of love and happiness stemming from being with one's beloved seems to be shadowed by the prospect of death. So much so that the imagery suddenly changes from a softer and a more hopeful description of the beauty of the beloved's neck (a consistent subject throughout the poem) to a more violent one, i.e. execution by a firing squad. Thus, the theme of death and execution in a societal critique comes in a poem that does not deal with such concerns in the first place.<sup>154</sup>

While, in Süreya's poems, the most frequent themes appear to be love, women, loneliness, social and political criticism, death, the idea of God, portraits and poetics

---

<sup>154</sup> İlhan gives the following poems/poem collections in which Süreya deals with death as the primary theme: *Uçurumda Açan, Sıcak Nal, Göçebe, Güz Bitiği, Beni Öp Sonra Doğur Beni*.

in verse<sup>155</sup>, Çiftçi argues that the main artery of Süreya's poetry is eroticism<sup>156</sup> with socialist-realist aspects also present. These central themes appear as an expansion from the individual to the societal issues in the context of his poems. The prominent theme of eroticism in Süreya's poems "should not be considered as an independent theme. In the background of [Süreya's] poem, eroticism is sought to be processed with a fictional logic that is the product of resistance for life"<sup>157</sup> as also seen in Ayhan and Berk's poetic styles where the main themes are attributed to overarching societal issues. Moreover, as a protuberant feature of the *Second New* poetry, Süreya's poetic style also bears the vestiges of an individual point of view instead of a tight ideological focus. In time, this characteristic of Süreya's poetry has developed a distinct identity that transcends this general structure of the *Second New* and is often referred to as having the most original image of the movement. In his famous article published in *A* journal in October 1956, entitled *Folklor Şiire Düşman (Folklore is the Enemy of Poetry)*, Süreya himself states that

[c]ontemporary poetry [also] has ended up relying on the *word*. Let us draw a line from François Villon to André Breton to Henri Michaux, and we will see how this has evolved. Contemporary poets jolt the words indeed, displacing them from their place and meaning. While this is the case, I think that the poets who still include folklore and folk idioms in their poems are on a barren path.

---

<sup>155</sup> Akyüz Sizgen, Berna. 'Cemal Süreya'. *Türk Dili, Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, vol. 700, Apr. 2010, pp. 572.

<sup>156</sup> Starting with the Tanzimat poem, the female figure in poetry turned from the symbolising mother, sister and Leylâ figure, which is used as the inaccessible love symbol, to the understanding of a lover in flesh and bone. This approach reached further dimensions in the Republican Period. The poets of the Second New, led by Berk and Süreya, approached the idea of lover using the concepts of eroticism and carnal love. Karakoç, on the other hand uses the figures of Leylâ and Meryem in his poems, where the idea of the lover has turned into a symbolic and inaccessible figure in folk poetry as used before in the folk poetry before the Tanzimat era. For a detailed analysis of the Leylâ figure in Karakoç's poetry, please see [sub-chapter 4.1.2.](#)

<sup>157</sup> Çiftçi, Ferhat. 'Cemal Süreya'nın Üvercinka Şiirinde Şiirsel Objeye Ve Politik Gaye'. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 67, 2019, p. 37.

Folklore cannot carry the present intellectual quality of poetry. The air of folk idioms is too narrow to allow poetry to flap its wings.<sup>158</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Bezirci also argues that the central tenets of the *Second New* differ from the *Garip* movement and remain as (i) turning one's back on the spoken and common language, (ii) moving away from the life and culture of the people, and (iii) making *folklore the enemy of poetry*, ignoring the urban *little man*.<sup>159</sup> Süreya maintains that "the central thing in poetry is not to *tell a story*, but [to have] a *poetic load* to be established between words: in Braque's words, it's poetic, not anecdotal."<sup>160</sup> Thus, Süreya's aims regarding the *Second New*'s legacy overlap with the characteristics of the movement where it was born as a *reaction* to the prohibitions imposed by the *Garip* movement, which were gradually worn out, stereotyped, and critiqued by the *Second New*.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, while Orhan Veli's *plain* poetry "despised image, music, simile, exaggeration and other literary arts", the *Second New* poets have "opened the movement's doors to these without requiring any discipline [to be sought]."<sup>162</sup>

Following these newly introduced features of *Second New*, Süreya wrote one of the most renowned poems of Turkish poetry, *Üvercinka*, as mentioned briefly above. Before the poem, the title (also the title of his first poetry book, published in 1958) was one of the most debated, on which many different opinions were expressed. According to Çiftçi,<sup>163</sup> while some associated the name with Picasso's *Guernica*, for some, it was created by combining the diminutive suffix *-ka* for female names in Slavic languages and the word *pigeon*. Apart from the question of which is more accurate, the reader gets the idea that the woman, as the beloved, portrayed in the poem is likened to a pigeon.

---

<sup>158</sup> Süreya, Cemal. [Folklor Şiire Düşman..](#)

<sup>159</sup> Bezirci, p. 17.

<sup>160</sup> op.cit.

<sup>161</sup> Bezirci, p. 103.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Çiftçi, p. 37.

*Thus, once again, we are with your neck, among your numbered parts  
That's the longest neck you own, it is to hold onto or not to lose hope  
We are in a tram leading from Laleli toward the world  
Suddenly, somehow, you touch my heart  
But how come as soon as you touch my heart  
Making love becomes valid once again  
on all landmasses  
including Africa  
[...]<sup>164165</sup>*

Süreya himself, in an interview, explains his word choice as follows:

*Üvercinka* is an abbreviated word from the pigeon's wing<sup>166</sup>, a concept that is oriented toward peace, love and imposition. As for my choice of title for the book, there are two reasons for this. One is clear: today's poetry, and by the way, my poetry forces the word. I think I am giving a small but meaningful section of my poem. The second reason is something very private, [related to] purely everyday life. By naming my book *Üvercinka*, I guess I give a small but meaningful section of my poem that forces the word.<sup>167</sup>

The imagery used in the poem is rich, consistent with *Second New* characteristics and the central theme of Süreya's poetry, eroticism, is also present. The audience can

---

<sup>164</sup> Süreya, Cemal. 'Üvercinka'. *Üvercinka*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, p. 56.

<sup>165</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Üvercinka](#).

<sup>166</sup> G(*üvercin ka*)nadı, an abbreviation of Turkish words meaning "pigeon's wing".

<sup>167</sup> Doğan in Çiftçi, p. 38.

catch the stream of consciousness technique throughout the poem, while the imagery of the woman as the beloved does not leave the reader's sight. According to Çiftçi, the features such as "the obligation on the subjective, forcing imposition through the standard deviation of the word seem reasonable within the framework of the [Süreya's] poetic universe.<sup>168</sup>" As such, Süreya's poetry explores multiple semantic aspects through diverse links where individual and social freedoms and issues are alluded to in the poem's surface structure through love and sexuality.

Another concept in Sureya's poetry is a "modernist strategy based on the discourse of originality and autonomy is represented as *anti-authority*"<sup>169</sup>. As remarked previously, Second New also emerged as a poetry against the established rules and tradition of Turkish poetry, rebelling against the socio-political circumstances in which it arose. Süreya's beliefs on the perception of poetry language and external reality with a unique understanding, which are mentioned in the personality discourse, indicate a rejection of the dominant language and reality and hence an antagonism to authority.

The unorthodox reconciliations are the fundamental application that changes Süreya's poetic language into a multi-layered, relatively confined, distinctive, and fictional language. Karadeniz<sup>170</sup> maintains that his attitude of suspending ordinary and discursive language finds a very evident response in poetry practice by using words in various and new sequences, creating new emotional and mental situations. As a result, this has been used as the principal means of developing modernist poetry centred on personality and hence differentiated by authenticity and autonomy.<sup>171</sup> However, Süreya's personality discourse, which is founded on the change of language with an individual disposition, does not envision fully forsaking the heritage of Turkish poetry. Süreya remains a cornerstone of not only the Second New movement but all

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Karadeniz explores the representation of the anti-authority as a modernist attitude in three sub-topics: *allegorical*, *imaginary* (through images), and *thematical*. For more details, please see Karadeniz, Mustafa. Cemal Süreya'nın Şiir Estetiğinde Poetik Sadakat: Poetika Ve Şiir Arasındaki Mütakabiliyet. İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015, p. 326-341.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

Turkish poetry with his interpretation that tradition is influenced by the concept of exceeding by inclusion, his attempts at alienating the language and focusing on imageries and deviations, unusual associations, deformations in word and verse.

### **1.1.3.5 Turgut Uyar**

*“There comes a day when everyone realises that they  
love, in a blink of an eye.”<sup>172</sup>*

Born in Ankara, Ahmet Turgut Uyar (1927-1985) is one of the most celebrated poets of the Second New. He was the fifth of six children born to a father who was a cartography major in the military and a mother who was a housewife. Uyar's education was continued in several military schools, some of which were boarding schools. Following his provincial service, he resumed his civil service career in Ankara, where he willingly left his military career as a personnel officer and began working for Turkey Cellulose and Paper Industry, where he retired<sup>173</sup>. After his first marriage to Yezdan Şener, he married Tomris Uyar, a well-known author and translator.

Talat Halman, the renowned cultural historian and professor of letters, describes Uyar as “one of the liveliest minds and unquestionably a giant of poetry in Turkey” who has “expanded the frontiers of the functions, forms, and values of verse with the wisdom and the verve that have marked his art.”<sup>174</sup> Uyar, whom the Garip movement

---

<sup>172</sup> Uyar, Turgut. ‘Sevmek Herkesin’. Varlık, no. 391, 1953, p. 7.

<sup>173</sup> Şenderin, Zübeyde. ‘Turgut Uyar: Sanat Hayatı ve Eserleri’. Sosyal Bilimler, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2012, p. 144.

<sup>174</sup> Halman, Talat S. ‘Review: Kayayı Delen İncir by Turgut Uyar; Bir Şiirden by Turgut Uyar’. World Literature Today, vol. 58, no. 1, Winter 1984, p. 161.

had influenced his early works<sup>175</sup>, began to be listed among the Second New movement's founders after the publication of one of his most well-known poetry collections, *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı*. Dynamics such as the expansion in the fiscal policies, comprehension of capitalism, and urbanisation during the Democratic Party era have been influential in Uyar's change of lyrical line. Kekeç<sup>176</sup> further argues that aside from these reasons, Uyar developed a new poetic vocabulary and understanding due to Garip poetry's inability to accurately capture social realities such as the loneliness of besieged and overburdened metropolitan residents or the turmoil of the great metropolis. The battle of the individual enters the poem of Uyar with his move to Ankara as civil personnel.<sup>177</sup> The poet had to establish himself and exist in this urbanising society in the vast metropolis.

Uyar himself explains the transformation of his poetry, stating that it is necessary to mention the money explosion created by the Democrat Party and the changes and shaking of the values it brought: “On my own behalf, when I came to Ankara from Terme as an [military] officer, I had a great shock, I felt the need to settle a confrontation [with myself].”<sup>178</sup> Furthermore, on the changing political, fiscal, and social environment, the poet maintains:

The reason that prompted me to write the poem I wrote was that I saw my environment change. I could not escape the suddenly urbanized world, the

---

<sup>175</sup> Şenderin (pp. 147-149) maintains that “It is possible to divide Turgut Uyar's poetry into periods, and such a classification process is not difficult for a poet who has undergone a great transformation in his poetry in terms of form-essence relationship.” According to the author, *Arz-ı Hal* (published in 1949) and *Türkiyem* (published in 1952) are considered to be poems from the first period, whilst *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistan* represents the start of the second period and the true turning point in his poetic style.

<sup>176</sup> Kekeç, İsmail. ‘Düzyazılarından Hareketle Turgut Uyar’ın Şiir Anlayışı ve Bir Eleştirmen Olarak Turgut Uyar’. *Akademik Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 2, Summer 2018, pp. 213.

<sup>177</sup> Şenderin, p. 149.

<sup>178</sup> Özkırımlı in *ibid*, p. 148.

neon lamps I encountered, the big hotels, and the situations that heralded some new developments in writing the [Garip] poetry.<sup>179</sup>

Thus, Uyar's poetry, in line with the Second New's guidelines, started to reflect more existentialist thematics, as also seen in his contemporaries. With the publication of *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı*, the audience is encountered with the frequent use of themes like the sense of isolation brought on by urbanization, alienation brought on by the separation of values that results from urbanization, the sense of siege brought on by a person's relationship with objects that separates them from their true selves, and the like. The poet also uses themes such as the desire to escape everything that brings about this alienation and isolation, and he subjectifies women as objects to realise this desire to escape, using intense sexuality and death in his poems.

Uyar's poem, *Geyikli Gece (The Night With The Deer)*<sup>180</sup>, published in *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı*, is one of the prime examples where the poet used the concepts and thematics of existentialism.

*However, there was nothing to be afraid of.*

*Everything was made of nylon; that was all.*

The poem begins with the concept of fear, and the poet assures the audience that there is nothing to worry about. It is worth noting that he begins his poem with an adverb (however) to imply that something contradictory has occurred. The contradiction is explained in the second verse, where the poet, critiquing, says that everything was

---

<sup>179</sup> Özgüven in *ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Geyikli Gece](#).

made of nylon. Şişman<sup>181</sup> argues that Uyar “explained what happened in the following parts of the poem [and] in a sense, he started his poetry from the conclusion.” The word nylon, furthermore, has a symbolic connotation and “points to the being-in-itself in the philosophy of existentialism, standing in front of the human being whose existence comes before its essence in poetry and reveals itself as an object of fear.”<sup>182</sup> Moreover, there is a reference to urbanisation<sup>183</sup> and a more veiled allusion to the modern individual who is the result of urbanisation and the modern society they build.

*And when we died, we were dying five thousand, ten thousand abruptly  
against the sun.*

*But before we find the night with the deer*

*We were, like children, all afraid.*

In the following verses, the audience comes across a further critique of modern society and the technologies it has produced, where the concept shifts to death. Technology has advanced, and with it, weaponry have as well, making them more terrifying and lethal. Five to ten thousand people can perish simultaneously because of the atomic bombs and other weapons of mass destruction, which are the results of developing technology. The discovery of the night with the deer, which is all about nature<sup>184</sup>, as detailed in the next stanza, brings this horrific imagery to an end. According to Şişman<sup>185</sup>, “[o]ne escapes from life, which is the source of fear, finding

---

<sup>181</sup> Şişman, Gülşah. ‘Turgut Uyar’ın “Geyikli Gece” Adlı Şiirine Varoluşsal Bir Yaklaşım Denemesi’. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 10, no. 16, Fall 2015, pp. 1068.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1069.

<sup>183</sup> Yılmaz, Mehmet. ‘Kente Alışamayan Uyumsuz Bireyin Öyküsü: Turgut Uyar’ın Geyikli Gece Şiiri Üzerine Bir Tahlil Denemesi’. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 6, no. 3, Summer 2011, pp. 1893–906.

<sup>184</sup> Caner refers to other poems of Uyar, such as *(Bir Kantar Memuru İçin) İncil* and *O Zaman Av Bitti*, to analyse and conclude that the imagery of deer is used to symbolise “woman” and “nature”. For more on these analyses, please see Caner, Firat. *Turgut Uyar’ın Huzursuzluğu*. Bilkent Üniversitesi, Sept. 2006.

<sup>185</sup> *Op. cit.*

*the night with the deer*. The discovery of *the night with the deer* occurs when the stages of existence become obvious [to the individual].” The stanza comes full circle when the poet re-mentions the fear everyone felt due to modern life, technology, and other developments like city life. The discovery of *the night with the deer*, which alludes to the individual's salvation, dispelled the fear.

The next stanza focuses on the features of the night with the deer, which can be described as a natural setting where individuals free from their worries can fully express themselves without being constrained by social conventions and rules. In other words, those described as “the ones with *the night with deer* are those who are aware of their existence.”<sup>186</sup>

*One should always know about the night with the deer*

*In the green and distant wild forests*

*Slowly, as the sun sets on the ends of the asphalt*

*It will save us all from the time*

[...]

It is nature, the distinguishing characteristic of *the night with the deer* that was alluded with the sun setting on the asphalt, as the asphalt is one of the critical components of modern life and the big cities. In this verse, the setting sun on the asphalt suggests that the troubles brought by modern city life have ended, and the redemption of the night of the deer has come. Furthermore, it brought the feeling of *timelessness* or the action of escaping from the constraints of the time. Şişman argues that the person unable to reflect on the purpose of their existence, which is one of the central questions of existential philosophy, is caught in a never-ending cycle.<sup>187</sup> In other words, even when there is not enough time for someone to contemplate philosophically and logically on

---

<sup>186</sup> Şişman, p. 1069.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

their own existence, they nevertheless need to go on living in the middle of the turmoil of life and keeping up with the pace of time by fulfilling their commitments. Similarly, Yılmaz maintains that “the hectic pace of work in big cities prevents individuals from considering how and why they live; everything is crammed into a limited amount of time, and the time is continuously monitored to avoid being late.”<sup>188</sup> Thus, for those who live in modern cities, getting rid of time means reestablishing a connection with their actual selves and the natural world because the pace of modern life distances them from nature and its essence.

The poet appeared satisfied with his discoveries of *the night with the deer* in the final phrases of the last stanza.

[...]

*However, the night with the deer is in the forest*

*Sharp blue and rustling*

*I pass into the night with the deer*

*I reach out and kiss my own cheeks.*<sup>189</sup>

When the poem comes to a close, the poet makes the action of reaching out and kissing his own cheeks, demonstrating that he is aware of his loneliness and has found the answer within himself. This gesture shows that the poet embraced the night with the deer, i.e., the place which promised him salvation and redemption. Since he is no longer surrounded by the problems of modern life and the big cities that he was criticising, the poet is now fully conscious of his existence. In other words, a person who is alone on the path of life, who entered this world alone, and who will leave this world alone, is conscious that he should not turn to anyone other than himself for

---

<sup>188</sup> Yılmaz, p. 1898.

<sup>189</sup> For the original version of the poem as extracted here please see Appendix, Chapter 1 Poems, [Geyikli Gece](#).

assistance. Man is his own master and is in charge of himself.<sup>190</sup> The person will eventually arrive at himself due to his actions on the path to self-realisation because “[d]espite all the elements that make *the night with deer*, ultimately the only reality is the inevitable loneliness of the individual.”<sup>191</sup> Thus, passing into *the night with the deer* denotes the conclusion of all existential concerns for the individual (the poet), allowing him to be comfortable in all his loneliness.

Therefore, it may be argued that Uyar has a softer viewpoint on these trepidations despite being preoccupied with existentialist themes like loneliness, alienation, and death. In other words, he can feel at ease while addressing these issues. The poet’s attitude is reflected in his own words, where he stated, “[t]he adventure of the poet is the adventure of the person who has remained as alone in every age.”<sup>192</sup>

Claiming that “poetry should not comfort us; on the contrary, it should disturb us by making us uneasy”<sup>193</sup>, Uyar achieves what he set out to do with his poetry. Kurt<sup>194</sup> maintains that Uyar’s poetry is written in a brand-new language and has his own mythology and language, just like many other poets who develop their own mythologies, metaphors, and imagery particular to the modern era. Uyar aims to depict a world which was built on the natural and yet unspoilt by an individual decision, while urbanisation and modern life “where everything is nylon, and everyone feels like they are in a blockade” is portrayed by “flats, wide streets, neon lights, bonds, money, checks, and where everything is made of nylon”<sup>195</sup> comprise the central conflict of the poet against the lifestyle he heralds. Uyar remains “one of the four or five great living bards”<sup>196</sup> and a forerunner of contemporary Turkish poetry

---

<sup>190</sup> Şişman, p. 1075.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Uyar in ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Kekeç, p. 214.

<sup>194</sup> Kurt, Mustafa. ‘Şehirdeki Yabancı: Turgut Uyar’ın Şiirinde Modernizm Eleştirisi’. Gazi Türkiyat, vol. 22, 2018, p. 77.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Edgü in Caner, p. 3.

into which he skillfully incorporated his own vision while addressing issues of modern life with language that pushes the boundaries to this day.

## **1.2 A Dissident of the *Second New Poetry*: Sezai Karakoç, Religion, and Islamic Existentialism**

Sezai Karakoç (1933-2021) is a conservative-Muslim intellectual, writer, and prominent representative of Turkish *Second New* poetry. He is one of the few conservative authors influenced by existentialism and Sufism and an influential intellectual of Turkish Islamism that affected the Islamic community in Turkey.

Sezai Karakoç was born in Ergani, a village of Diyarbakır, in 1933 to a well-known family of the region where his grandfathers were prominent figures in the village and its vicinity. Karakoç spent his childhood in Ergani, Maden and Dicle towns in South-eastern Anatolia. Upon finishing Maraş Secondary School, he graduated from Gaziantep High School in 1950 with plans to study philosophy in İstanbul. However, for financial reasons, he entered the Faculty of Political Sciences in Ankara entrance examination and graduated from Ankara University's Department of Finance in 1955 despite his willingness to study philosophy. His close friend, who also happens to be a leading intellectual and literary figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century Turkey, Cemal Süreya<sup>197</sup>, describes him as follows: '[He is] a Muslim who knows Marx and Nietzsche. Also knows Rimbaud. Also likes Dali. Also reads Nazım.'<sup>198</sup> Tufan also emphasises the significance of Karakoç's place in Turkish Islamism and says that '[h]e has been an influential intellectual who has put his mark on Turkish Islamism and affected the Islamic community in Turkey as much as Mehmet Akif Ersoy and Necip Fazıl

---

<sup>197</sup> For more information on Cemal Süreya and his impact on Turkish modern literature and poetry, please see [sub-chapter 1.1.3.4](#).

<sup>198</sup> Tufan, 'Sadece Kongrelerden Tanıyanlar ve Hiç Bilmeyenler için Sezai Karakoç.' *Hürriyet*, July 10, 2012.

Kısakürek did.’<sup>199</sup> Karakoç states that writing poetry was not his first aim: “Poetry was like a whim that haunted me from time to time. It cannot be said that I devoted myself to [poetry]. So I was not reading to [be able to] write poetry. I was reading because it was my spiritual need.”<sup>200</sup> His approach to writing poetry notwithstanding, affected by Kısakürek, Karakoç started penning his first poems. Today, Karakoç is regarded as a peer of these poets and an equally important name in developing an Islamist ideology in Turkey in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Karakoç is included in the *Second New* movement mainly because the images in his poems are intense, and the meaning is obscure. There are discussions regarding whether Karakoç should be included in this movement according to different critics’ perspectives. Karataş<sup>201</sup> maintains that these perspectives are remote from objectivity and closer to personal assessments and points of view. Although Karakoç’s poems at the very beginning of the 1950s have different characteristics than that of the *Second New*, his style started to carry similar features between 1955-and 1965. “Besides the formal similarities”, Karataş argues, “Karakoç remains closer to the other poets [of the *Second New*] in terms of common features such as rebellion for persecution and oppositional posture seen in the core of the poems published in this period.”<sup>202</sup> Similarly, Doğan states that Karakoç’s differences from his contemporaries can be seen as “the hegemonic attitude of literature [that] can be aggravated by some directed resistances. This fact embodies the situation in Sezai Karakoç’s *Second New*.”<sup>203</sup> Karakoç, on this matter, says that “[i]n sound and form, motifs and images, I am separated from [the other poets] with whom we were very close at the beginning, due to the difference in understanding the existence that fills that form and throws that

---

<sup>199</sup> Gürcan, ‘Seventh Son of the East: Sezai Karakoç and His Doctrine of Revival’, *Turkish Studies* 16 (2015), p. 2.

<sup>200</sup> Koçakoğlu, Bedia, and Ayşe Demir. ‘Bir Azizin Hasreti Olmak: Sezai Karakoç’un Peygamber Tasavvuru’. *Seçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 34, 2015, p. 124.

<sup>201</sup> Karataş in Kemal Timur, ed. *Sezai Karakoç Sempozyum Bildirileri: Nisan 2012, Diyarbakır*. (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2014), p. 27.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Doğan, p. 8.

sound.”<sup>204</sup> In other words, Karakoç points out that the main difference from his contemporaries lies in his willingness to capture the tragic humour at the moments when life is most explosive, such as love, freedom, life and death, and the absolute shrouded in the absurdity. This is not to say that Karakoç does not belong to the *Second New* movement if classification is to be made but that his poetry and style bear some alterations, e.g. his inclination to using the poetry techniques seen in Sufistic poetry (following Yunus Emre, Mevlânâ Rumi, and the like) and Divan literature<sup>205</sup> (writing in couplets, using the *masnawi* technique as seen in poems such as *Leylâ ile Mecnun*), etc. Although a representative of the Second New, Karakoç sets himself apart by using motifs, images, and symbols, incorporating traditional and contemporary in his poems. Sufism and poetry are intertwined in our past life and literature; Sağlık maintains, “*Mevlevihanes* and *dervish lodges* are also temples of poetry. In *Mevleviyye*, poetry, music and mysticism are three aspects of a single,

---

<sup>204</sup> Karakoç, *Edebiyat Yazıları II*, p. 44.

<sup>205</sup> TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi describes Divan literature as a literary tradition that has continued its existence for six centuries with a language in which Arabic-Persian words are widely used without any changes. Within the general development of Turkish literature, from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Persian literature, which took its theoretical and aesthetic principles from Islamic culture and took its form as an example, Divan literature shaped under the strong and continuous influence of all aspects and started to give clear examples. Akün, Ömer Faruk. ‘Divan Edebiyatı’. [TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi](#). On the impact of Divan literature on modern Turkish literature and poetry, Gökalp (1993, p. 348) states that the tradition of Divan literature in the works of poets such as Yahya Kemal and Ahmet Haşim showed itself not only in terms of measure, rhyme, etc., but also in the sense of style and aesthetics. Different understandings have been reached through the relations these poets established with the literary movements in the West. Over time, the form similarities with the Divan poetry were abandoned, and the ways of combining with the tradition of Divan literature, in essence and in depth, were sought. Poets such as Attila İlhan, Turgut Uyar, Behçet Necatigil, and Hilmi Yavuz benefited from the Divan poetry tradition with the musicality created with images, associations, discipline, sounds and words.

inseparable flow of spirit.”<sup>206</sup> Karakoç, Enser<sup>207</sup> argues, a proponent of the revival of Islamic civilisation based on humans, assigned Sufism a unique place, considering it to be a crucial aspect of Islamic civilisation and an embodiment of the concept of metaphysical thought's basis for resurrection. Sufism significantly impacts Karakoç's perspective of knowledge and the nature of man and God.

Karakoç praises the newly emerging poetry and says that it can be summarised with the line from *Üvercinka*<sup>208</sup>, one of the most well-known *Second New* era poems that bear almost all the characteristics of the movement. In this poetry, there is no Absolute, but the existence of the Self is in question. “The littlest behaviour of the self is like a major message, even though the poet himself does not know what the message is”, Karakoç maintains.<sup>209</sup> Remarkably, for Cemal Süreya, the birth of the *Second New* can be summarised with Karakoç's poem *Balkon*<sup>210</sup>.

Karakoç rechristened *Second New* as *neo-realist poetry* while noting that the poetry of Orhan Veli constituted the realist movement in Turkish poetry. He defines *Second New* as the poetry of a *pure living* which,

does not have an a-priori theory of the genesis and any code based on it. This living is realist, pragmatic, and pluralist. The phrase *human in the universe* summarises this poetry. Partly, it flees from rationality and wanders off in dreams. On occasion, it escapes from the censorship of thought. These poets do not accept “meaning” as the essence of existence and poem. [...] This poetry also touches the

---

<sup>206</sup> Sağlık, Şaban. ‘Tanrı’nın Gözüyle Bakış Penceresi’ Yahut Sezai Karakoç’un ‘Ayinler’i’. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 141.

<sup>207</sup> Enser, Ramazan. ‘Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirinde Tanrı Kavramının Tasavvuf Epistemolojisi Açısından Anlamı ve Kullanımı’. FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, no. 11, 2018, p. 192.

<sup>208</sup> Please see [section 1.1.3.4](#). for a segment from the poem and its discussion with regards to its place within the *Second New* movement.

<sup>209</sup> Karakoç, ‘[Yeni-Gerçekçi Şiir: ‘İkinci Yeni’](#)’, (accessed December 14, 2017).

<sup>210</sup> Sert, İsmail. ‘Yıldırım Aydınlığında Bir Ağaç Olarak Şair’. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 23ç

spherical wall of the metaphysical and mystical world at a few points. Every power related to the “Absolute” lives quietly, isolated from its weapons, in this circus. [...] According to these poets, Jesus invented religion because he was bored; St. Antoine walks in the sky donned only a shirt; “Dear Mr God<sup>211</sup>” is a priest who confesses sins, or rather, who counts and enumerates sins!<sup>212</sup>

This lengthy quote presents Karakoç’s take on existentialism, as well. Here, he says that this poetry does not have a deduced point of origin and is based on only the realist living and that there is no meaning per se to the poetry but rather a sense of the search of the individual, of the poets themselves, in the universe. From this point on, in Turkish poetry, existential questions have begun to form. To find answers to these questions, the poets have abandoned the structured, meaningful verses in the poetry and started to transcend into unknown worlds, the metaphysical and the mystical, while choosing absurd and, at times, made-up words. Therefore, with his attitude towards the style and the characteristics of his poems that he shared with his contemporaries, Karakoç remained a pioneer within the *Second New Movement* as long as this movement remained the cornerstone of Turkish poetry.

After the late 1960s, Karakoç’s poetry style became more personal and grew away from any literary movement. His contemporary, Ece Ayhan, stated in 1987, “Sezai Karakoç, too, was one of the two or three contemporary poets of the *Second New* until 1962 or perhaps 1968. But now, it is necessary to call him “a poet of our time.”<sup>213</sup> Karakoç himself says, “[i]n sound and form, motifs and images, I have gradually grown separate from my poet friends with whom I was very close at the beginning because of my difference in perception and personality, and this difference becomes more and more apparent”.<sup>214</sup> Karakoç also takes one step further from being a

---

<sup>211</sup> The phrase *Dear Mr God (Sayın Tanrı)* also appears in Sureya’s poem Üvercinka (if it was up to Mr God, it is a sin to sleep with you, rubbish!) which possibly inspired Karakoç to mention when his and Sureya’s friendship and connection are taken into account.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Karataş in Timur, p. 38.

<sup>214</sup> Karakoç, *Edebiyat Yazıları II*, p. 44.

representative of the *Second New Movement* and starts to develop his own idea of a civilisation based on Islamic rules and Western philosophies.

### 1.2.1 Karakoç's Doctrine of Resurrection

Karakoç's use of values such as death, love, religion, mysticism, and the like, Şahin<sup>215</sup> argues, are the set of values that makes humans return to sacred existential forms and to re-join their self-awareness. In other words, Karakoç dwells on these themes because he argues that it is a way for humans to remind themselves that they exist for a reason and that reason can be known and reached only through believing in Allah. It is essential to underline that in his usage of the themes of existentialism and doctrines of Islam, Sufism included, which created a sui generis characterization of Islamic existentialism in Turkey, Karakoç cannot be labelled as existentialist. Instead, as this dissertation argues, he creates the sole instance of Islamic existentialism in Turkey utilising existentialism's concepts. Incidentally, some twenty-five years later, Karakoç accepts that existentialism has lost its power, primarily due to changing global social and political circumstances. By this time, Karakoç started publishing *Diriliş* magazine and creating his doctrine of the resurrection.

The doctrine of resurrection is central to understanding Karakoç's approach and perspective on poetry, literature, the socio-political status quo, and life in general. Şahin argues that both in his poetry and his essays, "the concept of resurrection spreads from the centre to the periphery."<sup>216</sup> With its vertical dimension, resurrection aesthetics represents human and Turkish-Islamic civilisation<sup>217</sup>. The first and most

---

<sup>215</sup> Şahin, Veysel. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Yaratıcı Değerler'. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2015, p. 2728.

<sup>216</sup> Şahin, Veysel. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Kur(t)uluş Değerleri ve Diriliş Estetiği'. *Mecmua Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 3, Spring 2017, p. 36.

<sup>217</sup> It is important to note that Karakoç distanced himself from any debate that focuses on one's ethnic origins and ethnicity. This can be read in the sense that the doctrine of resurrection is a Turkish one in the sense that it was structured in Turkey and it is based on the values of Islamic civilisation.

crucial prerequisite for the desire to be oneself, in Karakoç's opinion, is the resurrection. Because, in the broadest sense, being human is a prerequisite for resurrection.<sup>218</sup> Karakoç describes resurrection as

becoming reality, constantly trying, finding the truth and growing it under new conditions, revealing the roots in the past, releasing branches [...] into the future, melting of all forms of multidimensional and multi-faceted change, transformation, state, orientation, development and revolution in a single structure.<sup>219</sup>

Moreover, for Karakoç, "the resurrection precedes the revival of man, who is the consciousness of the universe, on his axis."<sup>220</sup> By stating that man has been looking for his own meaning since he was created, Karakoç prioritises man's position in the aesthetics of the resurrection. "The resurrection, in Karakoç's opinion, is a way of life."<sup>221</sup> Thus, the doctrine and idea of resurrection permeate all works of Karakoç.

Can argues that for Karakoç, "the idea of the resurrection asserts that this world and the one after it are one and cannot exist apart from one another. Our belief shapes the world we live in in the afterlife."<sup>222</sup> Karakoç states, with regards to the meaning of man's existence that

[w]hat we shall attribute to the hereafter will determine the meaning of our existence. We can consider our life worthless if we start from nothing and end up nowhere. However, if our current existence has a purpose, which we feel it does, and if we wish to understand this life

---

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Çağ ve İlham III: Yazgı Seçişi*. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2010, p.135.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Can, Hamit. 'Siyasal Bir Tasarım Olarak: Diriliş Partisi'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2015, p. 469.

we lead, we must give it that purpose. We cannot avoid believing something has a beginning and an end if we are not devoted to it.<sup>223</sup>

On March 26, 1990, Karakoç founded the *Diriliş Party (DİRİP)* with this philosophy of the resurrection at its core and the idea of the generation of the resurrection as his political platform. Can<sup>224</sup> claims that the chronic crises affecting the entire nation, the impasse caused by the issues in the intellectual community, and other similar unfavourable circumstances compelled *Diriliş*, a profoundly ingrained movement of thought, to be created as a political party. Karakoç views religious values as centred on the axis of civilisation since he views belief as the core of civilisation, which serves as the foundation of the doctrine of the resurrection. Koçakoğlu and Demir<sup>225</sup> maintain that in both his poems and prose, he evaluates the stages that human beings have passed from creation to the present as the existence of a civilisation.

Moreover, the resurrection movement can be seen as his approach to merging existentialism with Islam's doctrines and not depending on existentialism developed by Sartre, Camus or Western thought, which Karakoç fiercely criticizes in several of his essays. "Now, [existentialism] leaves its place to new currents," he writes, and "humanity is conceived with new hopes, a new humanism, a humanism of resurrection."<sup>226</sup> From the 1980s onward, Karakoç has extensively discussed and critiqued existentialism's origins and teachings, especially Sartre's and Camus's points of view. In his essay entitled *Fate*, he states that every existence depends on a law: "positive sciences determine the law of the instrument, the science of psychology determines psychological events, and the social events are the subjects of sociology."<sup>227</sup>

---

<sup>223</sup> Karakoç in *ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Koçakoğlu, Bedia, and Ayşe Demir. 'Bir Aziz'in Hasreti Olmak: Sezai Karakoç'un Peygamber Tasavvuru'. Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, no. 34, 2015, p. 126.

<sup>226</sup> Karakoç, *Edebiyat Yazıları II*, pp. 6-11.

<sup>227</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *İslam*. 6th Ed., *Diriliş Yayınları*, 1989, pp. 37-44.

For Karakoç, all such laws that govern different areas of life emanate from a Creator. The belief of fate, therefore, is the belief in a Creator, that everything is linked to Him, both nature and human's reason for existence. In other words, all existence is based on and is emanated from the single divine determinism. The determinism that the positive sciences rely on, thus, for Karakoç, is but only one branch of this divine determinism:

For the belief of fate, there are no facts, attempts or intentions outside Allah's knowledge and will. Everything has happened and will happen simply because He said: "let this be." [...] Sartre, on the other hand, makes the human being responsible for all actions. Thus, man becomes the creator and is responsible for his/her own actions. Furthermore, Sartre holds the man responsible not only for a part of his actions, as religion does but for the entirety of [his actions].<sup>228</sup>

Thus, Karakoç criticises Sartre for making the man responsible for the entirety of his choices and actions. For Karakoç, such a holistic responsibility for human beings is unbearable and unacceptable, for there is already a Creator who pre-sets the rules in the form of religion that humans should follow. Karakoç further points out that existentialism holds the man responsible for what he does *not* do as much as what he does, contrary to religion which only accounts for the actions of men. Thus, Sartrean existentialism for Karakoç becomes a by-road with regards to humanism because it simply forgets about the nature of being, ignores that the individuals never live under equal conditions from the time they were born and throughout their lives, and reduces history to the human condition while being insufficient doing so. '[Existentialism] holds the man liable for his conditions', he further explains, 'if you put the man in Allah's place, this inevitably happens. Sartre accepts every man as an *übermensch*<sup>229</sup>,

---

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> *Übermensch* is a German philosophical term significantly used by Friedrich Nietzsche, means "superman" or "superior man" and is used to justify the existence of the human race. "This superior man would not be a product of long evolution; rather, he would emerge when any man with superior potential completely masters himself and strikes off conventional Christian 'herd

making his doctrine a doctrine of intellectuals.<sup>230</sup> Karakoç, to create his own doctrine, comes up with an answer to this conundrum. For him, in the face of the Absolute, only Islam can determine the individual's place without resigning to understatement or extravagance. Only Islam connects this world with the next world, the world beyond; only Islam accounts for every condition of man and humanity and does so without descending into desperation<sup>231</sup>. Then, to exist for humans should be a responsibility in which they will carry out the rules of the doctrine of Revival. To exist, for Karakoç, is not futile; on the contrary, there is a higher purpose for human existence, which can only be found when the soul transcends its boundaries and sees its Creator in all His glory.

This higher purpose of human existence lets Karakoç deal with the question of existence and death in his works while denying the well-established judgement that existentialism is pessimistic. On the contrary, for him, the rise of existentialism has power and an optimistic side. Karakoç refuses Sartrean atheism or Camusian absurdism in understanding the laws of existence, links nature's and human's reason of existence to a mighty Creator (i.e. Allah), and the fundamental belief that everything is linked to Him. Consequently, he uses the notion of death as a transcendental experience for the human being, which enriches life with an experiment that exceeds physics. Death, as the central concept of existentialist thought, has been studied by Karakoç, which can be interpreted to establish the foundations of Islamic existentialism, where the meaning of human existence is examined and analysed through Islamic doctrines.

This dissertation argues that Karakoç aspires to do the following: he does not merely combine Islam and existentialism and leaves them side by side. Instead, by framing them in Islam, he seeks to address humans' most fundamental questions. Thus, it can be argued that his intentions fall under Islamic existentialism, which is not very

---

morality' to create his own values, which are completely rooted in life on this earth." [‘Superman’](#). Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed 12 June 2021.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, pp. 40-41.

<sup>231</sup> Karakoç, *İslam*, p. 74.

different from what Abdennour Bidar,<sup>232</sup> who developed an existential understanding of Islam by identifying “to act like a fully free individual that recognises the divine source of humanity but still enriches himself by the divine attributes of infinity and immortality”.<sup>233</sup>

As a believer, Karakoç belongs to a theological world that cannot be fully understood within strict positivist constraints. He understands and makes sense of his relations with all categories of existence within a religious spectrum and presents this situation as the ultimate foundation in his doctrine of resurrection and belief in his own existence. Philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics, unrelated to God, as well as science and reason alone, are insufficient to introduce people to the truth in his universe. God’s existence, the source of existence and the absolute truth, reveals significance in Karakoç's universe and is made clear by carefully investigating and critiquing the ideas and concepts of existence and, hence, existentialism.

---

<sup>232</sup> Abdennour Bidar (b. 1971) is a French writer and philosopher. For further details on his approach to existentialism and Islam, please see [sub-chapter 2.1.2](#).

<sup>233</sup> Hashas, Mohammed. “Self Islam, Islamic Existentialism, and Overcoming Religion.” In *The Idea of European Islam : Religion, Ethics, Politics and Perpetual Modernity*, edited by Mohammed Hashas, 140–62. Routledge, 2018.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2 ISLAMIC EXISTENTIALISM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter sets the framework around the concept of Islamic existentialism by segmenting the two components that constitute it: (i) the component of Islam, i.e., the meaning of Islam as religion within Islamic existentialism, as well as the standpoint of Christian, or Catholic existentialism, thus introducing the religious existentialisms and (ii) the component of existentialism in the atheist, or French existentialism, as they are situated in the existing literature.

The twentieth century is characterised by highly secular philosophies, existentialism among them. Nuyen states, “[d]espite its religious beginnings in Kierkegaard<sup>234</sup> and Buber<sup>235</sup>, existentialism established itself in the twentieth century as a thoroughly

---

<sup>234</sup> For more detail on Kierkegaard and the foundations of existentialism, please see [sub-chapter 2.1.1.](#)

<sup>235</sup> According to Friedman (2002: 16), “Buber's thought has had a great influence on a large number of prominent writers and thinkers” Zank and Braiterman introduces Buber as follows: “Martin Buber (1878–1965) was a prolific author, scholar, literary translator, and political activist whose writing -mostly in German and Hebrew -ranged from Jewish mysticism to social philosophy, biblical studies, religious phenomenology, philosophical anthropology, education, politics, and art.” Concerning his relationship to existentialism, the authors state “Like Sartre and

secular philosophy”<sup>236</sup>, which constitutes the doctrines of the French, or atheist existentialists, Sartre among them, and the Christian existentialists whose origins can be traced as far back as to, again, Kierkegaard. This constitutes the existentialist part of Islamic existentialism with which this framework is concerned. Concerning Islam’s part of Islamic existentialism, we can pursue the origins in two main strands: the Eastern or Arab existentialism, whose origins fall within the colonial and post-colonial Arab and North African thinkers, and the Sufistic approach of Islamic belief, which is mainly observed in Iran and Turkey.

Islamic existentialism, for the purposes of this dissertation, is further defined as the way of understanding Islamic doctrine through the following existentialist themes: (i) death, including angst and despair, (ii) freedom, (iii) authenticity, and (iv) alienation, including isolation. While this chapter investigates the different attitudes toward existentialism and different approaches to Islamic belief, i.e., Sufism, the main argument is that similar to French existentialism, which understands these four main themes from the point of view of the human subject, Islamic existentialism, too, considers the human subject and his experience of existentialist questions employing these four themes. However, different from atheist existentialism, the human subject in Islamic existentialism, through investigating these themes, ultimately aspires to reach his creator, i.e., God. Thus, it can be argued that Islamic existentialism is much similar to Christian existentialism. These four themes are subsequently discussed in

---

Heidegger, Buber directed his attention to concrete existence. But unlike his fellow ‘existentialists’, Buber was moved by the interaction between humans, individually and collectively, and an absolute reality that exceeds the human imagination. Against Sartre, Heidegger, and also Carl Jung, Buber rejected the picture of self-enclosed human subjects and self-enclosed human life-worlds beyond which there are no external, independent realities.” For more detailed information on Buber, please see: Zank, Michael, and Zachary Braiterman. ‘Martin Buber’. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/buber/); Sam Berrin Shonkoff. *Martin Buber : His Intellectual and Scholarly Legacy*. Brill, 2018; and Maurice S. Friedman. *Martin Buber : The Life of Dialogue*. Routledge, 2002.

<sup>236</sup> Nuyen, A. T. and DePaul University. ‘Existentialism and the Return to Religion’. *Philosophy Today* 44, no. 2 (2000): 169–76. <https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday200044245>.

detail in [sub-chapter 2.3.](#), which is followed by an inclusive summary of the similar studies around the topic and a description of the methodology of the dissertation.

## **2.1 Religious Existentialisms and Islam as a Component of Islamic Existentialism**

Islam is the last of the Abrahamic and monotheistic religions, and puts Allah as One and omnipotent, making the humans His subjects. According to the Muslim faith, human fate is determined by God's will, in other words, through divine determinism. Because we speak about divine determinism, at first glance, the views of Islam as a monotheistic religion and existentialism as a secular philosophy can be seen as an oxymoron when put together. Differently put, if humans need to follow a line of divine determinism through the religious path, then how can existentialism and Islam occur together without being mutually exclusive? This is a solid argument when we think of only the Western, or Sartrean, existentialism where there is no religion, God, and divine determinism. Existentialism, particularly Sartrean or atheist existentialism, argues that humans are free to make their own choices by using their free will. As will be explained in detail in the upcoming sub-chapter, Sartre, in his famous lecture given in 1946 entitled *Existentialism is a Humanism*, describes himself as an existential atheist and places himself amongst this group in which he also includes Heidegger<sup>237</sup>

---

<sup>237</sup> Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was a German philosopher whose works on phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism are well-recognised. His ideas have exerted a seminal influence on the development of contemporary European philosophy, Wheeler claims, among which is his seminal work *Being and Time*. According to SEP, *Being and Time*, which was first published in 1927, is widely regarded as one of the most important works in the canon of contemporary European (or Continental) Philosophy. It propelled Heidegger to a position of intellectual prominence on a global scale and served as the philosophical foundation for a number of later initiatives and concepts in the contemporary European tradition, such as Sartre's *existentialism*, Gadamer's philosophical *hermeneutics*, and Derrida's concept of *deconstruction*. For more details on Heidegger's life and works please see: Wheeler, Michael. '[Martin Heidegger](#)'. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy; Davis, Bret W. Martin

(although Heidegger refused to be called an atheist existentialist in his *Lettre sur l'humanisme* dated 1946) as well as the French existentialists. Sartre states that he calls this group *atheist existentialists* because, for this group, *existence precedes essence*, or “if you will, that we must begin from the subjective.”<sup>238</sup> The second group consists of “the Christians, amongst whom I shall name Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both professed Catholics”,<sup>239</sup> which ultimately further complicates the question as now “there are two kinds of existentialists.”<sup>240</sup> Thus, although Sartre is a fierce advocate of atheist existentialism and the first name that comes to mind when we speak about (French) existentialism as a school of thought, he acknowledges that some who profess the Christian belief, prominently Catholicism, and position existentialism and religion together.

It is, thus, worth looking at Christian existentialism in detail as there are certain parallels between Islamic and Christian or Catholic existentialisms, which this dissertation calls religious existentialisms, also known as existential theology in the literature<sup>241</sup>. Therefore, it suggests that Islamic existentialism is not a unique combination as it may be thought.

---

Heidegger: Key Concepts. Routledge, 2010, Stassen, Manfred, editor. Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings. Continuum, 2003; Safranski, Rüdiger. Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil. Harvard University Press, 2002.

<sup>238</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Edited by John Kulka, Translated by Carol Macomber, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 20.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> For more information on existential theology, please consult the following key texts: Cobb, John B. *The Structure of Christian Existence*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967; Jansen, G. M. A. *An Existential Approach to Theology*. The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966; Kuitert, Harminus Martinus. *The Reality of Faith a Way Between Protestant Orthodoxy and Existentialist Theology*. W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1968; Stagg, Frank. *Polarities of Man's Existence in Biblical Perspective*. Westminster Press, 1973;

### 2.1.1 Christian Existentialism

Although perhaps perplexing at first sight because the religious, deterministic and existentialist perspectives may seem mutually exclusive, the literature clearly defines Christian existentialism, which is described as “a form of existentialism stressing subjective aspects of the human person considered as a creature of God.”<sup>242</sup>. Also called Catholic existentialism, it especially emphasises (i) the natural desire of God's creatures, i.e. humans, to seek God<sup>243</sup> or (ii) the distance between humans as sinners and omnipotent God.<sup>244</sup> For instance, a prominent Christian existentialist, Nikolai Berdyaev,<sup>245</sup> favoured non-systematic and mysterious forms of expression in philosophy instead of logical and rational methods. According to Berdyaev, man's greatness derives from his share of this spiritual realm and his divine potential to create; truths are not the result of analytical investigation but rather the light that leaks from the transcendent world of the spirit. Furthermore, he argued that “by quickly accepting the *death of God*, the European Christian society had fallen into a spiritual crisis by focusing on science, humanism and democratic progress rather than ‘man as a free person.’”<sup>246</sup>. A very similar thought process and critique are found in Karakoç<sup>247</sup>, where he argued that individuals got stuck in a cycle of constant advancement as a result of the phenomena of modernity by way of focusing on such scientific, economic,

---

<sup>242</sup> Definition of Christian Existentialism. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Christian+existentialism>. Accessed 2 Apr. 2022.

<sup>243</sup> The philosophers argue this include: St Augustine, Pascal, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Gabriel Marcel.

<sup>244</sup> As in Kierkegaard and the dialectical or crisis theology of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner.

<sup>245</sup> Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev (1874 - 1948) was a Russian religious and political philosopher. He was sometimes referred to as a Christian existentialist, despite the fact that his ideas differed significantly from those of Jean-Paul Sartre and other existential thinkers. Later in life, Berdyaev For more info on Berdyaev's life and works please see Nikolai Berdyaev - [New World Encyclopedia](#), accessed 14 May 2022 and Nicolaus, G. (2010). C.G. Jung and Nikolai Berdyaev: Individuation and the Person: A Critical Comparison (1st ed.). Routledge.

<sup>246</sup> Bakır, Kemal. ‘Nikolay A. Berdyaev ve Varoluşsal Felsefi Antropoloji’. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, no. 93, July 2020, p. 29.

<sup>247</sup> Karakoç, Ruhun Dirilişi. *Diriliş Yayınları*, 2007.

and political advancements whereby quickly accepting that the God is dead and the humans become perpetually free.

Although Berdyaev “turns to metaphysics like Kant to seek moral freedom, his metaphysics is of religious character and he never rejects the historical reality of Christianity, on the contrary, he thinks that the real meaning of freedom and personality lies in this *historical* basis.”<sup>248</sup> The perplexity is nevertheless evident for scholars who deal with the subject of Christian existentialism, because (atheist) existentialism is perceived as a “notoriously angsty way of thinking” whose advocates extensively discuss angst, anxiety, and absurdity of the human existence, it is apparent that “existentialism is not exactly the easiest philosophy to incorporate into Christian theology”<sup>249</sup> Nathan argues. However, it should not short sight the scholars studying existentialism because this may cause “its roots in the philosophical tradition [to be] overlooked”<sup>250</sup> as Collins argues. Nor the “kind of approach favoured by the existentialists is not entirely novel; it has striking parallels in St. Augustine, Pascal, and other respectable thinkers”<sup>251</sup> and “[e]xistentialism is not really modern at all, but the heir of a long philosophical tradition”<sup>252</sup>. Its mediaeval roots notwithstanding, still “there are obvious clashes between an all-powerful and all-knowing God [of Christianity] and the presence of anxiety and absurdity in our lives” and that “many existentialist philosophers actively rebelled and fought against the idea of God”<sup>253</sup> among which Sartre and other French existentialists can be counted. Indeed, Sartre refuses that it is the Christian doctrine that can help the individual to select between two equally difficult choices by stating

---

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Olsen, Nathan. ‘Putting Doubt into Faith: An Introduction to Christian Existentialism’. [Student Christian Movement](#), 27 May 2020.

<sup>250</sup> Collins in Lewis, Gordon R. ‘Augustine and Existentialism’. *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1965, p.13.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Casserley in Lewis, p. 13.

<sup>253</sup> Olsen.

The Christian doctrine tells us we must be charitable, love our neighbour, sacrifice ourselves for others, choose the ‘narrow way’, etcetera. But what is the narrow way<sup>254255</sup>? Which is the more useful aim - the vague one of fighting as part of a group or the more concrete one of helping one particular person keep on living? Who can decide that *a priori*? No one. No code of ethics on record answers that question.<sup>256</sup>

Pattison argues along the same lines when considering Christian existentialism: “[i]f existentialism is identified with the atheistic existentialism of Sartre, then to speak of Christian existentialism would seem to be a contradiction in terms.<sup>257</sup>” The response to this difficulty in incorporating Christianity and existentialism comes from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard whose philosophy unmistakably affected that of Sartre’s. In philosophy and literature, Kierkegaard is accepted as the *father* of existentialism. Solomon argues, “[i]t is generally accepted that existentialism began with Kierkegaard's *untimely* works, and existentialism as a movement - and especially Kierkegaard's philosophy - should be viewed as a radical break with

---

<sup>254</sup> Narrow way, or narrow gate, is one of Jesus’s teachings mentioned in the Gospel according to Matthew: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” *Holy Bible*. Matthew 7:13-14. New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#).

<sup>255</sup> Interestingly, Buber, whose name is mentioned among the religious existentialists, describes his perspective as the *narrow ridge*: “I have occasionally described my standpoint to my friends as the ‘narrow ridge,’ [...] “I wanted by this to express that I did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed.” [(Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 184]. The narrow ridge, in its hardships to access to the certainty of knowledge, then, bears similarities to the narrow gate, which, although may prove difficult, will lead the person to the certainty of knowledge, that is life.

<sup>256</sup> Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, p. 31.

<sup>257</sup> Pattison, George. ‘Fear and Trembling and the Paradox of Christian Existentialism’. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*, Columbia University Press, 2012, p. 212

traditional Western philosophy.”<sup>258</sup> Among many other scholars, who trace Christian existentialism's roots back to Kierkegaard, Pattison, too, argues it is probably Kierkegaard who

does the most to give a specific shape to Christian existentialism (at least in its academic form), and it is from Kierkegaard that such central concepts as anxiety, repetition, the moment of vision, despair, and being-toward-death derive their distinctively existentialist meaning - as does the term “existence” itself.<sup>259</sup>

Similarly, Olsen states that Kierkegaard is “the first person to explicitly outline a form of Christian existentialism. Although earlier thinkers that have influenced Christian thought to a great extent, like St. Augustine<sup>260</sup>, are relevant to existentialist theology, Kierkegaard’s works are the foundations of the school of thought we know as Christian existentialism.”<sup>261</sup> Acknowledging that humans live in a world that is more often than not defined by angst, fear, and despair, Kierkegaard maintains that there is also “God who embodies [I]ove and urges a return to the values of the New Testament: grace,

---

<sup>258</sup> Solomon, Robert. *Akılcılıktan Varoluşçuluğa: Varoluşçular ve 19. Yüzyıldaki Kökleri*. 1st Ed., Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2020, p. 14.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> St. Augustine (354-430), also known as Saint Augustine of Hippo was one of the one of the Latin Fathers of the Church and one of the most influential Christian thinkers after St. Paul. “Augustine’s adaptation of classical thought to Christian teaching created a theological system of great power and lasting influence. His works shaped the practice of biblical exegesis and helped lay the foundation for much of medieval and modern Christian thought.”( [Saint Augustine](#), Britannica, accessed 8 Apr. 2022.) According to Lewis, “Augustine has an existentialist standpoint of human fallenness, an emphasis on the existing individual, and an existential attitude of involvement. But these function within an essentialist ontology and an orthodox doctrine of revelation in Christ and the Bible.” Thus, it can be argued that existentialism in St. Augustine is similar to existentialism in Kierkegaard. All in all, tracing the roots of existentialism back to St. Augustine is possible, which makes existentialism a far wider philosophical movement than it is usually perceived. For more detail on St .Augustine and existential standpoint please see: Lewis, p. 22.

<sup>261</sup> Olsen.

humility and love.”<sup>262</sup> Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Olsen argues that Kierkegaard

places doubt at the centre of the Christian faith. [Kierkegaard] argues that Christianity is not based on objective certainty but on subjective relationships with God. These subjective relationships depend on making a *leap of faith* and believing wholeheartedly in God regardless of any evidence to the contrary.<sup>263</sup>

In his article analysing the relationship between philosophy, existentialism, and existentialist psychotherapy, İçöz argues that Kierkegaard “embarks on a quest, an investigation, which his predecessors did not” whereby he “deals with the human being together with the world he lives in and the divine order in which he lives.”<sup>264</sup> In order to understand man, Kierkegaard deals with the world and the divine order in which [his] man is shrouded. In detail,

[Kierkegaard's] man is shrouded in dilemmas; on the one hand, he knows his finitude, but on the other hand, he lives with his infinite possibility until the end. On the one hand, he trembles with the anxiety of infinite possibility; on the other hand, he is afraid of the hopelessness of finitude and freezes. On the one hand, he must build an accountable life; on the other hand, he does not have the faculties he needs to establish an accountable life; he is condemned to choose without knowing and foreseeing and to live with the consequences of his choices<sup>265</sup>.

For Kierkegaard, being a sinner is the immense sorrow of being human. However, “Kierkegaard's sinfulness is not about breaking divine laws but about the fact that we

---

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> İçöz, Ferhat Jak. ‘Felsefeden Seans Odasına, Oradan da Hayata: Bir Varoluşçuluk Öyküsü’. Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, p. 222.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

will always be incomplete and imperfect. From this point of view, the only non-sinful being is the all-knowing God.”<sup>266</sup> Humans are imperfect because they are “finite [...] and are condemned to live with uncertainty”<sup>267</sup>. Humans cannot become whole because only God is whole, flawless, and complete; therefore, there is no possibility for humans to become *complete*. For Kierkegaard, thus, “the best [humans] can do is to be less sinful and act by faith.”<sup>268</sup> For Kierkegaard, faith, similar to being sinful, is described as “to follow those who call us, to devote ourselves to a path that calls us even if we fear and doubt it, without judging the result”<sup>269</sup>. Thus, faith remains the central notion of Christian theology and, subsequently, Christian existentialism. Jaspers, as one of the Christian existentialists to whom Sartre refers in *Existentialism is a Humanism*, takes the notion of the Kierkegaardian faith and applies it to his own concept of the possible existence philosophy, as Erdem<sup>270</sup> puts it. Concretely, “the motifs of the *faith* that exist in Kierkegaard's philosophy return differently with Jaspers.”<sup>271</sup> On the other hand, religious belief in Kierkegaard's philosophy gives way to the concept of *philosophical belief* in Jaspers' philosophy.

### ***2.1.1.1 Faith and Existentialism in the Philosophies of Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel***

The life and works of Karl Jaspers deserve a more exhaustive study and analysis in the pursuit of understanding Christian existentialism. For the purposes of this dissertation in general and this chapter in particular, a summary of the key themes of his philosophy will be contented with. Jaspers (1883-1969), a psychiatrist by formation, is a prominent name in the field of the philosophy of religion and epistemology, among others. Erdem states that Jaspers “was dissatisfied that the term *existentialism* connoted

---

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, p. 226.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Erdem, Haluk H. ‘Karl Jaspers ve “Mümkün Varoluş”un Felsefesi’. Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 159–74.

<sup>271</sup> Heinemann in ibid, p. 160.

a doctrinal view, and preferred to use the term *existential philosophy* instead.”<sup>272</sup>

Positioning himself as an existential philosopher rather than an existentialist, Jaspers’ *existence of possibility* describes “the possibility of existence, which is the actual reality of man”<sup>273</sup> because “realising [man’s] existence is a possibility” for him.

Furthermore, Jaspers “influenced by Kierkegaard, uses the term *existence* in his book *Psychology of World Views*<sup>274</sup> which was published in 1919 and deals with the basic problems of existential philosophy such as *being oneself* and *being open to others*.”<sup>275</sup>

Jaspers’ philosophy carries elements of existentialism, which led him to be associated with Heidegger as “the two founding fathers of existential philosophy in Germany” as Thornhill and Miron<sup>276</sup> put it. While Jaspers, later, expressed that he does not want to be associated with Heidegger, the authors argue that “there remains a residue of validity in associating Heidegger and Jaspers” since existentialism had “certain unifying features, and many of these were common to both Jaspers and Heidegger”<sup>277</sup>

In other words, [existentialism] might be regarded as a theoretical position in the early phases of its development on three axes: (i) [Existentialism] emphasised the idea that the content of cognition must be found in specific experiences and decisions, moving philosophical discourse away from Kantian formalism, (ii) [it] adopted Kierkegaard’s definition of philosophy as a passionate and profoundly involved activity that gravely associated the integrity and authenticity of the human being, and (iii) [by] including all facets of human life (cognitive, practical, and sensory) into a comprehensive account of rational and experiential existence, it sought to overcome the antinomies (reason/experience, theory/praxis, transcendence/immanence, pure reason/practical reason) that characterise the classical metaphysical tradition..<sup>278</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*.

<sup>275</sup> *op.cit.*

<sup>276</sup> Thornhill, Chris, and Ronny Miron. ‘Karl Jaspers’. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/jaspers/>.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

Accepting this description of existentialism, the authors maintain that the suggestion that Jaspers and Heidegger are associated with cannot be dismissed entirely, which makes them, in one way or another, contributors to the re-emergence of existentialist thought in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>279</sup>

Along with Jaspers, Sartre refers to Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) as one of the Christian existentialists. Besides being described as a philosopher, Marcel was also a playwright and drama critic. He converted to Catholicism in 1929, and the philosophy Sartre has referred to as Christian existentialism was initially endorsed [by Marcel] but later repudiated.<sup>280</sup> Treanor and Sweetman argue that, on the issue of the subject's true nature, Marcel differs from both Heidegger and Sartre and that his views are closer to those of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber.<sup>281</sup> Marcel characterises man in terms of his needs, emphasising the danger that these needs will be suffocated or muted by despair. In other words, “[t]he broken world can smother transcendent *exigencies*, leaving only quotidian, functional needs intact.”<sup>282</sup> In this manner, humans need transcendence which he defines as ontological exigence. Thus, “ontological exigence is essential and demands some level of coherence in the cosmos and some understanding of our place and role within this coherence”<sup>283</sup>. However, for Marcel, transcendence should not and cannot be defined simply as *moving beyond* without further explanation. Instead, it must “retain the tension of the traditional distinction between the immanent and the transcendent” while it is not comprehensible by humans since “[t]here is an order where the subject finds himself in the presence of something entirely beyond his grasp.”<sup>284</sup> Faith, as in the other Christian existentialists’ worldviews, thus, plays a vital role in Marcel in the understanding of man’s demands, existence, and the meaning of transcendence. For, “it is in the transcendent realms of love, art, and faith that [Marcel]

---

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Treanor, Brian, and Brendan Sweetman. ‘Gabriel (-Honoré) Marcel’. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2021, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2021. [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

most clearly *sees*, or at least intuits the transforming operations of grace.”<sup>285</sup> Moreover, for him, “faith always has an *existential index*; it fully engrosses a person’s powers of being.”<sup>286</sup> Therefore, similar to other Christian existentialists, faith is the central notion to understanding human existence and is, in itself, an existential confirmation of believing in, trusting, and having confidence in another person or God.

Christian existentialists, thus, have defined and analysed man with different focal points whereby man’s journey to understanding his existence stems from. Christian existentialism refers to people's innate yearning to pursue God or to use faith to bridge the gap between themselves as sinners and the omnipotent God.

### **2.1.2 Islam and Existentialism**

Throughout intellectual history and literature, the works of Jaspers and Marcel, as well as the works of Kierkegaard and other Christian theologians, in relation to Christian existentialism, theology, and philosophy of religion were well analysed and studied. However, the question of whether Islam and existentialism exist together has not been as thoroughly investigated. Moreover, because there are different approaches to Islamic existentialism, mainly steered by geography, there is not yet a clear definition made of Islamic existentialism. Abdennour Bidar (b. 1971), a French thinker and philosopher of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has made the most studied attempt at this definition in the literature. Bidar claims, “Islam or Islamic belief without submission is premised on a profound desire for freedom of conscience, expression and dissent.”<sup>287</sup> According to

---

<sup>285</sup> Paul Marcus. In *Search of the Spiritual: Gabriel Marcel, Psychoanalysis and the Sacred*. Routledge, 2012, p. 71.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, 115.

<sup>287</sup> Kiwan, Nadia. ‘Abdennour Bidar: Existentialist Islam as Intercultural Translation’. *Secularism, Islam and Public Intellectuals in Contemporary France*, Manchester University Press, 2019, p. 256.

Hashas<sup>288</sup>, in a sincere endeavour of a theologian-philosopher, Bidar attempts to combine the two worldviews (i.e., Eurocentric and Islamocentric), which can also be considered ‘rethinking Islam’ in the modern age. Bidar’s attempt at this combination stems from his development as a “young European Muslim”<sup>289</sup>, according to whom, in the Self-Islam approach he develops, the individual is the *heir of God* on earth, gaining eternal presence and securing historical immortality beyond the classical metaphysical interpretations, which constitutes a statement of intellectual, and not just personal, spirituality. This approach is reminiscent of Karakoç, who ultimately aspires to reach Islamic civilisation through being the soldier of resurrection, which necessitates following Islam’s tenets, the teachings of the Prophet and the Qur’an, all the while applying the themes of existentialism to his doctrine with the purpose to reach his aspiration. Similarly, Bidar was also taught under the Sufistic path for a while, which, although ended in a rebellion because he could not succeed in merging the two worlds of the West and the East, made him realise it was the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*, or unity of being, which became central on which Bidar based his theories of Self-Islam<sup>290</sup>, Islamic reform, and immortality<sup>291</sup>. For him, Self-Islam is based on in-depth contemplation and probing the purpose of life and the origins of its ideals. Its foundations are liberty and responsible conscience freedom.<sup>292</sup> To achieve this, every Muslim needs to think autonomously and act authentically. This line of thinking can also be found in Karakoç, for whom the true *soldier of resurrection* should live an authentic life, through which he can discover the path to reuniting with his Creator, which ought to be the focus of his existence in this world. This can only be done by carrying out one's obligations in life as the soldier of resurrection and contributing to

---

<sup>288</sup> Hashas, Mohammed. ‘[Reading Abdennour Bidar: New Pathways for European Islamic Thought](#)’. *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2013, p. 47.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> According to Bidar, Self-Islam is constituted of two axes: (i) personal responsibility whereby “every individual has the right to take of Islam according to one’s level of responsibility and spiritual need” and (ii) spiritual responsibility whereby “every Muslim is to find his [or her] own way, his [personal] Islam, which means the adequate way of each to attach to Islam, and to Islamic culture” which is possible by being always in contemplation and communion with Allah. (ibid, p. 53).

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

the construction of the *city* of resurrection toward reaching the Islamic civilisation. Another common idea in Karakoç's and Bidar's Islamic existentialism is that they refuse the Western notion that *God is dead*. On this subject, Bidar argues that the Western effort of *killing God* and *substituting religion* with secular or atheist beliefs has not been sufficiently humane. Instead, these initiatives have given rise to other profane idols, such as nationalism and capitalism. This argument almost verbatim resonates in Karakoç's viewpoint regarding capitalism and communism, for whom both are the West's new Gods, created to crush the people until their individualities are entirely forgotten.

Hashas argues that Bidar attempts to make “[s]elf-Islam both an existentialist enterprise based on autonomy, and also as a spiritual responsibility based on profound consciousness of the nature of the self and other.”<sup>293</sup> Like Karakoç<sup>294</sup>, Bidar, by challenging Islam's metaphysical interpretations and tradition, oppressed Muslims without releasing them sufficiently to experience this historical life as the beginning and end of life and not merely a portal to the after-world, attempting to reintroduce Islam into this world.

Although existentialism's effects have been discussed in the academic and non-academic environments in Turkey, especially between 1950 and 1980, a scholarly approach to Islamic existentialism does not altogether exist in Turkish academic literature, even though Sufism<sup>295</sup> has affected many of the Islamic thinkers in this

---

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>294</sup> Bidar's and Karakoç's similar views on Islam and existentialist themes notwithstanding, it is not possible to argue that they share the same worldview in all accounts. Although built on the same discussion of religion and modernity, Karakoç does not aspire to “overcome” religion as Bidar does. Bidar's “overcoming religion” seek to achieve “man the creator” which necessitates “mulating God in His infinite power, mercy, benevolence, justice, and responsibility.” (ibid, p. 72). For Karakoç, on the other hand, it should be recognised and known that God is the all-powerful, all-merciful and humans should not forget that they are merely His subjects and they are here to serve Him so that they are granted with a life in the Paradise with His benevolence and justice.

<sup>295</sup> For description and details of Sufism, please see [sub-chapter 2.1.2.2.](#)

country. This is not to say that Sufism has not been studied, scrutinised, and examined in Turkish literature since there is a substantial body of work concerning Sufism, *Mevlevilik*<sup>296</sup>, and other religious sects and/or dervish orders, along with their origins, central tenets and prominent names related to these sects and orders. It is rather to underline that a considerable body of research still needs to be conducted to understand the relationship between the *themes* and *concepts* of existentialism and the doctrines of Islam tenets. This is especially imperative when considering the environment in which existentialism emerged in Turkey and its effects on Turkish authors, poets, and thinkers. It can be argued that Islamic existentialism has been shadowed by the existence of secular existentialism, which is not atheist existentialism but also not one that is religiously driven by, as discussed in the first chapter. Islamic existentialism in the Turkish context, also constituting the scholarly contribution of this dissertation, defines the purpose of human existence as ultimately reaching God through acting authentically, being conscious that humans, as God's subjects, go through angst, despair, and death to reach the divine love for and of God, which is the ultimate freedom, as Sufism and mysticism influence it.

### **2.1.2.1 Sufism**

The idea that *love* and the love for God is the reason for existence can be traced as far back to Ibn Sina (980 - 1037)<sup>297</sup>, who professed that “Allah is the First Cause, the

---

<sup>296</sup> Mevleviyye is a sect attributed to Mevlânâ Rumi. Rumi's regular meetings consisted of religious talks, listening to music, and chanting the sema. His views spread over time, and the number of people wanting to attend his gatherings grew. It is said that Mevlânâ set some rules to organize and bring order to the meetings. This order would form the origin of the Mevlevi order rituals. Thus, Rumi did not himself found the Mevlevi order but his ideas and rules that consisted the gatherings, later, structured it. For more information about the Mevlevi order, please see ‘Mevleviyye - [TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi](#)’.

<sup>297</sup> According to IEP, “Abu ‘Ali al-Husayn ibn Sina who is better known in Europe by his Latinised name *Avicenna* is the most significant philosopher in the Islamic tradition and arguably the most influential philosopher of the pre-modern era.” It is believed that “Ibn Sina’s work had a decisive impact upon European scholasticism and especially upon Thomas Aquinas” who believed in “the medieval maxim that “grace perfects and builds on nature; it does not set it aside or destroy it” and whose biggest contribution to theology and philosophy is that “his model for the correct relationship between these two disciplines, a model which has it that neither theology nor

supreme light, and the source of all light. He is the “supreme intelligence and the supreme love” and that “*Vâcibü'l-Vücûd*<sup>298</sup> is a pure goodness due to its necessity and absolute perfection, and that there is an endless love for the whole world in his nature”<sup>299</sup>. Filiz states, “[t]he philosophy of love forms the basis of [Ibn Sina’s] mystical ideas. Ibn Sina says that love is the basis of all existence, everything is born

---

philosophy is reduced one to the other, where each of these two disciplines is allowed its own proper scope, and each discipline is allowed to perfect the other.” Both Ibn Sina and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) are, thus, influential philosophers when the foundations of the religious existentialisms are considered. Ibn Sina, on the one hand, incorporates divine existence which “bestows existence and hence meaning and value upon all that exists”; while Thomas Aquinas is considered among the founding fathers of modern philosophy and church liturgy. For more information on Ibn Sina, please see: ‘[Avicenna \(Ibn Sina\)](#)’, Bulut, Nihat. ‘(Divine) Law and Power from Ibn Sina’s Perspective’. *Istanbul Medipol Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 2020, pp. 55–72, Norman, Nurul Ain. ‘Ibn Sina’s Theory of the Soul: A Taxonomy of Islamic Education’. *Islam & Civilisational Renewal*, vol. 12, no. 2, Dec. 2021, pp. 275–89. Gardet and Louis further argue that Thomistic synthesis “on the theological as well as the philosophical level, takes broad conceptual frameworks from Aristotle (without neglecting the Platonic elements), while does not hesitate to take many elements of technical skills from Avicenna, especially Averroes.” For St. Thomas, “it was not merely a matter of laying out the principles of the distinction and harmony between reason and faith; it was also to transform this separation and harmony into fruitful intuitions, some philosophical and some theological.” Thus, the theological and philosophical elements were combined in an “intellectual synthesis belonging only to St. Thomas.” Philosophical elements came from “Aristotle, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Averroes (Ibn Rüşd), some of them often corrected, or broadly rethought”, and the theological elements came from St. Augustine and John of Damascus. For a detailed discussion of how Thomas Aquinas combined such elements and used the equipment of his theological predecessors, please see: Gardet, Louis, and Georges Anavvati. *İslam Teolojisine Giriş: Karşılaştırmalı Teoloji Denemesi*. Translated by Ahmet Arslan, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2015, p. 413. For more information on Thomas Aquinas’s life and works please see: ‘[Thomas Aquinas](#)’, Bauerschmidt, Frederick Christian. *Thomas Aquinas : Faith, Reason, and Following Christ*. OUP Oxford, 2013., Pasquale Porro. [Thomas Aquinas](#). Catholic University of America Press, 2016.

<sup>298</sup> *Vâcibü'l-Vücûd* states that God has a reality outside of the mind and that his non-existence cannot be considered.

<sup>299</sup> Ulutan, Burhan. ‘Allah’ın Kemâli ve Üstün Sevgisi’ in *İbn Sina Felsefesi*, Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 2000, p. 76.

out of love and unity is returned with it.”<sup>300</sup> According to TDV, in Islamic literature, the word love (*aşk*<sup>301</sup>, in Turkish) is used in two primary senses, divine and human. “Divine love is usually called *true love*, which has been extensively studied in Sufism and partially in Islamic philosophy.”<sup>302</sup> Although the word *aşk* does not appear in Qur’an as such, “there are some verses and *hadiths* which the Sufis, who consider it permissible to use the word love as a religious term. For example, according to them, what is meant by *fierce love* in surah *al-Baqara*<sup>303</sup> is *aşk*.” Moreover, the early period Sufis<sup>304</sup> tried to express “the unexpressible dimension of the love they had for Allah in their works with symbolic words expressing *vuslat* and *hijran*.”<sup>305</sup>

Another Islamic scholar who stated that love is the only means for people to comprehend the greatness of Allah is Mevlânâ Rumi. Rumi (1207 – 1273) is widely accepted as the greatest Sufi mystic and poet in the Persian language, famous for his lyrics and didactic epic *Mesnevi* (*Masnawi*<sup>306</sup>), which widely influenced mystical thought and literature throughout the Muslim world. In *Mesnevi*, “Rumi tells stories and recites poems that describe the passionate Sufi path of love by including a mixture

---

<sup>300</sup> Filiz, Şahin. *İslam ve Felsefe: İslam Dünyasında Felsefe Akımları*. Say Yayınları, 2014, p. 210.

<sup>301</sup> TDV defines the word *aşk* as follows: “The word is derived from its original, *ışk* which means ‘severe and excessive love that a person gives himself completely to the one they love, being so fond of them that they do not see anything else as beautiful other than their beloved.’ ‘[Aşk](#)’. The English word *love* corresponds to both *aşk* and *sevgi*, and thus it is used to express the both words.

<sup>302</sup> ‘[Aşk](#)’. TDV *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*.

<sup>303</sup> “Still there are some who take others as Allah’s equal -they love them as they should love Allah- but the *true* believers love Allah fiercely. If only the wrongdoers could see the *horrible* punishment *awaiting them*, they would certainly realize that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is indeed severe in punishment.” *Al-Baqarah*, 2:165. [Quran.com](http://Quran.com)

<sup>304</sup> It is also important to mention that some Sufis rejects the use of the word love on the grounds that “*aşk* is an excessive word and being excessive cannot be attributed to Allah. Thus, His love for His subjects cannot be called *aşk*. On the other hand, no matter how strong a person’s love for Allah is, he still cannot love Him enough and as much as He deserves, so the subjects’ love for Allah cannot be called *aşk*.” ‘[Aşk](#)’. TDV *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>306</sup> *Spiritual Couplets*.

of profound spiritual understanding and realities of the mundane.”<sup>307</sup> His title, *Mevlânâ*, meaning *our master*, was given to glorify him. Mevlânâ Rumi believed that only through love can a person begin their journey, travel, and ultimately come face to face with their own existence<sup>308</sup>, which contains the sole truth. In other words, love is the source, motive and purpose of all divine and human actions.

Loutfy and Berguno argue that Sufism which is described as “Islamic mysticism, often referred to as the internalisation and intensification of Islamic faith and practice”,<sup>309</sup> can also be paralleled with existentialism in its common themes such as “the importance of personal experience, the nature of the self, the path to self-development and the obstacles to self-realization”<sup>310</sup>. The authors refer to Kierkegaard<sup>311</sup> as the founder of existentialism, which is also widely accepted in the literature.

---

<sup>307</sup> Loutfy, Nour, and George Berguno. ‘The Existential Thoughts of the Sufis’. *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, vol. 16, no. 1, Jan. 2005, p. 145.

<sup>308</sup> The existence of things as knowledge in the knowledge of Allah before they become visible, the nature of the visible beings in Allah’s knowledge, their hidden truths.

<sup>309</sup> ‘Sufism.’ *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, (accessed May 28, 2018).

<sup>310</sup> Loutfy and Berguno, p. 144.

<sup>311</sup> Kierkegaard’s existentialist thought was about ‘the concept of man who stands full of fear and trembling as he faces the most basic and fateful questions of his existence.’ For more detail on Kierkegaardian existentialism please see: Geula Elimelekh, ‘Existentialism in the Works of Abd Al-Rahman Munif’, *Oriente Moderno*, 1 (2014), p. 14.

Sufism, or *tasavvuf*, is described as the path the Sufis take, and a Sufi<sup>312</sup> (*mutasavvif*) is described as “one who dedicates him or herself to the union with the Divine”<sup>313</sup> who “adopts the Sufistic [*tasavvufi*] lifestyle and tries to gain the closeness of God in this way.”<sup>314</sup> Sufism holds that the One and Only God's determination caused all beings to arise. Man is the ideal and perfect representation of God among these creations, each of which is a reflection of God's names. For Sufism, because of the manner man entered the world, he has stayed apart from God, and achieving this whole from which he has been cut off is the solution to both his ontological and epistemological issues and dilemmas. Enser argues that, in Sufism, “the analogies of *water-drop* and *ocean* are frequently used to describe the link between this [exiled] state of man and God. The *water-drop* essentially comes from the *ocean* and eternally wishes to meet with it.”<sup>315</sup> Therefore, the ultimate goal for the Sufis is to become one with God and return to God as it was God from whom man comes.

Sufism has its mystical core represented in Islam. However, it “differs from the orthodox religion which is mostly about exoteric practices primarily Five Pillars of

---

<sup>312</sup> Loutfy and Berguno (p. 144) state the etymological roots of the word Sufi differ but all claims indicate a meaning of wisdom and piety: “The word Sufi is commonly thought to be derived from the Arabic word *suf* meaning wool, referring to the wool used in making the modest robes worn by certain Sufis. However, a more plausible explanation for the name given to followers of this mystical tradition has to do with Ashab-as-Safa, an esoteric group formed in the early seventh century. Safa, or *safwa* literally means piety, and for this reason it is thought to be the word from which Sufism was derived. Others claim that Sufism is related to the Greek word *sophia* meaning wisdom.” Similarly, Buehler states “Historically, the word *sufi* was first used in eighth-century Islamic texts to describe ascetics, wearing coarse scratchy woollen robes [...] because *suf* is the Arabic for *wool* [...] wearing of coarse wool paralleled the practices of Christian ascetics in the deserts of the Near East.” For more details on the term, its discovery and perception by the Europeans, please see: Buehler, Arthur F. *Recognizing Sufism: Contemplation in the Islamic Tradition*. I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 4-5.

<sup>313</sup> Loutfy and Berguno, p. 144.

<sup>314</sup> ‘[Mutasavvif](#)’. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 19 Aug. 2022.

<sup>315</sup> Enser, p. 204.

Islam<sup>316</sup><sup>317</sup>. Loutfy and Berguno<sup>318</sup> state that Sufism embraces Islam's exoteric teachings but also gives them a new perspective that emphasises the inner effects of spiritual practice and profound esoteric understanding.

Loutfy and Berguno establish similarities between Kierkegaard's concept of existentialism and the Sufist thought, noting that both share the ultimate desire to deepen the direct relationship with God, in a similar vein where Pattison and many other scholars who established the relationship between Christian existentialism in Kierkegaard. This Western notion of existentialism, embodied in Sartre the most, proposes that existence precedes essence and that humans are entirely alone. For, now that *God is dead*, they live “in a world without a deity, where science can reveal the mechanical workings of nature but cannot discover the reason for their existence or any rational motivation for the existence of man and the universe.”<sup>319</sup> Thus, the authors interpret that both Sufism and Kierkegaardian existentialism deal with personal development and the importance of the inward journey that would attain a relationship with God and the self, while Sartrean existentialism excludes God from the equation and creates a philosophy that is essentially atheist in its approach.

Moreover, Di-Capua<sup>320</sup> argues that there is a strong link between Sufism and Arab existentialism which emerged “as a major category of Arab thought” and “coincided with the worldwide process of decolonization and the rise of the first generation of Third World regimes”, which created “a unified and accumulative phenomenon with the multifocal intellectual system by fusing European existentialism with Islamic philosophy”. The sub-chapter below analyses the main threads of Arab existentialism and its roots in Sufism while showing the similarities and differences between Arab existentialism and existentialism in Turkey.

---

<sup>316</sup> The five pillars of Islam are explained by a hadith of Prophet Muhammad as (i) the profession of faith (*shahada*), (ii) prayer, (iii) giving alms, (iv) fasting, and (v) pilgrimage.

<sup>317</sup> Loutfy and Berguno, p. 145.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Elimelekh, p. 2.

<sup>320</sup> Di-Capua, Yoav. ‘[Arab Existentialism: An Invisible Chapter in the Intellectual History of Decolonization](#)’. *The American Historical Review*, vol. 117, no. 4, Oct. 2012, p. 1064.

### 2.1.2.2 Arab Existentialism

*Existential Time* by Abd al-Rahman Badawi<sup>321</sup> is primarily acknowledged as the first work of modern Arab philosophy. In it, he refers to existentialism as *wujudiya*, a phrase that sounds familiar to the Sufistic school and thought. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam of Turkish Religious Foundation (TDV)<sup>322</sup>, *wahdet-i wujud*, a Sufi term possibly derived from the same root, means “the unity in existence and existing in unity; in Sufistic or mystic context.”<sup>323</sup> It is “the system of thought that explains the relations between God, the universe and human beings” and is a concept that is

primarily related to God-human relations, the unity-multiplicity problem, human will and freedom, evil in the world, causality, etc. It presents a comprehensive and systematic thought about metaphysical issues, the meaning of faith and creed, moral issues and various religious issues. Those who accept this thought are called the people of unity of existence, *wujûdiyye*.<sup>324</sup>

Its roots in Sufistic thought notwithstanding, Arab existentialism achieved a more significant impact by growing into “a decentralised yet influential intellectual movement with meaningful global connections.”<sup>325</sup> Although it shares the same name as the Western doctrine, it became a “series of formulations and adaptations that collectively sought to create a new postcolonial Arab subject: confident, politically

---

<sup>321</sup> Badawi (1917-2002) is one of the most eminent philosophical figures and scholars in Egypt in the twentieth century, a prolific writer and translator, with about 120 monographs and translations in philosophy, viewed as the first existentialist philosopher in the Arabic world and was a follower of Martin Heidegger. For more information on Badawi, please see “Abdul-Rahman Badawi. Philosophers of the Arabs. Accessed 8 May 2022.”

<sup>322</sup> Also referred to as TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi and TDV throughout the dissertation.

<sup>323</sup> ‘[Vahdet-i Vücûd](#)’. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 3 Apr. 2022.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

<sup>325</sup> Di-Capua, p. 1061.

involved, independent, self-sufficient, and above all liberated.”<sup>326</sup> It is striking to recognise that in its ambitions to create an ontology of the Arab subject, Arab existentialism shows prominent similarities to existentialism as a philosophy as it emerged and became impactful also in Turkey. As Arab culture was “dominated by the language, assumptions, and politics of existentialism”<sup>327</sup> by the 1960s, the same phenomenon can be observed in the Turkish literary and political spheres during the same timeframe. The development of Arab existentialism coincided with both the Second World War and the Six-Day War (1967), whose effects began to be felt in Turkey by the end of the 1950s, as already discussed in the preceding chapter. These effects grew significantly throughout the 1960s.

While “a young generation of Arab intellectuals employed variants of existentialism in order to meet the multiple challenges of decolonisation”<sup>328</sup>, Turkish poets, authors, and thinkers have also engaged with existentialist thought to overcome the present challenges. These challenges proved similar to their Arabic peers, such as the “cultural contradictions, uneven development and the consequent social injustice, a struggle for full physical liberation, and the derivative search for an alternative Cold War political space.”<sup>329</sup>

Di-Capua further argues that this process has triggered the following questions: “Who is the Arab subject in the wake of the colonial experience? Can Arabs have an authentic existence, and is it possible for them to become modern on their own terms?” While colonialism has not affected Turkey as it has its neighbours to the south and east, the question of the modernity of the Turkish subject and broader discourses on modernism in Turkey have been among the hotly debated topics ever since the Republic of Turkey was founded.

---

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid, p. 1062.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

The differences in both historiographies notwithstanding, in the years following Second World War and under the challenging political and economic circumstances brought on by the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s, the Turkish literary movement, particularly with the emergence of the Second New Movement, was also preoccupied with the ontology of the Turkish subject. However, the question of whether the Turks could have an authentic existence did not find a greater resonance outside the literary and intellectual circles. While Arab existentialism constituted itself as “a multilayered cross-cultural process in which European existentialism lost its original meaning at the very same moment in which it was fused with local Arab thought and created anew”,<sup>330</sup> Arab intellectuals “saw existentialism as a way to connect with the global culture of resistance”<sup>331</sup>, existentialist thought in Turkey could not reach as far.

Nonetheless, in both cases, it remains “striking that there is no literature that situates the intellectual generation of Arab existentialists within the global historical context of their time.”<sup>332</sup> Although having severe impacts on Turkish literature, newly constructed forms in poetry, and the questions of individuals’ existential purpose and authenticity, existentialism in Turkey was not made “legible across cultural borders and rendered culturally functional through creative translation, and not through intellectual fidelity to provenance.”<sup>333</sup> Moreover, despite sharing the same quality as its Arabic counterpart in being not “a *poor application* of an original European idea, but a salient characteristic”<sup>334</sup>, existentialism in Turkey could not reach transnationality but rather *intra*-nationality through the works of the *Second New* poets and those who followed them in other literary forms of work.<sup>335</sup>

---

<sup>330</sup> Di-Capua, p. 1064.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid, p. 1062.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, p. 1064.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup>The names that come to mind at once when existentialism is mentioned in Turkey are:

Selahattin Hilav, Atilla Tokatlı, Demir Özlü, and Onat Kutlar. Other names who penned critiques concerning existentialism are Nusret Hızır, Peyami Safa (who was sympathetic to the part of existentialism which he calls *religious existentialism*, has an ethically critical approach to what he calls *Godless existentialism* and especially Sartre's understanding of freedom), Ferit Edgü and

Arab intellectuals, on the other hand, managed to “devise a local existentialist tradition [...] with its focus on physical liberation from foreign rule and a general sense of collectivity.”<sup>336</sup> While helping create a new intellectual sphere, Arab existentialism also “framed decolonization as a process with an extremely broad cultural and intellectual spectrum, ranging from the ontology of modern Arab subjectivity and the balance between local and universal culture (e.g., the problem of authenticity).”<sup>337</sup> While not going as far as creating a different intelligentsia, existentialism in Turkish literature has framed the thoughts of individualism, seen clearly in the shaping and application of the *Second New* movement, as well as spreading through the cultural and intellectual spectrum via literature and poetry seeking physical liberation from the bi-polar duality of the US vs Russia, the capitalism vs communism. Similar to Arab existentialism, French existentialists’ effect on Turkish authors and poets has been prominent, and existentialism appeared as a multifaceted intellectual system rather than a cohesive and cumulative event; thus, *Second New*’s virtually sudden and unplanned appearance, even if it remained local and did not become universal as it did in the Arab World.

Di-Capua argues that the story of Arab existentialism begins with “Badawi’s promise to liberate the Arab self from the constraints of colonial culture by fusing European existentialism with Islamic philosophy.”<sup>338</sup> Following his teacher Alexandre Koyré (an immigrant from Russia who then left France and settled in Egypt), Badawi, influenced by Heideggerian terms of existentialism, began to seek to “draw a link between existentialism and Sufism.”<sup>339</sup> By then, Badawi had subscribed to

---

Yaşar Nabi Nayır. For more information on how existentialism was perceived by other Turkish authors that remained out of scope of this dissertation, please see: Direk, Zeynep. ‘Türkiye’de Varoluşçuluk’ in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, edited by Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinil, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., İletişim Yayınları, 2007, pp. 442-444.

<sup>336</sup> op. cit.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, p. 1067.

two of the main themes of existentialism: first, existence precedes essence (i.e., who a human being is [his or her essence] is the result of his or her choices [existence]); and second, time is of the essence (i.e., human beings are time-bound, and the lived time that they experience is different from measured clock time)<sup>340</sup>

This interpretation of existentialism has led to a study of how time has impacted individual existence and argued that “true existence is that of the individual. The individual is the subject that necessitates freedom. The meaning of this freedom is the very existence of possibility.”<sup>341</sup> His project followed this, which aimed to fuse Sufism and existentialism. According to Di-Capua, Badawi “viewed both systems of thought as predicated on individual subjectivity, which is to say that we are in the world employing a relationship of being in which the subject is our body, our world, and our situation.”<sup>342</sup> This was fuelled by the aspiration to “bring Arab philosophy up to a level of parity with Heideggerian thought” because if this could be achieved “the postcolonial Arab generation could join the modern world on equal philosophical terms.”<sup>343</sup>

Badawi “sought to update the mediaeval Sufi doctrine of the *Perfect Man (al-Insan al-Kamil)* as a [link] between *necessity (wujub)* and *possibility (imkan)*, combining the attributes of eternity and its laws with the attributes of the generation of being<sup>344</sup> and unearthing Sufism’s doctrines with that of Heideggerian concepts of existentialism “arguing that he was drawing on medieval Sufism exactly as Heidegger had built on Søren Kierkegaard.”<sup>345</sup> Similarly, Karakoç, especially while referring to freedom<sup>346</sup> as an existential concept, does a similar job in unearthing Sufism’s doctrines while

---

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Badawi in *ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid, p. 1068.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Please see [chapter 4](#) for further analysis of the theme of freedom in Karakoç’s works.

adding Islam's doctrines to the mix with that of Sartrean and Camusian existentialism.

## 2.2 The Existentialism Component of Islamic Existentialism

This section will focus on French existentialism and how it was influenced by the writings of Sartre, Camus, and others after the Second World War and the start of the Cold War. As stated, Sartre includes himself into the group he calls the atheist existentialists. Therefore, it will concentrate on the atheist existentialists who comprise French existentialism for the purposes of this sub-chapter. French political context and the prominent French existentialists are also introduced.

### 2.2.1 French Existentialism

Throughout the literature, existentialism is described differently. Childers and Hentzi argue that existentialism is “more accurately described as a trend or current in European philosophy and literature [and] often incorrectly referred to as a philosophical *school*”<sup>347</sup>. Kaufmann states it is “not a philosophy, but a label widely used to lump together several philosophers and writers who are more or less opposed to doctrines while considering a few extreme experiences the best starting point for philosophic thinking.”<sup>348</sup> Furthermore, “most of the living *existentialists* have repudiated this label, and a bewildered outsider might well conclude that the only thing they have in common is a marked aversion for each other.”<sup>349</sup> Crowell points out that “[i]t is sometimes suggested that existentialism just is this bygone cultural

---

<sup>347</sup> Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi, editors. ‘[Existentialism](#)’. The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism, Columbia University Press, 1995.

<sup>348</sup> Kaufmann, Walter. ‘Existentialism and Death’. Chicago Review, vol. 13, no. 2, Summer 1959, p. 75.

<sup>349</sup> Kaufmann, Walter. Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre. 12th Ed., Meridian Books, 1960, p. 11.

movement rather than an identifiable philosophical position; alternatively, the term should be restricted to Sartre's philosophy alone."<sup>350</sup> Judaken<sup>351</sup> remarks,

if anything, existentialism defined itself against systems: systems of thought like Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's or *scientific* schemas like racism or positivism; systems of behaviour like those of the mentality of the masses as in nationalism or the narrow norms of the bourgeoisie; or systems of production like those created by the industrial revolution.

Similar to Judaken, who states that *existentialism is an anti-ism*<sup>352</sup>, Aho argues that "it is an *-ism* that gives the misleading impression of a coherent and unified philosophical school."<sup>353</sup> Solomon, on the other hand, argues that Sartre claims that the word existentialism became so broad that it no longer means anything.<sup>354</sup> Sartre himself, Judaken writes, rejects to define of existentialism and quotes Sartre: "It is in the nature of an intellectual quest to be undefined [...]."<sup>355</sup> To define it would make it "a finished, already outdated mode of culture, something like a brand of soap, in other words, an idea."<sup>356</sup> Camus, another prominent name in existentialism, also rejects being associated with the term. Marcuse argues that even though "Camus is not from the existentialist school, the fundamental experience that permeates his thinking is also at the origins of existentialism."<sup>357</sup>

The discussions of whether or not existentialism is a philosophy notwithstanding, it is

---

<sup>350</sup> Crowell, Steven. '[Existentialism](#)'.

<sup>351</sup> Judaken in Judaken, Jonathan, and Robert Bernasconi, editors. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*. Columbia University Press, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Aho, Kevin. *Existentialism: An Introduction*. 2nd ed., Polity Press, 2014, p. 9.

<sup>354</sup> Solomon, p. 14

<sup>355</sup> Sartre, in Judaken, p. 2

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Marcuse, Herbert. 'Sartre'in Varoluşçuluğu'. *Varoluşçuluk, Fenomenoloji, Ontoloji*, edited by Güçlü Ateşoğlu, translated by Soner Soysal, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2020, p. 205.

known that “the word was officially coined by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel in 1943 and quickly adopted by his compatriots Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.<sup>358,359</sup> Despite his reluctance to use the term, Sartre entitles his lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which reveals “the conceptual struggle that Sartre was to have throughout his life, and it was an explicit attempt to show how this conflict could be resolved.”<sup>360</sup> The lecture aimed to “show how existentialism, a philosophy of individual freedom, could be seen as a form of humanism, a philosophy that locates value in humanity.”<sup>361</sup> Thus, this dissertation refers to existentialism as a philosophy in the sense that it contains the *values of humanity* discussed in the form of four concepts in detail throughout this study.

Existentialist thought and philosophy have re-flourished in the two most war-torn societies, namely Germany and France. It is argued in the literature<sup>362</sup> that atheist, or French, existentialism has its roots in Heidegger. It is an existentialism “with the secular, even anti-religious and humanistic [roots] that emerged from Heidegger's work in the Nazi-occupied lands of France.”<sup>363</sup> Indeed, although a victor, France remained one of the most traumatized nations in the wake of the war. Hitchcock<sup>364</sup> argues, “[t]he French could exult in their liberation only briefly before commencing

---

<sup>358</sup> Cooper quotes de Beauvoir who says both she and Sartre did not embrace the word existentialism at the beginning: “During a discussion organized during the summer [of 1945], Sartre had refused to allow Gabriel Marcel to apply this (word) to him: ' ... I don't even know what existentialism is. I shared his irritation ... But our protests were in vain. In the end, we took the epithet ... and used it for our own purposes.” De Beauvoir in Cooper, p. 11.

<sup>359</sup> Aho, p. 9

<sup>360</sup> Jones, Gerald. ‘[Was Existentialism a Humanism?](#)’ *Philosophy Now*, no. 53, 2005.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Cooper (p. 11) notes that although the label of existentialism was associated with Heidegger and Jaspers as the “two German philosophers of *Existenz*, whose whose influence upon Sartre has been considerable, Heidegger bridled at this, quickly disowning the title [...] Jaspers, while unwilling to be identified too closely with Sartre, was sufficiently enamoured of the term to claim that a book of his own.”

<sup>363</sup> Solomon, p. 476.

<sup>364</sup> Hitchcock, William I. *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954*. University of North Carolina Press, 1998, p. 12

the painful process of rebuilding a nation traumatized not just by war and the German occupation, but by a decade of bitter, partisan strife.”

France experienced German occupation almost for the entirety of the war from 22 June 1940 until the liberation of Paris on 25 August 1944. Marshal Philippe Petain signed an armistice with Nazi Germany and became the Prime Minister of a new corporatist state based in the town of Vichy, widely known as Vichy France. The separation in the French soil had fortified during the first two years of the war when the country was “divided into occupied and ‘free’ zones, the former under direct German control and the latter nominally ruled by Marshal Petain.<sup>365</sup>” France, therefore, started to experience ideological, political and geographic division long before the Cold War when it tried to side with the Allies against the threat of Communism. During wartime, General Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970), who led the country to a victory with the help of the Allied Forces, had an idea of a strong and completely independent France and not one which depended on the Third Reich. Young maintains “[t]o regain its status, independence, and self-respect after the debacle of 1940, France had to rely on other allies, especially America and Britain, to liberate French soil,”<sup>366</sup> which in itself proved to be a struggle, yet, de Gaulle has risen as the hero who liberated France in 1944.

### ***2.2.1.1 Occupation, Resistance, and Liberation: France during the Second World War and Early Cold War***

It can be argued that the socio-political context in France where existentialism re-emerged is similar to the Turkish one. Marcuse states, “[t]he age is the age of totalitarian terror: the Nazi regime is at the height of its power German armies occupy France and the values and standards of Western civilisation have been coordinated

---

<sup>365</sup> Wilkinson, James D. *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 36.

<sup>366</sup> Young, John W. *France, The Cold War and the Western Alliance, 1944-1949: French Foreign Policy and Post-War Europe*. St. Martin’s Press, 1990, p. 2.

and invalidated by the reality of the fascist system.”<sup>367</sup> In these years, the issue became about the concrete existence of the individual and not any abstract idea: “What is the definitive and obvious experience here and now, in this world, that will provide the basis for its existence?” Marcuse explains the foundation that the question has become different than that of Descartes. Even though existentialism is also concerned with the consciousness of cogito, it is “now *thrown* into an absurd world in which the irresistible phenomenon of death and the irreversible progress of time negate all meaning” and the subject has become “absurd and his world is devoid of purpose and hope.” The death of God caused the absurdness of the world where it is “precisely Godless in its *essence* and leaves no room for any transcendental refuge.”<sup>368</sup> In other words, the individual becomes face-to-face with its existence without the hope that there will be salvation or redemption.

The years of occupation in France were also the years where a *Mouvement de résistance* slowly emerged. Shortly after Petain declared the cessation of hostilities and the decision of the armistice, de Gaulle rejected the new government’s verdict and “called upon French civilians and military personnel to rally wherever they could and continue to resist in the cause of eventual military victory.”<sup>369</sup> Although few French civilians immediately heeded this summons, the Resistance took longer than anticipated to take root in a nation split between occupied and free zones. The general sentiment throughout the Occupation remained in support of the collaboration with Germany; however, the underlying ideological division continued after the war and persevered throughout the Cold War years. Kocher argues that De Gaulle’s call to arms and to resist was met with responses that varied from the outright enthusiasm for Nazism displayed by the “fascist gangs and writers of Paris to mere acquiescence to the dogged resistance from July 1941 on.”<sup>370</sup> This has proven that there is division over the different factions or ideologies even as early as the 1940s.

---

<sup>367</sup> Marcuse, p. 205-6.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, p. 206.

<sup>369</sup> Kocher, Matthew Adam, et al. ‘Nationalism, Collaboration, and Resistance: France under Nazi Occupation’. *International Security*, vol. 43, no. 2, Fall 2018, p. 128.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

Existentialist thought and its emphasis on the importance of the individual started to emerge during these years. Despite the humiliation of 1940, the problematic rule of the Vichy regime and “the country’s embarrassing subjugation to the US and Britain in the international diplomacy”<sup>371</sup>, French, and especially, Parisian cultural life started to regain its former glory: “French intellectuals acquired a special international significance as spokesmen of the age, and the tenor of French political arguments epitomised the ideological rent in the world at large.”<sup>372</sup> The intellectual renaissance in Paris has proven to be significant; while putting the ideologically divided France at the heart of the ideological debates, it also supported the rise of *intellectual resistance*. Chafer and Jenkins<sup>373</sup> maintain that French intellectuals historically have served as a powerful conduit for public opinion due to their proximity to the governing and political classes. They have frequently expressed opinions that highlight the disconnect between official policy and public sentiment during times of crisis or tension.

Moreover, within the intellectual elite of Saint-Germain-des-Près, the artistic neighbourhoods of Paris, Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus, as well as Aron and Merleau-Ponty were the ones well in the limelight. While the editorial board of *Les Temps Modernes* involved all of the names above to “reflect the broad consensus around the left-wing politics and existentialist philosophy”, Camus, who also actively took part in the Resistance, from the editorial pages of the *Combat* had become “the most influential writer in post-war France.”<sup>374</sup> Because “between 1940 and 1945, French intellectuals became involved in intense power struggles in which those seen to be

---

<sup>371</sup> Judt, Tony. *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956*. University of California Press, 1992, p. 210.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>373</sup> Chafer, Tony, and Brian Jenkins. *France: From the Cold War to the New World Order*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Press; St. Martin’s Press, 1996, p. 39.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*

associated with the Resistance were ultimately victorious”<sup>375</sup>, the intellectuals felt the necessity to demolish the previously prevailed dilemma between *being* and *doing* together with the rise of the Resistance. Now, “[t]o do was to be: [...] being part of the common purpose, accepting as one’s own the meaning given to a collective action offered certainty in place of doubt.”<sup>376</sup> In other words, the individual within the intellectual, whether it be Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, or another person, has discovered the value of being, acting, and choosing where to belong (or not belong) on their own, as opposed to waiting for an ideology or a faction that seeks to control the other to make that decision for them. This constituted the inherent idea that to exist is to act.

There is no denying that Sartre was a left-wing supporter who, simply put, had links with the French Communist Party. However, it is still essential to underline the fact that existentialism, as it emerged during the “one-sidedness of domestic resistance politics and the increasingly reactionary and repressive nature of government policy”,<sup>377</sup> remained an individualistic philosophy where the individual chooses what they support or believe in, rather than the government, the war, or the factions of thought choose for them. Judt states<sup>378</sup>

The chance (to be part of a romantic commitment) was welcomed primarily in theory; in practice, only a minority of intellectual resisters saw real action of any sustained sort, whether in the Free French armies, the armed resistance, or clandestine networks of all kinds. For most of the rest, the association with the community of resisters counted, the sense of being part of something larger than oneself – a circle of dissenting writers, a resistance group, a clandestine political organisation, or History itself.

---

<sup>375</sup> Baert, Patrick. ‘[The Sudden Rise of French Existentialism: A Case-Study in the Sociology of Intellectual Life](#)’. *Theory and Society*, vol. 40, p. 628.

<sup>376</sup> Judt, p. 32.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

Thus, for Sartre et al., except for Camus, it was choosing not to be on the front lines of the armed Resistance but instead be part of the resisters' community by writing, transforming, and transcending this commitment through their writings. After the war, when Sartre tried to clarify what existentialism meant through literature, i.e. in his plays, essays, articles and such, he emphasised “freedom and responsibility, humanism and choice”<sup>379</sup>. Furthermore, he directly encompasses the moral teaching of intellectual Resistance by putting the individual at the centre of the (sometimes the literal) stage and expresses that existentialism defines man through *action*:

The doctrine I am presenting before you is precisely the opposite of [quietism<sup>380</sup>] since it declares that there is no reality except in action. It goes further, indeed, and adds, ‘[m]an is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realises himself, he is, therefore, nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is’.<sup>381</sup>

Sartre, thus, defends existentialism with the emphasis on man’s actions and argues that the optimism in existentialism is welded precisely because of the necessity to take action. He explains that existentialism cannot be viewed as a philosophy of *quietism* since it defines man by his actions. Nor can it be viewed as a pessimistic portrayal of man because no theory is more favourable than the idea that man controls his own fate. It also does not try to dissuade a man from doing, telling him that the only thing that gives him life is his activity and that without it, he has no hope. Therefore, on this level, we are thinking about an ethic of action and self-commitment.<sup>382</sup>

Marcuse argues that Sartre’s existentialism evolved during the time of war, liberation, and reconstruction, although neither the triumph nor the fall of fascism significantly

---

<sup>379</sup> Wilkinson, James D. *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 81.

<sup>380</sup> i.e., inaction

<sup>381</sup> Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, p. 36.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid*, p. 40.

altered existential understanding: “in the change of political systems, in war and peace, before and after totalitarian terror, the structure of human reality remains the same.”<sup>383</sup> Existential understanding lived on in the absurdity that even though fascism was defeated, the world did not crumble but instead returned to its former state and proudly re-established the old order.

Sartre’s existential analysis, which professes that *existence precedes essence*, abstracts from the historical elements that make for empirical concreteness<sup>384</sup>. It can be said that it is a purely philosophical explanation in line with the individual’s isolated status and the questions he deals with in the absence of God. In other words, existentialists seek meaning for human existence in order to alleviate society’s anxieties.

### 2.3 The Four Concepts of Existentialism

The four main concepts of existentialism are closely related to the questions that the modern has individual vis-à-vis his existence and are discussed in detail below based on the secondary literature. Although examined individually here, these concepts should not be seen or treated as four different and standalone themes that have no relationship with each other. On the contrary, all of them are interlinked, and more often than not, they overlap in meaning, and one’s definition affects the others and vice-versa. This interlinkage among the existentialist themes can also be seen in the poems of Karakoç (further analysed in chapters [3](#) to [6](#)). In his poems and essays, we often witness the usage of these themes one after the other, successively, if not interchangeably.

Existentialism discusses more than four themes in its different iterations, whether atheist or religious. As seen in the above chapters, while Kierkegaard focuses on angst, despair and meaninglessness of human life (some of which his introductions to

---

<sup>383</sup> Marcuse, p. 207-8.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

the literature as central themes of existentialism) can be nested under the broader theme of death (further detailed in [sub-chapter 2.3.1](#)); Sufi scholars emphasise the importance of freedom (further detailed in [sub-chapter 2.3.2](#)), and to that extent, some form of meaning, through finding God. Sartre mentions authenticity (further detailed in [sub-chapter 2.3.3](#)) through existing via action and not having bad faith. When reading Camus, on the other hand, we come across the theme of alienation (further detailed in [sub-chapter 2.3.4](#)) through absurdity and isolation. According to Abdullah and Saksono<sup>385</sup>, in *The Stranger*, Camus's storied novella, the protagonist, Meursault, experiences alienation "as a direct consequence of his individualistic, absurdist nature and rejecting the traditional views that developed in society", for instance.

The prevailing themes and sub-themes of existentialist thought in the broader literature of existentialism notwithstanding, it was the American existential psychiatrist Irvin D. Yalom (b. 1931), influenced by prominent names like Rollo May (1909-1994)<sup>386</sup> and Viktor Frankl (1905-1997)<sup>387</sup>. In his magnum opus entitled *Existential Psychotherapy*, Yalom categorically introduces the main three themes of existentialism, death, freedom, and isolation. Existential therapy, or existential psychotherapy, is a therapy method which is a "philosophically informed approach to counselling or psychotherapy" and is "characterised in practice by an emphasis on relatedness, spontaneity, flexibility, and freedom from rigid doctrine or dogma."<sup>388</sup>

---

<sup>385</sup> Abdullah, M. Adam, and Suryo Tri Saksono. 'Alienation in Albert Camus' the Stranger'. IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 34–38.

<sup>386</sup> Rollo May was an American existential psychologist who is frequently linked to existentialist philosophy and humanistic psychology, and along with Viktor Frankl, he was a leading advocate of existential psychotherapy.

<sup>387</sup> Viktor E. Frankl was Austrian psychiatrist and psychotherapist who developed the psychological approach known as *logotherapy*, widely recognized as the *third school* of Viennese psychotherapy, after the *first school* of Sigmund Freud and the *second school* of Alfred Adler. For more information on Frankl and logotherapy as a form of psychotherapy, please see '[Viktor Frankl](#)'. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed 19 Aug. 2022, and '[Logotherapy and Existential Analysis](#)'. Viktor Frankl, Accessed 19 Aug. 2022.

<sup>388</sup> Cooper, Mick, et al. 'What Is Existential Therapy?' *The Wiley World Handbook of Existential Therapy*, Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2019, p. 2.

Moreover, existential therapy highlights and honours the paradoxical, ongoing, and ever-evolving aspect of the human experience and fosters an insatiable curiosity about what it is to be a human<sup>389</sup>. It asks

some of the most fundamental and perennial questions regarding human existence: ‘Who am I?’ ‘What is my purpose in life?’ ‘Am I free or determined?’ ‘How do I deal with my own mortality?’ ‘Does my existence have any meaning or significance?’ ‘How shall I live my life?’<sup>390</sup>

In his book, Yalom categorises these perpetual questions to examine them under four themes, i.e. death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness. In each section, he introduces these themes, their historical foundations in existential philosophers, and how he applies them to the therapy sessions with his patients. Following his example, the sub-chapters explore the themes of death, freedom, and isolation while adding authenticity as a separate theme since this theme is fundamental to Sartre’s understanding of existentialism. Next, in dedicated chapters, each of these themes is analysed in-depth in Karakoç’s essays and poems which are proven to be influential to the poet and made him the sole representative of Islamic existentialism in Turkey.

### **2.3.1 Death**

Throughout the history of humankind, death has been one of the most intriguing subjects humans strive to understand. Religious leaders, scientists, philosophers, and people have tried to understand the finitude of human life and the perplexing question of life after death. Not surprisingly, death is one of the central concepts of existentialism, and it has been one of the most scrutinised subjects for existentialists. Death as an existential concept is explored hereafter, along with the notions of *despair*

---

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid, p. 3

and *angst*, both of which profoundly interested the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard.

### 2.3.1.1 *Despair*

Kierkegaard is recognised as the father of existentialism and as influential for philosophy as Hegel and the German romantics. McDonald<sup>391</sup> argues that Kierkegaard's contributions to the development of modernism, stylistic experimentation, vivid re-presentation of biblical figures to highlight their modern relevance, the invention of critical concepts that have been explored and repurposed by thinkers ever since, interventions in contemporary Danish church politics, and ardent attempts to analyze and revitalize Christian faith are all noteworthy. Akış Yaman<sup>392</sup> maintains that while philosophers have contemplated the qualities of being human throughout time, Kierkegaard focuses on the mental state that results from failing to uphold these virtues. Kierkegaard referenced *despair* as a notion brought on by an *aesthetic* manner of living rather than death.<sup>393</sup> Aho<sup>394</sup> explains that most of us spend our formative years, adolescence, and early adulthood in the aesthetic domain, where we are engrossed in the present's sensory pleasures and euphoric effects. Kierkegaardian critique of an aesthetic way of life, thus, is that it “ultimately leads to despair, not merely because temporal pleasures are short-lived and pull us into an empty cycle of searching for the next thrill, but because the aesthete is not yet an *individual* or a *self*.”<sup>395</sup> Thus, becoming an individual entails making challenging, life-changing decisions that weave and link the fleeting moments of one's life into meaningful and enduring totality.<sup>396</sup>

---

<sup>391</sup> McDonald, William. ‘[Søren Kierkegaard](#)’. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2017, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2017.

<sup>392</sup> Akış Yaman, Yasemin. ‘Benliğin Ölümcül Hastalığı: Umutsuzluk’. Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 61.

<sup>393</sup> Cooper, David E. *Existentialism: A Reconstruction*. Basil Blackwell, 1990, p. 136.

<sup>394</sup> Aho, p. 120.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, for Kierkegaard, despair should be distinguished from doubt<sup>397</sup> since “despair expresses the whole self, doubt is a cognitive act carried out mentally. While despair is absolute, doubt differs from person to person.”<sup>398</sup> McDonald<sup>399</sup> argues that Kierkegaard established how far off from God humans are on a pure, fundamental level, and this was done to show how completely dependent humans are on God's grace for salvation. *Desperation* plays a critical role in that sense because “[humans’] struggle to accept divine forgiveness can become mired in despair, including the second-order despair over the impossibility of forgiveness of our sins and the demonic despair of defiance in which we refuse to accept forgiveness.” Furthermore, for Kierkegaard, despair is a *sickness unto death*<sup>400</sup>, not because it causes physical death, but because the person experiencing it is unable to pass away even though they are in great pain. For Kierkegaard, the relationship between death and despair is the desperation one feels when he is unable to die: “[w]hen death is seen as the greatest danger; we hope to live. We hope to die only when we know a greater danger. When the danger grows, death becomes hope.”<sup>401</sup>

Kierkegaard, Solomon argues, believed that it was his obligation to explain what it meant to be a Christian. However, in contrast to earlier Christian defenders who believed that religious doctrines were rational and that philosophy, as an expression of reason, could demonstrate the truth of these doctrines, Kierkegaard asserted that such

---

<sup>397</sup> Akış Yaman explains the difference in the etymological roots of the words *despair* and *doubt* as follows: “The etymological origins of the Danish *fortvilelse* and the English *despair* are different. The Latin word *despair* means *hopeless, devoid of hope*. On the other hand, Danish *fortvilelse* is of German origin. The origin of the word is the Danish word *tvivl*, which means *doubt*. This corresponds to the German word *zweifel*. In Danish, the prefix *-for* is added, while in German the prefix *-ver* is added. Both prefixes explain the origin of the word. Danish *fortvivlelse* and German *verzweifeln* are used to express the word *doubt*.” (Ibid)

<sup>398</sup> Op.cit. p. 63.

<sup>399</sup> McDonald, ‘[Søren Kierkegaard](#)’.

<sup>400</sup> *The sickness unto death* is also the name of one of Kierkegaard’s books: Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition For Upbuilding And Awakening*. Princeton University Press, 1983.

<sup>401</sup> Kierkegaard in Akış Yaman, p. 66-7.

a defence would fail<sup>402</sup>, which was a radical stance for a Christian. He further argued that Christianity was the epitome of absurdities rather than a collection of sensible principles. Because Christianity was founded on paradox and irrationality, philosophy or reason and Christianity could not coexist.<sup>403</sup> McDonald maintains that the central paradox is “the assertion that the eternal, infinite, transcendent God simultaneously became incarnated as a temporal, finite, human being (Jesus)”<sup>404</sup>. His philosophical stance with regard to Christianity notwithstanding, Kierkegaard was a firm believer in this religion. His writings are based on a highly sombre style of Lutheran pietism, emphasising the grim concepts of sin, guilt, suffering, and personal accountability at the centre of his childhood and upbringing.<sup>405</sup> For Kierkegaard, “*Christianity is suffering*, and to be a Christian is to be eternally aware of the unhappy passions of anxiety and guilt.”<sup>406</sup> Anxiety has an essential role for the Christian to overcome the desperation that stems from being an individual: “the despair [is a] sin before God. The reason why an individual is in despair before God is because he has misused his freedom.”<sup>407</sup> According to Kierkegaard, anyone who strives to be themselves to get rid of this situation by doing their best will fall short. Although it is vital, it will remain an insufficient effort. Another type of despair is the attempt to escape it by rejecting God's salvation. The second method is to be aware of Jesus and the atonement he provides but not to rely on it.<sup>408</sup> As a result, all difficulties hold one in despair, but for believing in forgiveness. Anxiety occurs as soon as redemption is possible, and the prospect of rescue forces the hopeless person to face his or her future. For Kierkegaard, “[a]sking for God's grace and forgiveness of sins is an act of anxiety,”<sup>409</sup> which is why it is necessary to overcome desperation. In other words, in Kierkegaard, anxiety is linked to both sin and faith.

---

<sup>402</sup> Solomon, p. 133.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid.

<sup>404</sup> McDonald, ‘[Søren Kierkegaard](#)’.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Solomon, p. 135.

<sup>407</sup> Akış Yaman, p. 87.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid, p. 88

### 2.3.1.2 *Angst*

Angst (also referred to as anxiety, dread, and sometimes fear) is a pivotal phenomenon within existentialist philosophy, both as a standalone term and regarding its relation to the concept of death. As a way of overcoming the despair of being an individual for Kierkegaard, angst, or anxiety, emerges when one's sense of self is destroyed by the breakdown of one's sense of security in one's being.<sup>410</sup> In other words, one feels like one is losing oneself and turning into nothing without the unifying bond of being-in-the-world to integrate and hold one's identity together.<sup>411</sup> However, anxiety should not be viewed as only a biochemical response to an imagined threat. According to Aho<sup>412</sup>, it is not a medical ailment but rather a feature of human nature, a fundamental experience that makes the nothingness underlying man's daily existence apparent in the world. Furthermore, Cooper<sup>413</sup> argues that because angst is not a pleasant feeling, people typically want to avoid it by *fleeing* into *bad faith*<sup>414</sup>. It is also a mood that suggests or confirms the individualised character of true existence.

Heidegger strongly emphasises the role of angst on *Dasein*. *Dasein*, translated from German as *being there*, is a term for *existence* as the exact opposite of *essence*, a concept with which the philosopher explores and describes human life. In angst, for Heidegger, “all entities within the world sink away so that the familiar world becomes *uncanny* (*unheimlich*).”<sup>415</sup> Angst, thus, is defined in this way by Heidegger, who differentiates it from “fear of specific things and occasions in the *now-familiar* fashion.”<sup>416</sup> The *anxious* person views these as *insignificant* and irrelevant instead of

---

<sup>410</sup> Aho, p. 165.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

<sup>413</sup> Cooper, p. 128.

<sup>414</sup> Bad faith is a Sartrean term which can be defined as an occurrence when a person is get hold of by others, in the sense that he starts to see himself through their eyes. For a detailed description and discussion of bad faith, please see [sub-chapter 2.3.2](#).

<sup>415</sup> Cooper, 130-1.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

afraid. Therefore, the withdrawal of entities and the revelation of the world as it is, as well as the withdrawal of one's life and the revelation of one's existence as *Dasein*, are all parts of the experience of angst.<sup>417</sup> On the other hand, *uncanniness* is an even more impalpable term that can be defined as "strange or mysterious, often in a way that is slightly unsettling."<sup>418</sup> For Heidegger, "angst is the disturbing and *uncanny* mood which summons a person to reflect on his individual existence and its *possibilities*." The individual who does not choose to turn away from this to fall into the comfort in his *aesthete* at this point, accepting his angst, would come face to face with his existence. Existentialist angst should not be avoided or suppressed as existence itself is the root of the problem; rather, it should be acknowledged and experienced to its fullest extent.<sup>419</sup>

Furthermore, Yalom mentions *death anxiety*, which entails the common fears of death as "[f]ears about pain; fears about an afterlife; fears about others, and fear of personal extinction."<sup>420</sup> One dreads (or worries) about disappearing and being nothing<sup>421</sup>. For Yalom, this anxiety cannot be located; although, according to Heidegger, if and when it is located, it has an inherent feeling of threat that manifests as the uncanny.

### 2.3.1.3 *Death*

Leading names in existential thought, including Jaspers and Heidegger, gave death a central place in their writings. According to Gray, this is because "to recognise this fact, the painful fact of human finitude, the inevitability of death, can alone make

---

<sup>417</sup> Withy, Katherine. 'The Methodological Role of Angst in Being and Time'. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 43, no. 2, Jan. 2012, p. 205.

<sup>418</sup> '[Uncanny](#)'. *Cambridge Dictionary*,. Accessed 14 Aug. 2022.

<sup>419</sup> Aho, p. 168.

<sup>420</sup> Yalom, p. 42.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43.

living meaningful and significant”,<sup>422</sup> for death is a phenomenon within life. Cooper claims that contrary to popular thought, the issue of death is scrutinised by existentialist writers not because death is the finality of human life or because it has connotations of life being meaningless. “The attention is explained, rather, by the conviction that the phenomenon of death reveals authentic possibilities of human existence.”<sup>423</sup> In other words, existentialists strive to find the authenticity of human life by focusing on the subject of death. Grant further states, “[t]he standards of this life must pass away, and the true standard to be set up” because the actual view of human life does not consider how it relates to the life or death of the body or how happy or unhappy this life is at the moment. The true view of human life is in the “*sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e., in its relation to God and eternal life.”<sup>424</sup> Grant’s point is reminiscent of that of Kierkegaard’s, for whom “the experience of Dread [...] precedes the leap of faith. And faith is defined as absolute trust in the Christian God of love, in whom eternal life is possible for man.”<sup>425</sup> For other existentialists such as Heidegger, Jaspers and Sartre, dread (of death) can bring about salvation in this world; it does not “precede anything; it reveals the truth of Nothingness and conditions our perception of all other truths”<sup>426</sup>. In other words, it resides in the character of experience that results from pursuing the truth in daily life.

Yalom argues that incorporating death into life enriches life; it enables individuals to extricate themselves from smothering trivialities and live more purposefully and authentically.<sup>427</sup> Death remains a fundamental phenomenon of life, despite people’s attempts to ignore the topic in social settings, try not to think about it throughout the day, and fantasise about a time when it is no longer a part of human existence. Likewise, people often try to imagine what it would be like to be immortal and tend to

---

<sup>422</sup> Gray, J. Glenn. ‘The Idea of Death in Existentialism’. *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 48, no. 5, 1951, p. 118.

<sup>423</sup> Cooper, p. 133.

<sup>424</sup> Frederick C. Grant, “The Permanent Value of the Primitive Christian Eschatology,” *The Biblical World* 49, no. 3 (March 1917): 157–68, <https://doi.org/10.1086/475712>, p. 167.

<sup>425</sup> Gray, p. 117.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> Yalom, Irvin D. *Existential Psychotherapy*. Basic Books, 1980, p. 54.

find some solace in escapist literature where there is no death and dying from old age is a thing of the past. In such literature, it is overcome with technological advancements where the protagonists welcome death only if they wish. However, it is essential to note that for many of us, being aware of mortality may be a rich source of possibility that helps us fully appreciate life's preciousness.<sup>428</sup> Gray argues that “we can grant the existentialists that awareness of personal death brings greater intensity and clarification to life, [but] we need not renounce our conviction that death as an occurrence holds; also, the promise of a greater fullness of being.”<sup>429</sup> Thus death as a phenomenon can be treated as “a necessary evil, a passageway to a better, fuller life without limitations.”<sup>430</sup> For the existentialist, the reality of death, death as a possibility for each human being, confirms and expands on angst for a free and unique nature of existence. The following section further explores freedom in man's existence, individuality and its descriptions within existentialism.

### 2.3.2 Freedom

Freedom is one of the key concepts that both the religious and atheist existentialists discuss in-depth and perhaps *the* key concept. Existentialism views the individual and his experiences as singular and unique and considers them the foundation for understanding human nature. Moreover, existentialism claims man is *thrown into a world* of objects devoid of will and consciousness, raising questions about what it means to be a human being in the world<sup>431</sup> and focuses on the relationship between human existence and the type of existence of natural objects, despite having a will and consciousness. Thus, existentialism “emphasises human subjectivity, originality and freedom,”<sup>432</sup> and the problem of subjectivity, freedom, will and responsibility is why it, as a philosophy or school of thought, cannot be defined unequivocally.

---

<sup>428</sup> Gray, p. 127.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Niederhauser, Johannes Achill. ‘[Heidegger on Death and Being](#)’. University of Warwick, 2018.

<sup>431</sup> Bakır, p. 28.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

It was Heidegger who claimed humans are *thrown into* the world<sup>433</sup> and that we “find ourselves thrown into the world for no apparent reason that we are conscious, self-defining embodied beings within our own specific physical, social, and historical context.”<sup>434</sup> Furthermore, for Heidegger, “our psychological construction of an external objective world erroneously leads us to think of our existence as if we were some sort of complex object.”<sup>435</sup> Influenced by Heidegger’s prose and philosophy, Sartre also claimed “[humans] are not in a position to make ultimate claims about the being of the world”<sup>436</sup> because we can only make some statements about the way our consciousness perceives the world. In other words, for Sartre, all of our realities are fiction save for the fact that we exist, that we are alive, and that we live. However, because it is fictitious does not mean “they are fake or misleading, on the contrary, it shows that they are parts of our lives that we build by making choices in our freedom”<sup>437</sup>. Thus, when Sartre says that existence comes before essence, it means that humans first exist and then, through their free choices, decide their essence, i.e. what kind of person they will become. In other words, “existence without and before essence is an ontological emptiness.”<sup>438</sup> Hence, freedom and the ability to choose one’s essence are the most fundamental claims of existentialism.

---

<sup>433</sup> Solomon argues that “reality is Heidegger's notion of *thrownness* and him finding himself in a situation he did not choose. He explains reality (as also seen in Sartre) as follows: “Reality is a set of facts about ourselves that determines our situation. The *facts* that I am tall, Jewish, bald, French, an only child, living in the 20th century in occupied France are all part of my *reality*. I can have surgery to shorten my legs, decide to flee occupied France and renounce French citizenship, reject Judaism and choose another religion, but these decisions are *still* based on the fact that I am now tall, a French living in occupied France, and a Jew. *Reality* is the things that make a man himself.” For more on this discussion, please see: Solomon, 2020, p. 537.

<sup>434</sup> Misselbrook, David. ‘An A–Z of Medical Philosophy: X Is for Existentialism: Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre’. *British Journal of General Practice*, vol. 64, no. 629, Dec. 2014, p. 642.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> İçöz, p. 230.

<sup>438</sup> Hilmi Yavuz. “Sarte ve Kün Emri”, in *Varoluşçuluk I, Doğu-Batı Dergisi*, vol. 92 (2020). p. 143.

Furthermore, Crowell argues that “[e]xistential moral psychology emphasises human freedom and focuses on the sources of mendacity, self-deception, and hypocrisy in moral consciousness”<sup>439</sup> and that it is vital that the existential themes of anxiety, nothingness, and the absurd should be comprehended in this framework. Aho, moreover, states that “for the existentialists, no idea is more central than freedom”<sup>440</sup> and discusses that for Kierkegaard, choice and freedom are the most incredible gifts that have been bestowed upon mankind, while for Sartre, it is “*the* defining feature of existentialism.”<sup>441</sup> For Sartre, freedom must not be understood in that man is free to do whatever he wishes, nor is it sufficient to understand it only in the Kantian sense as the constitution of morality.<sup>442</sup> It should go further to define the action and the ability to choose, i.e. man is free because he has the freedom to choose: “man [is] one of free choice, without excuse and without help” and “when once a man has seen that values depend upon himself, in that state of forsakenness he can will only one thing, and that is freedom as the foundation of all values.”<sup>443</sup> The definitive decision, which is at the centre of Sartre’s existentialism, is also susceptible to some sort of determination because the available options are constrained by the circumstances surrounding the decision. Sartre also describes what subjectivism means in that sense, stating that for existentialism, “man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity”<sup>444</sup> and while man chooses himself, it means that each of us needs to choose for ourselves and while doing so it also means we choose for other people as well.<sup>445</sup> For Sartre, “[t]o choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is chosen; for we are unable ever to choose the worse.”<sup>446</sup> In other words, we choose the better option for us and unless it is the better choice for all humanity, it cannot be better for

---

<sup>439</sup> Crowell, 2020.

<sup>440</sup> Aho, p. 93.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, p. 27.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>445</sup> “For example, Sartre says that a young soldier on the battlefield or a young writer faced with the occupation of Nazi soldiers is free to approach the situation as he wishes, but he is not at all free to choose to be in the situation where he has to choose.” Solomon, p. 533.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

us either. Then, the freedom to choose comes with a responsibility, since we fashion ourselves, i.e. our essence by our choices, the image we choose for ourselves is also “valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves” and “[o]ur responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole.”<sup>447</sup> In other words, the freedom to choose entails a three-fold responsibility: (i) to choose the better option for us which would affect the ever-malleable image we fashion for ourselves, i.e. our essence, (ii) all the while we need to think about the better choice for all mankind because (iii) it would be binding for the entire age we exist in.

Choosing in itself is an action which has the utmost importance for Sartre. A goal, purpose and our positions to achieve it are values, but ultimately “freedom is the only and only source of values... Nothingness, absolute nothingness, is the only reason for my adaptation to this or that value, or the scale of values in general.”<sup>448</sup> Kurtar argues that Sartre's interpretation of nothingness is that possibilities are both feasible and limitless: amid nothingness, limitless possibilities emerge.<sup>449</sup> Aho, on this subject, further states, “only after we make these choices do we become someone,” but “these identities are never secure; they are always subject to future choices”<sup>450</sup> because we can choose differently than we did before. Therefore, “[w]e are *self-making* beings responsible for the meanings we give to things through our own choices, the totality of which make us who we are”<sup>451</sup> or, to paraphrase Sartre, man is nothing more than a collection of tasks, that he is the sum, the organisation, and the set of relationships that make up these tasks.<sup>452</sup> This collection of tasks may be existential, historical, or social in nature. For instance, the place and time of our birth, the family we come from, our ethnicity or sexual orientation, and other factors all have meanings and

---

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Philosophical Library, 1956, p. 121.

<sup>449</sup> Kurtar, Senem. ‘Jean-Paul Sartre’ın Mutlak ve Radikal Mücadelesi’. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, p. 110..

<sup>450</sup> Aho, p. 93.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Sartre, p. 19-20.

provide the potential for freedom to appear as a struggle. Thus, the fate of freedom needs to be understood with its factual limits, and not only as a “hopeless and pessimistic field of action but also as a field of struggle, resistance and tension that enables authentic action and even collective action.”<sup>453</sup> In other words, Sartre’s claim that man is condemned to be free can also be understood in this field, allowing resistance and his actions either alone or combined.

Nietzsche’s madman announced the ultimate freedom of *man* in *The Gay Science* with the shocking adage that *God is dead*: “ ‘Where is God?’ he cried; ‘I’ll tell you! *We have killed him* - you and I! We are all his murderers.’ ”<sup>454</sup> he shouts and says “God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him! How can we console ourselves, the murderers of all murderers!”<sup>455</sup> After this, the madman puts the responsibility of becoming God on the shoulders of humans:

Do we not ourselves have to become gods merely to appear worthy of it? There was never a greater deed - and whoever is born after us will, on account of this deed, belong to a higher history than all history up to now!<sup>456</sup>

Now that *God is dead*, the responsibility for each human to take, for the sake of humankind and history, is similar to that of Sartre’s one when he says man is free to choose the deeds he is to do. After the two great world wars, existentialism proclaimed new ground, just as human existence appeared to be gripping the shadows of the declaration of God's death. Kurtar<sup>457</sup> argues that this is also an announcement that needs to be heeded by humankind who is left with only their freedom because they cannot anymore find the truth in the beauty or the eternity of God, and now

---

<sup>453</sup> Ibid, p. 111.

<sup>454</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science - with a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Edited by Bernard Williams, Translated by Josefine Nauckoff and Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 119.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid, p. 120.

<sup>457</sup> Kurtar, p. 105.

freedom, which will never succeed in becoming God, becomes a struggle to imitate being God in action and with action. Sartre is “in the middle of the future foretold by [Nietzsche’s madman]”<sup>458</sup>, and he demands the entire human existence to undertake the *present*, with all its depth, because for Sartre, the *present* is the time of action and decision, and is the real-time of existence. Kurtar<sup>459</sup> further remarks that Sartre's philosophy of freedom, as a revolution in thought and action, has emerged in a crisis in which European culture finds itself, while the state of philosophy in particular and all intellectual endeavours in general also need to be taken into account.

Similarly, for Berdyaev, freedom is “something that cannot already exist in the objective world or outside the world”, and therefore it “cannot be given by others or gained without conscious effort, but can exist, or rather can be created, by the creative actions of the *person* himself.”<sup>460</sup> This is a more Kierkegaardian approach whereby the key to eternity is in man's self-realisation, which will lead to his liberation, and show himself as a significant, free, and moral personality. For Sartre, however, “because to begin with [man] is nothing, he will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.”<sup>461</sup> Thus, man’s existence requires action together with responsibility. For Sartre, since there is no God to imagine human nature, there is no human nature to begin with. “Man simply is”, and it is not that “he is not just what he imagines himself to be”<sup>462</sup> instead, he is what he wills to be and as he imagines himself after coming into existence - as he wills to be after leaping into existence. Thus Sartrean existentialism, or “atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative”, makes a more consistent claim that “if God does not exist, there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence” and that being is “man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality.”<sup>463</sup>

---

<sup>458</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>460</sup> Bakır, p. 29.

<sup>461</sup> Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism, p. 6.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

The inherent characteristic of freedom, i.e. responsibility, thus, becomes an existential value. Yalom argues that “the universe is contingent; everything that could have been created differently”; thus, “unless the individual is free to constitute the world in any of several ways, then the concept of responsibility has no meaning.”<sup>464</sup> For Sartre, man is accountable for both his actions and his decisions to ignore his actions. In this aspect, Yalom states that Sartre's point is not moral; rather, he asserts that “what I *indeed* do is my duty rather than suggesting that I should be acting differently.”<sup>465</sup> To flee from this responsibility is defined as to live *inauthentically* in Heidegger, and to have *bad faith* (*mauvaise foi*) in Sartre. “Sartre considered it his project to liberate individuals from bad faith and to help them assume responsibility.”<sup>466</sup> Living authentically, the difference between good vs bad faith and the concept of authenticity in existentialism is further explored in the following chapter.

### 2.3.3 Authenticity

Authenticity is a concept of existentialism that has more intangible descriptions when compared to the concepts of death or freedom. Yalom explains that “death [as] an existential issue is self-evident: Mortality and finiteness are obvious givens of existence”<sup>467</sup> Responsibility and authenticity oftentimes appear together in existentialist thought, but it is not immediately clear what the existential referent is in these concepts.

Authenticity is described as “the quality of being real or true”<sup>468</sup> and is used interchangeably with *originality*. Beehler discusses that both concepts may very well co-exist together but from an existentialist point of view, “[t]he determining factor in whether a person lives authentically is that the life lived [to] be what the person wants

---

<sup>464</sup> Yalom, p. 220.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid, p. 221.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

<sup>467</sup> Yalom, p. 218.

<sup>468</sup> ‘[Authenticity](#)’. Cambridge Dictionary, Accessed 27 June 2022.

and chooses.”<sup>469</sup> As discussed in the sub-chapter on freedom above, in living authentically too, *choosing* becomes the defining verb: “[c]hoice is the core of authenticity” where “the life lived is chosen by the person living it, not by someone else (parents, or God, or society, operating on the person through *internalised* or *introjected* wishes or fears or norms)”<sup>470</sup> which then links freedom and authenticity together. Aho, furthermore, distinguishes being authentic from being original by describing authenticity as “not simply imitating the socially prescribed roles and values of the public world [but being] genuine or true to the concerns and commitments that matter to me as an individual.”<sup>471</sup> For Taylor, authenticity is “a certain way of being human that is *my way*”<sup>472</sup>, and he also explores how this concept is related to the idea of Romanticism via Rousseau which is discussed in another manner related with modernity. Although *being true to oneself* can be traced back to metaphysics, epistemology and ethics; in the modern era, the question of authenticity started to concern moral-psychological issues, identity, and responsibility rather than metaphysical nature<sup>473</sup> which can also be linked to the *God is dead* idea that remains in the heart of modernity. Aho<sup>474</sup> argues that there is no inherent goodness in humans, to begin with, and since *God's death* there is no moral standard to judge what is actually good. The existentialist protest, hence, is against the ideal of human goodness and indicates that being authentic has little to do with being morally *good*. Trilling also discusses the emergence of authenticity in Western philosophy first with the modern era. Rousseau initially argued that “what destroys our authenticity is society”

---

<sup>469</sup>Beehler further states “Each of us is born an *original*, a unique individual bearing a distinctive potential. If, then, each of us lives authentically, if we are each *true to ourselves* [...], then the expectation is that each of us must die an original. On this view, absence of originality discloses absence of authenticity.” For more detail on the discussion of originality vs. authenticity, please see Beehler, 1990.

<sup>470</sup> Beehler, p. 41.

<sup>471</sup> Aho, p. 114.

<sup>472</sup> Taylor, Charles. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Harvard University Press, 2021, p. 29.

<sup>473</sup> Varga, Somogy, and Charles Guignon. ‘[Authenticity](#)’. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

<sup>474</sup> Aho, p. 119.

<sup>475</sup>. In other words, making our sense of existence dependent on other people's opinions is what kills our authenticity.

Authenticity in Martin Heidegger's philosophy is explained through his central concept of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is participation and involvement in the world around us, which serves as the foundation of human existence. Heidegger classifies the three crucial components of *Dasein*<sup>476</sup> as follows: (i) *factuality*, meaning that any human is already in a world when they are born or *thrown* into and that their existence in that world and how they perceive it both determine and are determined by that world; (ii) *existentiality* or the understanding of the world into which one has been *thrown*: this process never final; it is always a development, a becoming, and an anticipation of one's potential, in other words, "[e]xistentiality refers to a neverending process of inner personal existence as well as to one's being in and with the world"<sup>477</sup>; and (iii) *fallenness* or *forfeiture*, the mode of existence in which most live day to day.

Fallenness is a concern of every day to the point where Heidegger refers to it as *the question of the sense of Being*<sup>478</sup>. Not pondering the question, "*what does it mean to be*", to live, is to give up authentic existence, distancing oneself from one's primary goal of *becoming* (existentiality), and ultimately live a life of isolation from both oneself and others.

The last notion of *Dasein*, i.e. fallenness, is treated in Camus as the comforting rhythm of our everyday lives when one suddenly feels *absurdity* which strikes out of the blue when one's need for reasons confronts the "unreasonable silence of the world"<sup>479</sup>. Salur<sup>480</sup> argues that contrary to Kierkegaard, who deals with authenticity

---

<sup>475</sup> Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 93.

<sup>476</sup> Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi. '[Dasein](#)'. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Aho, p. 116.

<sup>480</sup> Salur, Bilge. 'Modernlik Eleştirisi Olarak Varoluşçu Felsefede Otantiklik: Authenticity in Existentialism'. *ETHOS: Dialogues in Philosophy & Social Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 2, July 2021, p.10.

with transcendence, Camus has constructed a distinct philosophy of authenticity by altogether rejecting a theological underpinning and emphasising that any prospect of authenticity can be found in this world; reminiscing a Nietzschean perspective. Camus rejects Kierkegaardian transcendence and emphasises that we must shape our lives without seeking such an external meaning. Moreover, Camus concluded that “human life is both meaningless (absurd) and valuable in terms of having an end that will end with death.”<sup>481</sup> He famously compares the pointless repetition of modern life with Sisyphus’ hopeless struggles<sup>482</sup> and describes the feeling of absurdity as follows<sup>483</sup>

It happens that the stage sets collapse. Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm - this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day, the *why* arises, and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement.

For Camus, fatigue occurs after the mechanical life’s deeds at the same moment that it ushers in the drive of consciousness. It “awakens consciousness and provokes what follows”, which is “the gradual return into the chain or it is the definitive awakening”<sup>484</sup>, resulting in suicide or recovery. For him, suicide is comparable to one’s desire to withdraw into the calming routines of society or the metaphysical comforts of religion, and these are all manifestations of one’s need to flee from who he is. On the contrary, “[o]ne must imagine Sisyphus happy” because “[t]he struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart”<sup>485</sup> while suicide is an impassioned affirmation of one’s own freedom, a freedom that rejects or renounces

---

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> Sisyphus is the Greek mythological hero who is punished by Zeus to roll a rock up to a mountain only for it to roll down and start again. For more details please see [sub-chapter 3.1.2.](#)

<sup>483</sup> Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. Translated by Justin O’Brien, Vintage International, 2018, p. 13.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid, p. 83.

the absurdity of life. In other words, to be free in one's authentic being, one needs to embrace the absurdity of life.

Fallenness of *Dasein* in Sartre, on the other hand, is discussed through the notion of *bad faith* (*mauvaise foi*). Aho<sup>486</sup> states that *facticity* and *transcendence* are two separate features that Sartre develops into the existentialist configuration of the ego as a relational conflict or struggle between the two. In Sartre's definition, it is this "double property of the human being", who is "at once a facticity and a transcendence."<sup>487</sup> He states, "[t]hese two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of valid coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them or to surmount them in synthesis."<sup>488</sup> Facticity describes the elements of one's situation that restrict and bind one, such as one's physical characteristics, social status, and previous behavioural tendencies. Transcendence, on the other hand, describes how one self-consciously reacts to these facts, decides to interpret them, gives them significance, and the way one transforms them through one's behaviour.<sup>489</sup> When one of these two elements is denied<sup>490</sup>, inauthenticity or bad faith occurs.

According to Sartre's description of bad faith, this phenomenon is unique to the *for-itself* and thus requires ontological treatment.<sup>491</sup> Varga and Guigon describe bad faith as "a kind of self-deception, involves believing or taking oneself to be an X while all

---

<sup>486</sup> Aho, p. 134.

<sup>487</sup> Sartre, 1956, p. 143.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Aho, p. 134.

<sup>490</sup> Aho explains how the denial of this *double-property* of being a human leads to bad faith as follows: "I deceive myself, for instance, when I adopt the persona of a college professor and see myself solely in terms of the professor's peculiar habits. Thus, the fact I am bookish, absentminded, and self-absorbed is just the way I am [...] I interpret myself as a professor-thing. But, as 'being-for-itself,' I am also not a professor because I have the ability to take a stand on these patterns of behavior and choose to do otherwise. [...] In bad faith, I usually cling to my socially constructed identity for security and deny the nothingness, the fact that my identity is always incomplete and that I alone am responsible for my existence."

<sup>491</sup> Reynolds, Jack, and Pierre-Jean Renaudie. '[Jean-Paul Sartre](#)'. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

along one is (and knows oneself to be) actually a Y”,<sup>492</sup> while the key to the special terminology of *Being and Nothingness* defines it as “a lie to oneself within the unity of a single consciousness.”<sup>493</sup> In other words, a person tries to evade the responsibility of *Being-for-itself* by bad faith based on irresoluteness between transcendence and facticity that refuses to reconcile or acknowledge either for what it is. The act of bad faith, for Sartre and Camus, thus, entails facing one’s anxiety rather than avoiding that responsibility and caving into convention's absurdity.

Sartre’s most well-known example of bad faith is the café waiter, which is central in understanding the abstruse notion, and thus warrants the following lengthy quote, taken from *Being and Nothingness*<sup>494</sup>

Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice and his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. [...] He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café. [...] The game is a kind of marking out and investigation.

For Sartre, this *play at being a café waiter* and trying to institutionalise oneself as this item is an example of bad faith and, by extension, *inauthenticity*. For, the waiter knows “precisely this person whom I have to be (if I am the waiter in question) and who I am not.”<sup>495</sup> In other words, he is “transcending his facticity by breaking the

---

<sup>492</sup> Varga and Guignon. ‘[Authenticity](#)’.

<sup>493</sup> Sartre, 1956, p. 824.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid, p. 146.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid, p. 147.

rules of being a waiter”<sup>496</sup> , and he refuses to take responsibility for it, downplays the potential of other solutions, and appears to be deluding himself by playing this character. For Sartre, authenticity “supposes self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted”<sup>497</sup> however he does not go further in explaining what authenticity entails. Although it may initially appear that one may escape *bad faith* by establishing a sincere, deep commitment to something and keeping it, Sartre questions if such an absolute, being-determining commitment is conceivable. Varga and Guignon further argue that because of the constant uncertainty around who we are, lucid self-awareness reveals to us that we can never achieve the state of the *in-itself* when making a decision. When Sartre claims that people are always previously corrupted and that bad faith [always] re-apprehends good faith, being in good faith seems unachievable because we are continuously acting dishonestly and in bad faith. Thus, “the inescapable nature of bad faith seems to leave no room for the possibility of authenticity.”<sup>498</sup> However, such a pessimistic conclusion would be one that would not be sufficient to explain authenticity as meant by Sartre. Bell’s description of authenticity as “the awareness and acceptance of this basic ambiguity”<sup>499</sup> resonates in Sartre as he later argues, “[a]uthenticity, it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks it involves, in accepting it... sometimes in horror and hate” and claims that “there is no doubt that authenticity demands much courage and more than courage.”

500

For Sartre, an individual’s inherent indeterminacy and the requirement to constantly understand oneself are related to authenticity. But even the idea of sincerity, or accepting things as they are, should not be the foundation for this self-actualisation or self-creation. Sartre maintains that despite being ideals, honesty and authenticity cannot be thought of as universal truths.

---

<sup>496</sup> Aho, p. 134.

<sup>497</sup> Op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>498</sup> Varga and Guignon.

<sup>499</sup> Bell, in *ibid*.

<sup>500</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Anti-Semite and Jew*. Translated by George J. Becker, Schocken Books, 1944, p. 65.

Authenticity is significant to the philosophy of existentialism, so much so that alienation occurs when someone is merely detached from what is believed to be his authentic self. Social exclusion, mental illness, criminal activity, and an overarching sense of disillusionment with the world can be all counted as effects of alienation. The following sub-chapter looks more closely at literary accounts of alienation as well as how existentialist philosophy and the other three previously covered notions perceive it.

### **2.3.4 Alienation**

In exploring the four themes of existentialism, it became apparent that modernism plays a significant role to the extent that it is the concept that revolves around these themes, intertwining one with the other. One of this dissertation's sub-arguments is that French existentialism, which influenced existentialist philosophy in Turkey, had a significant impact primarily during the Cold War era when people's individuality was eclipsed by the expanding influence of the bipolar world structure and the intrinsic urge to select one or the other political system. Modernism had no less impact in such a volatile period, and it is essential in understanding the concept of *alienation*, as was evident in the analyses of the first three existentialist principles.

Modernism's rise to prominence as a significant artistic and literary movement is sometimes correlated with the mental shift that the First World War seems to have caused. Old ways of explaining and portraying the world no longer looked suitable or applicable in light of the collapse of antiquated political orders and the tremendous deaths caused by war. Alienation and isolation become more prevalent as ideas and even as strategies. Aho argues that one see the examples of how alienation resonated in modern man, where the terrifying feeling of having one's public life scrutinised and controlled by a group of faceless bureaucrats heightened the alienation and bewilderment of modern existence and emerged as a significant theme in existentialist literature<sup>501</sup> as seen in numerous works by Kafka. Moreover, several existentialists addressed the issue of alienation caused by the machine age's standardisation and

---

<sup>501</sup> Aho, p. 26.

collectivisation of people<sup>502</sup>. For example, the *Crystal Palace* described by Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) in his seminal work, *Notes from the Underground*, dated 1864, represents a nightmare for him with dull conformism, loneliness, inordinate pride, and the mutilation of human existence instead of logical advancement.

The description of the term alienation, thus, can be traced back to a time before existentialism gained popularity during and after the Second World War. Childers and Hentzi<sup>503</sup> state that when Hegel argued that alienation was a *discordant relationship* between the individual and society and a damaging separation between an individual's actual condition and his *essential nature*, the direction he was taking was that the foundation of alienation is the perception of the self as a distinct and independent entity within a broader and usually antagonistic community. As widely known in the literature and beyond, alienation had a particular meaning for the early Marx, who adopted the concept from Hegel, and was pertinent to his larger economic argument. Kaufmann argues that it is peculiar that alienation became “popular only during the cold war, as a meeting place for East and West, for Marxism and existentialism” while it was Hegel who had used the word so much and dictated “[s]pirit alienated from itself.”<sup>504</sup> It is well-founded that the term alienation became a synonym with Marx, who refers to the physical and psychological separation of the worker from the outcome of his labour, as well as the eventual dissolution of interpersonal and familial ties due to the dominance of capitalism. As Childers and Hentzi argue, within the bourgeois capitalistic culture, this isolation, which is brought about by economic servitude, causes social breakdown before leading to social rebellion. Kaufmann, furthermore, traces the roots of existentialism from the Hungarian literary historian György Lukács (George Lukacs, 1885-1971), who argued “alienation had been central in Hegel's thought no less than in Marx”<sup>505</sup> to the German philosopher Erich Fromm (1900-1980) who stated, “Marx's philosophy, like much of

---

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi. ‘[Alienation](#)’. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995.

<sup>504</sup> Kaufmann, Walter. ‘The Inevitability of Alienation’. *Revue Européenne des Sciences Sociales*, vol. 18, no. 52, 1980, p. 29.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

existentialist thinking, represents a protest against man's alienation, his loss of himself and his transformation into a thing.”<sup>506</sup> All contributions made by his predecessors and contemporaries notwithstanding, alienation still resonates the most with Marx, who uses the word in various contexts; his main concern remains dehumanisation. For Marx, man has become alienated from his actual nature in numerous ways, including the loss of his independence, poverty, isolation from other people, and involvement in labour that lacks originality, freedom, or creativity. Kaufmann argues that “nobody has argued more passionately that man has no essence than has Jean-Paul Sartre”<sup>507</sup>, and for him, the man was *condemned* to be free since he lacks the substance of things. Although their views are not entirely opposed, while Marx views the oppressed as victims, Sartre, on the other hand, maintains that humans are their own victims, that we are free, and that it is our fault for not understanding our freedom.

With Sartre, thus, the term alienation gained further resonance in existentialism. For him, Childers and Heintzi argue that dying and what he believed to be the fundamental meaninglessness of life lead to a painful awareness rupture and a widening gap between the self and societal structures. Furthermore, the issue of alienation in literature from the 20<sup>th</sup> century is modified in such a way that one may feel alienated not only from society but also from one’s own self. Solomon<sup>508</sup> maintains that people are not authentic because this is the easier way to be. A person can never be utterly authentic since *fallenness*, which is a quality of *Dasein*, continually manifests itself. However, man will never entirely lose his authenticity either because the *existentiality* of *Dasein*, maintains steadfast control over the inauthenticity it creates, in a similar way that fallenness interrupts authenticity. The opposed dichotomy of fallenness and existentiality creates alienation. Thus, while all of them relate to the anxiety and despair of being a human, it is impossible to think of freedom apart from authenticity, just as it is impossible to think of alienation apart from authenticity.

Humans experience alienation continuously where every day, one grows less and less content with the anonymity and mediocrity of the average, creating alienation from

---

<sup>506</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>507</sup> Childers and Heintzi, ‘[Alienation](#)’.

<sup>508</sup> Solomon, p. 433-34.

oneself. Solomon<sup>509</sup> argues that this is what Hegel refers to as the *incompatibility of unhappy consciousness*, and in Marx, where there is an explicit materialist interpretation, the same idea occurs as alienation. It returns in various forms of elation and despondency in Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. Heidegger refers to it as estrangement. As discussed above, the roots of alienation from oneself lie in the concept of angst. In addition to confronting mortality, living an inauthentic existence might also force one to confront the dread of nothingness due to the high amount of alienation and guilt it causes. Aho argues this “takes a darker turn”<sup>510</sup> in the existentialist account of alienation that is also linked to bad faith. For Sartre, only via the *gaze* of the *Other* can one realise who he is. A person’s appearance is a social judgement that defines them as a *being-in-itself*, an item or thing.<sup>511</sup> This dehumanises the person and prevents them from being able to forge their own identities. He writes, “suddenly the alienation of myself, which is the act of *being-looked-at*, involves the alienation of the world which I organise”<sup>512</sup> and “thus in the shock which seizes me when I apprehend the Other’s look; this happens - that suddenly I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities.”<sup>513</sup> In other words, for Sartre, because “The Other looks at me and as such he holds the *secret* of my being, he knows *what I am*.”<sup>514</sup> To paraphrase Sartre, this is where one’s tangible relationships with the Other first began; they are entirely controlled by one’s attitudes toward the thing that one is for the Other, leading to dehumanisation and alienation from oneself.

Sartre asserts that a person never presents himself as if he is in possession of something. It is implied in Sartre that for a person to *exist*, they must transcend themselves or become alienated from themselves, again referring to the double-property of facticity and transcendence. It appears to be difficult to simply live without slipping into bad faith and not deny either facticity or transcendence, which poses difficulties of its own, such as maintaining good faith and avoiding slipping into

---

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Aho, p. 88.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Sartre, 1956, p. 388.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid, p. 390.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, p. 506.

bad faith. Similar to Sartre's commitment principle to hold good faith as much as possible, Kaufmann<sup>515</sup> argues that one reaction to alienation is creativity, another is devotion as alienation from society, and oneself leads to isolation and self-doubt, however, both entail further alienation. On a more positive note, Sayers<sup>516</sup> argues that while authenticity is conceivable and alienation is not unavoidable, authenticity is a personal choice instead of a historical accomplishment. It would be only possible if humans detached themselves from the Other and their social existence to transcend their existence to find their authentic selves. However, it is complacent to think that merely changing society will change this because it is not our natural or typical way of being. Heidegger and Kierkegaard argue that the age of mass society has really made things worse for humans to find their authenticity and true freedom while escaping alienation.

## **2.5 Methodology of the Dissertation**

This dissertation looks mainly at the works of Sezai Karakoç. Thus, the analytical chapters will analyse how Karakoç attempted to bring existentialism and religion together in his poems and texts.

The analyses are first conducted by carefully examining the chosen poetry. According to Second New's rules, Karakoç's poetry is abstract, closed in meaning, emphasises the style, and uses strong imagery. As a result, where possible, the analysis also studies Karakoç's essays on the relevant issues. For each existentialist concept, up to three poems are chosen; if this is not possible, Karakoç's essays are used to explore the concept in question.

---

<sup>515</sup> Kaufmann, p. 42.

<sup>516</sup> Sayers, Sean. *Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011, p.7.

The essays of Karakoç were compiled to be published in the journal *Diriliş*<sup>517</sup> which was founded in 1960. The effects of the Cold War in Turkey were heavily experienced starting from the 1950s and well into the late 1960s; the essays where Karakoç started writing about existentialism and religion mainly in *Diriliş* and other different journals are used. These texts have been compiled in *Diriliş* as well as separately published books of Karakoç after 1960; both forms of publications are used as resources. *Diriliş* also constitutes a school of thought in Turkish politics and literature, which advocates for returning to the Islamic sources to resolve social and individual crises while focusing on the issues of Turkish modernisation. This has been subjected in many works, books; journal-, magazine-, and newspaper articles; and theses, primarily produced by different faculties and departments of literature, letters, and literature in Turkey. This dissertation uses these different sources of information as secondary literature as well as supporting literature throughout the analysis chapters.

Finally, the analyses in the following four chapters are written with referrals to the definitions of the four existentialist concepts made in the [sub-chapter 2.3](#) as they need to be viewed as interconnected concepts, intertwining one another rather than as four separate and standalone themes with no link to each another, and thus they need to be read with this in mind.

---

<sup>517</sup> *Diriliş* was published from 1960 to 1992 in 7 periodicals within which the journal was ceased publishing. Therefore, the editorials and other works that refer to existentialism remain less in number compared to the total years the journal was printed.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3 DEATH

*“Every soul will taste death. And you will only receive your full reward on the Day of Judgment. Whoever is spared from the Fire and is admitted into Paradise will indeed triumph, whereas the life of this world is no more than the delusion of enjoyment.”<sup>518</sup>*

*“The relationship that most profoundly and universally characterises our sense of being is that of life with death because the limits imposed on our existence by death are crucial to the understanding and evaluation of life.”<sup>519</sup>*

---

<sup>518</sup> The Qur’an, Surah Al-i Imran, 3:185. [Quran.com](http://Quran.com)

<sup>519</sup> Tabucchi, Antonio. Pereira Maintains. Canongate, 2015, p. 2.

*“Human stories are practically always about one thing, really, aren’t they? Death. The inevitability of death... all men must die.”*<sup>520</sup>

*“Mors est quies viatoris – finis est omnis laboris.”*<sup>521/522</sup>

Starting with the present chapter, the dissertation hereafter will examine each of the four existentialist themes detailed in the [sub-chapter 2.3](#) as seen and used by Karakoç in his poems and essays. As discussed within the literature review and conceptual framework chapters, Karakoç, as a representative of the Second New movement, and due to the political circumstances of the 1950s and 1960s, was impacted by the rise of existentialist thought in France and Western Europe. However, different from his contemporaries, Karakoç was a conservative-Muslim intellectual and critic who sought to apply the principles of the Muslim belief in his life and works, thus creating a unique combination in Turkish poetry and literature that this dissertation calls Islamic existentialism. In this regard, he discussed and utilised the main themes of existentialism to pursue an authentic life, to reach ultimate freedom in the afterlife by following the principles and rules of Islam, and to transform the alienation of man by turning to one’s true roots, i.e. Islamic civilisation and achieve the ultimate resurrection by being one with God. Moreover, Karakoç, as seen in his poems and essays, accepts that death is an inherent component of life that all humans need to admit and embrace as a gift of God who will reward those in eternal life who keep their beliefs and follow him as Islam commands.

The concept of death in this chapter is studied in Karakoç’s poems, and essays and closely follows the description of death as an existential concept given under [sub-](#)

---

<sup>520</sup> Tolkien, J.R.R. “Tolkien in Oxford.” Release: Modern Writers. BBC2 England, 30.03.1968. London.

<sup>521</sup> Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. Translated by William Weaver, Harcourt Brace, 1994, p.85.

<sup>522</sup> “Death is rest for the traveller – it is the end of all labour.” (Lat.)

[chapter 2.3.1.](#), including the descriptions made for the notions of angst and despair. Karakoç claims that death is a phenomenon which allows humans to transcend their lives by snatching them away from their daily routine and making them confront eternity forcefully and strikingly.<sup>523</sup> Resurrection or revival, too, is only possible if humans accept that death is an inseparable part of life. Thus, in Karakoç's works, resurrection is described as a movement of returning to the essence of history, society, and civilisation starting from humans themselves. The resurrection movement later becomes a doctrine, which strives for the existence of being based on following one's heart and mind. For Karakoç, humans can create a true civilisation through such an authentic existence. Maintaining that, he focuses on Islam and Islamic tenets in his idea of resurrection while also considering Western intellectual literature and history.

For Karakoç, recognising the reality of death allows humans to transcend from relative existence to absolute existence. For him, coming face to face with the veracity of death would prepare humans for the afterlife. He uses the concept of the afterlife strictly with its Islamic connotations; i.e. the humans will be tested with their good deeds and sins during Judgment Day when they come face to face with their Creator.

Death, then, will play a preparatory role for the believing human Muslim; it will purify the soul and lead to a pure belief. Karakoç repeatedly states that death itself is an examination of the conditions of the life-after-death and to believe in an afterlife is to believe in the progression of humanity which ultimately brings about a complete belief in Allah. By doing that he unites an existentialist theme, i.e., death, with Islamic rules and beliefs which leads him to be an advocate of Islamic existentialism.

Significantly, Karakoç chooses to use existentialist themes, such as death, together with Islam because even though existentialist thought in Turkey has been developed as a response against the repressive and polarising Cold War conditions, and heavily influenced the *secular* authors and poets as discussed extensively in [sub-chapter 1.1.3](#), Karakoç, a disciple of Islam, remains a pioneer in attempting to marry this Western-centred philosophical thought with the Islamic perspective.

---

<sup>523</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Gün Dönümü*. 7th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2010, p. 15.

### 3.1 Death as an Existential Concept in the Works of Karakoç

Although the other poets of the *Second New* dwell on the meaning of life and death as well, theirs is a more personal relationship between themselves and God from a *secular* perspective.<sup>524</sup> The difference between Karakoç and his contemporaries of the *Second New* can also be seen in their usage of the word *God*<sup>525</sup> when they speak about the deity in whom they believe. Secular poets such as Süreya and Ayhan use the word *God* in their poems in order to show their deistic stance rather than using the word *Allah* which has more of an Islamic connotation. Karakoç, on the other hand, uses the word *Allah* when he refers to the deity he believes in<sup>526</sup>. Besides Süreya and Ayhan, the poems of Uyar and Cansever also engage in the subject of life and death, albeit in a more abstract way and through utilising metaphors, in accordance with the *Second New*'s guidelines. For these poets, death is a central notion that shows the influence of existentialism in the formation of this movement. Only Karakoç, among the *Second New* poets analyses the notion of death by Islamic rules by living under the central tenets of Sunni Islam (because for him the only salvation is possible through Islam), which, for him, is the only way to conceive the greatness of Allah. He maintains that “[t]he person who searches for the reason for creation will find the answer to the question [in Allah’s explanation that He created man to worship Him]. The wisdom of

---

<sup>524</sup> For instance, in one of his well-known poems, Cemal Süreya, acknowledging his own death, uses the word God while calling out to him: ‘I know, God, every death is an early death’. Cemal Süreya, *Üstü Kalsın, Seçme Şiirler* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2019). Other examples on this subject were detailed under sub-chapter 1.1.3.

<sup>525</sup> In Turkish language the word God (Tanrı) is often used by people who do not believe in an organised religion e.g. Islam but do believe in a Creator. If a person uses the word Allah, this usually means that they are Muslim. This distinction is not made when people use daily vernaculars such as “İnşallah (God willing)” or “Allah Korusun (God forbid)”.

<sup>526</sup> It is important to note that, in his early works, Karakoç uses the word God (Tanrı) more often, he begins to use the word Allah instead when he starts to develop his own doctrine of an Islamic civilisation through the rules of Islam. In Karakoç's poems, the word “God” occurs 92 times, “Allah” 18 times, and “Rab” 13 times. The usage of the words “Allah” and “Rab” is more prominent in his essays.

human existence is in worshipping Allah.”<sup>527</sup> Thus, for him, only by believing in God will a person who seeks a reason for his existence discover an answer.

Karakoç’s endeavour to examine the meaning of life through death (as one of the main concepts of existentialism) and Islam’s teachings can be seen and found both in his poetry and in his writings. Karakoç’s poetry carries the main characteristics of the *Second New* poetry i.e., obscurity in meaning, usage of symbolism and metaphors, focusing on the style of the poetry, etc. “Since obscure meaning in poetry leads to polysemy, obscurity is at the forefront in Karakoç poetry<sup>528</sup>”, which the poet adopts and applies in his poems. “This is why [Karakoç] is also a great thinker” Bangır claims, “[j]ust as there can be no logical open expression without contemplation; there is no logical closed [obscure] expression at all.<sup>529</sup>” The same contemplation can be found in his essays, which collectively established the basis of his resurrection ideology. Through an analysis of the selected poems below, this chapter seeks to understand how Karakoç used the existentialist theme of death within his aim to follow Islam’s teachings. Because the poetry and the imagery used in the poems are obscure and closed in meaning, Karakoç’s essays, where he used and distilled Western philosophies, including, but not limited to, existentialism, and extrapolated to Islam’s teachings, are also used as supporting discussions in these analyses.

### 3.1.1 *Monna Rosa II – Ölüm ve Çerçeveler*

Karakoç’s poems are gathered together in one collection entitled *Gün Doğmadan (Before Sunrise)*. The whole collection is divided into thirteen chapters all of which contain several poems pertaining to their main chapter. All thirteen chapters have explanatory sub-titles, which are construed to reflect the life of the poet, divided into seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter among other imageries), and numbered

---

<sup>527</sup> Karakoç, *Gündönümü*, p. 19.

<sup>528</sup> Bangır, Mehmet Malik. “‘Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine’ Şiirine Farklı Bir Bakış.” *Atatürk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 63, Dec. 2019, pp. 450.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid*, p. 450.

as *first, second, third* etc. *rainstorms* underlining that these are the important turning points and milestones in the life of Karakoç.

*Ölüm ve Çerçeveler* is the second part of Karakoç's most famous work, the poem *Monna Rosa*, which is comprised of four different parts. This is also the opening chapter of the collection, containing the poems written between the years 1951-1953 and is entitled *Monna Rosa, The First Rainstorm: The Spring Rainstorm. The rainstorm of the rose, the call of the full moon.*

It is widely argued that the 14-stanzaed first part of *Monna Rosa*, entitled *Monna Rosa I - Aşk ve Çileler (Monna Rosa I – Love and Ordeals)*, is Karakoç's most well-known poem and that it endowed him recognition, especially among the conservative groups of the Turkish public. This poem is described as “an objection to the existing and dominant perception of poetry”<sup>530</sup> as was the disposition of the *Second New Movement*.

While this first part can be read as a dedicated love poem, the second part, *Monna Rosa II – Ölüm ve Çerçeveler (Monna Rosa II - Death and the Frames)*, which is the subject of this analysis, dwells on the destruction and reality of death. The third, *Monna Rosa III – Pişmanlık ve Çileler (Monna Rosa III - Regrets and Ordeals)*, and the fourth, *Monna Rosa IV – Ve Monna Rosa (Monna Rosa IV - And Monna Rosa)* parts focus on the past and present regrets of the poet.<sup>531</sup>

In this second part<sup>532,533</sup>, Karakoç draws away from mentioning love for a woman and the ordeals that stem from such love and loss, in other words, earthly and humanly

---

<sup>530</sup> In M. Can Doğan, ‘İkinci Yeni Söyleminin Öncüsü, İkinci Yeni Şiiri’nin Gönülsüzü: Sezai Karakoç’ *Turkish Studies, International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 6 (2011): 732.

<sup>531</sup> For the entirety of the 4-parts of the poem (in Turkish) please see: Sezai Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, pp.13-34.

<sup>532</sup> Different sections of the part II is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see the Appendix: [Monna Rosa II – Ölüm ve Çerçeveler](#).

<sup>533</sup> The translations of all poems used in the analysis chapters are mine.

deliberations, and starts to emphasise the destructive and mystified powers of death in vivid imagery:

*Lamps are alight, dimmed and golden,  
It will snow at night until dawn  
In the soil, the rattling flesh and bone...  
Fear gets ahold of the half-dead  
When touching their skulls to a stone.  
-The dead, they only have their nails,  
And only their sprained knees...-*

Death is a strikingly prominent component already at the beginning of the poem. With the image of the dimmed lamplight, which is consistent throughout the poem and used with a stylistic preference at the beginning of every stanza, the imagery suddenly becomes sombre. It is apparent to the audience that the hour is late, and the air is heavy with the promise of snow. This setting Karakoç presents at the very beginning, gives the audience a serious and gloomy tone while it is evident that overall darkness surrounds the poem. Although the audience does not know where the poem is taking place, the rattling sounds coming from the ground and the vision of the skulls touching a stone (most probably a gravestone) exemplifies the reality of death and brings a graveyard to mind. Moreover, the poet visualises a cadaver, all decayed except for their nails and knees sprained. Having this vision written within two hyphens seems to be an afterthought on the poet's part but appears to be stylistically done for the emphasis on the impact that death leaves upon the once-living body of the human.

Death, thus, is treated by Karakoç as a transcendental and inevitable fact of life. The dual pattern is seen in his poetry, as well as in the texts he deals with the question of death. In this part of the poem, he starts his narrative with a lively image, however sombre, of the lights of a street, or a house, or a far-away view of a sleepy town,

which has a graveyard in its outskirts consistent with Anatolian towns and villages. He writes about the weather, that it will snow, which is still a subject for the living. His sudden transition to the sounds coming from the ground with decaying corpses, their form deteriorated with the reality of death, could be interpreted along with the fact that death creates a duality to life. Here, it can be argued that death as one of the most prominent themes of existentialism preoccupies the poet with such striking visions.

*Lamps are alight, dimmed and golden*

*The insects are looking at the fire, at the ashes.*

*Dogs pull the canaries into pieces,*

*A grey woodworm devours epistles.*

*Owls are hooting in ruins.*

The poem continues, starting the same way the previous stanza does. Karakoç is a stout believer in Islam and supports the idea that there is certainly life, a better life, as an award to be received after death. Throughout the poem, the lights being still alight although dimmed gives the impression to the audience that there is something divine, taking the dead from this living plane, consistent with the Islamic belief of leaving one's body to pass to the afterlife, where they will continue on living. The setting, as well, is not contained only to a graveyard anymore but to a much wider space, probably the whole village and perhaps even beyond. With this, the audience more concretely understands the reality, certainty, and instantaneity of death.

All of the visualisations of this stanza are based on how death treats a living being once it takes them. The setting grows even darker in the audience's eye; nothing is left but the insects, which have already devoured the dead, although they cannot reach into the fire itself. Consistent with the monotheistic burial rituals, the cadavers described to the audience are now consumed by the insects and become one with earth. The imagery of fire and ashes still evoke a feeling that something is still alive

and makes the transition of the dead, perhaps the death itself. We understand that there is no humanity left now that the dogs, once the pets of the humans, are back to their survival instincts; they eat canaries; incidentally docile household birds, with no human left to protect them from the wildlife around.

The poet continues to make the audience confront the horrors of death, as for Karakoç we are most afraid of death not before or after, but at the hour when we meet with it. Death makes us alienated from our once-living body and changes our perception of our once-alive surroundings. In his essay entitled *Ölümün Sebebi* (*The Reason of Death*), Karakoç states that

The dead startle us. It takes a long time for us to get used to a skull. Even [the decaying skull] now is a document proving that death [as a phenomenon] belongs to another world. A dry leaf cannot scare us, but a dried body [a cadaver] affects us. [...] This is because it is now the property of a separate world<sup>534</sup>.

Here, as a conservative author, thinker, and poet, Karakoç emphasises the fact that the body, which is now dead, belongs to a separate world, in other words, to the afterlife. It is worthy to note that up until this point in the poem, he rarely mentions the metaphysics of death and focuses on the very existence of the body, and what happens to it, now that it is dead. He does not refer to the afterlife or beyond, save for the repeating references to the still-lit lamps and the fire. He is still preoccupied with what death does to the body, to the concrete existence of the human being. He is also still focused on the tenebrous state of the surroundings, which gives the impression that time has passed and the living is not coming back. Even the letters, the epistles, and messages that were written by a once-alive hand are being devoured by slower beings like wormwoods and only owls are being heard within the silence of the dead.

---

<sup>534</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. "Ölümün Sebebi" in *Dirilişin Çevresinde*. 4th Ed. 12. İstanbul: Diriliş Yayınları, 1988, pp. 7-10.

*Alight are the lamps, dimmed and golden*  
*Everywhere a stray bullet finds*  
*The horses rampant, without a rider...*  
*There is the light of a soul in the skies,*  
*Lamps are alight, dimmed and golden*  
*Hooting are the owls in ruins.*  
*The lamps are alight, dimmed and golden*

Only halfway through the poem, Karakoç shifts focusing on the Islamic components from the purely existential ones. Although the stanza is styled the same and begins with the same reference to the still-lit lamps, the imagery actuates rapidly and kicks into motion compared to the previous imagery where death captured everything and made them silent and still. Suddenly, horses (another domesticated animal) are adrift and rampant and bullets are found everywhere as if something has put them in motion.

It can be argued that *the light of a soul in the skies* is a reference to God, who puts the events in motion and appears among the death and ruins. In other words, the poem treats death as a transcendental experience, an experience every being needs to have to reach true liberation and freedom. The imagery here is consistent with Karakoç's belief system, where the death of a human being is inevitable and is another crucial step to reaching the afterlife, the true meaning of existence, and God. Because, for Karakoç, death is a trial to which all humans are subject, as well as a "gift of God"<sup>535</sup>. He maintains that "to be able to withstand the conditions of the other side, it is necessary to pass a rigorous test. This test is death. Here we have to see the existence of death and believe in the beyond." In other words, only by witnessing the veracity of death can people believe that there is something else other than the reality of this world which is only a preparatory place. Karakoç, in accordance with his Sufistic beliefs, refuses the existentialist notion that there is nothing before or after this world into which the humans are *thrown*.

---

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, Karakoç argues that human life before death, in this world, is the real stranger, stating

what good comes out from the alienation that Marx emphasised, the alienation caused by a few overlords? Where is Camus's stranger, who has been destroyed by the cancellation of emotions? The real stranger is the human being, in this world, even to his own body in a way.<sup>536</sup>

Thus, for Karakoç, it is possible for human to strip away from their alienated selves once they meet with their *end* in this world. It will be only possible for the humans to know their true self when they reach the beyond and become one with God.

After the sudden appearance of God as the light among the gloominess and ruin, reminding the audience the true rescuer, the poem goes back to its previous imagery, again a dark one but still a shade lighter: there is wind in the air now which does not feel as heavy in the mind of the audience as snowy weather does.

*A lamp is alight, dimmed and golden;  
Winds seize thin sails.  
Reaching out to the earth from the ships  
Hands tremble the banners and spirits.  
Lamps are alight, dimmed and golden,  
Will long for roots of the kelps  
Hidden treasures, sea snakes...*

---

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

Here, the poem evolves into a standstill when we consider the imagery. A ship is on the forefront of this stanza, which has long been washed ashore and remained there after death has taken every single being alive upon or below it. The sails have been thinned so that the winds could seize them, not vice versa. The appearance of the dead hands that have been strewn from the ship to the ground now trembles the spirits who belong to the once living. Death even took out the life of the sea so that the sea snakes and the hidden treasures in the depth of the sea will long for the roots of the kelps that were once surrounding them in a lively environment for a very long time. In other words, once death has taken all the living things, the scene of the poem tranquilises. The dimmed lamps now remain the only evidence that there was once life upon the ship.

As argued above, the lamp imagery is an essential and consistent theme throughout the poem, appearing 18 times, which deals with death's destructive power on the animals, humans and daily objects, and acts as an image of the lingering life. In other words, it is suggested in the poem that even though death has a destructive power and the living fears from it, it needs to be experienced as a necessity to be able to reach the light of the soul that can only be found in the afterlife.

The poem closes with the exact same stanza it begins with, which is shorter compared to the other stanzas and features the same lamp imagery. It can be argued that the poem comes full circle; it begins and ends in the same way when the poet compares dying to a journey.

*A lamp is alight, dimmed and golden*

*A strange journey, train and Geyve<sup>537</sup>*

*A dagger splits, ah... the dreams:*

*A dream, a dagger, a hand: and, and, and...*

---

<sup>537</sup> Geyve is a town of Sakarya province, situated in the south-eastern part of the Marmara region.

The town is mentioned throughout the four poems that are comprising of the Monna Rosa collection.

The similes here, at the end of the poem, are not as closed or veiled as in the other stanzas of the poem but more to the point and clear. The lamp imagery, here, can also be interpreted as the light seen while people die and move to the ethereal plane. For Karakoç, being consistent with his belief system, death is another journey all humans must take. The more forceful imagery of the dagger which is splitting dreams, or the dreamlike state of death, echoes with the certainty of death. The poem ends and thus the life (of the poem) also ends. However, contrary to the (Sartrean) existentialist thought, only the physical life here in this world, as we experience it, ends. The train, or death, takes the deceased to another world. Karakoç starts this poem with more worldly and existential components (e.g. what death does to a body, how only silence and loneliness are left after death, etc.) and grows into an Islamic understanding of death, as also explained in one of his essays:

When death approaches and begins to break away from the physical world, a person enters a new world: the world of 41 degrees. There, convoys of horses, mules, rattles, and rocky roads of the unknown, the sun which does not burn but only shines, and the Qur'an, which we listen to in a time of inspiration, grasp us and make us understand directly. This understanding is clear and pure. Not a second passes before we miss those words [of the Qur'an]. The word joins the soul and the two become one. The world established by the Qur'an settles in man and leads him to the most straightforward and immediate way of life.<sup>538</sup>

As in his poetry, in his essay entitled *The Unknown*, Karakoç uses poetic images to describe the afterlife. It is a brand-new world, which is hotter than this world where the sun still shines does not burn, it is not giving or taking lives. Humans are now enshrined by the once feared unknown, which was made possible by the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an establishes this world; in other words, it is only possible to experience the unknown, the new

---

<sup>538</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. "Görünmeyen" in *Dirilişin Çevresinde*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. 12. İstanbul: Diriliş Yayınları, 1988, pp. 14-17.

world, through the Qur'an and its words, its teachings. If the man is brought up with the words of the Qur'an, then the unknown will embrace him in the afterlife, and the frightful death will become a rebirth.

Every fruit, every sweet fruit, is the product of an ordeal. Beyond-death, then, ripens like a fruit in the sun and falls into a person's palm like an apple after death. In this way, death becomes a birth on the other side. The birth and the resurrection of those who go to the earth with gems that cannot decay are easier and sweeter. The gems - faith, love, prayer<sup>539</sup>, fasting and praying... These gems are a window for pre-death ceremonies and beyond death. What good comes in denying this?<sup>540</sup>

Karakoç emphasises in every turn the belief that death is a difficult ordeal, or a test, which for the believer, for the Muslim, will be the greatest of gifts. Muslims, who believed, prayed, fasted, and performed all religious duties, will be given the gift of resurrection. Baş argues that for Karakoç, death is “a change, a definite metamorphosis for the transition from the world of relative existence to the world of absolute existence.”<sup>541</sup> Moreover, the secret of human existence is spoken by the thought of death and the afterlife, which is also the key to reaching resurrection. For Karakoç, “to be devoid of the thought of death means to be devoid of the thought of resurrection”<sup>542</sup> which in turn means the nonfulfilment of one's true existence. Resurrection, for Karakoç, is the ultimate call and fate for one to find oneself. He maintains that resurrection “fills the destiny of existence like a seed that solidifies [in this call]” and that “[i]t is the being that goes towards [finding] the essence [and] it is the essence that seeks its existence.”<sup>543</sup> All of these, for Karakoç, will be possible

---

<sup>539</sup> Prayer here is the translation of “namaz” which is among the five pillars of Islam and should not be confused with the act of praying.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>541</sup> Baş, Münire Kevser. *Diriliş'in Yapı Taşları: Sezai Karakoç'un Düşünce ve Sanatında Temel Kavramlar*. Lim Yayınları, 2015, pp. 251.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid, p. 252.

<sup>543</sup> Karakoç, 2010, p. 42.

with the experience of death. He “aims at a functional consciousness of death [and] to have a view of death that makes life meaningful.”<sup>544</sup> Thus, rebirth and resurrection, upon which Karakoç builds his ideology, political thought and worldview, should be achieved through performing what Islam commands and through dying and eventually death which is one of the key themes for existentialism. This is how Karakoç brings these two seemingly unrelated elements together and constructs a notion of Islamic existentialism within his own doctrine of the resurrection.

### 3.1.2 *Köpük*

*Köpük (Foam)*<sup>545</sup> is a standalone poem, which can be found in the fourth chapter of the poem collection of *Gün Doğmadan*, written in 1962-1967, entitled *Sesler (The Voices)*<sup>546</sup>. *Köpük* is a quintessential example of the Second New poetry, which is laden with obscure images, full emphasis on style, stream of consciousness technique and a thoroughly closed meaning.

In this poem, Karakoç deals with the theme of death extensively, and different from the other poems that are analysed in this chapter, touches upon the question of suicide:

[...]

*You, o poet, you crucified your hands and arms*

*The death that is the manager of the supernatural lives*

*Its newest invention is suicide*

---

<sup>544</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>545</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Köpük](#).

<sup>546</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Gün Doğmadan*. 19th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012, pp. 121-172.

Karakoç brings forth the subject of death for the poet, most probably himself, by using the metaphor of crucifixion which is the ultimate image of death and dying and also relates to religious belief. According to him, death manages, and executes, in both meanings of the verb, from a superior point, the supernatural lives i.e. life after death. The poet here transposes the idea that because death has this kind of a mission, it gathers all supernatural life to him by creating suicide so that the mission is successful and it receives more and more *lives* to manage ever and beyond. In these verses, Karakoç seems to use closed meaning in poetry as well as satire. As a conservative-Muslim poet and intellectual, Karakoç is steadfastly against the idea and act of suicide. He maintains

Suicide is the negative image of ‘dying before dying’. It is the negative [of the photograph] that those who perceive the need to die before dying have come to that state and cannot reach their belief, condition and culture. If death is defeated and the denial of [existing-in-] the beyond runs amok, suicide will come to the centre of humanity and will establish its kingdom there.<sup>547</sup>

Despite contrasting Camus’s philosophy of absurdism in his other essays, it can be argued that Karakoç was nonetheless influenced by Camus’s take on the subject of suicide. Suicide, for Camus, is a declaration that life has no significance or value, and this conclusion is reached as a result of the absurd and paradoxical encounter between “the individual’s desire to make sense of the struggles and sorrows of life and the apparent lack of an overarching meaning that would enable them to do so.”<sup>548</sup> In his philosophical essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus deals with the topic of suicide in-depth, saying that “there is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.”<sup>549</sup> In the preface he wrote in

---

<sup>547</sup> Ibid.

<sup>548</sup> Roberts, M., and E. Lamont. ‘Suicide: An Existentialist Reconceptualization’. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, vol. 21, 2014, p. 875.

<sup>549</sup> Camus, 2018, p. 4.

1955, he also argues that the essay “attempts to resolve the problem of suicide, [...] without the aid of eternal values which, temporarily perhaps, are absent or distorted in contemporary Europe.”<sup>550</sup> Furthermore, Camus’s attempt at discussing and resolving the problem of suicide requires no belief in God, religion, or any other spiritual guideline as “even if one does not believe in God, suicide is not legitimate” and “[w]ritten fifteen years ago, in 1940, amid the French and European disaster, this book declares that even within the limits of nihilism it is possible to find the means to proceed beyond nihilism.”<sup>551</sup> In a similar vein, Karakoç also denies the legitimacy of suicide, although he looks at the issue from a purely religious point of view: “not that there is a single sign of it, let us assume that there is no cure for death, for a moment. People should never die any more. What will happen then?”<sup>552</sup> he asks. Karakoç refuses that humans, as Sartre, Camus and other Western philosophers believed, are limited creatures that can only be described by the bookend acts of birth and death. He argues that “[w]e are not just a foam of the earth. We are not just a soil shortage that rises and sinks like a pimple on the earth.”<sup>553</sup> For him, as the conditions of this world are exceeded and transcended, the signs and initial traces of the next world surface, much as embers emerge from the bottom when ash is unearthed. God made humans in his own reflection, according to the Sufistic belief, and in Mevlânâ’s words, “[H]e has hidden the Sea and made the foam<sup>554</sup> visible, He has concealed the Wind and shown you the dust.”<sup>555</sup> Thus, Karakoç argues, humans cannot exist merely in the foam or dust of the earth, there needs to be more to achieve and to see, which will be possible when the grey rain-curtain of this world rolls back<sup>556</sup>, as it were, and the real reason of man’s existence will be unveiled in the

---

<sup>550</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

<sup>552</sup> Karakoç, *Ruhun Dirilişi*, p. 110

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Here, it is important to underline that the word *foam* (*köpük*) as used by Mevlana has affected Karakoç, who used the word in a similar meaning and also gives it as the title to the poem that is subject to this section.

<sup>555</sup> Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*. SUNY Press, 1983, p. 175.

<sup>556</sup> Walsh, Fran, et al. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. [Screenplay](#), 2003, p. 110.

afterlife. Therefore, if death as a certainty of life is *cured* and disappeared from human life, “it will be seen that suicide and murder are increased and become an epidemic. So much so that perhaps more people will die [by suicide and murder] and [dying a natural] death will become extremely attractive.”<sup>557</sup>

Camus examines the issue of suicide through Sisyphus, a Greek mythological hero who became famed for his general deception and twice eluded death. In his wrath, Zeus condemned him to a futile job of rolling a rock up to a mountain where the rock falls as soon as he reaches the top and needs to start the process over for eternity.<sup>558</sup> For Camus, Sisyphus is an absurd hero because “[h]is the scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing.”<sup>559</sup> For Karakoç, on the other hand, looking for the meaning and the glory of existence only in rebellion and resistance, just like Sisyphus does, was Camus’s only advice for the future of the humankind.<sup>560</sup> According to Karakoç, Camus tries to interpret the past and the existing in terms of person and humanity through his absurd hero but this cannot be enough. There should be more to human existence for him and the answer can be found in God’s own word, meaning the Qur’an. According to the principles of the Qur’an, resurrection after death entails re-entering the physical world for a better and more secure physical and spiritual existence. This is a “new existence in which the life in this world will be accounted as an overture, a new life in which the final boundaries of pleasure and misery can be achieved will be attained”<sup>561</sup> and this can be

---

<sup>557</sup> Camus, p.10.

<sup>558</sup> In *Odyssey*, Homer tells the punishment of Sisyphus as follows: “Aye, and I saw Sisyphus in violent torment, seeking to raise a monstrous stone with both his hands. <sup>[595]</sup> Verily he would brace himself with hands and feet, and thrust the stone toward the crest of a hill, but as often as he was about to heave it over the top, the weight would turn it back, and then down again to the plain would come rolling the ruthless stone. But he would strain again and thrust it back, and the sweat <sup>[600]</sup> flowed down from his limbs, and dust rose up from his head.” Homer. *Odyssey*, Book 11, Line 567. Translated by A.D. Murray, Harvard University Press, accessed 5 June 2022.

<sup>559</sup> Judaken, Jonathan, and Robert Bernasconi, editors. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*. Columbia University Press, 2012.

<sup>560</sup> Karakoç, Ruhun Dirilişi, p. 117.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

explained by believing in Qur'an's doctrines and also by Sufism. For Karakoç, Sufism wants to open the doors to the next world, the hereafter, while man is still in this physical world, by seeking the secret of life and death and examining the possibility of dying before death. This will give man the meaning of his existence through accepting his death and also his freedom<sup>562</sup> because man will assuredly be free in the life hereafter, once he truly reaches God.

Accepting that death has invented suicide to manage supernatural lives eternally, in the next stanza of *Köpük*, Karakoç says that death always reminds people of itself.

*Death draws you if your pipe is lit  
if you do not grow roses, death  
if the milky way were a jet trail, death  
dreams become memories of sewage  
a repaired bicarbonate day rises red  
twice a day, death does wink at me  
in the dawn and the dusk  
[...]*

In this heavy imagery of the poem, Karakoç transposes to the audience that people almost constantly think about death, himself included, becoming almost face to face with it by the vivid thought of it. Whatever the person seems to be doing, or not doing, death hovers above them and reminds itself of them. In the following verses, Karakoç writes that death constantly plans its plans, sometimes through its invention of suicide and thinks of humans, and because humans also almost always think of it, they start to see signs of death wherever they look. However, he maintains that suicide is useless and cannot be abode

---

<sup>562</sup> For a detailed discussion regarding the relationship between freedom, belief and Sufism, please see [chapter 4](#).

by. In opposition, humans need to act as if death is a celebration, in a similar vein to Mevlânâ Rumi. Rumi's death, to this day, is celebrated in *Şeb-i Arus* (*Wedding Night*) rituals commemorating his reunion with his divine lover i.e. God.

*Let's carry the bride's night to our bed  
Before death reaches our bed rupturing  
For now, this bed is the blessed bed  
Death is a hungry dog looking for us  
A dog barking most at dawn*

Thus, for Karakoç, if we desire true existence, it is absurd for us to seek for it here among the already existent things, within the foam and the dust of the world. By accepting that death is a gift given by God, humans must seek true existence there, in the afterlife, with Him.

### **3.1.3 *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine***

The last poem this section will analyse is another essential and well-known poem of Karakoç entitled *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine*<sup>563</sup> (*From the Exile Country to the Capital of Capitals*) where he is again preoccupied with the notion of death. Although not as eminent as *Monna Rosa* among the general public; for Karakoç scholars and the poet's followers, it is one of his most important works, which is laden with existentialist, as well as Islamic, imagery, even more palpable in this sense when compared to *Monna Rosa II*.

---

<sup>563</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, p. 425.

In the poetry collection mentioned above, Karakoç categorised this poem under the chapter *Zamana Adanmış Sözler (Words Dedicated to Time)*, which contains all his poems written between the years 1971-1974. The chapter is subtitled *8<sup>th</sup> Storm: Eternal Summer Storm, Storms of Destruction and Reconstruction of Soul and History*. The poems of this chapter deal with death through several metaphors and references to animals such as snakes and scorpions<sup>564</sup> which are often associated with destruction and darkness, reflecting the basic fears of humans; or through seasons such as autumn or winter which are often associated with the end of the life cycle, old age, and death.

*Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine*<sup>565</sup>, similar to *Monna Rosa*, is composed of four parts. The first two parts (divided not by titles but by roman numerals) are concerned with more material and existential trepidations, such as the anger and the memories of the once young poet who now remembers them as an older man:

I.

[...]

*Memories, the iron plaster of time*

*And, the dreams of youth*

*Crucify the poet's arms*

*And they calcify throughout the lines*

*Oh, old bone, oh old skin*

*And stretched between bone and skin*

*Are my soul's days of festivity*

*Oh, old bone, oh old skin*

*Are the hours of victory once thought to be defeat*

---

<sup>564</sup> *Snake, Scorpion, Autumn, and Winter* are titles of different poems which can be found under this 8<sup>th</sup> chapter.

<sup>565</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine](#).

Karakoç is reminded of his memories and the times of his youth, which are now no more than a dream to him, and seem just as far. Just at the very beginning of the poem, the audience encounters the imagery of crucifixion. Karakoç is a poet and a thinker who always deliberates on religion and while he is Muslim, he has extensive knowledge of Christianity and Judaism<sup>566</sup> and refers to prophets<sup>567</sup> including Jesus, Moses, and several others. Although a critical religious image, here crucifixion is used out of its religious meaning. It is understood that the memories of the poet's youth despair Karakoç and he feels bound to his old age where his words are now petrified even before they could become the poem, probably because he is faced with a truly human existential crisis, due to getting old and being closer to death. Nevertheless, it is worthy to ascertain that he preferred and selected the image of the crucifixion, even if it is used as merely a symbol, it cannot be thought of outside of its association with death.

The hopelessness of the poet can also be seen when he refers to his now decaying and perhaps dying body as old bone and old skin. He now finds the festive and happy days of his youth, the victories he mistook for defeats as young people often do, and the faded memories of old things that are only remembered when he looks at his old body.

Already from the beginning, this poem has the tone of despair, the hopelessness of the poet who is close to dying but is still alive. He has not yet faced death, which is an essential point in the flow of the poem, for, similar to *Ölüm ve Çerçeveler*, the poet first deals with the proximity of death and how it affects and frightens him. Then, again halfway through the poem, this anguish evolves into vivid imagery of the actuality of death. In this part, the poet still deals with how dying affects living beings:

---

<sup>566</sup> For Karakoç's analyses of Christianity and Judaism, as the Western religions, please see Karakoç, Sezai. *İslam*. 6th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1989.

<sup>567</sup> For more of Karakoç's emphasis on the importance of the prophets, please see [chapter 4](#).

III.

*The dead have come with hackberry vines*

*They climbed my walls, my strongholds*

*Some reflected in rivers*

*Some carved from rocks*

*Some distorted by the world after*

*A rotating funnel*

*Filled with death*

*When the sun rises*

*Cut from the faces, dead*

*A mosaic of miniatures*

*The moon touches our skin*

*With a cold shudder of the reaper grim*<sup>568</sup>

As the poet is still alive, first, the dead visit him with different apparitions, some are reflected in the rivers, some appear chiselled from rocks, and some are distorted by death and thus seem fearful. The imagery of the dead climbing to his walls and strongholds gives the impression that the dead are several in number, and they are, being similes of death, closing in. Although the poem does not state the time of day or the whereabouts of this phenomenon, consistent with the *Second New*'s obscurity rules, the audience can feel that it is nighttime and dark and gloomy. In addition, the rising sun image, thus the ending of the night, which is usually used as a symbol of hope, relaxedness, and light, works to the contrary. At last, for the poet, the funnel rotates and is filled with death, and in the small hours of the dawn, he sees the faces that are indeed dead, now seem like mosaic miniatures. Finally, the moon's fading

---

<sup>568</sup> Ibid, p. 429.

light is compared to the grim reaper<sup>569</sup>'s touch, which ultimately means the certainty of death.

Although the imagery associated with death in this poem can be considered dreadful, in his essays, Karakoç speaks about death with a more soothing tone, almost as if he embraces and welcomes it. He has a certain contemplation that sees what will become of the humans after they die and what would happen after the fact that they are faced with the initial horrors of it:

Each of us will embody death, one of the greatest unknowns, with its honey-coloured, bitter or sweet taste when the day comes. More precisely, we will taste that irresistible taste of death. Death itself is not pain, contrary to what we always think. The pain is in the physical disintegration, when the joints abandon their duties, when one bone lays down another bone, when the flesh is separated from the skeleton, and when the body becomes meaningless and absurd.<sup>570</sup>

Karakoç then touches upon the subject of absurdity through the reality of death, a subject, he studied through Camus and criticises its meaning, as it is understood in Camusean existentialism.

Pain stems from absurdity. Otherwise, death itself is not bitter but unbearably sweet. In death, there is a sweetness equal to the unbearable physical pain. As physical pain increases, death becomes sweeter [...]. For a moment, the “call of death” takes on a unique and irresistible appeal. Man is fascinated by the magic

---

<sup>569</sup> In the poem, Karakoç uses the word Azrail (Azrael) to indicated the grim reaper. Azrael, according to the Islamic belief, is the archangel of death. Similar to grim reaper, and probably affected by the Western depictions of the archangel of death, Azrael is often portrayed in black cloak, visible wings, and a reaping hook. Azrail is referred to in Qur'an's 32<sup>nd</sup> surah, As-Sajdah: “Say, [t]he angel of death who has been entrusted with you will take you. Then to your Lord, you will be returned.”, 32:11. [Surah As-Sajdah – 1:30](#). Accessed 9 Nov. 2021.

<sup>570</sup> Karakoç. “Görünmeyen”, p. 14.

of death, of the invisible, and he leaves this world in such temptation; he leaves it intoxicated with the unknown.<sup>571</sup>

As mentioned before, for Karakoç, the pain of death only arises because the dead body now belongs to another dimension and the human who observes this phenomenon gets alienated from the body, simply because it does not belong to this world anymore. The decaying of the body makes man suffer because he cannot make any meaning out of this phenomenon.

The absurdity, for Karakoç, lies only here and it cannot be attributed to the whole meaning of existence. In his essay entitled *Yaratılış Sırrı (The Secret of Creation)*, he criticises Camus for trying to replace everything with absurdity and putting absurdity in the centre of everything, rather than treating it as but one element of all Creation: “to explain life to be the condemnation to the absurd, that is, to understand Camus’s concept of an absurd world and existence as the meaning of creation, would be, above all, a mockery of the word *meaning*”<sup>572</sup>. Nevertheless, he does not disregard that there are absurdities in life but these need to be treated as a balancing element of life which “completes the mind, peace and harmony, and is useful for this integration, gaining a meaning as a counterpoint in the whole.”<sup>573</sup> Adding his belief system, i.e., Islam’s teachings, to the discussion, he concludes that among the dissonances and absurdities, “[t]he universe is in harmony with the whole. The solar system stands with intertwined harmonies and maintains its order. The stars, the moon, the sun, the earth all form the grand construction of universal harmony.”<sup>574</sup>

Karakoç never strays far from the notion of death. Even while speaking about Creation, and the mechanics and metaphysics of human existence, he returns to the notion of death and the afterworld.

---

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. “Yaratılış Sırrı” in *Ruhun Dirilişi*. Diriliş Yayınları, 2007, p. 93.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

Just as the mind progresses, it develops and becomes richer due to its opposition, conflict, and struggle not to be defeated by matter; the world and the order in the universe develop through internal fusions. The afterworld is won in this world.<sup>575</sup>

Therefore, the afterworld is understood in Karakoç's perspective as the ripened fruit the humans won through many ordeals they encountered and overcome so that they are able and worthy to reach the ultimate gift, or award, that is afterlife. This understanding and belief that earthly, and existential ordeals will bring about the long-awaited gift, that is death and afterlife is the central notion of the poem when it moves from the existential tribulations of the poet to the ones he longs for to have in the afterlife.

#### *IV.*

*From your heart, I was exiled first  
All of my exiles are in a way a spell of this exile  
Beyond all ceremonies, feasts, masses, and rituals,  
I came to you; I came to fall at your feet  
I came to apologize even though I am not worthy of forgiveness  
Do not delay my exile in this world*

For the poet, now the memories of youth, all festivities, ceremonies, and celebrations have lost their meaning. The notion of exile here can be attributed to being cast away, or *thrown* in Heideggerian terms, to this world, from God's bosom, the poet has had to live his life away from God and his presence, which is the ultimate exile for him. All of the other exiles, perhaps from his loved ones, family, work, and other earthly miseries are only an extension of this original exile and cannot be compared to it in magnitude. The audience sees the poet begging at the feet of an invisible being,

---

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

probably God Himself, asks for forgiveness, even though he is not worthy of God's eminent forgiveness, and to be taken back to His embrace, from whence he originally came.

This stanza shows an understanding of Sufistic, or divine, love. Karaca states, “[in this stanza] divine love comes to light. Almost a voice that is ‘maddened by love [for God]’ is heard.

*I saw the mountains fall in a Venus glass*  
*I have been sold like a slave in the Bazaar of bazaars*  
*I saw the sun turn yellow on the wall of Constantine*  
*I burned with your image adjacent to dreams*  
*It was your shadow, reflected in the fountain of the elixir of life*

In the first part of this stanza, the imageries, such as seeing the mountains fall, being sold as an enslaved person, seeing the sun turning yellow etc., can be interpreted as the man's journey in this world. The poet is the witness and the narrator of this journey. All material worries come to an end when the poet notices the fountain of the elixir of life, which is said to give men eternal and immortal life - for Karakoç, going beyond the belief that “the dialectic of history and existing is continuous progress” is inherently “optimistic. It is good. It is [the act of] believing in God. It is the belief that man will progress, giving absolute value to the beautiful and the truth.”<sup>576</sup> This verse acts as a bridge between the previous verses and the next ones, when the poet startles by the shadow he sees and is surrounded by the thought of the dead, leaving the past journey of the man behind.

---

<sup>576</sup> Karakoç, *Ölümün Sebebi*, p. 8.

*In this moment when the thought of death is engulfing me  
In fear of the unaccounted deeds - I came to you,  
I came to fall at your feet I came to apologize even though I am not worthy of  
forgiveness  
Dear  
Dearest  
O beloved!  
Do not delay my exile in this world*

Notably, the second verse of the second part of the stanza mentions the “fear of the unaccounted.” The audience gets the impression that the poet is now talking about something more significant than himself or any potential historical events. In a sense, the shadow he had previously seen on the elixir of life solidified and grew more significant than himself; he began to feel terrified of it because he could not put an earthly explanation on it. Then, the stanza comes to a close with a full circle, continued to be laden with heavy imagery in line with the Second New style, when the poet starts to beg at the feet of God, again, to become one with him in the afterlife. Karaca<sup>577</sup> argues that in this part of the poem, “[t]he bewilderment and anguish of having been separated from one’s lover [i.e. God] are intertwined; now the individual has forgotten himself, stripped of his substance and the world; the world has shrunk.” In other words, at this point of the poem, the poet wishes to reach to God’s bosom, to be rescued from his exile, and nothing more.

*What news from the birds in your country  
Even from the tombs, a spring rises  
So what if there is an assassin of love as long as there is a lover  
And there is an Absolute beyond nothing and everything ever  
[...]*

---

<sup>577</sup> Karaca, Hünkâr. ‘Zamana Adanmış Sözler “Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine” Şiirine Bir Bakış’. Türk Dili, vol. 68, no. 791, Nov. 2017, pp. 18–28.

The poem closes with descriptions that remind the audience of death. The poet's feelings regarding his impending death are perceptible, but the emotion of death predominates over the feeling of life. In other words, the poet does not fear the unknown anymore but embraces death in a Sufistic manner, saying that spring is rising from the tombs. The poet does not care if there is death as long as there is hope to get together with one's lover. Karaca argues that "Only a surrendered soul can reach this feeling, and, according to [the poet], death means reuniting with [his] true lover."<sup>578</sup>

It is also important to highlight that in the last verse, Karakoç ends the poem by mentioning that there is an Absolute being who exists beyond nothing and everything, describing Allah. Absolute is a word that denotes God. The exile in the poem ends with a reunion with God, and the poem is concluded with unwavering optimism. The poem ends with verses that imply that to be an exile is to be in the world. Karakoç himself, in an essay, states that "to see death with a visionary eye, to look beyond death... This is our occupation, the new existence we call"<sup>579</sup>. Thus, for him, to grasp the reality beyond and willing to go beyond death is the soldier of resurrection's duty:

### **3.2 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to illustrate that Karakoç uses the concept of death in its existential roots in his poems and essays, along with the notions of angst and despair, indicating that humans feel fear and alienation when meeting the reality of death. According to Karakoç, this realisation allows people to transcend their existence by pushing people to break out of their daily routine and have a jarring and abrupt contact with eternity. However, this encounter is optimistic because, in the end, dying is a journey and a way for the believer to go beyond the foam and dust of this world and see a more affluent life that awaits and is promised in the afterlife. According to

---

<sup>578</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>579</sup> Karakoç, *Ölümün Sebebi*, p.10.

Karakoç, this investigation is about death itself and realising that death exists will help humans to believe in an afterlife.

The resurrection ideology of Karakoç seeks existence through heart- and mind-directed action. People are ready to believe in resurrection or revival when they recognise death as an inevitable aspect of existence. Resurrection is thus defined in Karakoç's writings as a movement that starts with humans themselves and returns to the core of history, society, and civilisation. Therefore, death will serve as a prelude for the Muslim who believes; that it will purify the soul and bring about a pure religion, Islam. Karakoç repeatedly asserts that believing in a hereafter is to trust in the advancement of humanity, which leads to a complete belief in Allah. Death itself is an evaluation of the living conditions that follow death. The ideas of death, love, religion, etc., are presented in Karakoç's writings and poetry as principles that would lead people to revert to sacred existential forms and re-join their self-awareness.

Getting to the truth of the death issue is substantial in Karakoç's thought of resurrection and his personal life. This issue, which he considers the most significant dilemma of modern man, forms the basis of his intellectual journey. The concept of *resurrection*, which defines Karakoç's entire intellectual journey, is also used in the context of death and resurrection. In his own words<sup>580</sup>, “the concept of resurrection is the Turkish expression of *bâ'su ba'del mevt*, which means resurrection after death.”

This chapter puts forward a discussion on how Karakoç investigates the concept of death in relation to reaching resurrection and the afterlife, which is the true and promised life for the Muslim. The discussion is carried out by analysing three poems of Karakoç. While *Monna Rosa II - Ölüm ve Çerçeveler* captures Karakoç's perspective on the veracity of dying and the transcendent nature of death, underlining his Sufistic beliefs and rejecting that the existentialist idea that there is nothing outside of the world into which humans are born; *Köpük* deals with the question of suicide. Although his perspective has similarities with that of Camus on this matter, Karakoç approaches the topic from a purely religious perspective. Karakoç rejects the

---

<sup>580</sup> Enser, p. 204.

legitimacy of suicide and insists that, contrary to what Sartre, Camus, and other Western philosophers believed, people are not merely finite beings whose existence can be summed up by birth, death, and their life in between. Karakoç argues that the purpose of this limited life on Earth is accepting that death is a way to reach freedom since, once he fully encounters God, man will enjoy freedom in the afterlife. Lastly, *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine* deals with the feeling of exile as Karakoç points out that humans live a life which is existence apart from God and his presence, which is the ultimate exile for him, which might be attributed to being cast away, or thrown to use the Heideggerian terminology, to this world from God's bosom. In other words, the poet accepts death in a Sufistic fashion rather than fearing the unknown and treats dying as a joyful deed because it would imply becoming one with God, the ultimate goal of the Muslim in this World, and that death is a gift bestowed by God.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4 FREEDOM

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”<sup>581</sup>*

*“Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers.”<sup>582</sup>*

*“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”<sup>583</sup>*

This chapter aims to explain that the concept of freedom, as it is understood in Western philosophies or with its political connotations in Western societies, is a phenomenon discussed in a different manner in Karakoç’s poems or essays. Karakoç’s relationship between freedom and liberation is connected to religious belief,

---

<sup>581</sup> *Holy Bible*. John 13:34. New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#).

<sup>582</sup> *The Qur’an*. Surah Al-Mai’dah, 5:54. [Qur’an.com](#).

<sup>583</sup> Frankl, Victor E. *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press, 2006.

particularly Sufism. Sufism (*tasavvuf*) can shortly be described as the spiritual and inner lifestyle lived within the framework of Islam's external and internal rules. For Karakoç, the only way to reach a true living, and thus true liberty and freedom, is to love God and follow his laws i.e. the external and internal rules of Islam as revealed in the prophets and, eventually, in the Qur'an. As discussed in [Chapter 2](#) in detail, the French existentialist thought, on the other hand, defines freedom as a lucid choice and transcendence rather than acting on rational terms. Sartre states, "if indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism – man is free, man is freedom."<sup>584</sup> An atheist, Sartre refuses that there is a divine meaning to human life or that God gives a purpose for man to live his life accordingly. He also is opposed to secular moralism, which defends that all actions of good faith, to be an honest person, not to lie and cheat, should come as an obligation to man because it simply is "obligatory *a priori*", not because it was made obligatory by God. Existentialists take the discussion one step further and argue that because there is no God, everything is permitted to man and that there are no "good values" set for him nor do these values come to him inherently: "[i]f God does not exist, [we are not] provided with any values or commands that could legitimise our behaviour. [...]. We are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free."<sup>585</sup>

By leaving God and any kind of divine intervention out of the equation, it can be argued that Sartre holds man responsible for all his actions and claims that he is condemned and forsaken. Because from the moment "he is *thrown* into this world, he is responsible for everything he does"<sup>586</sup>, there is no fate nor a power of passion upon which he can blame his actions, and "whatever man may now appear to be, there is a future to be fashioned, a virgin future that awaits him"<sup>587</sup>. Therefore, all the choices he makes will make a future for him; thus, the future is still malleable while he is abandoned in the present. For Sartre and the existentialists, only the person and his

---

<sup>584</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Yale University Press, 2007, p.11.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

feelings and choices are to be counted when facing a dilemma or any kind of confrontation and only through his actions and choices could man reach his true freedom.

#### 4.1 Freedom, Divine Love and Sufism

Karakoç, as a conservative Muslim and a dedicated Sufi, sees himself as a disciple of Mevlânâ Rumi and Yunus Emre; and understands and treats freedom along the same lines as Sufism. Sufism believes that humans are created in the likeness of God himself, and for Karakoç, too, “[the human] existence was made possible with love.”<sup>588</sup> Shapoo states “Sufis seek to associate themselves with God explicitly - not to become Gods, but to completely unite their individual consciousness and identity with God, whose existence is both transcendent and immanent”<sup>589</sup>, and “[t]he immanence of God is manifested in his love for mankind”<sup>590</sup> which in turn manifests as *wahdet-i wujûd* (unity of being) for the Sufis as the last level of *tawhid*. Simply put, *tawhid* is “the unity and singularity of God [and that] His lordship is indivisible and God’s domain alone, and attempts by men to impinge on his absolute Lordship, such as acting as mediators between the divine and the rest of the humanity, undermines *tawhid*.”<sup>591</sup> For Sufis, *tawhid* has “a pantheistic sense, i.e. all essences are divine, and there is no absolute existence besides that of God.”<sup>592</sup> *Tawhid* has three levels where the man connects his will with that of Allah. In the first two levels, there is a duality between Allah and the universe. At the last and highest level, that is *wahdet-i wujûd*, this duality disappears and a perfect unity comes into existence. At this level where unity is accepted in terms of existence as well as in will and observation, man [as Allah’s subject] realizes that no existence other than Allah actually exists.” According

---

<sup>588</sup> Karakoç, Mevlâna.

<sup>589</sup> Shapoo, Sajid. [The Understanding of Tawhid in Sufi Classical Period](#). June 2018, p. 220.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid, p. 215.

<sup>592</sup> Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "tawhid". [Encyclopedia Britannica](#).

Accessed 18 January 2022.

to İbnü'l-Arabî<sup>593</sup>, “the realm of beings is nothing but the manifestation of Allah, who is the only being in terms of *essence*, in tangible *beings* as a requirement of divine love and personal love.”<sup>594</sup>

The relationship between love in the Sufistic sense and liberation can be found in the early Sufistic literature. Lumbard argues that Sufis see “love as the essence of God and the substance from which all else is woven”<sup>595</sup> and “it is of the utmost importance that one realizes the love of God [...] because true salvation lies in love for God.”<sup>596</sup> Then, through realising the love of God, man can be truly free in reaching his love in the eternal life hereafter: “the happiest of mankind in the hereafter are those who are strongest in love for God; for the meaning of the hereafter is reaching God and realising the happiness of meeting Him.”<sup>597</sup> Furthermore, Artıran claims that “freedom in Sufi interpretation is to be released from the bondage of worldly needs and desires and to discover a certain balance between the physical and the spiritual or the *outward appearance* and the *inner meaning*.”<sup>598</sup> Similarly, Karakoç states that he believes that man is free as long as he believes in God<sup>599</sup>

I believe that the person who believes in God is free. Only Allah can save a person from the things that put chains around a person's neck, from others, from people and things deified by people. That is, only God can set man free. Denial is bondage; belief is freedom.

---

<sup>593</sup> Muhyiddin İbnü'l-Arabî (1165-1240) was a Muslim scholar, mystic, and poet who is widely accepted as the Sufi scholar who made the Sufistic thought into a systematic philosophy in relation to both *tawhid* and other issues.

<sup>594</sup> Türer, Osman. [Ana Hatlarıyla Tasavvuf Tarihi](#). Ataç Yayınları, 2011, p. 221.

<sup>595</sup> Lumbard, Joseph E. ‘From Hubb To ‘Ishq: The Development of Love In Early Sufism’. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2007, p. 351.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid*, p. 382.

<sup>597</sup> Hamid in *ibid*.

<sup>598</sup> Artıran, H. Nur. [Sufism and Freedom](#). 2009. Tariqa Alawyyia, Mostaganem.

<sup>599</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*. 6th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1995, p. 8.

Similarly, Mevlânâ Rumi, in *Mesnevi*, proclaims that whoever is freed from his earthly bondage with the force of the Divine Love is unaffectedly free. He found himself liberated from all worldly desires that made him captive once he accepted that he was God's servant, and "the six directions and five senses were pronounced irrelevant"<sup>600</sup>. He was liberated from all attachments and found existence in non-existence, i.e. in God's existence and utter obedience.

Every enslaved [person] rejoices when liberated. Oh God, I am so happy that I am your servant; I am so joyous. [...] Those liberated from hatred, anger, violence, wrath and other negative and harmful feelings consider themselves genuinely free.<sup>601</sup>

In Rumi, achieving actual existence and thus true liberation stems from "the primary goal of ascetic discipline and spiritual warfare: the elimination or transformation of the ego, which veils man from perceiving and actualising his true selfhood."<sup>602</sup> The *existence (wujûd)*<sup>603</sup> and *ego* are used interchangeably in Rumi's poetry and prose, and "find his true Self; man must pass beyond his illusory self"<sup>604</sup> because, in reality, the only existence belongs to God.

If we place our existence next to his Existence, ours is seen to be completely derived from His, such that we have no existence. We have received a ray of His Being's light, and soon that ray will be

---

<sup>600</sup> Artiran.

<sup>601</sup> *Mesnevi* volumes 1 and 2 as quoted in Artiran.

<sup>602</sup> Chittick, p. 173.

<sup>603</sup> TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi states that in Islamic theology's metaphysics and logic, the existence is always considered in terms of the nature of existence, i.e. being, and its presence in the mind. Wujûd, which means "existing outside the mind", is essentially existing, therefore "talking about it means talking about the existing. Therefore, the subject of metaphysics is not mere spiritual existence but existence in terms of physical being. The first of this pair of concepts is universal, abstract and mental, the second is the existence of the first in the objective world outside the mind. 'Vücûd'. [TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi](#),. Accessed 6 June 2022.

<sup>604</sup> Chittick, p. 173.

drawn back to its Source. Hence what outwardly appears existent is really nonexistent, and what seems to be nonexistent is really Existence.<sup>605</sup>

Karakoç's understanding of existence is in a similar vein. He proclaims that the everlasting light in his life has been the light and illumination that stemmed from believing in God. He maintains that he "can only risk living and dying for the sake of this belief, interfering with the space, entering the time, or rather establishing a dialogue with time and space" and for him, it is this belief that is "love for me. It is the way. It is the meaning. It is the sound. It is the cause. It is the Existence."<sup>606</sup> Finding man's true calling for freedom in the Sufistic creed, Karakoç refuses Sartre's man, *condemned* to be free, with all responsibilities of now and in the future lying on his shoulders, without any higher authority to turn to. For Karakoç, the true liberation of man will arise from his love towards God, and he will follow the way of Islam by executing the five pillars that the Qur'an and the Prophet ordered. Thus, he will reach the true meaning of his existence, the absolute love for God. Any other forms of love, love for one's mother, love for one's beloved, love for animals, and the like, are "preparatory steps for the true love, worthy of eternity. The heart and soul, which has passed all these steps, reaches absolute love, the love of God, and becomes attached to it."<sup>607</sup> In other words, *a priori* obligation to love one another does come inherently for Karakoç, as opposed to Sartre, but secular moralism is not in itself sufficient for him either. Because Sufism is the whole of the moves in people's thoughts, beliefs and behaviours that show the disciples [of the Sufi order] by opening the door to the other world from this world, the love man has for God will carry him, the believer, to the other world.

Similarly, Karakoç treats love and affection as a spiritual existence in his poetry. In his poems, love and the states of love are essential values and images to be possessed

---

<sup>605</sup> Ibid, p. 175.

<sup>606</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*. 6th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1995, p. 8.

<sup>607</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Mevlâna*. 5th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012., p.37.

for the sake of man's liberation. According to him, "love and affection are means to reach beyond time, space, object and subject."<sup>608</sup>

Therefore, what existentialist thought describes as freedom becomes liberation in Karakoç's works, who argues liberation is only possible to achieve with divine love as "[t]he noblest creature created by God (human), holding on to life with his roots, finds love as the secret of [his] existence."<sup>609</sup> For Karakoç, Sufism enables people to get closer to the afterlife, where, after many trials and the tests the soul is put through; it will stand tall in front of God. Karakoç explains "[b]y searching for this secret of life and death, by probing the possibility of dying before death, Sufism wants to open the doors of the next world, while [we are] still in this physical world" because "[i]f real existence is fire, this world is its ashes", and man will see the real-life in its glory and abundance when he passes to the afterlife when he is resurrected, by God's will, after death.

For Karakoç, Sartre's existentialism needs to be applauded because it looks on at the epoch, ponders about the period he lived in, and it was the Second World War that made him into who he was as "this generation has been brought [by war] to the point of seeing and holding onto their own existence or non-existence."<sup>610</sup> However, for Karakoç, Sartre's atheistic and human-centric philosophy is "the metaphysics of mistrust, the system of [an] excessive caution. Although such caution is only one condition of existence, in Sartre, it is in itself the existence."<sup>611</sup> Karakoç criticises Sartre for reducing the meaning of existence to only this life (life as we know it in this world, after birth and before death), "not only did he deny fate, he also did not want to recognise external circumstances"<sup>612</sup> while making the man "a vague line between two spaces."<sup>613</sup> Karakoç, in his Sufistic stance and his adamant search for God, with the

---

<sup>608</sup> Şahin, Veysel. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Kur(t)uluş Değerleri ve Diriliş Estetiği'. [Mecmua Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi](#), vol. 2, no. 3, Spring 2017, p. 32.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> Karakoç, Edebiyat Yazıları II, p. 124.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

<sup>612</sup> Karakoç, "Ölümden Sonra Kalkış" in *Ruhun Dirilişi*. Diriliş Yayınları, 2007, p. 114.

<sup>613</sup> Karakoç, "Yaratılış Sırrı" in *ibid* p. 93.

love he has for God, argues that religion gives a great sublimity to the meaning of man”<sup>614</sup>, in other words, it gives his life both *a priori* and *a posteriori* meaning. Following the path of religion and belief will bring man to the truth, and it will be possible through following the heart, where we find love and humility. In Karakoç’s words

Starting with a pure and clean heart [...] [one] can rise to the soul's strength and right thoughts. The heart will lead the believer to humility. Humility is the foundation and root of morality [and] the heart is the home of love. The home of God’s love. The heart thus becomes the centre point of the soul, reason and morality.<sup>615</sup>

Placing the divine love in the centre to reach God’s love and from there to reason and morality is how Karakoç utilises the existential concept of freedom in Islamic existentialism. As Sufism, Karakoç also argues that “[m]an is a work of imitation. To find God means to rise from this imitation to reality” because “[e]xistence begins with God. We can only explain existence with Him because only He can be alone. It is He who creates non-existence.”<sup>616</sup> Thus, man can truly exist only by realising God, which will happen once he is resurrected by him, his resurrection will be the key that can, in turn, be reached through divine love. As Şahin states “[a]ccording to Karakoç, the anatomy of love is man’s turning to himself, discovering God and his own freedom.”<sup>617</sup>

Divine love as a means to the liberation of the soul, death, afterlife, and resurrection phenomena are, thus, four main themes that are interwoven in Karakoç’s poems within the wider context of freedom and love. The below analyses of three of his most prominent works, *Hızır la Kırk Saat*, *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, and *Esir Kent*, aim to show

---

<sup>614</sup> op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>615</sup> Karakoç. Mevlâna, p. 30.

<sup>616</sup> Karakoç, p. 13.

<sup>617</sup> Şahin, p. 32.

that the poet deal with these concepts, especially love and liberation through God's love as seen in the Sufistic thought.

#### 4.1.1 *Hızır'la Kırk Saat*

Karakoç has several epic poems, each published as separate books, including *Hızır'la Kırk Saat (Forty Hours with Khidr)*, *Taha'nın Kitabı (Book of Taha)*, and *Leylâ ile Mecnun (Leylâ and Mecnun)*, where he applies the Sufistic connotations of freedom, love and liberation through mystical characters such as *Hızır*, *Taha*, *Leylâ* and *Mecnun*. *Hızır'la Kırk Saat* which "touches on important events in the history of Islam and religions, prophets, human beings, angels, goodness, evil, historical changes, the states and contradictions of society"<sup>618</sup> is the first poem to be analysed from a mystical and Sufistic point of view towards liberation through divine love.

In the Islamic belief, Hızır (Khidr) is "a person who lived in the time of Moses and was taught divine knowledge and wisdom"<sup>619</sup> as well as "one of those who lived for a long time in history by being treated as a mythological personality and will continue to live until the doomsday"<sup>620</sup> according to reliable hadith sources as well as history and mysticism books. For some Sufis, Hızır is still alive as he drank the *elixir of life (bengisu)*, another prominent theme Karakoç uses in his poetry. Bursevî states "Sufis agree that Hızır is alive. There are many stories about Sufis seeing and talking to him in holy places, learning some information from him, asking him some questions and getting answers."<sup>621</sup> Hızır, thus, remains a folkloric personage in the Islamic

---

<sup>618</sup> Öksüz, Mert. 'Modern Kelime ve İmgeler Arasında Hızır'la Kırk Saat'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 87.

<sup>619</sup> "Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi, Hızır maddesi," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, accessed October 8, 2021, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/Hızır>.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Kesebir, Ensar. 'Hızır'la Kırk Saat ve Modernleşme Vurgusu'. *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 29, Apr. 2015, pp. 247–57.

traditions, who is to this day kept alive through the Hıdırellez celebrations<sup>622</sup>. Taha, on the other hand, is a title of one of the Qu’ran *surahs*<sup>623</sup> which starts simply by saying “Tâ-hâ” in the first verse or *ayah*. According to one (widely accepted) Qur’an interpretation, “these are not two separate letters, but a word with meaning [...] which means ‘o person, o human!’ in some dialects of Arabic.”<sup>624</sup>

Karakoç’s selection and use of such names and mystical characters in such epic poems create the epitome of his work and link his understanding of Islam and God similar to that of Sufism especially when we take the Qu’ran into account which “contains many verses of prominent mystical character that support and echo the Sufis’ realisations”<sup>625</sup> in itself. In other words, it would be more accurate to define Karakoç’s poetry as one that was “embodied by the poet based on mysticism and inspired by him who deeply understood, incorporated and internalised Sufism.”<sup>626</sup> Thus, we can argue that although Karakoç’s work does not explain the teachings and understandings of Sufism to this philosophy’s greater extent, Sufism and the Sufistic understanding of God and His connection between his subjects through divine love remains a very important element in Karakoç’s poetry.

Within Karakoç’s collection of poems, *Hızır la Kırk Saat*<sup>627</sup> consists of the fifth chapter, with a subheading that reads *The Fifth Rainstorm: The Rainstorm of Flux*.

---

<sup>622</sup> Hıdırellez initially celebrates the arrival of spring. In Turkish language, months from May to November divide the year into “Khidr months” where the weather gets warm and the plants grow. From November to May, conversely, are “Kasım (literally meaning ‘division’) months” where plants die or go to sleep during cold winter months. Hıdırellez is still widely observed each May 6th in Turkey where people write their thoughts and wishes onto a piece of paper. This paper is then either buried in the soil of a rose plant or released into the water. People believe that Khidr receives their wishes that night and makes them come true.

<sup>623</sup> Qur’an is comprised of 114 *surahs* (chapters) which are further divided into *ayahs* (verses).

<sup>624</sup> ‘[Tâhâ Suresi Tefsiri](#)’. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Accessed 21 Mar. 2021.

<sup>625</sup> Loutfy and Berguno, p. 144.

<sup>626</sup> Yıldız, Ali. “Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirlerinde Tasavvuf.” 38. *Icanas Bildirileri*, 2008, pp. 1861.

<sup>627</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Hızır la Kırk Saat](#).

*The night journey of the nation for the elixir of life*<sup>628</sup>. Contrary to the other chapters analysed above, this chapter contains one poem and consistent with its subheading the poem covers different subjects through the concepts of travelling and journey. Öksüz argues that

The novelty of *Hızır ile Kırk Saat* in terms of content is that the stories follow each other. The use of the senses, subconscious, time and space jump by breaking the event ring that [eventually] make the [whole] event. The central striking aspect of the poem is that it tells what is learned from parables and other religious texts with modern and unconventional words and images.<sup>629</sup>

The poem was written in two months in 1967 and consists of forty parts compiled in one book. Similar to Sufis believing that Hızır is still alive and that he speaks to them, Karakoç also speaks with Hızır in writing this poem.

I wrote my poem called *Hızır ile Kırk Saat*, in May and June 1967, in a country cafe among the rocks, by the sea, in Yenikapı. For about forty days, in the afternoon, I finished the book there for an hour or two, listening to the sound of sea waves crashing against the shore and writing one part of the poem at a time. That's why I named the poem *Hızır ile Kırk Saat*: It was as if I had made an appointment with Hızır there, and each time I went, I returned with a chapter that was the fruit and gift of this appointment.<sup>630</sup>

According to some interpretations, Hızır, who is one of the earthly prophets<sup>631</sup>, lives in the sea and thus Karakoç has had an *appointment* with him next to the sea in

---

<sup>628</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. Gün Doğmadan. 19th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012. pp.173-296.

<sup>629</sup> Öksüz, p. 90.

<sup>630</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. Edebiyat Yazıları III: Eğik Ehramlar. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011, p.22.

<sup>631</sup> Some stories say four prophets are still alive. Two of them, Idris and Jesus live in the heavens and two, Khidr and Elijah, live on earth. However, there are some Sufis and Sufi scholars that do not accept Khidr as a prophet and rather a guardian, similar to a saint. For more information on

Yenikapı while writing the poem which took him approximately forty hours to write. Here, it is also significant to note that Karakoç has chosen forty as a number in the title. In Islamic tradition, forty is a particular number similar to three and seven. There are many traditions in Islamic culture involving the number forty, such as the forty readings of the Qu’ran (*hatim*) from start to finish, the forty readings of the hadiths, the celebration or remembrance of the fortieth day after someone’s birth or death, and the like.

Throughout the forty parts of the poem, at times Hızır speaks to the reader, and at times Karakoç takes over. The poem can be complicated to read at times because of the different subjects, places, and people, with Hızır’s leading role providing “a mixed order of transitions between times and places in poetry, disconnected parts, perceptions, determinations or criticisms.”<sup>632</sup> The very same role, however, brings all these seemingly disconnected pieces together and creates unity within the entirety of the poem.

At the beginning of the poem, Hızır tells his story to the audience, and the leitmotif that is felt is overly pessimistic; he complains about how he cannot find what he seeks wherever he goes because humans have lost their faith in God:

2.

*O green-turbaned great teachers,*

*You did not teach me this*

*[...]*

*I reached the times when the ruler begs to the people for his reign*

---

this please see: Necmettin Bardakçı, “İsmail Hakkı Bursevi’nin Musa-Hızır Kıssası Yorumunun İlim-Marifet Uygunluğu Açısından Değerlendirmesi,” Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, no. 5 (1998): 82–103.

<sup>632</sup> Öksüz, p. 88.

*Whilst he committed unparalleled atrocities*  
*You didn't tell me this*  
*People flew through the air but they died on the ground*  
*You didn't teach me this*  
*[...]*

Hızır is a symbolic figure who is sent to Earth where he distributes the graces of God to the people. From the beginning of the poem, Hızır protests about how he was not taught about modern times by the teachers of old which is consistent with Karakoç's criticisms concerning modernity in general and Western values of modernity in particular. Although he is ready to start doing his duty (the beginning of the poem introduces Hızır and why he is sent to earth to the audience), he immediately witnesses the rulers who require the votes of their subjects to reign over them but at the same time, they are still not accountable for their actions, not in the eyes of men and not in the eyes of the divine. In these modern times, people forgot about God, and the graces of Him, and they do not leave according to His rules. They have their aircraft, an important symbol of modernity, however, they still die normal, ordinary deaths. Kenebir states "although people have the luxury of flying in the air, building giant towers, plazas and living in skyscrapers; it takes only a strong earthquake to cause the collapse of these hundreds of metres of towers."<sup>633</sup> For Karakoç, the reason humanity is unhappy, pessimistic, and depressed should be sought in this co-dependence on modernity. He attributes these challenges to humanity to the destruction of the West in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and to the Western philosophy which ascertained its unilateral dominance by ignoring the Eastern spirit and Islam.

The themes of existentialism are intertwined in this part, where Karakoç remarks on death and its inevitability for humans while he writes about Hızır as a symbol to reach God through love and thus, divine liberation. As discussed in the previous chapter, humans are still subjected to death and they cannot (and could not) overcome this,

---

<sup>633</sup> Kenebir, p. 250.

however modern their lives would be. This is consistent with Karakoç's criticisms against the rationality which Western modernity accepts with the belief that *God is dead*. Karakoç argues "[w]hen Nietzsche said that *God is dead*, he was not mistaken in diagnosing a death but in the object of death. [...] Nietzsche was wrong: it was the soul that died, not God."<sup>634</sup> Thus, Karakoç simply refuses that God can be subjected to such a human concept, that is death:

While the spirit was dying on the crucifix of death, it reluctantly pointed to the dictatorial power of fate: Instead of saying that it was itself that was dead, it was God who was dead. [The spirit] saw itself so destroyed that [it] replaced the one who killed as punishment for the one who killed as atonement. This is the psychology of the criminal.

Thus, Karakoç criticises the way Western modern and rational thought has been mistaken when it tried to renounce the existence of God. For him, centralising the human mind among everything else was wrong and it has stemmed from the process of modernity. According to him, "this is a wrong interpretation of rationality; the real essence of rationality should be explained as that all existence happens with God."<sup>635</sup> Karakoç explains this by arguing that Nietzsche as well as the other philosophers and authors of these modern times keep replacing the old world with the new world without thinking about going beyond this material world. These philosophers and thinkers do not see "death as a beginning"<sup>636</sup> On the contrary, Sufistic thought does just that, it places the thought of God in a correct epistemological way where God is everywhere and every time, and since "the person who carries this thought shapes every stage of his life according to the divine, God directly enters every moment of life 'ready and omnipresent'". Carrying this understanding into his poetry, Karakoç reflects God as the permeating and determining idea within the poetry even when he does not openly speak about God. This understanding allows Karakoç to replace and

---

<sup>634</sup> Karakoç, *Ruhun Dirilişi*, p. 10.

<sup>635</sup> Enser, Ramazan. "Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirinde Tanrı Kavramının Tasavvuf Epistemolojisi Açısından Anlamı ve Kullanımı." *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 11, 2018, p. 194.

<sup>636</sup> *Ruhun Dirilişi*, p. 122.

repair the misconception of God is dead, which has become a proverb of modern times.

The beginning of *Hızır la Kırk Saat* can be read with this understanding in mind, where Karakoç criticises the modern times where humans become unfriendly and hostile because they forgot about God.

*I passed through another city  
They were burning the wheat  
The rice they ate  
They were blowing like pipes leading into each other  
Then, like pipes, they came out of each other  
They were propagating like rice  
I found their horses, only their horses friendly  
I kissed their manes and left*

HIZIR, as a missionary from God Himself, complains about the fact that humans forget about God altogether and become too interested in worldly pleasures. This is seen in the pipe imagery that can be interpreted as a sexual motif. Karakoç, through HIZIR, is bothered by “[t]he inequality between men and women of the time, the corrosive effects of politics, and the modern forms of idolisation/tabooing.”<sup>637</sup> Moreover, Karakoç here does not speak about love or liberation, on the contrary, he sternly criticises what cities and people have become with the loss of these values. The horses which HIZIR treats with love and compassion can be interpreted as an imagery of the freedom which cannot be found in these God-forsaken cities anymore.

As discussed above, the most prominent leitmotifs in the entirety of the poem are prophets, angels, the life and important events of the Prophet Muhammad, and God.

---

<sup>637</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

Through these subjects and people, Karakoç discusses the liberation motifs, as seen in part 32 of *Hızır ile Kırk Saat* which deliberates on the conceptualisation and observation of God through the Prophet's eyes and how to reach him through love and, consequently, divine liberation. It is essential to underline that Karakoç utilises the imagery of the Prophet since for him "[t]he Prophet is a great person who makes the belief in Allah manifest in the middle of the society."<sup>638</sup> It is also important that the Ascension of Muhammad appears towards the end of the poem since Karakoç believes that Muhammad, as Islam's prophet is "the supreme human being and the prophet" while "it was with Abraham that humanity was cut off from the dim belief and called to a clear and distinct belief" on which Moses builds his religion and with Jesus "the possible deepening of the belief in God in man is tried." It was with Muhammad, that finally, the "way of Allah is determined in an eternal form."<sup>639</sup> Thus Prophets carry the motifs of liberation within themselves while acting as the saviours of humanity. With the Ascension as the subject, Karakoç underlines the fact that rejoining with God was possible through love for the last prophet.

*Then,*

*Refref<sup>640</sup> also stopped and fell back*

*The Prophet passed forward*

*Forward, forward from the columns*

*Forward from the stone statues*

*Forward beyond words*

*Forward head from the east, the sunrise*

*Forward beyond the heart*

*Beyond thought*

---

<sup>638</sup> Karakoç, *Islam*, p. 32.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>640</sup> According to Islamic Encyclopedia, Refref means "flapping wings, fluttering in the air to land" which derives from the root *refif* meaning to shine. Refref also means "the bird's flutter in the air or the movement of its wings by spreading it when it will land" and is attributed to Prophet's mount (burak) in the ascension as a kind of ladder or wings of an angel.

*It was only love; love was his cloak  
And a mother's hand drying his forehead  
Then he saw and knew the Visible  
The invisible Visible<sup>641</sup>.*

Karakoç here describes *Miraç* (Ascension) where, according to Islam, Prophet Muhammad has ascended to Heaven on his horse, met with the prophets and spoke to God. It is significant to underline that the Ascension is depicted as a *night journey*, the same description can be found in the sub-heading of this poem (*the night journey of the nation for the elixir of life*). Karakoç constructed the entirety of the poem to describe this holy night at the end where the whole nation i.e. Muslims will drink from the *elixir of life* and reach immortality through this night journey the prophet has been on. As Enser argues, it is in *Miraç* where “God is considered entirely according to this mystical view, and this metaphor is used within the same meaning.”<sup>642</sup> It is seen here and in the entirety of the poet’s body of work, Karakoç tries to absorb the divine into the whole of his poetry by carrying the signs of meaning into his poetry, sometimes directly and sometimes with references between the lines. In these verses, Karakoç treats the Prophet in his all divinity, we see Muhammad while he goes from being solely a human, and a messenger of God on Earth to a divine creature. He does not need his mount *Refref* anymore when the creature falls back, the Prophet steps forward, and the imagery is almost a leap on his part. Love as a concept for achieving liberation shows itself in two different but sequenced forms: the Prophet, in his Ascension towards Heaven, has cloaked himself only with love whilst he also feels a motherly love that supports him in his journey to divinity.

Karakoç uses these two forms of love as a concept to achieve the liberation and the freedom man desires through the Prophet. The Prophet himself here also is a symbol of freedom, through him and through following him in the way of the Qur’an and Islam, all believers will achieve such freedom in the afterlife. Karakoç states, “[s]o,

---

<sup>641</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, pp. 264.

<sup>642</sup> Enser, 205.

neither evolution nor revolution. Only resurrection... This is the way, inheritance and method left to us by the Prophets, who are the messengers of the absolute truth, in the salvation of a community, in the salvation of people.” The only way, then, is to love God and to act with the love of God, through the salvation of the Prophet, if the believer wants to free himself and reach divine liberation.

The poem ends with the fortieth section depicting the Day of Judgment. Karakoç describes this day in positive imagery, almost in a manner of festivity and celebration rather than those with raining blood, ashes and fire, or explosion of skies. At the end of this holy day, and celebrations, people will understand the greatness of God, they will see him wherever they look and understand the core of their existence, the reason for their existence because it was God and his grace who made them exist.

40.

*Extinguish yourself with the existing existence of the Being*

*You will see for sure for sure*

*Wherever you turn*

*He is the One who exists, who the existence brings*

*Who efforms and changes*

*He is the One who dissolves and amasses*

*And the one who turns all into never-before*

Karakoç, at the end of the poem, stops speaking through Hızır or other beings and solely describes God without any intervening character. The audience journeyed with Hızır for the entirety of the poem and finally, they reached God.

[...]

*He is the One who creates the human from the blood clot, the semen*

*Nurtures him then*

*[...]*

*He is the One giving the faith and the persevering belief*

*Spousing him to the Qur'an and Satan*

*In due course*

*[...]*

*He is the One who is the most prominent Collector*

*Of skulls, of bones*

*Of the sun, the moon, of the stars*

*Of the whirlpools from whence*

*Heavens and hells lost and born*

*He is the One from whose plectrum is*

*Heard a different sound in every age*

*He is the One who was not born and will not perish*

*Who did not arrive and does not diminish*

Karakoç argues that “when I doubt my existence, I shrug and say ‘I exist because God exists.’”<sup>643</sup> as seen in his praise to God as the One who created and then collected the skulls and bones of his creation, as well as the sun, stars, the moon, heaven and hell... In short, God is the core from whence everything was born and then into whom he disappears. This final section of the poem summarises Karakoç’s belief system which argues that man existed *a priori* of his existence in this world and he will, with God’s grace and will, exist in the afterlife, thus rejecting Sartre’s understanding of man’s condemnation of being free and alone in this world. The only condition to reach this true living, in God’s bosom, thus true liberation and freedom are through loving him and following his rules as appeared in the prophet(s) and, ultimately, in Islam.

---

<sup>643</sup> Karakoç, *Islam*, p. 13.

#### 4.1.2 *Leylâ ile Mecnun*

Karakoç's epic poem *Leylâ ile Mecnun*<sup>644645</sup> is the eleventh part of his collected poems written in 1974-1977 and 1980 and is subtitled “*The Eleventh Rainstorm: The Rainstorm of Love. The fabled truth. The transformation of the seven colours passing through the prism of suffering and soul into the light of the only truth.*” Similar to *Hızır İle Kırk Saat*, this chapter only consists of this one poem which is divided into five sections, and each of the sections is further divided in itself. Upon reading the subheading of the poem where Karakoç immediately speaks about love and truth, we can interpret that upon suffering and through love, the heart and the soul will find their way into the absolute, or the only truth, which for Karakoç is God. Thus, the way of freedom of the soul will be only possible by reaching God's truth and this can be achieved through divine love.

*Leylâ and Mecnun* (Layla and Majnun) is an old love story of Arabic origin, written in *masnawi*<sup>646</sup> poem format. The story is developed by different poets in Persian literature many times and found its great form with Fuzûlî in Turkish literature<sup>647</sup>. It is a story of love and adventure that attracts much attention in eastern Islamic literature. In the story, Leylâ and Mecnun are a young couple from two different Arab tribes that fall in love but cannot reunite as tradition prevents them from coming together. Theirs is “a hopeless love full of suffering that leads to death without reuniting its heroes”<sup>648</sup>. The Sufistic meaning of the poem is brought in by Gencevi, who gave the story a mystical dimension by directing Mecnun's love for Leylâ to God<sup>649</sup>. Thus, Leylâ becomes an image that evokes *divine love*; when she becomes a lover, she becomes

---

<sup>644</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, pp. 517-600.

<sup>645</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Leylâ ile Mecnun](#).

<sup>646</sup> Masnawi (Mesnevi) is a poetry form of divan literature, each couplet rhyming separately.

<sup>647</sup> Özcan, Nezahat. ‘[Fuzûlî'nin Leylâ İle Mecnun Mesnevîsinde Aşk - Gelenek Çatışması](#)’. Gazi Türkiyat Türkoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi, vol. 6, 2010.

<sup>648</sup> Levend, A.S. “Bilinmeyen Eski Eserlerimizden: Leylâ ve Mecnun'lar”. Türk Dili, vol. 5., 1952, p. 8-12

<sup>649</sup> Türkan, Kadriye. “Leylâ İle Mecnun Hikâyesinde Aşkın Önündeki Engel: Dedikodu.” Turuk, vol. 8, no. 22, 2020, p.47.

abstract.<sup>650</sup> The same Sufistic approach is seen in Karakoç's *Leylâ ile Mecnun* as well. Through Leylâ's imagery as the beloved, Karakoç manifests God as the beloved and reflects the love of God in his poetry as seen in *Perili Şiir* (The Poem with a Fairy), where Karakoç explains that a celestial creature said this poem during Leylâ's birth:

*Was she a fairy, was she a fairy*

*Was my lover a fairy*

*I said resurrection, she said resurrection*<sup>651</sup>

Karakoç, from the time she was born, compares Leylâ to a fairy (*peri*), a celestial and magical creature that heralds the coming of the resurrection. This, in turn, can be argued that transcends her from only a human being to a creature of the divine which "[w]ith its intricate and intertwined texture of images and meanings, [this section] is loaded with connotations and images that allow us to think about the birth of the Prophet."<sup>652</sup> Along with this section, the other sections where Karakoç describes Leylâ's beauty and grace or Mecnun's love for her and where he describes Mecnun's birth have parallels to the birth of the Prophet and what a joyous moment that is. As Şahin argues

[A]ll love created from [God's] light is constantly present in the 'Absolute' (God), and it is constantly resurrected. The poet puts the person who seeks himself and his echo in the *Absolute* lover at the centre [of the cycle of resurrection]. Thus, man finds the echo of his

---

<sup>650</sup> Gedikli, Özgür. "['Vesikalı Yârim'den 'Monna Rosa'Ya Geleneğin 'Diriliş'i.'](#)" Turkish Studies Language & Literature, vol. 15, no. 4, Electronic Turkish Studies, Oct. 2020, pp. 1832.

<sup>651</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, pp. 527-8.

<sup>652</sup> Kaplan, Ramazan. 'Çağdaş Bir Leylâ ve Mecnun Hikâyesi: Sezai Karakoç'un Leylâ ile Mecnun'u'. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 167.

own love in the vertical dimension because all lovers and loved ones are a reflection of his light.<sup>653</sup>

Thus, love in its divine connotations and a phenomenon to reach God appear in these verses. Karakoç, a poet of the *Second New*, hides the real meaning he constructs, behind people, as seen in the verses below, since “people and facts get mixed up in texts in which *love* is designed and described with a divine understanding.”<sup>654</sup>

*I called you you Leylâ I called you Suna in poems, in songs  
Your real name remained like a whisper on the mouths on the lips  
My heart cracks like a pomegranate, and that secret remembers  
I take comfort from your birth, with its blessed presents*<sup>655</sup>

As seen in these verses, which are a part of section one of *Leylâ ile Mecnun* entitled *The Birth (What Majnun Says On Leylâ's Birth)*, Karakoç hints at a celestial and a divine being, likely the Prophet, wherever he praises Leylâ or another person, he, in reality, praises him and even if he needs to keep his name as a secret, he consoles himself that his birth comes from blessings and gifts, that is Islam, that is the way for the people, who live in sin and wrong-doings, to reach God. As seen in these verses, and elsewhere in the poem of *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, love is the prominent phenomenon where Karakoç uses “a very rich possession of words, an attitude that uses the possibilities of the imagery as much as possible, and at the end of it all, a shower of ‘feelings’”<sup>656</sup> transfers to the audience, consistent with the *rainshower* concept Karakoç uses as sub-headings in each section of his collection of poems.

---

<sup>653</sup> Şahin, p. 37.

<sup>654</sup> op.cit.

<sup>655</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, p. 524

<sup>656</sup> Kaplan, p.166.

The notion of love notwithstanding, as before, the concept of death also appears within the poem, so much so that it can be argued that it is intertwined with the notion of love as if Karakoç does not want the audience to forget that it is a reality of life, and only through death, people can reach resurrection which will be the true living. Immediately after Karakoç compares Leylâ to a fairy, these verses follow:

*She knew I was dead*

*She knew I was dead*

*I was resurrected; she knew*

*I was resurrected; she knew*<sup>657</sup>

Here, the audience again grasps that while Karakoç praises Leylâ and her birth, there is more to this explicit meaning. Leylâ, as soon as she was born, knew that the poet was dead and he was resurrected. Leylâ, as imagery of divine love, is situated higher than a human being, where she is a part of this higher knowledge, a knowledge only God Himself can make real and know.

Doing this, Karakoç creates his poetry where he centres on God and thus refuses any belief that God is dead or has disappeared from human life. Contrary to this thought that is essential to modernity, Karakoç's poetry is saturated with the thought of God, even though "quantitatively God is less involved in his poetry, [...] the main argument that Karakoç evaluates both historical, social or individual, physics or metaphysics is with the idea of God"<sup>658</sup> According to Karakoç, the phenomenon of modernity creates a blockage on the individuals where they permanently aim at continuous progress. He thinks that "this *godless* world-conception in the process of modernity has led humanity to a great disaster and tries to create a world in which everything, especially the existence of man, is positioned according to God in his

---

<sup>657</sup> Op. cit., p. 528.

<sup>658</sup> Enser, p. 193.

poetry.”<sup>659</sup> In line with this thought, God is both the source and the aim of Karakoç’s poetry, he does not treat God as an after-thought or addendum to his work, on the contrary, “he designs the whole world of existence according to the perspective of God, who has the only power.”<sup>660</sup> In the third sub-section of the third section of *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, entitled *Parenthesis*, Karakoç differentiates why he praised God at the beginning of his previous books but not here in this poem.

*The ancients, they lived in a mature society*  
*In a post where everyone will be with God immediately*  
*For that reason*  
*Tributes and invocations were found*  
*At the beginning of their books*  
*They begin the work by praising God*  
*They did find everything ready in advance*  
*And everyone at every moment is full of pure Islam*

As seen in this part of the poem, Karakoç believes that everyone who lived where God was alive, aptly named as *ancients*, were entitled to praise and admire God at the beginning of the books because they were living according to Islam’s rules where everyone will be in the end with God, without needing any purification, in other words, the fires of hell. This is a depiction of heaven while in the following part Karakoç turns into a more pessimistic thought and outspokenly describes that the people of modern life, where God is dead, are in hell.

*We, however, are calling from hell*  
*Through the swamp and all kinds of dirt*

---

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

*Denial, indifference, blindness*  
*All kinds of idolatry and heathendom*  
*First, we have to tear this web of evil*  
*To smash the steel chain of slavery*  
*We have to pull souls to a new world*  
*the mine should be free from all kinds of slag and rust*  
*Purification, great purification must come from the fire*  
*Purification must be for the soul to be free*

In order for the soul, and thus the individual, to be free, they need to tear the web of evil, that is, modernity, which brought all kinds of idolatry with itself. The soul must re-find God, it needs to liberate itself from the chains of the modern world, and with it, it needs to pull the other souls to the new world. The new world, and the freed soul, are only possible when they reach God. Karakoç repeats why the purification is needed for humans to reach the utmost beauty, that is, God, almost verbatim, in his essay where he depicts what is the *way of the soul*, in other words, the way to love, to reach God:

The soul will understand whether it has been purified and polished to realise the great love. How can the soul be willing to be ‘beautiful’ without being purified of ugliness? How can a soul that has not been purified and purified from envy, hatred, pride and worshipping the world can achieve divine manifestations, the manifestation of the sultan of love? Purification, great purification is necessary.<sup>661</sup>

Understandably, the sultan of love Karakoç speaks about is God, and humans must reach God through such purification of earthly desires. Unsurprisingly, he touches upon this subject in his book entitled *Mevlânâ Rumi*, where he writes about the life and works of Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumî, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Persian poet and the founder

---

<sup>661</sup> Karakoç, *Mevlâna*, p. 37.

of the Sufi order where “the Sufi aims to perfectly reflect the image of God in one’s heart, thus to achieve union with the Divine.”<sup>662</sup> According to Karakoç, Mevlânâ Rumi’s *magnum opus*, *Mesnevî* is not “a revelation, [but] it is a commentary of the Qur’an written with ‘the blood of love’, which is composed of unseen flowers compiled and evaluated by an exaltation at the highest level of inspiration, at its final limit.”<sup>663</sup>

According to Sufistic thought, “God is the ‘Lord’, [and thus] He is the creator of every element from the micro- to the macro cosmos and is the only unique, transcendent, and absolute power that maintains this creation at every moment and ensures all creation and order.”<sup>664</sup> In other words, humans that engulf this thought would shape every turn of their life where God is always with them, with their every breath and each step. In Karakoç’s works, God is permeated in the entirety of the poem, “[t]he phenomenon of God is not even reduced to an ‘important value’ in Karakoç’s poetry; on the contrary, just as in all the realms, God is in the centre of the poem itself and is the determinant of the poem.”<sup>665</sup> Moreover, Karakoç, inspired by Mevlânâ Rumi, “named his literary movement ‘Resurrection’. His closeness to Mevlânâ Rumi [is] seen as the best expression of [his] understanding of ‘religion that is the source of art, and art that does not corrupt religion’.”<sup>666</sup>

It is not a mistake nor a misplacement on Karakoç’s part that such a Sufistic approach to God is found in a poem that initially tells a love story. It is clear to the poet that although the souls of this modern life need purification with fire (i.e. hell), they will do so and will, in the end, reach divine liberation. This idea of liberation through love and love of God can be seen in the fourth sub-section of the third section, which is entitled *The Return*. It is important to underline the fact that Karakoç chooses to

---

<sup>662</sup> Halligan, Fredrica R. ‘Sufis and Sufism’. [Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion](#), edited by David A. Leeming, Springer US, 2014, pp. 1750–51..

<sup>663</sup> Balcı, Musa. ‘Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirinde Fars Edebiyatının İzleri ve Farsçada Sezai Karakoç’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 287.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid*, p. 194.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>666</sup> Balcı, p. 287.

interweave the different themes of existentialism i.e. death, freedom (liberation) and authenticity (resurrection to self) in this part of the poem, which is an important turning point when we consider the entirety of the story of *Leylâ ile Mecnun*.

*A thousand eras passed, the dining table's summary love and death*  
*Evolution, development, revolution what has really changed*  
*War and peace always overpowering*  
*A time needle pokes the clock*  
*A speck of dust*  
*And the winder stops*  
*At the most delicious meal, a small stone breaks the tooth*  
*Clears the age-old table, the suddenness of the black news*  
*Roads part ways on the day sunniest*  
*There are a thousand worms that eat the flower of love before it is ripe*

This section of the poem where the poet compares the entirety of human life to an enormous dining table<sup>667</sup> can be summarised with the overbearing concept of death. For the poet, with all of humanity's achievements, nothing has changed while only war and peace persist; death remains the only bad enough concept that can still interrupt any kind of activity, as the unseen speck of dust in the watch's winder which makes it stop, death, too, is unseen in man's life, we live our life and enjoy it as if there is no death until the time it arrives and devours our life as the worms devouring a flower. It is significant to indicate that Karakoç uses the imagery of devouring worms while he also depicts death in this poem, a device he used in *Monna Rosa II* as discussed in [chapter 3](#).

---

<sup>667</sup> One of the Qur'an's surahs is also entitled "The Dinner Table" where some of the verses mention Allah's love towards those who do good (to others) and the rules and ways for the believers to receive Allah's love. (*The Qur'an*. [Surah Al-Mai'dah](#), 5:13, 5:42.)

*Death closes every door, and death opens them*

[...]

*What is there to hope*

*If not for the blessing of resurrection*

*Only the blessing of resurrection*

*That is the indestructible lock, the unmelting key*

However, unlike *Monna Rosa*, Karakoç moves toward the imagery of an open door in this poem, a love poem in its essence. Albeit it is still death that opens the door, the door is opened to hope where man can hope for achieving resurrection. For Karakoç, only the blessing of the resurrection, through the blessing and willingness of God, is man's indestructible lock and key where he will reach the true meaning of life, finding his true self in his resurrection and thus will be forever free.

#### **4.1.3 *Esir Kentten Özülke'ye***

The final poem that I will analyse within the scope of this chapter is entitled *Esir Kentten Özülke'ye*, (*From Captive City to Self Country*), which consists of the second part of the poem collection entitled *Words Dedicated to Time*. The first part of the same collection *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine* (*From the Exile Country to the Capital of Capitals*), was analysed in chapter 3, which proves that there is a familiar story arc among the collections where Karakoç visits the same themes that existentialism and uses them sometimes interchangeably and sometimes alone in his poems. While the first part deals with death as an existential concept, this part moves toward the freedom stemming from death and the exile of man upon this earth.

[...]

*I stood on the path of love like the lofty mountains*

*Clouds are hope, mirages clusters*

*Oh, I'm crazy since the first day I saw you*

*Oh, the shirt of madness on me is in tatters*

The path of love the poet stops and stands steadfastly in is the same path the Sufis speak about; it will take him, through hopes and mirages, to the prophet and eventually to God.

Similar to *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, and different from the other poems analysed in this chapter, *Esir Kent*'s first part, entitled *The Poem of Destiny*, is written in couplets, in *masnawi* style, similar to *Leylâ ile Mecnun*. In this series of couplets, Karakoç praises the prophet after reflecting on his own life and using a centralised rose image, which is significant in both Divan poetry and Islamic art. It is essential to understand the significance of the rose image in Karakoç's poetry which is fed with the traditions of Divan poetry and Islam. Akbayır<sup>668</sup> argues that the rose is used as the symbol of the *beloved* in various ways where it depicts beauty, Allah or His Messenger, the sultan, the friend, etc., are all treated in various ways in divan poetry. In other words, the rose imagery, which stands in for the lover by default, can be described as beautiful, depicting the prophet or the love for God in different couplets.

In the fourth part of *Esir Kent*, entitled *Free Spring*<sup>669</sup>, Karakoç wholly moves to the theme of liberation and freedom. Spring, in itself, is the season that is associated with freedom. By mentioning spring, it can be argued that Karakoç leaves winter, the season associated with death and passes to spring, where freedom is found.

*A wind hit my face shouting spring*

*Calling me to you like pulling a slave to freedom*

*Breaking the chains that fell on me all the way from Babylon*

---

<sup>668</sup> Akbayır, Sıddık. 'Gül Muştusu'na Dair Bir Yorum Denemesi'. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 117.

<sup>669</sup> Karakoç, Gün Doğmadan, pp. 442-43.

*I wanted to run towards you right then at that time*

Karakoç speaks to the prophet, God, or both, feeling the freedom that came after death, spring after winter. The coming of spring caused the chains he had since Babylon to break and made it possible for him to run towards the bosom of God, where he would be truly free and find himself. Babylon in the Old Testament<sup>670</sup> and New Testament<sup>671</sup> alike represents a place of sin, adultery, and rebellion whose sins Karakoç, too, as a human, carried until the time came to break the chains and be free; in other words, reaching true freedom after death and resurrection, leaving the bonds and sins of this earth behind. The sudden appearance of the spring wind, which can be associated with the resurrection after death, awoke and arose him.

*I stepped on the ground with force; I felt the depth of the soil*

*Lifted off my shoulders, the weight of a mountain*

*I drew your picture to the blessed pages of the age*

*I whispered your name to the earth to the sky all the time*

In this stanza, Karakoç alludes that he was set free and is now completely aware of his freedom after encountering it by entering God's bosom. Karakoç, joyful, continues to communicate with what might be understood as the prophets and, consequently, God.

---

<sup>670</sup> In the Old Testament, according to Daniel, it was during King Belshazzar's (the King of Babylon), feast where he threw a banquet in vanity and covetousness that a writing on the wall appears spelling an inscription (*Mene, Mene, Tekel, Parsin*) which meant that God has ended his reign and his kingdom is divided between the Medes and Persians. (*Holy Bible*. Daniel, 5:1-6, Daniel 5:23-28. New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#))

<sup>671</sup> In the Book of Revelation, Babylon is depicted as a prostitute of which the angel explains to John of Patmos (the Revelator) as "with her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." (*Holy Bible*. Revelation, 17:2, Revelation, 17:5, New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#))

In the new and wonderful age he has entered, he is in an exultant mood, shouting and whispering the name of a blessed being. This new age is blessed because of the presence of the prophets. Karakoç defines prophets as heraldic beings who carry the good word of God to humanity. Altuntaş<sup>672</sup> argues that the evangel<sup>673</sup> that is brought by the prophets is a perpetual one. Karakoç considers this evangel in connection with the divine command, saying that this evangel is not temporary but permanent because it opens the door to the next world, to eternal bliss. “The heralds of prophets incorporate otherworldly hints making it perennial and continuous.”<sup>674</sup> Prophets herald the good word of God and lead the believer to the afterlife, which is cause for being ecstatic; as for Karakoç, the primary cause of people’s misery is their lack of belief in an afterlife.

## 4.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate how Karakoç’s views on freedom and liberation are related to religious belief, notably Sufism, which is described as the spiritual and inner way of life that is lived within the confines of Islam's internal and exterior laws. It is also argued that, in Karakoç’s poetry and essays, the subject of freedom is approached differently than how Western philosophies or civilisations interpret it. Karakoç believed that loving God and abiding by his commandments, as Sufism commends, as revealed in the prophets and ultimately in the Qur'an, is the only way to achieve an authentic living and, consequently, true liberty and liberation.

It is essential to emphasise the impact of Sufism on Karakoç in his approach to freedom as an existential concept. According to Childers and Hentzi, for those with

---

<sup>672</sup> Altuntaş, Sezanur. Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirlerinde Peygamber Kıssaları. Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı, 2015, p. 13.

<sup>673</sup> Muştı in Turkish, the word can be translated as “evangel, good news, and the good word” into English. I use all translations interchangeably here as the term *muştı* encompasses all these three meanings.

<sup>674</sup> Altuntaş.

theistic influences, existentialism can lead to a sort of mysticism that stresses introspection.<sup>675</sup> In a similar vein, this chapter makes the case that Karakoç's method of achieving freedom and liberation via Sufi teachings includes such introspections. Moreover, Halman states that Karakoç created “a unique *mythopoesis* in our modern poetry by assimilating spiritual and religious values with universal cultures, establishing dynamic relations between tradition and innovation.”<sup>676</sup> Within the universal cultures, existentialism takes part.

This chapter discusses the relation between Sufism and freedom and liberation as existential concepts through three poems of Karakoç, which have distinctive characteristics of the epic poems; in relation to the previous chapter's discussion of the idea of death, the existentialist themes are intertwined in *Hızır'la Kırk Saat* where Karakoç makes observations about death and its inevitability for people while writing about *Hızır* as a metaphor for approaching God through love and achieving divine liberation. It is noted that *Hızır* is also a Sufistic persona, and when the Qu'ran is considered in its many verses of prominent mystical characters that support and resound the Sufi realisations, Karakoç's choice and use of such names and mystical characters in such epic poems are understood. Thus, his use of mysticism brought his writing to its apex and connected his knowledge of Islam and God to Sufism.

Continuing the resounding of Sufi teachings, in *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, it is apparent that Karakoç refers to both love and truth, which allows the audience to infer that through love and suffering, the heart and soul will eventually find their way to the absolut, which is God. Thus, the poem alludes that the only road to the freedom of the soul is through the attainment of God's truth, which is made possible by divine love. In *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, Karakoç relays that the soul needs to reconnect with God and break free from the constraints of modernity. Only when the soul reaches God will the new world and the liberated soul be attainable. The Sufistic viewpoint that true liberation is only possible through divine love permeates throughout the poem. It is also significant that the phenomenon of God is not

---

<sup>675</sup> Childers and Hentzi. ‘[Existentialism](#)’. 1995.

<sup>676</sup> Halman, Talat. ‘Karakoç: Özgün Sentez’. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 564.

only treated as an essential value but, just as in all realms, God is in the centre of the poem and is the determinant of the poem. This supports Karakoç's view that God is the ultimate goal to be reached by man, which will be possible only by man's resurrection after his death (as found in the Turkish expression of *bâ'su ba'del mevt* that was mentioned in the previous chapter). Enser points out that Karakoç extends the idea of resurrection "from the individual to the society, [which is also] the transition process from disbelief, the source of meaninglessness and nothingness, to believing, which is the true facet of existence."<sup>677</sup> Therefore, man's resurrection, and by extension the ideology of resurrection of Karakoç, thus, bears significant role in the discussion of liberation, divine love and existence.

The last poem analysed in this chapter, *Esir Kentten Özüлке'ye*, focuses on the existential idea of death, advancing toward the liberation that comes with it and the exile of man into this world. Karakoç transforms the Turkish-Islamic synthesis<sup>678</sup> into values and images of liberation in a traditional and mystical sense<sup>679</sup>, as seen in the images of this poem. Karakoç speaks about how the path of love that he has chosen to be on and remain constant in is the same path of love that Sufis mention. This path of love would lead him through hopes and mirages to the prophet and ultimately God. With symbols of spring, the breaking of chains, and prophets serving as the heralds of true liberation, Karakoç also alludes to attaining true freedom after death and resurrection, leaving the shackles and sins of this world behind.

---

<sup>677</sup> Enser, p. 213.

<sup>678</sup> As noted before, it is important to underline that Karakoç distanced himself from any debate that focuses on one's ethnic origins and ethnicity. The emphasis on Turkish here, thus, should not be interpreted as a focus on one ethnic origin.

<sup>679</sup> Şahin, p. 33.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5 AUTHENTICITY

*“But above all, in order to be, never try to seem.”<sup>680</sup>*

*“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.”<sup>681</sup>*

*“On the Day of Judgment, no step shall a man stir until he has answered questions on five aspects of his worldly existence: his life and how he spent it; his knowledge and what use he has made of it; his wealth, how he acquired it and how he has spent it; and his body and how he has utilised it.”<sup>682</sup>*

---

<sup>680</sup> Camus, Albert. (1998). Notebooks, 1935-1951. (P. Thody & J. O'Brien, Trans.). Marlowe & Company.

<sup>681</sup> *Holy Bible*. 1 Corinthians 15:21. New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#).

<sup>682</sup> Jami` At-Tirmidhi 2416 - Chapters on the Description of the Day of Judgement, Ar-Riqaq, and Al-Wara. [Sunnah.com](#). Accessed 27 Mar 2022.

This chapter aims to illustrate that authenticity as an existentialist concept reveals itself in the notion of civilisation together with the idea of self in Karakoç's belief system, both of which are found fundamentally in his *city of resurrection* and the *soldier of resurrection* ideas. These ideas, in turn, are encapsulated in the overall *ideology of resurrection*, which is Karakoç's life's work upon which he builds his artistic, intellectual and political views of the concept of resurrection. Thus, in this chapter, Karakoç's ideology of resurrection in relation to the concept of authenticity is analysed because, for him, living authentically means fully committing to being the soldier of resurrection and defining oneself with the idea of resurrection. Moreover, according to Karakoç, the authenticity of man's life lies in the obligation to fight the spiritual war and to believe to exist for the true, authentic civilisation, which is the Islamic civilisation.

The concept of resurrection used by Karakoç is Islamic and bears the signs of the Islamic philosophy of its age. As seen in chapter 3, the idea of resurrection in Karakoç comes from the Islamic concept of *basübadelmeyt*, which literally translates to *resurrection after death* and, thus, is related to the concept of death and the afterlife, resurrection and never to die again, and the soul's journey to eternity in the Islamic belief. The Qur'an extensively deals with the concept of resurrection and life after death:

Do people not see that We have created them from a sperm-drop, then - behold!- they openly challenge Us? And they argue with Us - forgetting they were created- saying, 'Who will give life to decayed bones?' Say, O Prophet, 'They will be revived by the One Who produced them the first time, for He has *perfect* knowledge of every created being. [...] All it takes, when He wills something *to be*, is simply to say to it: 'Be!' And it is! So glory be to the One in Whose Hands is the authority over all things, and to Whom *alone* you will *all* be returned. <sup>683</sup>

---

<sup>683</sup> The Qur'an, Surah Ya-Sin, 36:77-79, 36:82-83. <https://quran.com/36?startingVerse=77>

Resurrection plays a pivotal role in understanding the concept of authenticity in the works and worldview of Karakoç. Living authentically manifests itself in Karakoç as a dedication to being a soldier of resurrection and defining oneself in light of the resurrection. Only through fighting the spiritual battle for the existence of the real, authentic civilisation, the Islamic civilisation, would this be achievable.

## 5.1 Authenticity and the Idea of Resurrection

As discussed in [Chapter 2](#) in detail, existentialist thought's definition of authenticity is two-fold: (i) responsibility and (ii) bad faith. Cooper argues that "Sartre's authenticity is the self-recovery of being which is lost during self-alienation."<sup>684</sup> Bad faith, related to responsibility, occurs by connecting too strongly with how one has always been, with their past, and abdicating their responsibilities for their present and future.

Authenticity happens when people's behaviours are consistent with their values and desires, even when external demands to adhere to social norms conflict with them. In other words, one does things authentically in line with their moral act<sup>685</sup>. Thus, in keeping one's pledge for duty, behaving in this manner is something one chooses as one's own, something to which one commits oneself simply because it is their responsibility to act on it, separate from any societal sanction. It is also described as, differently than originality, "actions that express the needs, values, desires, and aspirations of the self who acts."<sup>686</sup> Karakoç's understanding of resurrection, and from within it, how to become a *soldier of resurrection*, revolves around such a commitment, despite any social sanctions or external pressures. Becoming a soldier of resurrection is to accept such a responsibility, to have certain values and desires to

---

<sup>684</sup> Cooper, p. 101.

<sup>685</sup> [Existentialism](#) (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Accessed 29 Jan. 2022.

<sup>686</sup> Beehler, Rodger. 'Freedom and Authenticity'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1990, p. 39.

reach Allah, which requires fighting a war for Karakoç, which is, before anything else, a spiritual war<sup>687</sup>.

In this war, spiritual bodies, that is, existences, fall before material bodies, [it is the spirit that] becomes captive and is defeated. Or, on the contrary, [the spiritual bodies] are the ones who do the beating and captivating. This is a war of minds. This is a way of life, a worldview, a war of civilisation.

For Karakoç, the soldier of resurrection not only needs to fight the spiritual war but also needs to be a veteran of it and bring back memories for their children. Thus, the war to bring back true civilisation needs to be grown in the next generations. He maintains, “[w]hile returning from the war, the veterans bring the metaphysical spikes with them, and they gathered from their great trials against death. [...] Children are fed and grown with this *heavenly table*’s fruits.”<sup>688</sup> For him, veterans, martyrdom, and heroism all develop and multiply in this manner, and true civilisation is thus achieved.

To show how authenticity as an existential theme is revealed in Karakoç’s thoughts, it is significant to point out that Karakoç equates fighting a war of resurrection to a worldview that is the way to reach *civilisation*. Civilisation is one of the critical concepts in Karakoç’s poetry, and in his more expansive works, that is, “to a great extent, [his] poetry is an idea of civilisation. Karakoç’s poems are composed [with] the idea of resurrection, which he put forward in many of his ideas [and themes], with his dynamic and lyrical poetic language.”<sup>689</sup> Karakoç’s understanding of reaching the one true civilisation is to reach Islamic civilisation as this is the authentic civilisation that will encompass all other civilisations. To that end, Karakoç delves deep into the notion of civilisation in his poetry and essays, where he discusses the concept extensively. His arguments connect to the idea of resurrection because, initially, he

---

<sup>687</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*. 6th Ed., *Diriliş Yayınları*, 1995, p. 7

<sup>688</sup> Karakoç, “Destan”, in *Diriliş’in Çevresinde*, p. 20.

<sup>689</sup> Coşkun, Sezai. ‘Mekandaki Medeniyet-Medeniyetteki Mekan: Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirinde Mekan-Medeniyet İlişkisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme’. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 22, 2009, p. 236.

thinks that there is only one civilisation in the history of humanity, the Islamic civilisation, which can be called the *civilisation of truth*<sup>690</sup>. He argues that

to distinguish [the Islamic civilisation] from any other kind of civilisation, we call it the civilisation of revelation<sup>691</sup>, the civilisation of truth. The more [the other] civilisations get closer to it, the more they get to reach the main objective of civilisation, and the further they move away from it, the further they move away from [the main objective of Islamic civilisation].

Here, it is significant to point out that Karakoç calls Islamic civilisation a civilisation of revelation. Revelation or *wahy*, in Islam, means “God's secret notification of an order, a decree or information to His prophet”<sup>692</sup>. Thus, Karakoç attributes the foundations of civilisation to Islam. In other words, only Islam can be *the* civilisation, a reaching point for which the other civilisations must strive to achieve, because it was God's word and God's willingness, through *wahy*, was revealed to the prophets and the believers. According to Qur'an, God's revelation to the prophets began with Adam. After Adam, he revealed to Noah and the subsequent prophets, and finally to Muhammad, whom God sent as the last prophet to all people

[i]ndeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and David; we gave the book [of Psalms].<sup>693</sup>

It is equally important to note that Karakoç does not discard the existence of the other civilisations; however, his idea of resurrection is based on the notion that there is only

---

<sup>690</sup> Ibid, p. 238.

<sup>691</sup> From *vahiy* (*vahy*), *vahiy medeniyeti* in Turkish.

<sup>692</sup> “Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi, [Vahiy maddesi](#),” TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, accessed February 1, 2022.

<sup>693</sup> The Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:163. [Qur'an.com](#)

one true civilisation, the Islamic one. For him, “the Islamic ideal”, in which he believes, “does not start history with the Prophet<sup>694</sup> but that history reaches the highest point with him:

The history of truth begins with the first man, that is, the knowledge of the truth. With the Prophet, he reaches the last, the perfect point of development; it will last until the doomsday, that is, until the end of this worldly life of man.<sup>695</sup>

Because the Islamic ideal encompasses the perfect development with the last Prophet, the other civilisations can only be purified and become complete civilisations with the perception of the Islamic civilisation. The authenticity in this duty, i.e., to realise the civilisation as a movement, for Karakoç, can only be done with “great sacrifices by people who have an ideal, and *ideal*, *sacrifice*, and *dedication* are contradictory terms to material factors.”<sup>696</sup> In other words, to be authentic and live authentically, people need to have ideals; they need to dedicate and sacrifice themselves to achieve the true civilisation, the only one Islam and the soldier of resurrection can bring.

### 5.1.1 The Concept of Resurrection in Islamic and Christian Connotations

While Karakoç uses the concept of resurrection strictly in its Islamic connotation, with the Quranic *basübadelmeyt* where the Arabic idiom is a compound of the Arabic words *ba's* meaning *to rise, to resurrect*, *ba'ad* meaning *after* and *al-mawt* meaning *death*, thus, verbatim, *to be risen and resurrected after death*; the concept of resurrection, in general liturgy, is attributed to Christianity whereby the resurrection of Jesus forms the foundation of the Christian belief. The Nicene Creed<sup>697</sup> reads

---

<sup>694</sup> Last prophet, Muhammad.

<sup>695</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 12.

<sup>696</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Düşünceler I: Kavramlar*. 4th ed., *Diriliş Yayınları*, 2012, p. 8.

<sup>697</sup> According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Nicene Creed, also called Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a Christian statement of faith that is the only ecumenical creed because it is accepted as

For our sake, [Lord Jesus Christ] was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory, to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

According to the vast literature on Christian belief and theology, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is equalled to having hope in God and the existence of the righteousness of God. Moltmann argues that “[t]his is the basic tenet of Jewish apocalypticism. Death can thus be no limit for the realisation of God’s justice” and “[t]he resurrection hope for the individual was part of the universal hope for God and the coming of his new creation in righteousness.”<sup>698</sup> Thus, the idea of resurrection in Christianity gives man resilience and hope that even after death, he will not perish, that by God’s grace, he will be raised and reach the Kingdom of God. The willingness and enthusiasm to live one’s life authentically, then, can be founded upon this strong hope in Christian belief whereby it will make “this incarnation and the identification and the commitment of one’s life meaningful beyond all frustration”<sup>699</sup> even though “in the modern ‘society of having’ and in the institutional escapes from the battle of life, [the life] appears meaningless.”<sup>700</sup> In other words, the belief in resurrection and God’s righteousness through resurrection will lead man to live an authentic life, without bad faith, but with good deeds, because in the end, “if he risks his life for the coming of this kingdom, and if he takes his cross upon himself”, he will find himself again, because “[t]he resurrection hope readies one for a life in love without reservation”<sup>701</sup>.

---

authoritative by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and major Protestant churches. For more information please see: Nicene Creed. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nicene-Creed>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2022

<sup>698</sup> Moltmann, Jürgen. ‘Resurrection as Hope’. [Harvard Theological Review](#), vol. 61, no. 2, Apr. 1968, pp. 129–47. DOI.org (Crossref), p. 132.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid.

Thus, it can be argued that the foundation of Christian belief on the grounds of resurrection parallels what Karakoç argues and desires to achieve with his duty as the soldier of resurrection. It is important to note that, however, for Karakoç, the difference between the resurrection in Christianity and Islam arises from the misconception of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophers. He says, “they inflicted their lack of faith as a punishment on the Prophet; they said that Jesus was crucified, with a false reference, while their souls were crucified within themselves.”<sup>702</sup> It is still significant to draw the parallelism as it shows the similarities between Christian existentialism and Islamic existentialism from the perspective of the desire to reach God. It can be argued that both share the same basis of living one’s life authentically, that death is not necessarily a final destination, and that love is required to have true liberation in the afterlife. In the Christian belief, it can be argued that themes of existentialism, i.e., authenticity, love, and death, are utilised and paves the way for man to reach the Kingdom of God. In Karakoç’s idea and doctrine of resurrection, Islamic existentialism also uses these themes to reach the truth in man, reach Islamic civilisation, and, eventually, to God, his Creator.

As seen in the previous chapters, where the themes of death and freedom were analysed, Karakoç builds his idea of resurrection and the soldier of resurrection onto the belief that people have come from one creator. This creator is Allah, and everyone eventually will be returned to Him: “The Trumpet will be blown, and all those in the heavens and all those on the earth will fall dead, except those Allah wills to *spare*. Then it will be blown again, and they will rise up at once, looking on *in anticipation*.”<sup>703</sup> Thus, this is the fate everyone bears, which is why they should live an authentic life. In other words, only through living an authentic life, as the meaning of the theme of authenticity incorporates, can people find the way to be returned to their creator, which should be the central theme of their life in this world and can only be achieved by fulfilling one’s duty as the soldier of resurrection, working to build the city of resurrection. The transcendence vs facticity debate in Heidegger and Sartre is

---

<sup>702</sup> Karakoç, *Ruhun Dirilişi*, p. 10.

<sup>703</sup> The Qur’an, Surah Az-Zumar, 39:68. <https://quran.com/39?startingVerse=68>

reflected as physical vs metaphysical in Karakoç's worldview. For Karakoç, it can be argued, to reach to the metaphysical world and to transcend one's existence is through an authentic way of life, without bad faith, and working tirelessly as the soldier of the resurrection.

### 5.1.2 The Idea of Self and the Soldier of Resurrection

Karakoç does not exclude himself from this duty of the soldier of resurrection and describes himself as “a worker of the city of morality.”<sup>704</sup> For him, capitalism and communism are the devil's cities that need to be demolished for the city of the resurrection to be erected successfully. This is the duty of the *soldier of resurrection*: to live an authentic life and to work towards building such a life in the city of resurrection.

Karakoç, thus, criticises materialism and historical materialism, i.e. Marxism and Communism, as discussed in detail in chapter 6. He argues that they “try to hide their main schema with complex words” but “when [one] opens the veils of words and reach the origin of thought, the skeleton [one] will encounter is the denial of God, spirit, spirituality, religion, beyond the [meta]physical”<sup>705</sup>, and maintains that they both diverted from the primary goal and fixed their theories on the concept of utility, which for him, needs to be a means and not an end in civilisation. The primary goal for Karakoç should always be to reach God and become the subject that God wants man to become. As underlined in the previous chapter, he maintains that man exists only with God; it is his only way to become truly free and realise his authentic self because man's ultimate ideal and purpose is the divine origin.<sup>706</sup>

For Karakoç, thus, true civilisation can be reached when people believe in the only truth, which is the belief in God and the afterlife, to have faith in them. Finding and

---

<sup>704</sup> Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü, p. 14.

<sup>705</sup> Düşünceler I: Kavramlar, p. 8.

<sup>706</sup> Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü, p. 10.

reaching the truth is crucial in Karakoç's belief system, and this is the way to have an authentic life: "this is how I interpret history: war for truth and wars against the truth. This is how I interpret life: war for truth and wars and uprisings against the truth."<sup>707</sup> Warring for the truth is, thus, "a seed sown in the human spirit" for Karakoç, and it is this spirit that will achieve true authenticity through the spiritual war that will lead man to resurrection, and this will be possible through believing the truth, that there is God and an afterlife, so that,

this seed takes root and branches in the soul, [and] it manifests Islam. When it extends to the society, [then] the Islamic society, nation and state are born. [As a result] the civilisation of truth, the Islamic civilisation (true civilisation) is formed and extended throughout history.<sup>708</sup>

Karakoç argues that reaching a new and true civilisation is only possible by acknowledging the old civilisations, which is why he refers to old civilisations and ancient cities from that period in time in his poems. For him, man should not and cannot disregard them as the West tried to do with the Renaissance. For him, the Renaissance was not brand new but only a renewal of an older civilisation and was affected by Antiquity. He argues that "after all, man does not change even though the circumstances around him change"<sup>709</sup>. While acknowledging that such change in circumstances affects the soul, he claims that "this cannot be an outcome that [completely] changes the essence"<sup>710</sup> because "civilisation is a universal realisation related to our soul, mind and heart, it is a historical existence and change."<sup>711</sup> In other words, it is a continuation of the ways of the old civilisations to the new ones. Thus, man needs to understand this continuity in civilisations and needs to calculate his moves in order to "return to the civilisation of truth, which is the way of the prophets, to be renewed, refreshed, to gain a new soul and life, and resurrect; the soul of

---

<sup>707</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

<sup>709</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *İnsanlığın Dirilişi*. 8th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011, p. 10.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid.

humanity is due with this resurrection.”<sup>712</sup> Significantly, he mentions prophets as he sees them as the true flagships of an authentic life<sup>713</sup>:

The prophets who are devoted to the [authentic life] compile the symbols of bittersweet days, successes and scandals, defeats and victories, setbacks and rises, declines and rebirths, sufferings and donations, and attainment of divine gifts, which will inevitably go through every faithful person as long as the world and humanity exist.

Similarly, Heidegger’s account of man’s existence for the sake of *being himself*, thus, authenticity, “results from [his] competence in being members of a historical culture that [he] have mastered to a great extent in growing up into a shared world” because “existence has a directedness or purposiveness that imparts a degree of connection to [people’s] life stories.”<sup>714</sup> In other words, man’s purpose and the meaning of his existence during his lifetime is to some extent connected to the civilisation that he belongs to and is imbibed through all civilisations and can be found in his search for true civilisation. Thus, the authentic living in Karakoç’s thoughts can be related to the search for Islamic civilisation through which man will find his true existence. It can be argued that since civilisations do not die but transform to create other civilisations, Karakoç’s idea of resurrection is a *construction* of civilisation. In his aspiration to reach and to bring true Islamic civilisation, one needs to be the soldier of resurrection, willing to fight the spiritual war and thus live his life authentically, without the marring of any external pressure, deception, or imposition, much like materialisms tried to do.

---

<sup>712</sup> Ibid.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid.

<sup>714</sup> Varga and Guignon. ‘[Authenticity](#)’.

This can be seen explicitly in part 13<sup>715</sup> of the poem *Alinyazısı Saati*<sup>716</sup> where Karakoç complains that humanity has been castrated from the truth itself and was deceived by Western habits and addictions such as Coca-Cola that are being brought upon by the capitalist and imperialist civilisations, which are not the true civilisations. They replaced the liquorice sherbet, an original Eastern beverage that people enjoyed before being deceived by the West's ways.

### XIII.

*The greatest pain is this: humanity has been castrated  
From true thought, from true sensibility and true self-knowledge  
The banner behind banners is extinguished  
Darkness made light artificial, the real light killed  
What you call life is death, and what you think is death is the real-life  
It is the difference between the taste of liquorice sherbet in the summer heat of  
Diyarbakir  
And that of the poison that is coca-cola*

Karakoç maintains that this is the true difference between life as people think, which is, in reality, death itself for him. Conversely, what people think is death is the true meaning of life. In other words, Karakoç advocates that people's perception of true life by living what Western civilisation, habits, and values should actually be perceived as death, thus an undesired way of living. Similarly, the ways, traditions, and principles of the Eastern civilisation, which will one day be transformed into the Islamic civilisation by the will and determination of the soldier of resurrection, should

---

<sup>715</sup> Gün Doğmadan, p. 677-8.

<sup>716</sup> Please see [sub-chapter 5.3.1](#) below for further analysis of the poem *Alinyazısı Saati* and the concepts of cities, civilisation, and resurrection.

be perceived not as death but as life itself, which is portrayed in the comparison of Coca-Cola and the traditional liquorice sherbet.

Karakoç calls for returning to the Eastern civilisation, reconnecting with this true civilisation to achieve resurrection, through which it is possible to become free and achieve an authentic life. For him, this will be conceivable to embrace *our own* cities, Bursa<sup>717</sup>, İstanbul, Konya, and Edirne, which are incidentally significant cities and capitals of the Ottoman Empire. The true soldier of resurrection needs to reject the copies and imitations the West forces upon him, and even though it seems next to impossible to do, achieving this will be the only condition for authentic existence.

*Going back to freedom and authenticity*

*To the unique images of Bursa, İstanbul , Konya, Edirne*

*[...]*

*This is what we need to renew*

*Our own civilisation*

*And our own resurrection*

*To come back from the copy, the imitation*

*That is harder than coming back from the dead but*

*It is the only condition for the existence*

*It is in fate colliding with fate*

*Fate postponing fate*

*Fate defeating fate*

---

<sup>717</sup> Karakoç gives Bursa as an example for the city-civilisation relation: “Bursa was not just a city. It was like a poetry from top to bottom. Nevertheless, it was not just poetry either; there was also a veiled mathematics under that poem. Nor was it just the expression of a mystical spirit. It had an architecture. Behind this architecture, perhaps not foursquared like Western architecture, there was an architecture that expresses harmonies, like the shape of the moon when seen as a crescent, and behind that architecture, there was a hidden mathematics that melted into its essence.” Karakoç, Sezai. Çıkış Yolu I - Ülkemizin Geleceği: İki Konferans. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012, p. 27.

In the following stanza, Karakoç emphasises that the secret of existing, the authentic existence, is possible through resurrection, and becoming the soldier of resurrection. He argues that “[t]his is how the epic [of Islam] develops and takes root. Being a veteran is the heavenly gift that the epic [of Islam] puts on the living.” For this cause, the soldier of resurrection should embrace the reality of death. This death, for Karakoç, would bring salvation with it and will carry the soldier of resurrection to true liberation and authenticity of his being. It needs to be looked at, not as mere death but martyrdom, which the other generations take as an example: “Martyrdom is the sacred garment that [the epic] puts on the deceased for this cause. Veterans and martyrs are the knights of the Islamic Epic. Man thus comes close to eternity.”<sup>718</sup> In this way, society transforms, develops, and regenerates in the face of death and its love for the afterlife, which is the only device for man to approach immortality and eternity.

*The secret of existing again*

*Is in the task of resurrection and resurrection*

*Beauty that death cannot refute*

*I sing that beauty*

*I sing that beauty*

*That beauty beyond death*

For Karakoç, once this is achieved, it will be possible to achieve the Islamic Civilisation, which is the Civilisation of Truth that will have attained civilisation in all of its facets: spiritually, culturally, materially, and physically; and has thus emerged as the highest, deepest, and most all-encompassing civilisation.<sup>719</sup>

---

<sup>718</sup> Karakoç, “Destan”, p. 20.

<sup>719</sup> Karakoç, *Düşünceler I: Kavramlar*, p. 11.

It is important to note that, although Karakoç believes that the true resurrection will stem from pursuing an authentic life to reach the true civilisation in Islam, he criticises the current situation of the Islamic civilisation. According to him, Islamic civilisation is in a crisis and a depression, and he questions how “can a society that belongs to the Islamic faith and civilisation, which is God's greatest blessing to humankind, end up in its present pathetic state? There must be one or more reasons for this.”<sup>720</sup>

Ari<sup>721</sup> argues that just like Plato, Karakoç discovers that the close connection that has been made with truth rather than *power*, is the root of the legitimacy of authority. He bases his understanding on the tenets that thinking and political action not grounded in reality are ineligible for legitimacy and that there is no effective treatment for suffering. Karakoç argues that overcoming the crisis of Islamic civilisation and bring it back to its previous glory will be possible with the building of the city of resurrection.

## 5.2 The City-Civilisation Relation and the *City of Resurrection*

With the Enlightenment, modernity has changed the spaces in which people live. People have built modern houses, cities, and living spaces along with modernity. One of the main features is that they placed people into narrower spaces than in ancient times when people's lives were more intertwined with nature. In Turkey and Turkish literature, one of the most prominent subjects was the change in civilisation and the change of the living space.

As cities are seen as the heart and soul of civilisations, Karakoç, too, investigates the foundations of true civilisation through cities and eventually brings up his idea of the

---

<sup>720</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 15.

<sup>721</sup> Ari, Yunus Beyzade. 'Medeniyetin 'Diriliş'i: Sezai Karakoç'. *Anlayış*, no. 45, Feb. 2007.

*City of the Resurrection*<sup>722</sup>, realising that resurrection can be achieved through building this city in order to reach the true Islamic civilisation. He states, “[i]t is people who will multiply this awareness in the society with thousands, and thus a new Islamic site (which I call the City of Resurrection) will arise, completely different from the Western city”<sup>723</sup> and that “if we say *the resurrection of Islam* today, we mean that this civilisation will shake off its dust, wake up and shine its light again on all humanity.”<sup>724</sup> It will be possible for all soldiers of the resurrection to live an authentic life and realise their duties in building the city of the resurrection. Coşkun describes the city of the resurrection ideal as a “poetry of an alternative city within the framework of the conception of alternative civilisation” and states that he included “the city as one of the most important realities of civilisation in this conception of civilisation, and has developed a new urban conception against the modern western city.”<sup>725</sup>

Karakoç saw *Diriliş sitesi* as a crucial component of the *resurrection* since, in his view, no movement could reach the level of civilisation if it could not express itself in the city and construct a metropolis with its soul. Coşkun claims that for Karakoç, “[t]he concept of space, starting from the smallest unit and reaching the city, is the result of civilisation, and the quality of a civilisation is directly related to this result.”<sup>726</sup> This resonates with Karakoç’s previously reiterated belief that the soldier of resurrection’s duty needs to start within the family (the smallest unit), where the values of resurrection and true civilisation is taught to children by way of epic tales of martyrs and veterans. Remarkably, Karakoç does not consider the establishment of

---

<sup>722</sup> *Diriliş sitesi* in Turkish. Karakoç uses the Turkish term “site” here to mean “city” as in the city-states of the ancient civilisations. Türk Dil Kurumu defines the term *site* as follows: “a state consisting of one or more cities governed by its own laws in the ancient civilisations.” Site, in Turkish, is widely used in the contemporary daily language to mean “a collective settlement center in cities, which is managed and secured from a specific center”. ‘site’. Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri, <https://sozluk.gov.tr/?kelime=site>. Accessed 26 Mar. 2022.

<sup>723</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 40.

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>725</sup> Coşkun, p. 246.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*

*Diriliş sitesi*, which he shows as a target to the resurrection generation, as a mere worldly faith because “[t]he rebirth of the site must also be the rebirth and existence of man.”<sup>727</sup> As a result, Karakoç highlights a particular sort of human being that coexists with the environment and, through integration with it, expresses the *essence of existence*. According to him, the individual who constructed the city must also have gained the philosophical depth that the modern Western metropolis has destroyed.

### 5.2.1 *Alnyazısı Saati*

*Alnyazısı Saati*<sup>728</sup> (*Hour of Destiny*) consists of 13 sections written between 1979 and 1988, and its subheading is as follows: *13<sup>th</sup> rainstorm: winter rainstorm. Death. Then the wheel will turn again: Resurrection*. The poems of this chapter almost collectively mention a city per poem in which the audience also finds Karakoç’s criticisms towards Western values of modernism and civilisation ideas as seen immediately in the first poem concerning the city of Jerusalem.

It is significant to note that Karakoç, a conservative-Muslim poet, starts this collection of poems by mentioning Jerusalem foremost thus, it can be argued that he deems Jerusalem as the holiest of all the cities to which he refers, even before the cities such as Medina or İstanbul, both of which have significance for and on Karakoç as a thinker and an İstanbulite by choice.

---

<sup>727</sup> Ibid.

<sup>728</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Alnyazısı Saati](#).

### 5.2.1.1 *Jerusalem, Medina, and İstanbul as Cities of Resurrection*

The city-civilisation relationship can be inherently found in mentioning the cities of Jerusalem, Medina, and İstanbul, along with the other *cities of Islam*<sup>729</sup>, in Karakoç's poems. Medina is one of the most important cities for Islam and Islamic civilisation, from whose name the concepts of *medenî*<sup>730</sup> and *medîni*<sup>731</sup> were derived. As Koçak points out, "the first of the words related to civilisation in the Islamic world is the city of Medina, which announced the establishment of the Islamic State. Those who live in this city are called *medenî*, while those who live in any other city are called *medîni*."<sup>732</sup> Kutluer, furthermore, states, "the infinitive *temeddün*<sup>733</sup> is derived from the word *medina* and mean 'living an urban or civilised life.'<sup>734</sup>"<sup>735</sup>

Establishing a direct link between the concept of civilisation and specifically the city-space constructed with Medina in Islamic civilisation is key to understanding the link to the authentic life Karakoç builds within his civilisation and city of resurrection. In other words, the acceptance of civilisation as a way of life developed and shaped as belonging to Medina; thus, being civilised or *medenî* leads to an understanding of the relationship between civilisation and city-living space. For Karakoç, "[c]ivilisation, by definition, is a historical phenomenon that appeals to all humanity"<sup>736</sup> and "[t]here is almost a blood tie between cities and civilisations in terms of their existence and

---

<sup>729</sup> Coşkun (p. 249) states that for Karakoç, the salvation of cities that nurture Islamic civilisation such as İstanbul, Damascus, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Cairo, Islamabad, and Mecca will ensure the realisation of the resurrection.

<sup>730</sup> Ar. Civilised.

<sup>731</sup> Ar. who belong to the city, urban.

<sup>732</sup> Koçak, Ahmet. '[Sezai Karakoç'un Fikrî Yazılarında Doğu ve Batı Medeniyeti Tasavvuru](#)'. RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi, no. 5, Apr. 2016, p. 52.

<sup>733</sup> Ar. Civilising.

<sup>734</sup> Similarly, the concept of *civilisation* is derived from the word *civilis*, which means urban in Latin.

<sup>735</sup> Kutluer, İlhan (2003), "Medeniyet", [Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi](#).

<sup>736</sup> Karakoç. *Düşünceler I: Kavramlar*, p. 7.

interpretation of time and goods that give meaning to their existence.”<sup>737</sup> Emre<sup>738</sup> argues that the shared etymological origin of the words *civilisation* and *medina*, which allude to a civilisation that built cities of Islamic civilisation, indicate that Islamic civilisation is the source of urbanisation. Cities are one of the fundamental components of Islamic civilisation, according to Sezai Karakoç, who views them as settings where people reflect on the meaning of life. In a similar vein, Arı argues that one of the unique aspects of Karakoç which makes him a poet and thinker of the Islamic civilisation is that “he can infuse the hopes, prophets, cities and institutions of Islam into his art and thought with great excitement, vitality and naturalness.”<sup>739</sup> Thus, one of the most striking themes Karakoç uses in his poems is the cities, where he relates the idea of civilisation as the ultimate outcome of the war of resurrection, through which the soldier of resurrection will find the authentic way of living.

As discussed, Karakoç was amongst the poets who were very much interested in the constant change and transformation of civilisations, which he believes is needed in order to bring the civilisation of resurrection. He believes that the true Islamic civilisation will be reached with the resurrection and deals with this issue from the point of view of authenticity. Karakoç argues that civilisations “build their own living spaces, and [he] sees the change in the living space as regression and alienation from Islamic civilisation. [He] states that resurrection can only be realised in this living space, which will change this retrogression [from Islamic civilisation] as a leap forward.”<sup>740</sup> For existentialists, society has overvalued rationality and technology at the expense of losing from consciousness a fundamental sense of *authentic* being; individuals thus live in a world that has no more than an absurd, superficial meaning and that constantly threatens to devolve into nothingness.<sup>741</sup> In order to overcome this absurdity that modern life imposes on people, and in a time when global power

---

<sup>737</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *İnsanlığın Dirilişi*. 8th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011, p. 59.

<sup>738</sup> Emre, Akif. ‘Sezai Karakoç’ta Üç Şehir, Üç Sesleniş’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 438.

<sup>739</sup> Arı.

<sup>740</sup> Coşkun, p. 236.

<sup>741</sup> Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi, editors. ‘Existentialism’. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995. ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2137935616/citation/8AA77DFD75F34AD8PQ/151>.

diminishes the individual, Karakoç upholds the idea of living authentically and works towards achieving the Islamic civilisation. Arı argues that “[a]t a time when state-centred thinking has a hegemonic character, Karakoç maintained that *civilisation* is the best analytical tool that will enable us to make sense of the human-Islam relationship in history.”<sup>742</sup> In other words, for him, it should be the duty of all believers, that is to say, the soldiers of the resurrection, because it will not only bring them the authenticity, they need to strive for but also help them to make sense of their place in this period in history.

This effort to live authentically in order to reach true civilisation is prominent in the usage of the city theme in Karakoç’s poems. Differently composed and structured from the epic poems that are analysed in the previous chapters, the city imagery in Karakoç’s poems that are analysed hereupon can be found in several of his poems as intermingled here and there. Karataş argues, “[w]hen the city descriptions in the poems are brought together, they present a whole, almost like the various parts of [one single] poem. These [...] are like elements initially thought to be a complete structure but later dissipated and infiltrated different parts.”<sup>743</sup> This structure is seen in the entirety of Karakoç’s poems except for *Alınyazısı Saati*, which is one of the chapters where he single-handedly deals with the relationship between the cities and civilisations.

I.

*And the city of Jerusalem. The city that was built in the Heavens and lowered down to the Earth.*

*The city of God and all mankind.*

*Hides a crater underneath.*

*Now it weighs on my heart.*

---

<sup>742</sup> Arı.

<sup>743</sup> Karataş, Turan. Doğu’nun Yedinci Oğlu: Sezai Karakoç. 1st Ed., Kaknüs Yayınları, 1998, p. 334.

*What does Jerusalem say to me now?  
You were going to bring a damasked-torch from Damascus  
You were going to plant it in the tomb of the Prophet Solomon.  
A torch that will illuminate the souls  
It will transfer the demon to human:  
It will put out the eyes of the beast  
the human will turn from the demon*

In this stanza, although weaved with imageries such as damasked-torch, as an indicator of the style of Second New, it is clear that the poet has a yearning for Jerusalem of old. Jerusalem was a city that was made in heaven by God and then was sent to Earth and became a torch that illuminated the souls, with the help of the prophets, to transfer the demons into humans. The demons that Karakoç mentions are possibly the humans who lived in sin as was narrated in the Bible and the Qur'an. For Karakoç, as a civilisation city, Jerusalem was tasked with transforming the sinning human into believing humans. It is important to note that Karakoç relays the ways of true civilisation to the way of prophets. He maintains that the soldier of resurrection needs to find the elixir of life that was brought by the prophets: "Islamic culture and civilisation is a composition that springs from the spirit of Islam coming from the Qur'an and the Prophet. [The soldier of resurrection] will bring a civilisation renaissance out of it."<sup>744</sup>

*And you left Jerusalem that afternoon  
A First World War after noon  
Those horses you brought down from the snowy mountain  
Their ribs leaking blood  
In a house, a woman lowers the curtain  
Of the apocalypse, the apocalypse's curtain*

---

<sup>744</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 68.

In this part of the stanza, although it is unclear to whom Karakoç refers, it can be interpreted that he addresses the prophet. Throughout this stanza, the audience gets the impression that a significant character has left Jerusalem, which has since descended into a terrible period. The First World War is mentioned in the second verse, and the following verses state that Jerusalem's minarets have fallen silent, the mosques were destroyed, the shrines were left alone, and the city is not timeless as it was. These images portray a critique of modernisation and the West. The West brought the war to Jerusalem and caused its inhabitants to descend into the demons and the sinners the prophets once saved, leaving the city in an apocalyptic state.

*And the city of Jerusalem. The city that was built in the Heavens and lowered  
down to the Earth.*

*The city of God and all mankind.*

*The iron of the shrines has turned green*

*With the poison of time blowing like the wind*

*[...]*

*They are running away like they run from the city of Lot<sup>745</sup>*

*With God's wrath, so they won't turn into a statue of salt*

*With the torment of minarets, silent*

*With the agony of mosque domes destroyed violent*

*[...]*

The next section of the stanza consolidates the imagery that Jerusalem was left alone in its ruins, where no prophet is sighted anymore. The miracles of the prophets are

---

<sup>745</sup> Lut (Lot in the Old Testament) is one of the prophets mentioned in Qur'an, and he was given the order to teach to the people there about monotheism, the wickedness of homosexuality, and their violent and lusty behavior. Similar to the story in the Bible, the Qur'an claims that the inhabitants of the cities disregarded Lut's messages, which led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, by God's wrath.

something of the past, indicated by a yellowed wad. Once a city of the prophets that promised resurrection, there is no sign of ascension or existence of a prophet anymore.

*There is neither Zachariah nor Jesus anymore*

*Is that a yellowed wad, those miracles*

*That resurrection of the dead, that healing utterance*

*There is neither a trace of Ascension*

*Nor Peter<sup>746</sup> rising from the ground anymore*

*Alınyazısı Saati* refers to prophets several times. It is important to remember that Karakoç sees prophets as the bringers of the truth and leaders for humans to achieve an authentic life. The relation between truth and authenticity is notable in Karakoç, who also relays this to his audience in his essays. He states that his soul constantly craves the truth and always seeks it, which can be reached by “studying all hours of the day and night to fully comprehend Islam.”<sup>747</sup> Moreover, he reiterates that “the works and individuals who follow in the footsteps of the Prophet and are associated with the Qur'an -scholars, saints, and real heroes- are role models for my spirit as I seek the truth and study more about Islam in depth and without interruption.”, maintaining that the proper guidance and the leaders are the Prophet and the Qur'an, respectively.

---

<sup>746</sup> In the original language, Karakoç says “Nor the *rock* rising from the ground”. This can be interpreted in two ways. One, he refers to a literal rock, stating that the city was war-ridden and there are only ruins left. The other interpretation can be that rock refers to Petrus who is one of the 12 apostles of Jesus. In Aramaic, the name Petrus is translated as “rock” and to whom Jesus says: “I tell you that you are Peter. And I’ll build my church on this rock. The gates of the underworld won’t be able to stand against it.” *Holy Bible*. Matthew, 16:18. New International Version. [Bible Gateway](#). Given that this poem is filled with references to the names of prophets, I translated the verse keeping the latter interpretation in mind.

<sup>747</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 22.

Moreover, for Karakoç, the prophets and saints will also be heroes who devote their lives to the economy and culture while constructing the Islamic resurrection society because they are “*pîrs*<sup>748</sup> of civilisation”<sup>749</sup>. Karakoç describes the prophets as the greatest standard-bearers of truth. Thus, the resurrection soldier must follow in the paths of the prophets to reach the ultimate truth, leading to an authentic way of living. Karakoç maintains that there is “no other manhood and constructiveness other than following in their footsteps, carrying stones and mortar for the establishment of the only city of the future”<sup>750</sup>; thus, it is the only path to follow for building the city and the site of the resurrection. It is also significant to note that the city of resurrection will be found by following all prophets, but most importantly, Muhammad<sup>751</sup>: “Yes, we resurrection soldiers take refuge under the Banner of the Last Prophet. It is our duty that this banner not fall to the ground; it is our wisdom of existence.” In other words, according to Karakoç, following the Prophet's flag will bring a sincere believer to Islamic civilisation and is the ultimate responsibility and the true knowledge of existence.

İstanbul holds a special place for Karakoç, an essential city of the Islamic civilisation and on a personal level. Born in the southeast town of Ergani in Diyarbakır, Karakoç moved to İstanbul at an early age and lived there until he died. In his poems, he refers to İstanbul many times. *Alınyazısı Saati* is not an exception and is an excellent example to show the importance of İstanbul for the poet, which is the nature and history centre of Islam as the centre of civilisation and lifestyle, belief, thought, morality, art and literature.

---

<sup>748</sup> Pîr is a Sufistic term which means “the person who guides the devotee in the way of truth and the founder of the sect.” The TDV states that “the term *pîr* has been classified in four terms in terms of sharia, tariqa, ingenuity and truth. The four *pîr* of the shari'ah are Adam, Abraham, Moses and Mohammed; the four *pîr* of the tariqa are [the Qur'an'ic archangels] Gabriel, Michael, Raphael and Azrael. For more details please see of the term in its relation to Sufism, please see: ‘[Pîr](#)’. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, Accessed 15 Aug. 2022.

<sup>749</sup> Karakoç, *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*, p. 52.

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>751</sup> *Ibid*.

*lower down the moon on earth, let it be a city*  
*the details, her floodgates, gardens*  
*grow closer*  
*appear softly*  
*for years I lived that city*  
*piece by piece in İstanbul*  
*I lived the moon in her fountains*  
*I was divided with the moon in her cypresses*  
*I was injured together with the moon*  
*The moon, illuminating the cemeteries of İstanbul*  
*I breathed in parts of the afterlife's*  
*Sharp-lined freedom*

In this stanza, Karakoç describes what İstanbul means to him, using the moon as an essential part of the city. The imagery of the moon can be interpreted in a two-fold way: (i) as the moon is the satellite of the earth, İstanbul is the satellite, a vital part of the Islamic civilisation as it was the last capital of Islamic civilisation; and (ii) a symbol of the Islamic civilisation, as the crescent of the moon was and is the “political, military, and religious emblem of the Byzantine and Turkish empires and, later, of all Islamic countries.”<sup>752</sup> The relationship between the moon and the city of İstanbul can thus be interpreted in that sense, as a symbol of many civilisations<sup>753</sup>, together with the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the imageries of cypresses<sup>754</sup>

---

<sup>752</sup>. [Crescent](#). Encyclopædia Britannica, Accessed 16 Aug. 2022.

<sup>753</sup> According to [Encyclopædia Britannica](#) the crescent became the symbol of Byzantine empire “supposedly because the sudden appearance of the Moon saved the city of Byzantium (Constantinople, today’s İstanbul) from a surprise attack.”

<sup>754</sup> Remarkably, cypresses are important symbols of Islam and Sufism and they are often used as graveyard trees. Kankal states they are “the symbol of human life's efforts to exist from birth to death and of unity. Cypresses are also described as the tree of life, symbolizing abundance and fertility in ancient Turkish culture. The most important reason for this is that the roots of the trees come from under the ground, the trunk is on the ground and the leaves reach the sky. In this

and cemeteries are used as metaphors for life after death, as is explicitly stated in the last verses when Karakoç describes the afterlife as being free, in keeping with the theme of this chapter.

Karakoç refers to İstanbul, in the next stanza, as the city representing the Islamic civilisation, which lies between the East and West, as a sword of Islam which can stand against the East, represented by the imagery of the Chinese silk, and the West, represented with the imagery of the steel.

*This is the city beyond earth and the sky  
She's a sword reaching from East to West  
Splitting the devil's cocoon knitted from Chinese silk  
Shattering Western steel with its blows  
She's God's sword-like crescent  
The crystallized statue of the spirit of Islam*

İstanbul represents the poet's, as a soldier of resurrection, mission of bringing Islamic civilisation back to life. In keeping with his critique of the state of Islam and Islamic civilisation today, Karakoç makes an implication that İstanbul disappeared at this time. Her glory, with it, the glory of Islamic civilisation, must be resurrected.

---

trilogy, there is a belief value that evokes birth, life and the desire to reach heaven. The fact that the tree remains green despite seasonal conditions also symbolises immortality. [...] In mysticism, the fact that the lower branches of the cypress are straight reminds the person who has opened his hands to prayer. Its upper branches are turned to the ground, just like a dervish who realises his helplessness in the presence of the Creator and bows his head. In addition to these, the upright and neat form of the tree means truth and honesty. Its solid structure, which does not sway in the wind, is the symbol of patience. In Sufism, this state of the cypress is likened to withdrawing from the world." For more details, please see: Kankal, Recep. '[Türk Kültüründe Servi Ağacı](#)'. TR Magazine, 9 Mar. 2017.

*Even though it disappeared, her spirit permeated my soul*  
*She will live in me as long as I live*  
*Who knows, maybe she will be resurrected with me*  
*In the resurrection of the Nation of Islam*  
*[...]*  
*Your death, O İstanbul , is for the resurrection, I know*  
*So lower your soul's flags, lower and bury them in the ground,*  
*Rise and stand up*  
*In between your flesh and bones*  
*[...]*

As a city created by the Islamic civilisation and a symbol of the resurrection, İstanbul will once again become a city founded by the Islamic civilisation and acquire the character of a city with such promise. İstanbul is also a city of genuine civilisation. In the depiction of İstanbul 's demise today, Karakoç criticizes Westernisation and modernisation since, in his view, they alienate people. For Karakoç, this can only be overcome by going back to nature, as the following chapter discusses. In Karakoç's belief, in contrast to cities born of Western civilisation, Islamic cities were designed to emphasise the person, are connected with life and collaborate with nature to provide the most meaningful and all-encompassing solutions to the problems of human existence.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This chapter sought to demonstrate how Karakoç's conception of civilisation and the idea of self, both crucial to his concepts of the *city of resurrection* and the *soldier of resurrection*, reveal authenticity as an existentialist concept. These concepts are then condensed into the overarching ideology of resurrection, which forms the foundation

of Karakoç's artistic, philosophical, and political interpretations of the concept of resurrection.

In this chapter, Karakoç's ideology of resurrection is examined through his essays and his poem *Alinyazısı Saati* where he maintained the importance of the city, civilisation and resurrection themes. He argues that the reason why the man was created in the first place and his “descent to Earth is to embark on an Epic for the Earth.”<sup>755</sup> The epic he refers to is to bring the Islamic civilisation, the ultimate civilisation above all, back to earth. This is the ultimate goal for the soldier of resurrection, so much so that once he completes this embarkment, his victory will be gifted with “a complete Paradise, that is, a happy eternal life.”<sup>756</sup> For him, “the sacred seed of this duty found in man is promised with eternity,” and it was with this purpose that “the man was thrown from the *highest of the high* to the *lowest of the low* to grow and nourish this seed even under the most challenging conditions.”<sup>757</sup> In other words, the man’s ultimate goal in life is to realise this duty. For Karakoç, this can only be done by bringing Islamic civilisation back by adhering to being the soldier of resurrection, which necessitates pursuing Islamic civilisation, which, for him, is the burden of human destiny.

Karakoç argues that the main differentiator between the full resurrection and existence and the complete extinction is to be successful in bringing back the true civilisation. Only through living authentically, thus committing to be the soldier of resurrection fully, can the Islamic civilisation be reached.

The discussed concepts of civilisation, cities as the areas where human imagination realises the analysis of the relationship between existence, creation and creator in all its dimensions, and resurrection as the ultimate goal for the believer remain in relation to the idea of authenticity because, in Karakoç’s view, living authentically entails dedicating oneself to serving as a soldier of resurrection who will build the path to the Islamic civilisation and will define oneself in terms of resurrection.

---

<sup>755</sup> Karakoç, “Destan”, in *Diriliş’in Çevresinde*.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6 ALIENATION

*“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”<sup>758</sup>*

*“No one wanted him; he was outcast from life's feast.”<sup>759</sup>*

Sezai Karakoç's ideology of resurrection is quite comprehensive and is considered to have fed and affected not only his approach to the idea of a true Islamic civilisation,

---

<sup>758</sup> Donne, John. No Man is an Island. Souvenir, 1998.

<sup>759</sup> Joyce, James. Dubliners. Prestwick House, 2006.

as shown in the previous chapter, but also in his criticism of westernisation and the Western values that were applied to the Turkish civilisation movement.

Thus, this chapter aims to demonstrate in detail how the existentialist concepts of alienation and isolation are central notions in Karakoç's critique of Western values and westernisation in the name of embedding the Western civilisation in Turkey.

Universal alienation for him means to be alienated from one's disposition. Such an alienation is caused by the "western thought, which ignored the integrity of existence, which is the physical and metaphysical dimensions, and built its modern civilisation."<sup>760</sup> Alienation, and by extension, the isolation of man, thus, is a consequence of modernisation brought by the West and Westernisation in Karakoç's understanding and as discussed within this chapter, he emphasises that "this alienation is at the root of problems such as terrorism, anarchy and nihilism in the modern world."<sup>761</sup> Therefore, this chapter analyses his essays that critique modernisation and Westernisation through concepts such as dependency on commodities, materialism and absolutism. His poems *Masal*, *Çeşmeler* and *Ayinler* are selected to highlight the criticism of Westernisation and modernisation. Following Second New's characteristics and guidelines, Karakoç uses different subjects, objects and images in these poems. Although this chapter prominently analyses alienation and isolation as existentialist themes in these selected poems of Karakoç, there is also a continuation that can be found primarily in the previous chapter, where authenticity is a theme is discussed through the city imagery. As both main themes, alienation and authenticity, are discussed through the greater leitmotif of civilisation in Karakoç's poems, a connection and inter-relation between both chapters are made. The other two main concepts, analysed in chapters 3 and 4, respectively, death and freedom, can also be found as themes in these poems since they altogether build the entire civilisation ideal in Karakoç's worldview.

---

<sup>760</sup> Baş, Münire Kevser. 'Diriliş Düşüncesinde İki Kavram: "Evrensel Şuur" ve "Evrensel Yabancılaşma"'. *Yedi İklim Dergisi*, vol. 368, 2020, p. 7.

<sup>761</sup> Ibid.

As discussed in [chapter 1](#), Karakoç's upbringing and youth coincided with "the devastation caused by the Second World War in Europe, the emergence of the Cold War global politicians, and the post-war period when the colonisation of the Muslim-majority countries all over Asia and Africa ended"<sup>762</sup>. In Turkey, in the meantime, the virtues of the Western civilisation, modernisation and Turkish nationalism were being established as part of the new Republic's values. For poets such as Necip Fazıl and İsmet Özel Turkish nationalism needed to be redefined by Islamist values and associated with Islam on an intellectual level. They "combined nationalism with Muslim belief and criticised the secularism of Kemalist reforms through Islamist ideas."<sup>763</sup> Karakoç, too, has advocated that

the root of the identity crisis of the Muslims lies in the centuries-old depression. There is the problem of whether to lose [their] identity, whether to renew it or not, whether to regain it or not, in other words, [a] personality crisis"<sup>764</sup>.

For him, the reason for this identity crisis is the alienation that Muslims have been going through for the past two centuries. In his essay entitled *Night to Day*, he associates Islam's repression with night and darkness and the liberation from this darkness, in other words, the resurrection, with light and day: "[w]hat a long night, O Lord! A night that lasted for two hundred years. A night that still ripples as if it will never end, resisting the light!"<sup>765</sup> For him, the Islamic thinkers must "re-determine the identity and personality of the Muslim"<sup>766</sup> because "[t]his definition is the first

---

<sup>762</sup> Aydın, Cemil, and Burhanettin Duran. 'Arnold J. Toynbee and Islamism in Cold War-Era Turkey: Civilisationism in the Writings of Sezai Karakoç'. [Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East](#), vol. 35, no. 2, Aug. 2015, pp. 272.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

<sup>764</sup> Analay, Kadir. Sezai Karakoç ve Diriliş Düşüncesi. Dicle Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İslam Tarihi ve Sanatları Anabilim Dalı, Türk-İslam Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı, 2009.

<sup>765</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. Fizikötesi Açısından Ufuklar ve Daha Ötesi 3: Doğum Işığı. 3rd ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2009, p. 12.

<sup>766</sup> Ibid, p. 124

condition of rebirth”<sup>767</sup> when our age started to speak about the resurrection. Karakoç praises ordinary people, arguing that they resisted alienation more than the intellectuals did. However, for him, “the transformation of resistance to resurrection or the leap from resistance to resurrection is only possible with the awareness of the intellectuals and their involvement” as “[t]he people, by themselves, can never turn a resistance into a resurrection.”<sup>768</sup> Thus, there is a need for a new kind of intellectual who knows both the Western and Eastern values well enough to challenge them, as well as the values of Islam, who can then bring everything together to create the movement of resurrection.

## 6.1 Critique of the Dependence on Commodities

Some parallelisms can be made to the Marxist thought of alienation when Karakoç’s idea of transforming the resistance to resurrection is examined. Although Karakoç maintains that the alienation the Islamic world goes through is not the same as the alienation in Marxist terminology, it can be argued that his insistence on the necessity for intellectual involvement to make resurrection possible has traces of Marxist thought.

Marx’s theory of self-alienation upholds that “man who alienates something from himself and himself from something; that he alienates himself from himself.”<sup>769</sup> Similar to Marx’s thought in which he argues that “alienation results of man’s labour, of objects produced by man”, and that it is the realisation of “this objectification for the labourer is at the same time the loss of the object, alienation”<sup>770</sup>, Karakoç argues that people have developed an unhealthy dependence on earthly commodities or things, so much so, that they became one of them. “The objects, things, have now

---

<sup>767</sup> Ibid.

<sup>768</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>769</sup> Petrović, Gajo. ‘Marx’s Theory of Alienation’. [Philosophy and Phenomenological Research](#), vol. 23, no. 3, 1963, p. 421.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

begun to take man's place and consume him. The days when people will be a part of the things and things will be a part of people are very near. Isn't this a painful form of death?"<sup>771</sup>, he asks.

Karakoç finds the answer to this question in his ideal of the resurrection. For him, the person will be equipped with the idea of a new object, the resurrection, and it will "[r]escue him from this blockade of things, separate him from the love and fear of the things, which has become a superstitious belief"<sup>772</sup>. Notwithstanding the similarities to Marx's theory of alienation, his critique targets the historical dialectical materialism, showing that it "does not break the chain and does not change the way people interpret things"<sup>773</sup>. Instead, it "throws away the noblest part of man, the part that separates him from things, like ashes, as if this is the only way of salvation."<sup>774</sup> For him, this new object, the resurrection, will "not reduce people to things" but "will break the dialectic of man who becomes the history of things."<sup>775</sup> For him, it is imperative to refuse to believe in "the descent of man's own superior layer [...], to the lowest layer, the metal and material [one]" because this leads to accepting the dialectic of history as "a continuous decline and descent."<sup>776</sup> It is, therefore, "to believe in the power of universal evil which is nothing but ultimately deifying the devil himself."<sup>777</sup> Thus Karakoç criticises Marx et al. for handling subjects like the rebellion of death, metaphysical pain and feelings of the beyond in narrow and shallow spaces, i.e. alienation and dialectic of history, whereas these matters need to be treated within the broader scope of what death means to human existence.

Karakoç's criticism of man's dependence on things and thus his alienation from his true self and the true Islamic civilisation is an interwoven approach. Similar to the connection drawn between freedom and Sufism in [chapter 4](#), here, a link between

---

<sup>771</sup> Karakoç, *Lût'un, Arkasına Bakıp Tuz Heykeli Olan Karısı Gibi*, in *Diriliş'in Çevresinde*, p. 46.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47-8.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>776</sup> Karakoç, *Ölümün Sebebi*, p. 8.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

alienation and Sufism can also be drawn. Baş states that for Karakoç, Sufism is “a way of getting rid of things [i.e. commodities] and living the peak state of God's love.”<sup>778</sup> Karakoç, a poet by formation, states “[t]here is a rule in classical poetry: to use the metre in a way that it goes unnoticed.” His hope and belief are that, over time, all tangible things will leave their place in the order of the abstract. Because for Karakoç, the real danger lies in this world of closed systems born of isolation<sup>779</sup>. In other words, the things we create and depend on are interfering with our connection with nature.

Similar criticisms of his regarding how modern life separated man from his true nature have been examined in detail in [chapter 4](#). For Karakoç, the end goal always is to be one with God, to reach His realm of love which is only possible by going beyond the limits of concrete things, thus, surpassing the alienation created by man. “The purpose of life is to place the love and fear of God in the heart in the pursuit of conveying the soul to its eternal creator” and “to transcend things and time with this love and ecstasy, and to form all intentions and actions in line with God's consent.”<sup>780</sup>

This incorporation method of Sufism and existentialist themes constitute the foundation of Karakoç's thought process and belief system which is eventually instituted in the idea of resurrection systematically.

## 6.2 Critique of the Materialisms

Karakoç's take on alienation, although it has similar elements to the Marxist one, diverts from it completely regarding materialism. Karakoç, a Muslim and a steadfast follower of spiritual leaders like Rumi and Yunus Emre, sees materialism in any form as a way of crushing the individual. As explained in chapters 1 and 2, *Second New*, as a school of poetry and literature, has built itself through the complications that were

---

<sup>778</sup> Baş, p. 286.

<sup>779</sup>.op.cit., pp. 46-7.

<sup>780</sup> op. cit.

remnants of the Second World War, which then took a new form during the Cold War years. Karakoç, a *Second New* poet, thus, believes that in both Russian and American materialisms, the two sides of the Cold War-era political power struggle “collide and man is [left for] squealing in the middle of the two.”<sup>781</sup> For him, Russian materialism, i.e., communism, is “a philosophy that denies the idea of another world, the idea that people will be held accountable in the future and where eternity is left, even if people hold them accountable” and that it “is a hunger mania.”<sup>782</sup> In *Alınyazısı Saati*, Karakoç writes along the same lines, defending the same argument, this time in verse:

*A team of gunmen  
who believed in killing  
not to keep alive  
who deluded in extinguishing  
not to resurrect*

This poem is the 6<sup>th</sup> sub-section of *Alınyazısı Saati* in which Karakoç carries a conversation with the morning star. The entirety of the poem is designed as if to convince the morning star that better times are coming ahead and there is still hope that can be found in this life and the next one. Thus, Karakoç condemns the team of gunmen, which is most probably a metaphor for the political struggle of the two superpowers, which are not interested in keeping the people alive or in resurrection but in killing and extinguishing the will to live in the people. There is explicit parallelism that can be drawn where Karakoç condemns that both materialisms, communism and capitalism, squeeze individuals in between themselves, to their oblivion.

---

<sup>781</sup> Karakoç, Madde Örümceği, in *Diriliş'in Çevresinde*, p. 61.

<sup>782</sup> Ibid.

Karakoç, therefore, does not distinguish communism where “[t]he communist ideologue does not take into account that he forgets other matters for a moment” and “does not see that he has overestimated what he has in hand” because “communism is a neurosis of humanity” and capitalism which is another form of sickness, “born of American liberalism is a pride psychosis”, and, in the end, both are the “outbursts of neuroses as world wars.”<sup>783</sup> The poem continues with critique of both capitalism and communism:

*The most miserable imitation of capitalism  
And the javelin of communism  
melted and sucked our own people.  
Melted and sucked  
our souls, our life, our blood.  
This is how the game did start.  
This is how the game is gone.  
This is how the game is done.*<sup>784</sup>

For Karakoç, the struggle between the two ideologies is a game in which the individual’s life and entire soul are drained. Amid these materialisms, the individual’s uniqueness is gone. However, for Karakoç, individual existence is the most important of all; it is people as individuals who should come first, “we should exist [first of all]” and “[h]istory should not be a giant destroying individuals, but a composition consisting of the individuals added end to end.”<sup>785</sup> Believing in that, Karakoç assures the morning star that this game, although started, will finish and will be transformed to a manner in which resurrection will arrive in the very end. The believer should not be squeezed in between “the godless materialists who have

---

<sup>783</sup> Karakoç, Madde Örumceği, p. 61

<sup>784</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Alınyazısı Saati* in Gün Doğmadan, p. 650.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

deified themselves” and “the hypocritical materialists who trust that they have crucified God and removed him from the face of the earth.”<sup>786</sup> Here, it is critical to remember a similar vein of thought of Karakoç’s concerning the spirit’s crucifixion and leaving its place to dictatorial powers of fate, as touched upon in chapter 4 while discussing how he denounced the renunciation of the existence of God by the modern philosophies. Correspondingly, by stating that “even if a large part of my being is at the disposal of history, a part of it must remain mine,”<sup>787</sup> Karakoç refuses that history has an unbreakable stronghold on the individual.

In another connecting argument to an authentic way of life that is investigated in the previous chapter, which is possible through the *civilisation of truth*, i.e., Islam, Karakoç acknowledges the failure of the Islamic world. According to him, while the West developed the ancient civilisations into a rebirth through the use of reason and materialism, Islam failed “to act in time to balance the [West’s] technique”, which has left Islamic civilisation in a deep depression. This, in turn, has caused panic, producing “Western imitation that eventually led to a fascination with Marxist-experiment.”<sup>788</sup> Karakoç counts himself within the *generation of resurrection* that will not only overcome these strongholds of materialistic thoughts, dependence on commodities, and all enmities born from them but also find a way back to its roots through a path of rebirth and emergence of the new culture and civilisation. For him, this generation of resurrection will reach the true civilisation.

### 6.3 Critique of Absolutisms

Throughout the analysis chapters, I aim to connect existentialist thought’s main themes with Karakoç’s worldview, woven around the main idea of resurrection. As reiterated in the previous chapters, while he uses these themes extensively in his

---

<sup>786</sup> Ibid.

<sup>787</sup> Ibid.

<sup>788</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Hakikat Doğrultusunda* in *Çağ ve İlham II: Sevgi Devrimi*. 7th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012, p.121-2.

works, this does not mean that Karakoç is an existentialist himself. In fact, Karakoç criticises both Sartre and Camus and other existentialists in absentia for putting too much emphasis on the absolutisms which came through materialism. Materialism, which was “the fierce enemy of religious absolutism”<sup>789</sup>, failed to eradicate all absolutisms and “unwittingly began to maintain another absolutism, a view that makes matter and the power of matter the absolute truth.”<sup>790</sup> Following this, Sartre and Camus created other absolutisms that “occurred with Sartre as *being*, and with Camus as *absurd*” while they tried to come up with something to place with religion. Karakoç maintains that for Sartre, “man is the only and absolute constructor while making himself; thus, Sartre conditions the absolute on the human existence.”<sup>791</sup> On the other hand, Camus advocates that what man “develops outside and inside is *absurd*.”<sup>792</sup>

Karakoç gives more leeway to Camus than Sartre in his essays, saying that, although both of them are atheists, Sartre is deceived by the harshness of the conditions surrounding people; Camus, on the other hand, believed in the strength of man’s resistance in the face of circumstances. “While Sartre was looking at death, Camus was looking at life,”<sup>793</sup> he writes. Karakoç even questions whether the fact that Sartre was awarded the Nobel Prize long after Camus has been a psychological factor that played a role in Sartre’s rejection of the Nobel Prize. In Karakoç’s different essays, the audience senses that he appreciates and understands Camus more than Sartre.

Nonetheless, he criticises Camus’s approach toward absurdity, saying that Camus’s absurdity is a bare and steep *skyscraper-iceberg* standing in front of a person. For Karakoç, Camus degrades all of history to “a plague of the absurd” and reduces the experience of death, which should be perceived as a gift for humankind, in the end,

---

<sup>789</sup> Karakoç, “Mutlak’ın Avcısı”, in *Diriliş’in Çevresinde*, p. 67.

<sup>790</sup> Ibid.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid.

<sup>792</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>793</sup> Karakoç, *Edebiyat Yazıları II*, p. 123.

to “a kind of snapshot; that emerges from the collision of human and the absurd.”<sup>794</sup> Thus, the absurd in Camus becomes an unconditional existence and shows all the effects of absoluteness by gaining an existence outside of our own existence. This is why Camus argues that the most honourable act of man is rebellion against this absolute. Karakoç’s criticism of Camus underlines that for Camus, man “becomes a Prometheus who has fought for life and death throughout history to save his freedom from this Giant Absurd,”<sup>795</sup> all the while the one and true Absolute needs to be connected to religion and God.

While critiquing the existentialists’ approach to the one absolute and the human existence, Karakoç himself states what the aim and the purpose of man’s existence should be. He acknowledges that the plague of this era is indeed the abandonment, the alienation, the isolation of man. In an essay entitled *Plague in the Milky Way*, Karakoç, rather poetically, defines this new disease of our era as

the abandonment of the human being in a whole metamorphosis of apocalyptic movement that creates the tremor in humans that one day, when they will raise their heads to the sky, they will see that the Milky Way has been torn to shreds.

Thus, this new disease is much greater than the man himself and cannot be compared to other diseases humanity experienced throughout history, hence why he calls it the plague in the Milky Way. This disease is “the most terrible disease” where “people have merged into each other on the outside, but separated inside, they have become quite distant.”<sup>796</sup> This would necessitate a more extraordinary and drastic movement than ever if humanity wishes to overcome it. Karakoç argues that

[t]he issue is no longer a matter of this or that condition, nor of this or that time. The issue has ceased to be one of the historical

---

<sup>794</sup> op. cit.

<sup>795</sup>

<sup>796</sup> Karakoç, “Samanyolunda Veba”, in *Diriliş’in Çevresinde*, p. 39.

problems of man but has become a *real* problem. It is the existence that is now in question. Man has to understand why he exists. Either he will understand this or commit *total suicide* by deciding on the absurdity of this life. Man is now faced with the accumulated historical consequence of not bringing a solution to the real problem he sincerely believed in. The question of ‘What am I?’ has ceased to be the question of philosophers and has become the primary basis of the life of ordinary people. All this madness out there is to [be able to] forget this is a question of life and death. <sup>797</sup>

For Karakoç, the question of existence is the more outstanding question of all because it is related to life and death itself. He takes the question out of its usual surroundings and takes it out of being one of history’s long-asked questions. Because he believes that man can find the meaning of his existence only through believing in Islam’s doctrines and God, the denial of the person who asks questions of existence such as, ‘What am I?’, ‘Why am I here?’, ‘Where am I?’ would not work anymore<sup>798</sup>. These questions, for Karakoç, further cause denial in people where they “stop people, isolate them from time and even things, and people lose interest in other people. A person who does not know that the day is Thursday and the month is May”<sup>799</sup>. Even faith does not work for these people, who have the most terrible disease of all eras.

When faced with humanity’s most prevalent and fundamental questions, Karakoç again turns to his ideology of resurrection. He argues that even if “[t]his age has come with history and has relativised everything, and it is blind to everything but the bare existence and its absolute problems”, one should not be pessimistic instead they need to believe that “for every civilisation that has covered in dust, there is a

---

<sup>797</sup> Ibid.

<sup>798</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>799</sup> Ibid.

new *resurrection*.”<sup>800</sup> Therefore, the only way out for Karakoç is to be a part of the generation of resurrection if humanity is to maintain its optimism in the face of these insurmountable issues and concerns. For Karakoç, as discussed in the previous chapter, this is the most *authentic* way to live and for the man to be his most authentic self. This generation, for him, will be the one who “reaches the truth and eternity and determines all the movements after it as the differences of its own movement, because the problem is absolutely about the truth.”<sup>801</sup>

Thus, Karakoç argues against the materialisms of Russia and America and the wrong-absolutisms of Sartre and Camus and maintains that for the man of this era not to be alienated and feel isolated, he needs to turn to Islam and God, through whom, “[t]he Muslims’ war for re-existence will truly begin.” The soldiers of the generation of resurrection will wage war to attain the real civilisation of Islam, in which they are “in the opening rehearsal of the war for the re-creation and resurrection of Islam against the capitalist imperialism of the West and the communist imperialism of the North.”<sup>802</sup> To fight against the wrong-ideals of the West means to understand what it is to be an Easterner and to extinguish the root of the inferiority aroused by the Western civilisation with its dependence on materialism that oppresses and destroys the personalities of the people.

#### **6.4 Critique of West, Westernisation, and Modernisation**

Karakoç maintains that while Islam, in the beginning, was a pure civilisation that represented the true civilisation for centuries, after the Renaissance, the West, which took lessons from the Islamic civilisation, attempted to resurrect itself with the help of ancient civilisations. This, in turn, caused the Islamic civilisation to “experience its own internal depression, while it also was under the pressure of the new Western

---

<sup>800</sup> Ibid.

<sup>801</sup> Ibid.

<sup>802</sup> Karakoç, *Çağ ve İlham II*, p. 82

civilisation.”<sup>803</sup> Thus, once grand and pure, the Islamic civilisation has been alienated by the West, and drifting into depression.

While carrying some similarities with the Marxist theory of alienation, for Karakoç, alienation of the Islamic world, in the end, can be defined as alienation from “the history of culture and civilisation”<sup>804</sup> which has its roots in the West and Western values. Karakoç argues that the society of Muslims has become “helpless in the face of the West, and instead of calmly researching and finding the reasons for this and taking measures accordingly, [the Muslims] panicked and thought that they had found a solution in breaking away from themselves.”<sup>805</sup> Karakoç does not see this depression and feeling of helplessness as something that the Islamic civilisation can quickly be freed from. Contrarily, for him, “a new civilisational breakthrough is required [which] will happen with the resurrection of the soul.”<sup>806</sup> As discussed above, a new type of an intellectual is required for this breakthrough. Karakoç emphasises that this only can be achieved by resurrection and that the generations to succeed in this need to follow “the spiritual path and the path of virtue, and the generation of ascetic thinkers, scholars, writers, poets and artists who will find new ground by starting from the eastern and western inventory of science, literature and art”<sup>807</sup>. Therefore, in order to achieve their goals, this generation should reconsider Islam, the idea of civilisation, and both eastern and western ideals, in addition to adhering to Western values. Hence, it can be argued that Karakoç is not entirely against Western values, but he strongly emphasises that all these values must be brought together under the umbrella of the one true civilisation, the Islamic civilisation.

His poems *Masal* and *Ayinler*, as examined below, criticise blindly adopting Western principles and revere being an Easterner. As in his essays, he emphasises the need to be a member of the generation of the resurrection to be set free from being a part of

---

<sup>803</sup> Karakoç, *Düşünceler I*, p. 20.

<sup>804</sup> Karakoç, *Fizik Ötesi Açısından*, p. 52.

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>806</sup> Karakoç, *Düşünceler I*, p. 21.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*

the detached society and usher in the genuine society, which will be the believer's salvation.

#### 6.4.1 *Masal*

*Masal*<sup>808</sup> (*The Tale*) is the third poem in *Gül Muştusu* (Evangel of the Rose) which is the seventh part of Karakoç's collection of poems written in 1969-1970 and is subtitled *The Seventh Rainstorm: The rainstorm of the sky. The rainstorm of the earth. Flaming lakes. The opening doors of the Hidirellez winds. Gül Muştusu* contains several poems that deal with the West-East dichotomy through metaphysical and mystical components. Karakoç establishes the essential resurrection values upon the spirit of Islam: "[r]esurrection means the [permanent] return of the spirit of Islam to humanity. The literature without that spirit, the thought without that spirit, and action without that spirit soon becomes sterile and dry up."<sup>809</sup> Thus, in Karakoç's poems, the mystical and metaphysical components are used to strengthen the spirit of Islam in order to reach the resurrection, through which man can find his true meaning, freedom, and authentic life; while getting rid of his alienation. In the entirety of the collection of *Gül Muştusu*, Karakoç "tasks Jesus, Moses, Zachariah, the Gospel and finally the Qur'an with spreading, enlarging and multiplying the evangel of the

---

<sup>808</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Masal](#).

<sup>809</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Dönüş* in *Çağ ve İlham II*, p. 13.

rose<sup>810</sup>” as this poem is in itself a religious declaration and prayer. <sup>811</sup> *Masal* is a poem connected to tradition through folk literature and serves as the intellectual underpinning for the poetry, Aslan and Çiçek argue<sup>812</sup>. It also allows the examination within the interdisciplinary fields of philosophy, history, and sociology.

Situating *Masal*, which is an explicit critique of West, Westerners and Westernisation, within the Evangel, which will carry and spread the spirit of Islam is meaningful. The poem starts with an introduction of the father and his sons, who, one by one, go to the West while their father, who is portrayed as an understanding, compassionate, and kindhearted character, stays in the East.

*There was a father in the East  
before the West came  
His sons arrived in the West*

In other words, the father is encompassed in Karakoç’s ideas and values of the East being the superior civilisations. Aslan and Çiçek argue that the personification of the East in the father is a positive discourse across the negative one, which is how the

---

<sup>810</sup> As mentioned in chapter 4, the imagery of rose is significant in this poem. Karataş argues that in *Gül Muştusu*, Karakoç “brought the rose, one of the most important metaphors of our classical poetry, to our modern poetry in a way that evokes a new and contemporary meaning, and made it the focus of poetry. In other words, *the whole culture behind the rose* has been successfully carried over to modern poetry.” (Karataş in Akbayır, p. 115). Moreover, “this image, which is an inseparable part of the Turkish poetry tradition, has always been religious. It also evokes the serenity and grandeur of faith. It gives the news that after death, which creates the greatest peace in the realisation of the resurrection, can be reached only by relying on this image.” (ibid). Thus, it can be argued that in Karakoç’s poem the imagery of the rose as a religious symbol is used to reflect the willingness to achieve the resurrection.

<sup>811</sup> op.cit.

<sup>812</sup> Aslan, Celal, and Talha Çiçek. ‘Sezai Karakoç’un “Masal” Şiiri Üzerine Ontolojik Bir Analiz’. [Journal of History School](#), vol. 52, 2021, p. 2030.

West is portrayed. “The opposition of East and West is quite evident at the discursive level”, and “a narrative is made on the contrast between Eastern and Western civilisations.”<sup>813</sup> Karakoç divides the humanistic attitudes, which shape their corresponding civilisations following the period of Antiquity, into three: the Eastern<sup>814</sup>, the Western, and the Islamic attitude.<sup>815</sup> Throughout the poem, we can see how all these attitudes affect the poem’s eight characters, the father and his seven sons, “who turned to the West with historical and sociological necessities, symbolising the destiny of the East,” as seen in the verses *before the west came, [they] arrived in the West, implying the inevitability of the East-West encounter*”<sup>816</sup> as Aslan and Çiçek explain. In other words, Karakoç, while introducing the poem characters to the audience, already underlines the significance of the East-West confrontation and how it is reflected in his worldview.

The second stanza opens up with what the first son has encountered when he goes to the West of his own volition, seeking grandeur and honours, and the West welcomes him at first with grand gestures.

*First son at the West gates*  
*Welcomed with great ceremonies*  
*Then they gave a great feast in his honour*  
*[...]*  
*At night between feather pillows*  
*The son dreams of tomorrow's deep blue dawn*  
*A silhouette slowly swooped in like a feather.*

---

<sup>813</sup> Ibid, p. 2035.

<sup>814</sup> Koçak (2016, p. 61) states that according to Karakoç, Eastern civilisation is used for the ancient Indian and Chinese civilisations, which are completely different from the Islamic civilisation. In *Masal*, however, Karakoç refers to the East as the place where Islamic civilisation is to be found. This stems from the dichotomy the poem has between the West and the East.

<sup>815</sup> Karakoç, Sezai. *Durumalışta Özdeğişim* in Çağ ve İlham II, p. 139.

<sup>816</sup> op. cit.

*They killed him and buried him where nobody knows*

However, once he gets comfortable with how the West treats him, symbolised by the deep sleep and the feather pillows, the West strikes and kills him. The image of comfortable sleep and dreams of tomorrow can be interpreted as the first son falling for the conformism the West promised him.

While a hopeless love story brings the second son's demise, it is in the third son's story that the Western attitude is explicitly told. According to Karakoç, the intra-world perspective based on the rigorous critique of emotion, reason, and experimental methods is the theoretical foundation of the Western mentality. People with this mindset view themselves as forces of nature and are interested in objects and nature.<sup>817</sup>

*The third son in the West*

*Was so hungry, crushed and destroyed*

*But he got a job one day in a store*

*When his hunger was gone, he would seek his brothers.*

*But the magic of the West prevailed*

*There was so much work that he could not find time to look for his brothers*

In this stanza, Karakoç tells the audience that the son has become corrupted and alienated from his own culture due to Western ideas that encourage individuals to work more and more, to the point where he forgets about his family and the two brothers who died before him. The overworking store-clerk imagery shows how the third son started to consider himself a force of nature and left "the concept of a macro-

---

<sup>817</sup> Karakoç, *Durumalısta Özdeğişim*, p. 139.

time behind and penetrated the working world.”<sup>818</sup> Karakoç, here, criticises the modern man, initially, the Westerner who “combines the constructiveness, the unstoppable industriousness” which is “sometimes terrifyingly economical, sometimes incredibly wasteful” as it is seen in nature, “an endless change and developmentalism occur”<sup>819</sup> in the modern working force of the West.

*He learned how to tie a tie at night*  
*The day has come, he had a store, they pointed with their finger*  
*He was now the boss but was still a servant*  
*For servanthood made a home in his soul*  
*[...]*  
*Out of sheer shame*  
*He sent his father a check*  
*The father did not know what this paper was for*  
*He tore it up and threw it at the puppies to play with*

Through his alienation and ambition to become more successful, the third son, although he became a manager, remained a servant as he cannot leave the servanthood behind. The tie imagery in this stanza illustrates how the third son has become a *Westerner* indeed but is still a servant and how he has “succumbed to the materialistic and pragmatist side of the West”<sup>820</sup> because “[the Westerner] combined nature’s tendencies to suffocate, kill, and destroy with a position of *naturalisation*.”<sup>821</sup>

The cheque image he sent to his father demonstrates this as well. The father had no use for the check, which is among the status symbols the West used, similar to the

---

<sup>818</sup> Ibid, p. 140.

<sup>819</sup> Ibid.

<sup>820</sup> Aslan and Çiçek.

<sup>821</sup> Karakoç, p. 140.

images of wearing a tie and carrying a chequebook. So, he treats the cheque like a useless scrap of paper, rips it up carelessly, and then gives it to the puppies to play with. Aşkaroğlu argues that “Sezai Karakoç explains the contradiction of modernisation to human nature and, in his poems, he deals with the devastating consequences of isolation, communication breakdown, anxiety, corruption and alienation.”<sup>822</sup>

*The fourth son studied and became a scholar  
He thought his tribe and country  
own custom and ideal  
are that of a tired, past civilisation  
He had found true civilisation  
[...]*

The defeat of the fourth son against the West is corruption, forgetting his roots, assimilation and ignoring the civilisation from where he came. He gets lost in the teachings of another civilisation. In contrast to the fourth son, the fifth son felt the spirit of the west; nonetheless, despite his desire to return to his roots, he is now a lost soul. The West deforms him as well. The sixth son meets his demise in alcoholism, referred to as *poisoned water*.

The poem deals prominently with the seventh son. It is significant to note that Karakoç reserved 40 verses for the seventh son<sup>823</sup>, which indicates a symbolic value since the number forty is significant and representative in Eastern and, in particular, Islamic traditions, as explained in [sub-chapter 4.1](#).

---

<sup>822</sup> Aşkaroğlu, Vedi. *İkinci Yeni - Aykırı Sözçörler*. Kültür Ajans, 2016, p. 112.

<sup>823</sup> The number of verses used for the other six sons are as follows: 10 verses for the 1st son, 21 verses for the 2nd son, 22 verses for the 3rd son, 9 verses for the 4th son, 8 verses for the 5th son, and 8 verses for the 6th son.

*The seventh son grew up looking at the trees*  
[...]  
*In the biggest square of the biggest Western city*  
*He stopped and prayed to God*  
*So that they can't change him*  
*Then suddenly, an inspiration came to him.*  
*And he began to dig where he stands*  
[...]

One may argue that the seventh son's idealistic character represents Karakoç's perspective. Unlike his brothers, the seventh son travels to the West with a prepared conscience and identity. He is shown as an idealised figure who does not submit to the West's authority and upholds his ideals and traditions. According to Aslan and Çiçek, "[t]he seventh son is conscious of what happened to his brothers, and this awareness leads him to resist *changing the other person*, defined as the *single and great power* of the West."<sup>824</sup> The seventh son's solution to resist the West's ways and deception by digging where he stands in order not to change symbolises preserving his Eastern identity. Karakoç, with the figure of the seventh son, "depicts the Eastern attitude not to be defeated by the West."<sup>825</sup> It can be argued that the seventh son portrays a character who is aware of his identity and preserves it, drawing parallels between Karakoç's adherence to tradition, commitment to his mission, and avoidance of emulating Western culture.

*The crowd had grown*  
*Then he turned and spoke:*  
*Westerners!*

---

<sup>824</sup> Aslan and Çiçek, p. 2039.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid, p. 2039.

*I am the seventh son of a father  
Whose six sons you have swallowed  
I want to be buried here unchanged  
The pain of my brothers has killed my father  
I do not want to upset the soul of my father  
bury me without having me changed*

In this stanza, the seventh son defies the Westerners, declaring that he would not submit to the change that the Western principles have imposed, even though they have succeeded in changing, leading to his brothers' demise. Karakoç<sup>826</sup> argues that the Easterner has a subjective attitude as opposed to the objectivist mentality of the Westerners. The concept of being at peace with everything permeates the Easterner/oriental mindset. The concepts of non-interference and non-interference, as well as non-change and non-change, serve as its foundation. Because of this, according to him, this viewpoint is strongly *pacifistic*. Aslan and Çiçek argue that “the father’s mystical identity and Karakoç’s worldview overlap at this point.”<sup>827</sup> Hints of mysticism can be seen in the following stanza written from the seventh son's perspective, encompassing the worldview of Karakoç:

*I want to die an Easterner  
You have only one great power:  
You change your opponent  
Even if you kill me, I won't leave here  
Maybe my bones will change and become dust and dirt  
But my soul won't change.'  
[...]*

---

<sup>826</sup> Karakoç, Durumalışta Özdeğişim II in Çağ ve İlham II, p. 141.

<sup>827</sup> Op.cit., p. 2037-38.

*The earth split from this pain, the sky burned*  
*He turned into a pillar of light and reached into the sky*  
*The West was incapable of removing the pillar.*  
*Those with the most incurable wounds*  
*Those who were hurt in their hearts*  
*They still visit him and find healing*  
*Those who carry a trace of humanity in their hearts*

The seventh son dies without compromising his values and identity and becomes a pillar, representing the values of the East. Karakoç's following verses, "*he turned into a pillar of light and reached into the sky, [...] they still visit him and find healing,*" are "included in the poem as a representation of the mysticism of the East."<sup>828</sup> Consequently, the seventh son is identified with the east as a mythological character.

Karakoç argues that although "a Muslim has quarrels just like a westerner"<sup>829</sup>, his is not a fight for the sake of fighting and does not make fighting a guiding concept in his life. Furthermore, a Muslim shares the love of peace. However, "this love does not go as far as consenting to the reversal of peace at the border of its self-transformation."<sup>830</sup> In other words, peace and tranquillity are not necessary for the ego's comfort, and war and peace are the preconditions and prerequisites for establishing the holy city under the order of God's consent. The establishment of the city of resurrection differs in aim and circumstance, context, and essence and goes beyond the dichotomy of East and West.

Aşkaroğlu argues that the emulation of the West shows a social shift. In addition to the West-East conflict, "the main factor that drives people into depression is urbanisation, concretisation and, in parallel, the corruption that people experience in

---

<sup>828</sup> Ibid.

<sup>829</sup> Karakoç, *Durumalışta Özdeğişim II*, p. 141

<sup>830</sup> Aslan and Çiçek, p. 2040.

their inner world. For Karakoç, it was indeed the inner world where man will find his true self: “Except for the ability of things and nature to mirror people, to the extent that it destroys its introjection with its own quality, [the self] will be itself, it will exist”<sup>831</sup> he maintains.

Karakoç has fictionalised the story of the father and his seven sons, emphasising the opposing value systems of the East and the West. The Eastern value system is only hinted at; it is part of the poem’s intellectual backdrop<sup>832</sup>, referenced by the father image. The experiences of the seven sons represent Western living habits, which are perceived as unfavourable and corrupting, while Western civilisation’s transforming dynamics are subject to criticism through universal admiration for the West. The poet’s worldview is particularly shown in the seventh son's unyielding attitude<sup>833</sup>. Therefore, Karakoç appears to disapprove of the six sons’ position against the West because their fate is negated due to identity loss and corruption. The adulation of the West, which leads to individual and social misinformation, is criticised in the final layer, where the seventh son is represented by the mysticism and fate of the East.

Karakoç finds the solution to the West’s deceptive ways by underlining the need to bring the generation of resurrection. He states, “the solution is in the resurrection of attitude, the resurrection of the self-change, which will develop under the influence of inspiration from a divine grace that will return Islam to the attitude that remains in theory and history.”<sup>834</sup>

Karakoç structures *Masal* in the form of a folkloric tale where the story “evolved towards a systematic integrity with the phases focusing on the East-West problematic, destruction of personality and identity problems, universal alienation [...] with

---

<sup>831</sup> Op.cit.

<sup>832</sup> Aslan and Çiçek.

<sup>833</sup> Ibid.

<sup>834</sup> Karakoç, Durumalısta Özdeğişim III in Çağ ve İlham II, p. 147.

elements that fully overlap with the context of the thought of resurrection.”<sup>835</sup> With *Masal*'s historical and social layers, it can be argued that Sezai Karakoç also made the East-West contrast based on ideological criticism of materialisms, absolutisms, Westernisation and modernisation.

#### 6.4.2 *Çeşmeler* and *Ayinler*

Similar to *Masal*, *Çeşmeler*<sup>836</sup> (*Fountains*) and *Ayinler*<sup>837</sup> (*Rituals*) are the poems where Karakoç criticises the concepts of modernisation, Westernisation and Western values and points to the need to return to the Islamic civilisation in order for the believers, the soldiers and the generation of the resurrection, to create the re-existence of the one and true civilisation. It is also important to note that the imagery and symbolism used in these two poems are very abstract; thus, I will briefly discuss them in relation to the subject matter at hand

These two poems comprise two separate collections of Karakoç's poetry in *Gün Doğmadan*, following the closed meaning and abstract imagery of the *Second New Poetry*'s characteristics. *Çeşmeler* is the ninth part of Karakoç's collection of poems written in 1975 and is subtitled *The Ninth Rainstorm: the rainstorm of mirrors. The river of civilisation smiling through the rusting history*; while *Ayinler* is the tenth part subtitled *Tenth Rainstorm: rainstorm of birds. The example of Simurgh*<sup>838</sup>. To the

---

<sup>835</sup> Baş, Münire Kevser. 'Sezai Karakoç'un "Masal" Şiirini Diriliş Düşüncesi Bağlamında Okumak'. Prof. Dr. Ramazan Kaplan'a Armağan, Akçağ Yayınları, 2020, p. 9.

<sup>836</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Çeşmeler](#).

<sup>837</sup> Different sections of the poem is analysed in this sub-chapter. For the Turkish originals of these sections, please see [Appendix: Ayinler](#).

<sup>838</sup> The Simurgh is a mythical bird that appears in Persian literature. The corresponding figure to Simurgh is the phoenix which is more widely used in the Western literature. Like the phoenix, Simurgh is also a benevolent bird. Regarding its etymology, Dabashi explains that Simurgh is "in Persian both the name of a mythical bird for which the [other] birds are searching and, when as a compound word decomposed, literally means "Thirty Birds" (Si Morgh). The fact that only thirty

*beyond*<sup>839</sup>. Farther, and even farther to the beyond. Here, it is essential to underline the significance and relevance of why Karakoç uses Simurgh briefly. Simurgh is a figure connected to Sufism as it is subjected in Attar's poem, *Manteq al- Tayr* (*Conference of the Birds*). Dabashi<sup>840</sup> explains

[b]ecause poetic prose and ecstatic poetry were the primary manners in which Sufism propagated its ideals and doctrines, the movement profoundly impacted Persian literary humanism. The allegorical dimension of Sufi narratives, predicated on the idea of the Unity of Being, Wahdat al- Wujud, made their work particularly appealing to those with literary tastes.

His referral to Sufism through Attar's poem is also evident in the imagery's connection as he mentions a *rainstorm of mirrors* in the subtitle of *Çeşmeler* and, immediately after, in *Ayinler*, where he mentions a *rainstorm of birds* and the example of *Simurgh*. Sağlık argues that the emphasis on Karakoç's part while mentioning *Simurgh* and the rainstorm of the birds is on the difficulty of the journey that the birds made in order to reach *Mount Qaf*: "Once the journey is finished, the

---

(si) birds (morph) finally make it to Mount Qaf [*Kaf Dağı* in Turkish, according to the TDV, this legendary mountain is considered to surround the earth in classical Islamic understandings of the cosmos. For more information, please see: 'Kaf Dağı - [TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi](#)'] and all they see awaiting them after this difficult journey are their own reflections in a mirror -thirty birds- is the final punch line of Farid al- Din Attar's poem entitled *Manteq al- Tayr* (*Conference of the Birds*).” For more information on Simurgh and its relevance to Sufism and Persian literature, please see Hamid Dabashi. *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*. Harvard University Press, 2012, p. 124.

<sup>839</sup> Karakoç uses the Turkish word *öte* here which is translated as *beyond* which has connotations with regards to the after-life. The poet's implication here can be, thus, to reach to the beyond for the mortal people, in other words, to the life beyond, life after death, which is significant also in his use of the mythical bird, Simurgh.

<sup>840</sup> Hamid Dabashi. *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*. Harvard University Press, 2012, p. 123.

birds realise that only thirty of them survived the voyage. And, Simurg means ‘thirty birds’”<sup>841</sup> he states.

While Karakoç deals with the East-West dichotomy throughout *Ayinler*, it seems as if he does not want the audience to forget the Sufistic connection of seeking and man’s journey. Therefore, it can be argued that Karakoç introduces *Ayinler* to the audience in this way on purpose. The poem by Attar, which includes ideas such as the relationship among the *seeker-obstacle-wanted*, the *blessing vs burden*, and the themes of *journey and quest*, almost perfectly captures the fundamental adventure of man.<sup>842</sup> One of the most common phrases in Sufi literature is that *not everyone who seeks will find it, but those who discover it are those who seek*, Sağlık quotes Ian Dallas.<sup>843</sup>

As he does in many of his poems, as well as in *Masal*, Karakoç uses many objects as the poem’s imageries for the audience to make the connection with the bigger picture he wants to relay, which is the critique of modern life and man’s alienation and distancing from one’s self and culture. The contrast between East and West is also present in *Ayinler*, with the West being shown as a place of hopelessness via the imageries of atomic bombs, dead bodies, steel and uranium, where the man is alienated as a result of the wars and the power struggle. On the other hand, the East is portrayed as the rescuer through the act of the ritual.

*Don't forget, a voice says to me, don't forget me*  
*Heed to my voice, and listen*  
*You will find yourself but with a ritual*  
*Bodies arms legs and skulls are scattered about*  
*An atomic bomb fell somewhere*

---

<sup>841</sup> Sağlık , p. 146.

<sup>842</sup> Ibid.

<sup>843</sup> Ibid.

*We are in a fog of human death*  
*In steel storm and the magnitude of the uranium*  
*We are in a test to breathe and to exist*  
*The western pikes pierce our bosom with revenge*

For Karakoç, amidst all the horrifying consequences of the war and the power struggle caused by the West, the person can find salvation only through a ritual. Eroglu argues that “the ritual will convulse the individual in this circumstance. The ritual is an action [...] and clears the mental haze. Here, the ritual is likened to the *semâ*<sup>844</sup> [of the Mevlevîs].”<sup>845</sup> *Semâ* is a ritual of the *Mevlevîs* who follow the teachings of Mevlânâ Rumî, and according to the Sufis, the main thing in *semâ* is to listen and understand the meaning. When the meaning reaches the heart, it activates the heart, and ecstasy occurs. Therefore, it is significant that Karakoç integrates the act of listening to *Ayinler*, saying that this act will bring salvation.

Karataş states that *Ayinler* also incorporates the Islamic civilisation where the poet “embraces the whole of humanity and the universe with its joys and sorrows, carries it to *Ayinler* and makes it monumental in the poem.”<sup>846</sup> Moreover, while incorporating parts of Islamic culture and civilisation, or local ideas, into his poetry, Karakoç does

---

<sup>844</sup> *Semâ* is a Sufistic term which describes that the Sufî hears both external and internal things. The first Sufis described concept of *semâ* by saying that “*semâ* is a meaning that comes from God and it moves hearts towards God. He who listens to Heaven with God ascends to the level of truth; he who listens with his desire falls to the level of heresy.” *Semâ* incorporates both hearing and listening, as well as moving and dancing with the effect of the harmonious and pleasant voice. Since the dervishes danced whirlingly, *semâ* was also called “*devir ve deveran*” (whirling and turning). When the Sufis came together for conversation and invocation, following Mevlânâ, they chatted, listened to the advice given, and recited poems and hymns about the love and love of Allah. In this ritual, dervishes would become emotional, excited, agitated, exhilarated, ecstatic, and involuntarily began to spin from their places. The turning would last until the dervish calmed down. For more information about *semâ*, please see: ‘[Semâ](#)’. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 20 Aug. 2022; and, Uludağ, Süleyman. ‘[Tasavvufta Semâ](#)’. *Zuhur Dergisi*, no. 12, 2012.

<sup>845</sup> Eroglu in Sağlık, p. 146.

<sup>846</sup> Karataş in Sağlık, p. 147.

not ignore or forget the West. To understand and illustrate what is happening, it is vital to “know the West, which the poet is aware of and is equipped with such knowledge.”<sup>847</sup>

This knowledge is continued to be shown in *Çeşmeler*, where there is a continuation of the city theme as it was examined in the previous chapter through its connection to modern man’s life. Indeed, in Turkish culture, fountains are significant in their usage and their relation to urbanisation as a consequence of modernisation. Although the fountains “lost their old functions with the new living order of the modern world”, they still give “an idea about the development areas of the cities in the historical process, in terms of their location according to the centuries.”<sup>848</sup> As a poetry symbol, on the other hand, the poets have been “compared to the fountains, which are cited alongside poets and lauded for purifying the human soul and relieving the thirst of the soul, in terms of their symbolism, destinies and societal functions.”<sup>849</sup> This is seen in the *Çeşmeler* when Karakoç compares his loneliness in humanity to the deserted fountains that previously provided the city with water and life.

*I.*  
*from my loneliness*  
*distilled are the fountains*  
*I am the flow of fountains*  
*that dried up and forgotten*  
*in humanity*

---

<sup>847</sup> Ibid.

<sup>848</sup> Kara Pilehvarian, Nuran. ‘Osmanlı Çeşme Mimarisi’. [Türkler Ansiklopedisi](#), edited by Hasan Celal Güzel et al., vol. 12, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002, pp. 396–401.

<sup>849</sup> Abak, Şaban. ‘Çeşmeler ve Şairler’. Hece, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 132.

The imagery of the fountain, which is dried up and forgotten, can be interpreted as the individual's isolated status in a Westernised and modernised society. The fountain is used as a symbol that "mirrors our social life, our daily life and its functioning"<sup>850</sup>, which, through various ideas discussed in this chapter, now depleted and forgotten, shows Karakoç's critiques of modernisation and Westernisation. Using this symbolism throughout the poem, Abak<sup>851</sup> points out that Karakoç conveys his intense yearning for Islamic civilisation's prosperous times and for our civilisation itself, the belief and thought at its foundation and centre.

*people were dead*  
*that tomb lived alone*  
*And that fountain*  
*And I*  
*In a line resembling as-sirat*  
*I was breathing; I was about to fall*  
*the life and death together*

The ideas of isolation and alienation are apparent in the third stanza of the first part. People died, and only the poet and the tomb remained alone with the fountain. The poet seems to be alive, however, barely; as he thinks of himself close to being on *as-sirat*<sup>852</sup>, about to die, he is now breathing life and death together. According to

---

<sup>850</sup> Ibid, p. 133.

<sup>851</sup> Ibid.

<sup>852</sup> According to the Islamic belief, *as-sirat* is the bridge that each person must cross to reach Paradise. Although the Quran does not mention it, *hadiths* describe it. *As-sirat* is supposed to be sharper than the sharpest dagger or blade and thinner than a strand of hair. In the hadiths, it is believed that "after the reckoning and weighing (according to their good deeds and sins), people will pass over the bridge known as *as-sirat* set across the Hell-Fire". '[As-Sirat](#)'. SunnahOnline.com. Accessed 20 Aug. 2022.

Abak<sup>853</sup>, the *lament* mood permeates the poem, yet it cannot be argued that it is the dominating mood. The fountain symbolises rebirth and serves as a reminder and sign of the resurrection. This stanza is a significant example in which Karakoç incorporates the concepts of existentialism as they were discussed throughout the analysis chapters. Within a critique of the West, Westernisation and modernisation, Karakoç brings the issues of life, death, alienation, and isolation together, all to be resolved in the idea and ideal of resurrection.

## 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter used Karakoç's criticisms of the West, Westernisation, and modernisation to highlight the themes of alienation and isolation in his writings. The objections of materialism, absolutism, and dependence on commodities are used to support this argument. The sources cited in this chapter's analysis of the four main existentialist concepts reveal a clear interconnected relationship between them. While Westernisation, modernisation, and man's alienation and isolation as a result of adhering to the wrong-ideals and wrong-absolutes are some of Karakoç's primary concerns, he also references other themes and people in both his essays and poetry.

*Masal*, *Ayinler*, and *Çeşmeler*, three of Karakoç's poems, explore his perspective on alienation and isolation. In *Masal*, Karakoç discusses the East-West dichotomy portrayed by the seven sons and the father. According to Karakoç, individuals have grown unhealthily dependent on material goods or things to the point where they have become one of them, and when he criticises Western practices in this poem, he makes use of many of these things as symbols, such as chequebooks, ties, alcoholic drinks, and the like.

Although this chapter focuses on the existentialist concepts of alienation and isolation, it can be argued that the continuation of the concept of authenticity can also be found by examination of the city imagery. In *Çeşmeler*, the city theme is continued by using

---

<sup>853</sup> Op. cit.

fountains as the poem's central image. The introduction of *Çeşmeler* uses the Sufi figure *Simurgh*, which reflects Karakoç's belief in the Sufi teachings and that true salvation can be achieved with the love one has for God, which will be realised with the resurrection, similar to Simurgh's resurrection from its ashes. In *Ayinler*, similarly, the Mevlevi ritual of *semâ* alludes that the salvation and redemption of humanity will only be possible by following and listening to the rituals while getting rid of the West's ways which brought war, suffering, and aggrievance to humanity.

The Sufi example of *Simurgh* or the imagery of fountains as the cradles of civilisation, therefore, are symbols of the ultimate aim of the Muslim, that is, the resurrection, which was personified in the seventh son in the poem *Masal*, which will establish the authentic Islamic civilisation and bring about the resurrection. Karakoç maintains that the actual existence is in this life: "[a]lienation is fundamentally wrong [because it] expresses a post-facto existence. Man is alien in the past, not alienated afterwards; on the contrary, he gets rid of the alienation."<sup>854</sup> For him, it is possible that the alienation felt by the disbelieving philosophers (i.e., Sartre, Camus, etc.) is nothing more than a symptom of a deeper problem with alienation within their systems, which can only be overcome with the rise of the generation of the resurrection as the salvation and returning to the true Islamic civilisation will be possible by fighting for the resurrection.

Karakoç's poetry is "shaped by an occidental attitude, and it faces the problems of the age."<sup>855</sup> The occidental attitudes are brought by the philosophies and movements such as existentialism, surrealism, Dadaism, and the like, to Karakoç's poetry as part of the Second New movement. When the problems for which Karakoç proposes poetic remedies are examined, it becomes clear that Karakoç gives immediate solutions within the framework of Turkish and Islamic civilisation in contrast to the other poets of the Second New that dealt with the era's ontological crises through their poetry<sup>856</sup>.

---

<sup>854</sup> Karakoç, *Ruhun Dirilişi*, p. 117.

<sup>855</sup> Aslan and Çiçek, p. 2040.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*

Therefore, it is argued in this chapter that, in addition to upholding Western values, the generation of resurrection must evaluate Islam and Eastern and Western concepts to attain their aims. Although Karakoç is not wholly opposed to Western ideals, he emphasises the need to criticise and unite all of these values under the aegis of the one real civilisation, the Islamic civilisation.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation argues that by using existentialist ideas of death, freedom, authenticity, and isolation while adhering to Islamic and Sufi doctrines, Sezai Karakoç, one of the founders of the Second New movement in poetry, created an idiosyncratic characterisation of Islamic existentialism in Turkey. This study, thus, analysed the poems and works of Karakoç, in which he utilised the concepts of existentialism, contending that one must transcend the anguish and despair of this life by accepting that death is a fact of life and being willing to move past it, pursue an authentic life by being a true believer in Islam's teachings, achieve the ultimate freedom in the afterlife by abiding by Islamic principles and rules, and transform one's sense of alienation by attempting to become a soldier of resurrection.

Turkish poetry's Second New movement is credited to Karakoç and his contemporaries Ece Ayhan, İlhan Berk, Edip Cansever, Cemal Süreya, and Turgut Uyar. Turkish literature and poetry began to differentiate by extending their scope and opening themselves to foreign influence during the early Cold War years as a result of the changing of the world order and the changes in the Turkish socio-political system brought about when the DP won the elections of the 1950s that marked the end of the transition era to the multiparty system. One of the elements that led to the DP rule was the long-standing social opposition in Turkey and the failure to create economic success by its predecessor, the RPP. The economic reforms that the DP administration sought were responsible for the significant economic and cultural transformations occurring during that period. The gradual transition to a free market economy, an American way of life that can also be linked to the Westernisation efforts during the

Cold War, and indirectly the development of a more consumption- and consumer-oriented society can be summed up as these changes, which came in various shapes and forms. As a centre-right party, the DP promised liberal economic reforms and a more tolerant view of Islam. All of these social and economic developments began to diminish the individual's value, which impacted the Second New movement's direction and the existentialist themes that permeated the persona and psyche of this new poetry movement which disregarded the rules of the early Republican and conventional Divan poetry. The simple and everyday language employed primarily in the Garip, the First New poetry was abandoned with a more abstract meaning became popular.

It is possible to argue that such a breakthrough occurred due to the poets' rising sense of repression in their daily lives, which manifested itself in works that started to change the form of their poetry at the time. This is attributed to the rising right-vs.-left polarisation in the society, which has grown so pervasive that the uniqueness of the individual began to evaporate, which in turn caused anxiety and ennui within the individual, and in this period's poets, by extension.

The emergence of the term Second New, its establishment, and its evolution, and the acknowledgement of existentialism through Western European authors like Sartre, Camus, and Kafka, as well as the French surrealists, mystic, or formalist poets, are paralleled by the poets of the Second New who sought to follow Western poetry and literature but not copy it. The Second New was not born as a movement with a manifest or guidelines for what poetry should be or accomplish, nor did it appear around a literary magazine. The Second New poets started to publish their works individually in different magazines without knowing what the others did. The *guidelines* for the movement have become more evident after it was discovered that they share the same style in poetry and prose and that their attention was focused on the individual's shattered essence. Moreover, the poets of this movement invented their terms; they did not consider whether a word had Turkish roots or not; instead, they prioritised rhetoric, unconventional syncretism, poetry-workmanship, and poetic style.

Karakoç, although sharing the same style and poetry-workmanship as his contemporaries, started creating his own doctrine of *Diriliş* tracing Necip Fazıl's steps as an intellectual and a soldier of Islam. Karakoç, in his poems and other works, addresses what Islam means for the Eastern world and how it is equivalent to the true civilisation itself, not just a component of the civilisation process. He gave Sufism a special place because he saw it as an integral part of Islamic culture and a physical manifestation of the idea that metaphysical thought is the foundation for resurrection. This, in turn, distinguishes his poetry from his contemporaries, whereby integrating traditional and modern themes, imagery, and symbols are central in his poems.

Karakoç's perspective on knowledge, the essence of man, and God is greatly influenced by Sufism, which profoundly impacted his worldview as reflected in his poems. In the context of the religious spectrum, he comprehends and makes sense of his relationships with all types of existence, and he uses this understanding as the final support for his concept of resurrection and conviction of his own existence. By thoroughly examining and evaluating the ideas and concepts of existence and existentialism, Karakoç's universe, as it appeared in his poems, is revealed, and its significance is made evident.

The process of understanding Islamic teachings in Karakoç's poems in light of four existentialist themes, i.e., death, despair, and angst; liberation and freedom; authenticity; and alienation and isolation, is described as Islamic existentialism in this dissertation. The categories are formed per the framework established by renowned American psychologist Irvin D. Yalom, who offers an analogous classification of three themes: death, freedom, and isolation. Since authenticity is crucial to understanding Sartre's interpretation of existentialism, this dissertation also includes authenticity as a separate concept. Following this framework, death is explored as an existential concept along with the ideas of despair and angst, which profoundly interested Kierkegaard and the idea of freedom is treated as the fundamental concept that existentialism discusses since freedom and the capacity to choose one's essence are the most critical claims of existentialism. The concept of authenticity is explored through Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* and Sartre's concept of *bad faith* and Camus's conception of the absurd. Lastly, the concept of alienation is described in Hegel's and

Marx's understandings, how it resonated with the notion of *Dasein* and Sartre's perspective of the *Other*.

Following Sartre's distinctions in his 1945 speech, existentialism is a Humanism, where he says philosophers like Jaspers and Marcel are Christian existentialists while characterising himself and the French existentialists as existential atheists and asserting that for this group, *existence precedes essence*; this dissertation also distinguished between religious and atheist existentialism. In this manner, religious existentialism is studied two-fold. First is Christian existentialism, which is characterised as a subset of existentialism that emphasises the subjective qualities of the human person as a creation of God, as mentioned by philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Berdyaev, Jaspers, and Marcel. Second is Islamic and Arab existentialism, as explained by Bidar and Di-Capua. While Di-Capua contends that Arab existentialism emerged as a significant category of Arab thought and coincided with the global process of decolonisation and the rise of the first generation of Third World regimes, Bidar attempts to combine two worldviews that are Eurocentric and Islamocentric, which can also be considered rethinking Islam in the modern age. This study underlines that for both forms of Islamic existentialism, Sufism occupies a significant place described as Islamic mysticism, which encompasses both exoteric and esoteric Islamic teachings and the incorporation and intensification of Islamic religion and practice.

Thus, it is emphasised in this dissertation that Karakoç's understanding, as seen in his poems and essays, was significantly influenced by the teachings of Sufism and mysticism. For Karakoç, the real existence of both individual and social dimensions seems possible with a fundamental understanding of the idea of God. It is argued that this fundamental idea is central in Karakoç's usage of existentialism concepts, which also impacted the resurrection idea intended for the Muslim believer to have and maintain throughout his life.

The concept of death in Karakoç's understanding is analysed in three poems where the idea of death is central. In his poems and writings, death is depicted as having existential foundations along with the ideas of anguish and despair, suggesting that

when faced with the truth of death, people experience fear and alienation. The first poem that is analysed, *Monna Rosa II - Ölüm ve Çerçeveler*, captures Karakoç's viewpoint on the reality of death and the transcendent nature of death, highlighting his Sufistic beliefs and rejecting the existentialist notion that there is nothing outside of the world into which humans are born. The second poem, *Köpük*, addresses the issue of suicide, where Karakoç treats the subject from a solely religious standpoint, despite his viewpoint on this matter resembling Camus since, in contrast to what Sartre, Camus, and other Western philosophers, Karakoç believes that people are not only finite entities whose existence can be summarised by birth, death, and their life in between. Karakoç, therefore, rejects the legitimacy of suicide. The last poem that is analysed within the concept of death as an existentialist concept, *Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine*, asserted that the feeling of being cast away or thrown into the world in Heidegger's terminology is treated as the ultimate exile of man from God's bosom. In this poem, Karakoç points out that humans live a life apart from God and his presence, which is the ultimate exile, and that man's aim in life is to return to God and unite with him, for which death is the only way. This chapter discussed that, according to Karakoç, the goal of a human's brief existence on Earth is to come to terms with the fact that dying is a means of achieving freedom since, after fully encountering God, man will experience freedom in the afterlife.

The concept of freedom is analysed in the three epic poems of Karakoç. The connection between freedom and liberation, according to Karakoç, is based on religious belief, notably Sufism. To love God and obey his commandments, which are Islam's exterior and internal laws as revealed in the prophets and, eventually, in the Qur'an, is the only way to achieve authentic living and, by extension, true freedom and liberation. In the first analysed poem, *Hızır'la Kırk Saat*, Karakoç writes a poem in the fashion of conversation with *Hızır* as a metaphor for reaching God via love and obtaining divine liberation while making remarks about death and its inevitable nature for humanity. It is underlined that *Hızır* is also a Sufistic figure, especially in light of the Qur'an's numerous verses with strong mystical overtones that affirm and echo the Sufi realisation. Following the Sufistic connotations of *Hızır'la Kırk Saat*, the second poem that is analysed, *Leylâ ile Mecnun* revolves around the subject of the pure love the individual has for God, where it is implied that the only way to achieve God's

truth, which is made possible by divine love, is through the acquisition of liberation. The entire poem is infused with the Sufistic idea that true liberation can only come about with the willingness to follow the path that leads to divine love. It is also noteworthy that the existence of God is not only portrayed as an essential value but also serves as the poem's focal point and determining factor, just as in all other domains. In the last poem that is analysed, *Esir Kentten Özüлке'ye* suggests that the poet was set free and now fully understands his freedom after coming into contact with it by going into God's bosom. Karakoç keeps in touch with the prophets and, as a result, with God while emphasising the existential notion of death, moving closer to its liberation and the end of man's exile when he is united with God.

Dissimilar to the first two ideas, authenticity is regarded in Karakoç with a more nuanced and restricted definition. This dissertation, thus, argued that in Karakoç's worldview, the idea of civilisation and the notion of the self, both of which are fundamental to his concepts of the city and the soldier of resurrection, embody authenticity as an existentialist concept. These notions of civilisation and the soldier of the resurrection are then condensed into the overarching ideology and doctrine of the resurrection, which forms the foundation of Karakoç's artistic, philosophical, and political interpretations. This chapter analyses one poem, *Alinyazısı Saati*, which in this vein, mirrors Karakoç's emphasis, within the idea of the city of resurrection, that cities are one of the critical elements of Islamic civilisation, and he sees them as places where people reflect on the purpose of life. Because Karakoç held that the need to wage the spiritual war and to believe in the existence of the real, authentic civilisation, which is the Islamic civilisation, is what defines man's life as being authentic, this chapter also followed his critiques of the Western principles of modernity and civilisation notions.

Linked to the analyses made in the authenticity chapter, the last chapter on alienation focuses on Karakoç's critique of the West's ideals, Westernisation, and modernisation, where it shows in detail how Karakoç's critique of modernisation and westernisation in the name of establishing the Western civilisation in Turkey relies heavily on the existentialist concepts of alienation and isolation. Among the three poems analysed to put forward this argument, the first poem, *Masal*, depicted the

East-West dichotomy as perceived by Karakoç. The dependence on commodities is one of the critical complaints of Karakoç under the overarching concept of alienation. In Karakoç's view, the ultimate objective must always be union with God to enter His realm of love which can only be accomplished by transcending the bounds of the material world and eradicating the alienation that man has caused. When he criticises Western traditions, he also criticises how people have become unhealthily dependent on worldly possessions or things to the point where they have become one of them, as portrayed in *Masal*. Karakoç's belief in the Sufi teachings and the possibility of true salvation with love for God, which will be realized with the resurrection, are reflected in the analysis of the poem *Ayinler*. In *Ayinler*, the Mevlevi ritual of semâ suggests that humanity can only be saved and redeemed by adhering to the rituals and paying attention to them while abandoning Western ways that have caused humankind to experience conflict, suffering, and aggravation. *Çeşmeler*, the last poem analysed within the concept of alienation, the city theme and its relationship to modern man's life, is continued. By using the fountain as a symbol in this poem to critique the individual's isolated position in a Westernised and modernised society, Karakoç expresses his strong longing for the prosperous periods of Islamic civilisation as a true civilisation, where he argues that the belief and thought need to be in its foundation.

The approach to the four existentialist concepts discussed in Karakoç's poetry and essays is emphasised throughout this dissertation and should be regarded as interlinked concepts, not as four separate and standalone themes with no relationship. They are all associated with each other; each of their meanings and connotations can be found in the other, and each one's description impacts the others and vice versa.

It is this dissertation argument that all four concepts of existentialism, as found in the doctrine and idea of resurrection, permeate the poetry and works of Karakoç. The use of the existentialist concepts of death, freedom, authenticity, and alienation in such a broad context while adhering to Islamic and Sufi teachings, whereby a doctrine of resurrection was developed, makes Karakoç the sole representative of Islamic existentialism in Turkey.

## APPENDIX

### POEMS IN TURKISH

#### CHAPTER 1 POEMS

##### *MEÇHUL ÖĞRENCİ ANITI (ECE AYHAN)*

Buraya bakın, burada, bu kara mermerin altında  
Bir teneffüs daha yaşasaydı,  
Tabiattan tahtaya kalkacak bir çocuk gömülüdür  
Devlet dersinde öldürülmüştür.

Devletin ve tabiatın ortak ve yanlış sorusu şuydu:

- Maveraünnehir nereye dökülür?

En arka sırada bir parmağın tek ve doğru karşılığı:

- Solgun bir halk çocukları ayaklanmasının kalbine!dir.

Bu ölümü de bastırmak için boynuna mekik oyalı mor

Bir yazma bağlayan eski eskici babası yazmıştır:

Yani ki onu oyuncakları olduğuna inandırmıştım

[...]

***NE BÖYLE SEVDALAR GÖRDÜM NE BÖYLE AYRILIKLAR (İLHAN BERK)***

Ne zaman seni düşünsem  
Bir ceylan su içmeye iner  
Çayırları büyürken görürüm  
[...]  
Seni düşündükçe  
Gül dikiyorum elimin değdiği yere  
Atlara su veriyorum  
Daha bir seviyorum dağları

***ŞİİR (İLHAN BERK)***

Bir aşkı gitmek var şimdi sen osun  
Cinselliğimizi büyötmek büyötmek  
Dağlamak çıplaklığımızı göklemek  
Böyle seni suya göğe tutuyorum  
Seni artık korkunç karıştırıyorum

***YERÇEKİMLİ KARANFİL (EDİP CANSEVER)***

Biliyor musun az az yaşıyorsun içimde  
Oysaki seninle güzel olmak var  
Örneğin rakı içiyoruz, içimize bir karanfil düşüyor gibi  
Bir ağaç işliyor tıklar tıklar yanımızda  
Midemdi aklımdı şu kadarcık kalıyor.

Sen karanfile eğilimlisin, alıp sana veriyorum işte  
Sen de bir başkasına veriyorsun daha güzel  
O başkası yok mu bir yanındakine veriyor  
Derken karanfil elden ele.

Görüyorsun ya bir sevdayı büyütüyoruz seninle  
Sana değiniyorum, sana ısınıyorum, bu o değil  
Bak nasıl, beyaza keser gibisine yedi renk  
Birleşiyoruz sessizce.

***YUNUS Kİ SÜTDİŞLERİYLE TÜRKÇENİN (CEMAL SÜREYA)***

Sen ki gözlerinle görmüştün 57'de  
Babanın parçalanmış beynini  
Kağıt bir paketle koydular mezara  
İstesen belki elleye bilirdin de  
Ama ağlamak haramdı sana

***ÜVERCİNKÂ (CEMAL SÜREYA)***

Böylece bir kere daha boynunlayız sayılı yerlerinden  
En uzun boynun bu senin dayanmaya ya da umudu kesmemeye  
Laleli'den dünyaya doğru giden bir tramvaydayız  
Birden nasıl oluyor sen yüreğimi elliyorsun  
Ama nasıl oluyor sen yüreğimi eller ellemez  
Sevişmek bir kere daha yürürlüğe giriyor  
Bütün kara parçalarında  
Afrika dahil  
[...]

Birlikte mısralar düşürüyoruz ama iyi ama kötü  
Boynun diyorum boynunu benim kadar kimse değerlendiremez  
Bir mısra daha söylesek sanki her şey düzelecek  
İki adım daha atmıyoruz bizi tutuyorlar  
Böylece bizi bir kere daha tutup kurşuna diziyorlar  
Zaten bizi her gün sabahtan akşama kadar kurşuna diziyorlar  
Bütün kara parçalarında  
Afrika dahil  
[...]

***GEYİKLİ GECE (TURGUT UYAR)***

Halbuki korkulacak hiçbir şey yoktu ortalıkta  
Her şey naylondandı o kadar  
Ve ölünce beş on bin birden ölüyorduk güneşe karşı.  
Ama geyikli geceyi bulmadan önce  
Hepimiz çocuklar gibi korkuyorduk

Geyikli geceyi hep bilmelisiniz  
Yeşil ve yabani uzak ormanlarda  
Güneşin asfalt sonlarında batmasıyla ağırdan  
Hepimizi vakitten kurtaracak  
[...]

[...]  
Halbuki geyikli gece ormanda  
Keskin mavi ve hışırtılı  
Geyikli geceye geçiyorum

[...]  
Uzanıp kendi yanaklarımdan öpüyorum

## CHAPTER 3 POEMS

### *MONNA ROSA -II- ÖLÜM VE ÇERÇEVELER*

Lambalar yanıyor, hafif ve sarı;  
Gece kar yağacak sabaha kadar.  
Toprakta et, kemik çıtırtıları...  
Yarı ölüleri bir korku tutar  
Değince bir taşa kafatasları.  
-Ölüer ki yalnız tırnakları var,  
Ve yalnız burkulmuş diz kapakları...-  
Lambalar yanıyor, hafif ve sarı;  
Gece kar yağacak sabaha kadar.  
Toprakta et, kemik çıtırtıları...  
Yarı ölüleri bir korku tutar  
Değince bir taşa kafatasları.  
-Ölüer ki yalnız tırnakları var,  
Ve yalnız burkulmuş diz kapakları...-

[...]

Lambalar yanıyor, hafif ve sarı;  
Bakıyor ateşe, küle böcekler.  
Köpekler parçalar kanaryaları  
Mektupları bir boz ağaç kurdu yer.  
Baykuşlar ötüyor harabelerde;  
Yanıyor lambalar, hafif ve sarı.  
Bir kaza kurşunu bulur her yerde  
Süvarisiz şaha kalkan atları...  
Bir ruhun ışığı vardır göklerde,

Lambalar yanıyor, hafif ve sarı;  
Ötüyor baykuşlar harabelerde.

[...]

Bir lamba yanıyor, hafif ve sarı;  
İnce yelkenleri alıyor yeller.

Titretir kalpleri ve bayrakları

Gemiden toprağa uzanan eller.

Lambalar yanıyor, hafif ve sarı,

Bir yosun köküne hasret kalacak

Gizli hazineler, su yılanları...

[...]

Bir lamba yanıyor, hafif ve sarı,

Garip bir yolculuk, tren ve Gülce.

Bölüyor bir hançer, ah, rüyaları:

Bir rüya, bir hançer, bir el; ve, ve, ve...

## **KÖPÜK**

Sen ey şair ki ellerini kollarını çarmıha gerdin

Ölüm ki tabiatüstü hayatların meneceri

En yeni buluşu intihardır

[...]

Pipon yanıyorsa seni ölüm çeker

Gül yetiştirmiyorsan seni ölüm

Samanyolu jet iziyse seni ölüm

Rüya bir lâğımın anıları olur

Anarılmış bir soda gün doğar kırmızı

Ölüm bana günde iki kere göz kaş eder

Gün doğarken ve gün batarken

[...]

Gelin gelinlerin gecesini taşıyalım yatağımıza

Ki ölüm insanları kıra kıra varmadan yatağımıza

Bu yatak şimdilik kutlu yataktır

Ölüm ki aç bir köpektir arar bizi

Bir köpek havlayan en çok şafak aydınlığında

[...]

## ***SÜRGÜN ÜLKEDEN BAŞKENTLER BAŞKENTİNE***

### ***I.***

[...]

Anılar demirden alçısı zamanın  
Şair kollarını çarmıha geren  
Ve mısralar boyu kireçleşen  
Gençlik hayalleri  
Ah eski kemik ah eski deri  
Ve kemikle deri arasına gerilen  
Ruhumun şenlik günleri  
Ah eski kemik ah eski deri  
Yenilgi sanılan zafer saatleri  
[...]

### ***III.***

Ölümler gelmiş çitlembikler sarmaşıklarla  
Tırmanmışlar surlarıma burçlarıma  
Kimi ırmaklardan yansıma  
Kimi kayalardan kırılma  
Kimi öteki dünyadan bir çarpılma  
İçti ölümle dolu  
Dönen bir huni  
Doğarken güneş  
Kesilmiş ölü yüzlerden  
Bir mozaik minyatürlerden  
Dokunur tenimize  
Soğuk bir Azrail ürpertiyle ay  
[...]

#### IV.

Senin kalbinden sürgün oldum ilkin  
Bütün sürgünlüklerim bir bakıma bu sürgünün bir süreği  
Bütün törenlerin şölenlerin ayinlerin yortuların dışında  
Sana geldim ayaklarına kapanmaya geldim  
Af dilemeye geldim affa lâyük olmasam da  
[...]  
Dağların yıkılışım gördüm bir Venüs bardağında  
Köle gibi satıldım pazarlar pazarında  
Güneşin sarardığını gördüm Konstantin duvarında  
Senin hayallerinle yandım düşlerin civarında  
Gölgendi yansıyıp duran bengisu pınarında  
Ölüm düşüncesinin beni sardığı şu anda  
Verilmemiş hesapların korkusuyla  
Sana geldim ayaklarına kapanmaya geldim  
Af dilemeye geldim affa lâyük olmasam da  
Sevgili  
En sevgili  
Ey sevgili  
Uzatma dünya sürgünümü benim  
Ülkedeki kuşlardan ne haber vardır  
Mezarlardan bile yükselen bir bahar vardır  
Aşk cellâdından ne çıkar madem ki yar vardır  
Yoktan da vardan da ötede bir Var vardır

## CHAPTER 4 POEMS

### *HIZIRLA KIRK SAAT*

2.

Ey yeşil sarıklı ulu hocalar bunu bana öğretmediniz

[...]

Hükümdarın hükümdarlığı için halka yalvardığı

Ama yine de eşsiz zulümler işlediği vakitlere erdim

Bunu bana söylemediniz

İnsanlar havada uçtu ama yerde öldüler

Bunu bana öğretmediniz

[...]

Bir kentten daha geçtim

Buğdayları yakıyorlardı

Yedikleri pirinçti

Birbirlerine açılan borular gibi üfürüyorlardı

Sonra birbirlerinden borular gibi çıkıyorlardı

Pirinçler gibi çoğalıyorlardı

Atlarını yalnız atlarını cana yakın buldum

Öpüp çıkıp gittim yelelerini

32.

sonra

refref de durdu geriledi

peygamber geçti atıldı ileri

ileri ileri sütunlardan ileri

taş heykellerden ileri  
kelimelerden ileri  
gün doğuşundan doğusundan ileri  
kalbden öteye ileri  
düşünceden ileri  
yalnız aşktı sevgiydi onun pelerini  
alnını kurulayan anne eli  
sonra gördü ve bildi görüneni  
görünmeyen görüneni

40.

Tükenin var olan varlığıyla Varlığın  
Ki göreceksiniz kesin kesin  
Yüzünüzü nereye çevirirseniz çevirin  
O'dur var olan var eden  
Biçim veren deęiřtiren  
Daęıtan toplayan  
Hiç olmamiřa çeviren  
[...]  
Bir kan pıhtısından meniden  
Bir insan türeten  
Sonra onu büyüten  
Sözüne kulak yapan ağız yapan  
İřine onda bir yetenek özü mayalandıran  
İnanıř veren sabır veren  
Kur'an'a da řeytana da  
Eř yapan yoldař yapan sırasında  
[...]  
En büyük kolleksiyon sahibi

Kafataslarından kemiklerden  
Güneşten aydan yıldızlardan  
Cennet ve cehennemlerin  
Kaybolduđu dođduđu girdabından  
Her çağ bir başka ses  
Duyulan mızrabından  
Dođmamış ve ölmeyen  
Gelmemiş ve gitmeyen

## **LEYLÂ İLE MECNUN**

### **PERİLİ ŞİİR**

Bir peri miydi bir peri miydi  
Sevgilim bir peri miydi  
Diriliş dedim diriliş dedi  
Kav dedim kav dedi

### **DOĞUM**

Sana Leylâ dedim Suna dedim şiirlerde şarkılarda  
Gerçek adm bir fısıltı gibi kaldı ağızlarda dudaklarda  
Çatlar yüreğim bir nar gibi o sırrı anar da  
Avunurum doğumundan gelen muştulu armağanlarla  
[...]

Öldüğümü bildi  
Öldüğümü bildi  
Dirildiğimi bildi  
Dirildiğimi bildi

### **3. PARANTEZ**

[...]  
Eskiler yaşıyorlardı olgun bir toplumda  
Herkesin hemen Tanrı'yla olacağı bir makamda  
O yüzden  
Kitaplarının başında yer alır  
Tevhitler münâcatlar  
Onlar esere Tanrı'yi ululamakla başlar  
Hazır bulmuşlardır her şeyi önceden

Ve herkes her an dolu saf İslâmla  
[...]  
Bizse sesleniyoruz cehennemden  
Bataklık ve her türlü kir içinden  
İnkâr umursamazlık körlük  
Her türlü putlaştırma ve maddeye taparlık  
İlkin bu kötülük ağını yırtmak gerek  
Köleliklerin çelik zincirini parçalamak  
Ruhları çekip götürmek yeni bir dünyaya  
Eritip arıtmak bir yüksek fırın potasında  
Her türlü cüruftan pastan arınmalı maden  
Arınış, büyük arınış gelmeli ateşten  
Ruh arına arına özgür olmalı

#### **4. DÖNÜŞ**

Bin dönem geçti sofraya aşk ve ölüm özeti  
Evrim gelişim devrim gerçekte ne değişti  
Savaş ve barış hep aşan takati  
Bir zaman iğnesi kurcalayan saati  
Bir toz zerresi  
Durdurur zembereği  
Ufacık bir taş kırar dişi en nefis bir yemekte  
Ve toplar asırlık sofrayı kara bir haber birdenbire  
En güneşli günde ayrılır yollar  
Aşk çiçeğini olgunlaşmadan yiyen bin kurt var  
Her kapıyı ölüm kapar ölüm açar  
Olmasa basubadelmevt bereketi  
Umutlanacak ne var  
Basubadelmevt nimeti yalnız  
Bozulmaz kilit erimez anahtar

## *ESİR KENT'TEN ÖZÜLKE'YE*

[...]

Aşk yolunda durmuşum yüce dağlar örneği

Umutlar bulut bulut seraplar küme küme

Ah çılgınım seni ilk gördüğüm gündenbergi

Ah delilik gömleği üstümde lime lime

[...]

## *IV. ÖZGÜR BAHAR*

[...]

Bir rüzgâr çarptı yüzüme bahar diye bağıarak

Bir köleyi özgürlüklere çeker gibi beni sana çağırarak

Ta Babil'den üstüme yıkılan zincirleri kırarak

Sana doğru koşmak istedim hemen o saat o an

[...]

Kuvvetle yere bastım yokladım derinliğini toprağın

Omuzlarımdan kalktı sanki ağırlığı bir dağın

Resmini çizdim durdum kutlu sayfalarına çağın

İsmini fısıldadım yeryüzüne gökyüzüne durmadan

## CHAPTER 5 POEMS

### *ALINYAZISI SAATI*

Ve Kudüs şehri. Gökte yapıp yere indirilen şehir.  
Tanrı şehri ve bütün insanlığın şehri.  
Altında bir krater saklayan şehir.  
Kalbime bir ağırlık gibi çöküyor şimdi.  
Ne diyor ne diyor Kudüs bana şimdi  
Hani Şam'dan bir şamdan getirecektin  
Dikecektin Süleyman Peygamber'in kabrine  
Ruhları aydınlatan bir lâmba  
ifriti döndürecek insana:  
Söndürecek canavarın gözlerini  
ifriti döndürecek insana

Ve Kudüs'ü terkettiğin o ikinci  
Birinci Cihan Harbi günü vakti  
Kan sızdırıyor kaburga kemikleri  
Karlı dağlardan indirdiğin atların  
Bir evde perdeyi indiriyor bir kadın  
Mahşerin perdesini kıyametin perdesini  
[...]

Ve Kudüs şehri. Gökte yapıp yere indirilen şehir.  
Tanrı şehri ve bütün insanlığın şehri.  
Yeşile dönmüş türbelerin demiri

Zamanın rüzgâr gibi esen zehriyle  
[...]  
Kaçıyorlar Lût şehrinden kaçır gibi  
Tuz heykele dönüşmemek için Tanrı gazabıyla  
Susmuş minarelerin azabıyla  
[...]  
Artık ne Zekeriya ve ne İsa var  
Sararmış bir tomar mı mucizeler  
Ölülerin dirilişi şifa veren kelimeler  
Ve ne de Miraçtan bir iz  
Yerden yükselen kaya

### ***XIII.***

En büyük acı şu: insanlık hadım edildi  
Hakiki düşünceden gerçek duyarlıktan ve öz bilgiden  
Bayrakların ve sancakların gerisindeki sancak söndürüldü  
Karanlıktan sunî ışık yapıldı ve gerçek ışık öldü  
Hayat dediğiniz ölüm ölüm sandığınız gerçek hayat  
Diyarbakir'in yaz sıcağında meyankökü şerbetindeki tatla  
Koka-kola zehri arasındaki fark bu

## CHAPTER 6 POEMS

### *MASAL*

Dođu'da bir baba vardı  
Batı gelmeden önce  
Onun ođulları Batı'ya vardı

Birinci ođul Batı kapılarında  
Büyük törenlerle karşılandı  
Sonra onuruna büyük şölen verdiler  
[...]  
Gece olup kuştüyü yastıklar arasında  
Ođul yarınki masmavi şafağın rüyasında  
Bir karaltı yavaşça tüy gibi daldı içeri  
Öldürdüler onu ve gömdüler kimsenin bilmediđi bir yere

[...]  
Üçüncü ođul Batı'da  
Çok aç kaldı ezildi yıkıldı  
Ama bir iş buldu bir gün bir mağazada  
Açlığı gidince kardeşlerini arayacaktı  
Fakat Batı'mn büyüğü ağır bastı  
İş çoktu kardeşlerim aramaya vakit bulamadı  
[...]  
Kravat bağlamasını öğrendi geceleri  
Gün geldi mağazası oldu onu parmakla gösterdiler

Patron oldu ama hâlâ uşaktı  
Ruhunda uşaklık yuva yapmıştı çünkü  
[...]  
Sırf utançtan babasına  
Bir çek gönderdi onunla  
Baba bu kağıdın neye yarayacağını bilemedi  
Yırttı ve oynasınlar diye köpek yavrularına attı  
[...]

Dördüncü oğul okudu bilgin oldu  
Kendi oymak ve ülkesini  
Kendi görenek ve ülküsünü  
Günü geçmiş bir uygarlığa yordu  
Kendisi bulmuştu gerçek uygarlığı  
[...]

Yedinci oğul büyümüşü baka baka ağaçlara  
[...]  
En büyük Batı kentinin en büyük meydanında  
Durdu ve Tanrı'ya yakardı önce  
Kendisini değiştiremesinler diye  
Sonra ansızın ona bir ilham geldi  
Ve başladı oymaya olduğu yeri  
[...]

Kalabalık büyümüş çok büyümüşü  
O zaman dönüp konuştu:  
Batılılar!  
Bilmeden  
Altı oğlunu yuttuğunuz

Bir babanın yedinci ođluyum ben  
Gömölmek istiyorum buraya hiç deđişmeden  
Babam öldü acılarından kardeşlerimin  
Ruhunu üzmem istemem babamın  
Gömün beni deđiştirmeden

[...]

Dođulu olarak ölmek istiyorum ben  
Sizin bir tek ama büyük bir gücünüz var:  
Karşınızdakini deđiştirmek  
Beni öldürseniz de çıkmam buradan  
Kemiklerim deđişecek toz ve toprak olacak belki  
Fakat deđişmeyecek ruhum

[...]

Bu acıdan yer yarıldı gök yandı  
O nurdan bir sütuna döndü göđe uzandı  
Batı bu sütunu ortadan kaldırmaktan âciz kaldı  
Hâlâ onu ziyaret ederler şifa bulurlar  
En onulmaz yarası olanlar  
Ta kalblerinden vurulmuş olanlar  
Yüreğinde insanlıktan bir iz taşıyanlar

## *AYINLER*

### *İKİNCİ AYIN*

[...]

Unutma diyor bir ses beni unutma

Kulak ver ve dinle

Kendini bulacaksın ancak bir ayinle

Savruluyor vücutlar kollar bacaklar ve kafatasları

Düşmüş bir yere atom bombası

İnsan ölümünden bir sis içindeyiz

Çelik fırtınasında ve uranyum boyutlarında

Soluk almak ve varolmak sınavında

Öçle bağrımızı deliyor batı kargıları

## **ÇEŞMELER**

*I.*

Benim yalnızlığımdan

Damıtılmış çeşmeler

Kurumuş unutulmuş

Çeşmelerin akışıyım

İnsanlık içinde

[...]

Ölüydü insanlar

Yalnız yaşıyordu o yatır

Ve o çeşme

Ben de

Sıratı andıran bir çizgide

Soluyordum, devrildim devrileceğim

Hayatı ve ölümü birlikte

## REFERENCES

- Abak, Şaban. 'Çeşmeler ve Şairler'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, pp. 130–36.
- Abdullah, M. Adam, and Suryo Tri Saksono. 'Alienation in Albert Camus' the Stranger'. *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 34–38.
- [‘Abdul-Rahman Badawi’](#). *Philosophers of the Arabs*.. Accessed 8 May 2022.
- Adam, Matthew. *France under Nazi Occupation*. p. 35.
- Afridi, Mehnaz M., and David M. Buyze, editors. *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*. Accessed 20 May 2018.
- Aho, Kevin. *Existentialism: An Introduction*. 2nd ed., Polity Press, 2014.
- Akbayır, Sıddık. 'Gül Muştusu'na Dair Bir Yorum Denemesi'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, pp. 112–27.
- . *Yoktur Gölgesi Türkiye’de: Sezai Karakoç*. 1st Ed., Turkuvaz Kitap, 2013.
- Akın, Mahmut Hakkı. [Türkiye Modernleşmesi Karşısında Dini Gruplar](#). no. 1, Jan. 2017, pp. 1–24. *EBSCOhost*.
- Akış Yaman, Yasemin. 'Benliğin Ölümcül Hastalığı: Umutsuzluk'. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 61–89.
- Akkanat, Cevat. *Gelenek ve İkinci Yeni Şiiri*. İstanbul : Okur Kitaplığı, 2012. Central Campus Library PL219 .A35 2012.

- Akün, Ömer Faruk. '[Divan Edebiyatı](#)'. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Accessed 26 May 2022.
- Akyüz Sizgen, Berna. 'Cemal Süreya'. *Türk Dili, Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, vol. 700, Apr. 2010, pp. 569–76.
- Altuntaş, Sezanur. *Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Peygamber Kıssaları*. Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı, 2015.
- Analay, Kadir. *Sezai Karakoç ve Diriliş Düşüncesi*. Dicle Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İslam Tarihi ve Sanatları Anabilim Dalı Türk-İslam Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı, 2009.
- Armaner, Türker. 'Turkey: The Reception of Kierkegaard in Turkey'. *Kierkegaard's International Reception: The Near East, Asia, Australia and the Americas*, edited by Jon Stewart, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008.
- Armus, Seth. 'The Eternal Enemy: Emmannel Monnier's Esprit and French Anti-Americanism'. *French Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 271–304.
- Arnou, S.J., Rene. 'Existentialism in France Today'. *The Modern Schoolman: A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy*, translated by Reverend Christian L. Bonnet, S.J., vol. 24, no. 4, May 1947.
- Aronson, Ronald. '[Albert Camus](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
- . 'Camus the Unbeliever: Living Without God'. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*, Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 256–79.
- Artıran, H. Nur. [Sufism and Freedom](#). Tariqa Alawyyia, Mostaganem.
- Asiltürk, Bâki. '[Göğe Bakma Durağı](#)' *Şiirinin Ses, Anlam ve Uzam Çerçevesinde İncelenişi*. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.

- . [‘Hiç Kimselerin İlgilenmediği Bazı Olayların Tarihçisi’ Olarak Edip Cansever](#).  
Accessed 18 Dec. 2017.
- ‘[Aşk](#)’. TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Accessed 11 Sept. 2022.
- Aşkaroğlu, Vedi. *İkinci Yeni - Aykırı Sözçörlere*. Kültür Ajansı, 2016.
- Aslan, Celal, and Talha Çiçek. ‘[Sezai Karakoç’un “Masal” Şiiri Üzerine Ontolojik Bir Analiz](#)’. *Journal of History School*, vol. 52, 2021, pp. 2028–43. DOI.org (Crossref),
- ‘[As-Sırat](#)’. *SunnahOnline.Com.*, Accessed 20 Aug. 2022.
- ‘[Authenticity](#)’. *Cambridge Dictionary.*, Accessed 27 June 2022.
- Avemarie, Friedrich. [Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity](#). 1st ed., Routledge, 2005. DOI.org (Crossref).
- Aydın, Cemil, and Burhanettin Duran. ‘[Arnold J. Toynbee and Islamism in Cold War–Era Turkey: Civilisationism in the Writings of Sezai Karakoç](#)’. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 35, no. 2, Aug. 2015, pp. 310–23. [read.dukeupress.edu](#),
- Aydoğan, Mustafa. ‘Bir İkinci Yeni Şairi; Ece Ayhan’. *Hece*, no. 70, Ekim 2002, pp. 98–101.
- Aygün, Mehmet. ‘Türkiye’de Anti-Komünizmin Kaynakları - 4: 1950’lerde Anti-Komünizmin Uluslararasılaşması Ve Muhafazakâr Güçlerin Mücadeleye Dâhil Olması’. *Sosyologca*, vol. 5, 2013, pp. 61–74.
- Ayhan, Ece. *Başbozuk Günceler*. Edited by İshak Reyna, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018.
- . ‘Bir Etikçi: Ece Ayhan’. [Sivil Denemeler Kara](#), edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, pp. 59–65,
- . ‘Ece Ayhan’. *Hece*, no. 53-54–55, May 2001, p. 707.
- . ‘En Sıkı Şair: Cemalettin Süreyya Seber’. *Sivil Denemeler Kara*, edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, p. 16,

- . 'İkinci Yeni Akımı'. *Sivil Denemeler Kara*, edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014, pp. 59–65,
- . [Özgünlük amuda kalkmak değildir](#). 21 Jan. 2011,
- . 'Pazar Postası ve Mahşerin Dört Atlısı'. *Gergedan*, June 1987, pp. 92–93.
- . *Sivil Denemeler Kara*. Edited by Burak Şuşut, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014,
- Aytürk, İlker. [Nationalism and Islam in Cold War Turkey, 1944–69](#). *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 50, no. 5, Sept. 2014, pp. 693–719. *Crossref*,
- Babaoğlu, Resul. 'Ve İhtilal'. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. XV, no. 30, Spring 2015, pp. 369–77.
- Badiou, Alan. 'Varoluş ve Ölüm'. [Varoluşçuluk, Fenomenoloji, Ontoloji](#), edited by Güçlü Ateşoğlu, 1st Edition, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2020, pp. 237–50,
- Baert, Patrick. [The Sudden Rise of French Existentialism: A Case-Study in the Sociology of Intellectual Life](#). *Theory and Society*, vol. 40, pp. 619–44,
- Bakır, Kemal. 'Nikolay A. Berdyaev ve Varoluşsal Felsefi Antropoloji'. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, no. 93, July 2020, pp. 25–46.
- Bal, Metin. "'İyi Bir Kimse Nasıl Olunur?'" Sorusuna Sartre'ın Hümanist Ateist Varoluşçu Şeytan ve Yüce Tanrı Oyunu Bağlamında Felsefi Bir Cevap Girişimi'. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 93, pp. 195–222.
- Balcı, Musa. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirinde Fars Edebiyatının İzleri ve Farsçada Sezai Karakoç'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 704.
- Balık, Macit. 'Edip Cansever'in Tragedyalar'ında Yalnızlık, Bunalım Ve Yabancılaşma'. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 4, no. 18, Summer 2011, pp. 7–23.
- Bangır, Mehmet Malik. "'Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine" Şiirine Farklı Bir Bakış'. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 63, Dec. 2019, pp. 449–64.

- Bardakçı, Necmettin. 'İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Musa-Hızır Kıssası Yorumunun İlim-Marifet Uygunluğu Açısından Değerlendirmesi'. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 5, 1998, pp. 82–103.
- Baring, Edward. '[Humanist Pretensions: Catholics, Communists, and Sartre's Struggle for Existentialism in Postwar France](#)'. *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2010, pp. 581–609.
- Baş, Münire Kevser. '[Death in Sezai Karakoç's Poetry](#)'. *Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. Volume 5 Issue 1, no. 5, 2010, pp. 774–818.
- . 'Diriliş Düşüncesinde İki Kavram: "Evrensel Şuur" ve "Evrensel Yabancılaşma"'. *Yedi İklim Dergisi*, vol. 368, 2020.
- . *Diriliş'in Yapı Taşları: Sezai Karakoç'un Düşünce ve Sanatında Temel Kavramlar*. Lim Yayınları, 2015.
- . 'Sezai Karakoç Şiirinde Hızır'. *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, vol. 13, no. 41, 2009, pp. 21–31.
- . *Sezai Karakoç Şiirinde Metafizik Vurgu*. İnsan Yayınları, 2011.
- . 'Sezai Karakoç Şiirinde Ölüm'. *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 5, no. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 774–818.
- . 'Sezai Karakoç'un "Masal" Şiirini Diriliş Düşüncesi Bağlamında Okumak'. Prof. Dr. Ramazan Kaplan'a Armağan, Akçağ Yayınları, 2020.
- Beck, Maximilian. '[Existentialism, Rationalism, and Christian Faith](#)'. *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 26, no. 4, Oct. 1946, pp. 283–95. *Crossref*,
- Becker, Carl. '[Lack and Transcendence: The Problem of Death and Life In...](#)' *Mortality*, vol. 2, no. 1, Mar. 1997, pp. 73–78. *EBSCOhost*.

- Beehler, Rodger. 'Freedom and Authenticity'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1990, pp. 39–44.
- Benjamin, Elizabeth. *Dada And Existentialism: The Authenticity and Ambiguity*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.
- Berkes, Niyazi. 'Ziya Gökalp: His Contribution to Turkish Nationalism'. *Middle East Journal*, vol. 8, no. 4, Autumn 1954, pp. 375–90.
- Betschart, Alfred, and Juliane Werner, editors. [Sartre and the International Impact of Existentialism](#). Springer International Publishing, 2020. DOI.org (Crossref).
- Bezirci, Asım. [İkinci Yeni Olayı: İnceleme, Örnekleme](#). Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2013. EBSCOhost,
- 'BibleGateway: A Searchable Online Bible in over 150 Versions and 50 Languages.' [Bible Gateway](#), Accessed 27 Mar. 2022.
- [Bir Uygarlık Tasarımı Olarak Diriliş: Sezai Karakoç Özel Sayısı](#). Hece Yayınları, 2003.
- Buehler, Arthur F. *Recognizing Sufism: Contemplation in the Islamic Tradition*. I.B. Tauris, 2016.
- Bulut, Nihat. '(Divine) Law and Power from Ibn Sina's Perspective'. *Istanbul Medipol Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 2020, pp. 55–72.
- Burkill, T. A. 'Romanticism, Existentialism and Religion'. *Philosophy*, vol. 30, no. 115, 1955, pp. 318–32. JSTOR.
- Cailliet, Émile. 'Review: Be Not Afraid: Studies in Personalist Sociology by Emmanuel Mounier and Cynthia Rowland'. *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 36, no. 3, July 1956, pp. 192–93.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. Translated by Justin O'Brien, Vintage International, 2018.

- Can, Hamit. 'Siyasal Bir Tasarım Olarak: Diriliş Partisi'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2015, pp. 467–75.
- Caner, Firat. *Turgut Uyar'ın Huzursuzluğu*. Bilkent Üniversitesi, Sept. 2006.
- Cansever, Edip. 'Kontrbas Öğretmeni Rıza Diyor Ki'. *Yerçekimli Karanfil (Toplu Şiirleri 1)*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, p. 664. Accessed 26 May 2022.
- . [Şiiri Şiirle Ölçmek : Şiir Üzerine Yazılar, Söyleşiler, Soruşturmalar](#). Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020,.
- . '[Tek Sesli Şiirden Çok Sesli Şiire](#)'. *Şiiri Şiirle Ölçmek : Şiir Üzerine Yazılar, Söyleşiler, Soruşturmalar*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020, pp. 154–57,
- Casey, Steven, and Jonathan Wright. *Mental Maps in the Early Cold War Era: 1945-68*. Springer, 2011.
- Cebik, L. B. 'Freedom: An Existential Illusion'. *The Georgia Review*, vol. 25, no. 4, Winter 1971, pp. 395–423.
- Chafer, Tony, and Brian Jenkins. *France: From the Cold War to the New World Order*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire : New York, N.Y. : Macmillan Press ; St. Martin's Press., 1996.
- Childers, Joseph, and Gary Hentzi. '[Alienation](#)'. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995. *ProQuest*,
- . '[Dasein](#)'. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995. *ProQuest*,
- eds. '[Existentialism](#)'. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism*, Columbia University Press, 1995. *ProQuest*,
- Chittick, William C. [The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi](#). SUNY Press, 1983.
- '[Christian Existentialism](#)'. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Accessed 2 Apr. 2022.

- Çiftçi, Ferhat. 'Cemal Süreya'nın Üvercinka Şiirinde Şiirsel Objeye Ve Politik Gaye'.  
*Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 67, 2019, pp. 35–42.
- Çınar, Alev. '[Negotiating the Foundations of the Modern State: The Emasculated Citizen and the Call for a Post-Patriarchal State at Gezi Protests](#)'. *Theory and Society*, vol. 48, no. 3, June 2019, pp. 453–82. *EBSCOHost*.
- Çınar, Menderes, and İpek Gencil Sezgin. '[Islamist Political Engagement in the Early Years of Multi-Party Politics in Turkey: 1945–60](#)'. *Turkish Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2013, pp. 329–45. *Crossref*.
- Clemence, Madeleine. '[Existentialism: A Philosophy of Commitment](#)'. *The American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 66, no. 3, Mar. 1966, p. 500. *Crossref*.
- Çoban, Funda. 'İslamcılığın Fikri Taşıyıcısı Olarak Türkiye Siyasi Hayatında Necip Fazıl'.  
*Mülkiye Dergisi*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2015, p. 29.
- Çobanoğlu, Şaban. [Şiir Dilinin Sularında: İlhan Berk](#). Hece Yayınları, 2017,
- Cooper, David E. [Existentialism: A Reconstruction](#). Basil Blackwell, 1990,
- Cooper, Mick, et al. 'What Is Existential Therapy?' *The Wiley World Handbook of Existential Therapy*, Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2019, pp. 1–27.
- Coşkun, Sezai. 'Mekandaki Medeniyet-Medeniyetteki Mekan: Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirinde Mekan-Medeniyet İlişkisi Üzerine Bir İnceleme'. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 22, 2009, pp. 235–57.
- [Crescent](#). Encyclopædia Britannica,. Accessed 16 Aug. 2022.
- Crowell, Steven. '[Existentialism](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
- Davis, Bret W. [Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts](#). Routledge, 2010,

- Demir, Ahmet. '[Bir Şairin Kaleminden 'Ben'e, Sanata ve Yaşama Dair Notlar: İlhan Berk'in Düz Yazıları](#)'. *Erdem*, no. 60, Aug. 2011, pp. 51–76. DOI.org (Crossref).
- Di-Capua, Yoav. '[Arab Existentialism: An Invisible Chapter in the Intellectual History of Decolonization](#)'. *The American Historical Review*, vol. 117, no. 4, Oct. 2012, pp. 1061–91. Crossref.
- Dindar, Bilal. '[Emmanuel Mounier'in Personalizminde İnsan Kavramı](#)'. Accessed 21 May 2019.
- Direk, Zeynep. 'Türkiye'de Varoluşçuluk'. *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, edited by Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, 4th Ed., İletişim Yayınları, 2007, pp. 441–51.
- Diriliş. 'Fiil ve İnsan'. *Diriliş*, no. 53, 21 July 1989.
- . 'Kardeşlik'. *Diriliş*, no. 105–106, 20 July 1990.
- Dirlikyapan, Murat Devrim. "*İkinci Yeni*" Dışında Bir Şair: *Edip Cansever*. Bilkent University, June 2003.
- Doğan, Mehmet Can. 'İkinci Yeni Söyleminin Öncüsü, İkinci Yeni Şiiri'nin Gönülsüzü: Sezai Karakoç'. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2011, pp. 731–44.
- . *Modern Türk Şiiri: Olgular, Eğilimler, Akımlar*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018.
- Doğan, Mehmet H. *Yüzyılın Türk Şiiri Antolojisi (3 Cilt)*. Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L., and Mark A. Wrathall, editors. *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*. Blackwell Pub, 2006.
- Duru, Rıza. '[Mesnevi ve Sezai Karakoç](#)'. *Mevlana Araştırmaları-1*, edited by Adnan Karaismailoğlu, Akçağ Yayınları, 2007,
- Elimelekh, Geula. 'Existentialism in the Works of 'Abd Al-Rahmān Munīf'. *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 1, 2014, pp. 1–31.

- Emre, Akif. ‘Sezai Karakoç’ta Üç Şehir, Üç Sesleniş’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, pp. 438–43.
- Enser, Ramazan. ‘Sezai Karakoç’un Şiirinde Tanrı Kavramının Tasavvuf Epistemolojisi Açısından Anlamı ve Kullanımı’. *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 11, 2018, pp. 189–213.
- Erdem, Haluk H. ‘Karl Jaspers ve “Mümkün Varoluş”un Felsefesi’. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 159–74.
- Erdoğan, Dr Kenan. *Sezai Karakoç’un Aynasından Yunus Emre’yi Seyretmek*. 2011, p. 15.
- Ete, Mehmet Rağıp. *Hızır ile Kırk Saat’te Dinî Referanslar*. 2013, p. 20.
- Faucher, Charlotte, and Laure Humbert. ‘[Introduction – Beyond De Gaulle and Beyond London: The French External Resistance and Its International Networks](#)’. *European Review of History: Revue Européenne D’histoire*, vol. 25, no. 2, Mar. 2018, pp. 195–221. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*.
- Filiz, Şahin. *İslam ve Felsefe: İslam Dünyasında Felsefe Akımları*. Say Yayınları, 2014.
- Flynn, Thomas. ‘[Jean-Paul Sartre](#)’. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 22 Apr. 2004, [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#). Accessed 14 Mar. 2022.
- Frankl, Victor E. *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press, 2006.
- Gardet, Louis, and Georges Anavvati. *İslam Teolojisine Giriş: Karşılaştırmalı Teoloji Denemesi*. Translated by Ahmet Arslan, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2015.
- Geçgel, Hulusı. *İkinci Yeni Şiiri Çerçevesinde Ece Ayhan*. Trakya Üniversitesi, June 2002.
- Gedikli, Özgür. ‘“[Vesikalı Yârim](#)”den “[Monna Rosa](#)”ya Geleneğin “Diriliş”i’. *Turkish Studies - Language & Literature*, vol. 15, no. 4, Oct. 2020, pp. 1823–36. *EBSCOhost*,
- Gödelek, Kamuran. ‘[Possible Connections Between Sufism and Existentialism](#)’. *The Proceedings of the Twenty-First World Congress of Philosophy*, edited by Ionna Kucuradi et al., vol. 7, 2007, pp. 201–06.

- Gökalp, Gonca G. 'Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Şiiri ve Behçet Necatigil'. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, vol. 10, no. 1, July 1993, pp. 347–62.
- Gökdağ, Kamuran, and Yunus Cengiz. '[Mevlânâ'da Bir Özgürleşme Pratiği Olarak Fenâ](#)'. *e-Şarkiyat İlmî Araştırmaları Dergisi/Journal of Oriental Scientific Research (JOSR)*, Mar. 2021. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- Göktepe, Cihat, and Süleyman Seydi. 'Soğuk Savaş Başlangıcında Türk Dış Politikası'. *Kutadgubilig*, no. 72, 2015, pp. 197–222.
- Göle, Nilüfer. '[Gezi: Anatomy of a Public Square Movement](#)'. *Insight Turkey*, vol. 15, July 2013. *www.insightturkey.com*,
- Golomb, Jacob. *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus*. Routledge, 1995.
- Golsan, Richard J. '[The Legacy of World War II in France: Mapping the Discourses of Memory](#)'. *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow et al., Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 73–101,
- Gönül, Gizem Ece. 'Sevgi, Aşk, Karanfil, Rakı ve Diğerleri: "Yerçekimli Karanfil" Çözümlemesinden Varoluş Sözlüğüne'. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2018, pp. 1004–30.
- Grant, Frederick C. '[The Permanent Value of the Primitive Christian Eschatology](#)'. *The Biblical World*, vol. 49, no. 3, Mar. 1917, pp. 157–68. *DOI.org (Crossref)*,
- Gray, J. Glenn. '[The Idea of Death in Existentialism](#)'. *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 48, no. 5, 1951, pp. 113–27. *JSTOR*.
- Grøn, Arne, et al., editors. '[Kierkegaard's Existential Approach](#)'. *Kierkegaard's Existential Approach*, vol. 35, De Gruyter, 2017.
- Guicharnaud, Jacques, and Kevin Neilson. 'Those Years: Existentialism 1943-1945'. *Yale French Studies*, vol. 96, 1999, pp. 42–62.

- Guida, Michelangelo. 'A "Communist and Muslim" Poet in Contemporary Turkey: The Works of İsmet Özel'. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2014, pp. 117–31.
- Guillemain, Henri. 'Les Catholiques Français et La Deuxième République'. *Esprit* (1940-), no. 113 (13), 1945, pp. 875–98.
- Günay-Erkol, Çimen. '[Issues of Ideology and Identity in Turkish Literature during the Cold War](#)'. *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, edited by Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013, pp. 109–29,
- Gürcan, Metin. '[Seventh Son of the East: Sezai Karakoç and His Doctrine of Revival](#)'. *Turkish Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1–15,.
- Halligan, Fredrica R. '[Sufis and Sufism](#)'. *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, edited by David A. Leeming, Springer US, 2014, pp. 1750–51.
- Halman, Talat. 'Karakoç: Özgün Sentez'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 564.
- Halman, Talat S. 'Review: Kayayı Delen İncir by Turgut Uyar; Bir Şiirden by Turgut Uyar'. *World Literature Today*, vol. 58, no. 1, Winter 1984, p. 161.
- Hanna, Thomas L. '[Albert Camus and the Christian Faith](#)'. *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 36, no. 4, Oct. 1956, pp. 224–33. *Crossref*.
- Hashas, Mohammed. '[Reading Abdenmour Bidar: New Pathways for European Islamic Thought](#)'. *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 45–76.
- . '[Self Islam, Islamic Existentialism, and Overcoming Religion](#)'. *The Idea of European Islam : Religion, Ethics, Politics and Perpetual Modernity*, edited by Mohammed Hashas, Routledge, 2018, pp. 140–62. [www.taylorfrancis.com](http://www.taylorfrancis.com),
- , editor. [The Idea of European Islam : Religion, Ethics, Politics and Perpetual Modernity](#). Routledge, 2018.

- Hayden, Patrick. [\*Camus and the Challenge of Political Thought: Between Despair and Hope\*](#). Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.
- Henriot, Émile. '[L'immortel existentialiste](#)'. *Le Monde.fr*, 4 Feb. 1947,
- Hitchcock, William I. *France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954*. University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Homer. [Odyssey, Book 11, Line 567](#). Translated by A.D. Murray, Harvard University Press. Accessed 5 June 2022.
- Hyppolite, Jean. '[A Chronology of French Existentialism](#)'. *Yale French Studies*, no. 16, 1955, p. 100. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- İçöz, Ferhat Jak. 'Felsefeden Seans Odasına, Oradan da Hayata: Bir Varoluşçuluk Öyküsü'. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 216–36.
- '[İkinci Yeni Şiiri](#)'. *Türk Edebiyatı*., Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- İlhan, Nilüfer. '[Cemal Süreya'nın Şiirinde Ölüm Teması](#)'. *Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 6, no. 2, Spring 2011, pp. 473–84. *EBSCOhost*.
- Jamalzadeh, Abdoreza, and Seyede Sareh Tavassoli. *Human Verity in Humanism, Existentialism and Islam*. 2011, pp. 389–91.
- '[Jami` At-Tirmidhi 2416 - Chapters on the Description of the Day of Judgement](#)'. *Sunnah.Com.*, Accessed 27 Mar. 2022.
- Jansen, G. M. A. *An Existential Approach to Theology*. The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966.
- Jones, Gerald. '[Was Existentialism a Humanism?](#)' *Philosophy Now*, no. 53, 2005,.

- Jones, H. S., and Iain Stewart. '[Positive Political Science and the Uses of Political Theory in Post-War France: Raymond Aron in Context](#)'. *History of European Ideas*, vol. 39, no. 1, Feb. 2013, pp. 35–50. *EBSCOhost*,
- Jones, Kile. '[All the Consequences of This: Why Atheistic Existentialism Is More Consistent than Religious Existentialism](#)'. *Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism*, vol. 22, no. 1, May 2014, pp. 79–92. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Prestwick House, 2006.
- Judaken, Jonathan. 'Sisyphus's Progeny: Existentialism in France'. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*, Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 89–123.
- Judaken, Jonathan, and Robert Bernasconi, editors. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*. Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Judt, Tony. *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956*. University of California Press, 1992.
- '[Kaf Dağı](#)'. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*,. Accessed 14 Mar. 2022.
- Kankal, Recep. '[Türk Kültüründe Servi Ağacı](#)'. *TR Magazine*, 9 Mar. 2017,.
- Kaplan, Ramazan. 'Çağdaş Bir Leylâ ve Mecnun Hikâyesi: Sezai Karakoç'un Leylâ ile Mecnun'u'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, p. 704.
- Kara, İsmail, and Asım Öz, editors. *Türkiye'de İslâmcılık Düşüncesi Ve Hareketi Sempozyum Tebliğleri*. 1. baskı, Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2013.
- Kara, Ömer Tuğrul. '[Türkçenin Kuralları Dışına Çıkan Bir Topluluk: İkinci Yeniciler](#)'. *Journal of History School (JOHS)*, vol. 6, no. 15, Sept. 2013, pp. 451–80.
- Kara Pilehvarian, Nuran. 'Osmanlı Çeşme Mimarisi'. *Türkler Ansiklopedisi*, edited by Hasan Celal Güzel et al., vol. 12, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002, pp. 396–401,
- Karabulut, Mustafa. '[Edip Cansever'in "Medüza" Şiirine Varoluşçu Bir Bakış](#)'. *Erdem*, no. 61, Dec. 2011, pp. 147–58. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.

- Karaca, Alaattin. [İkinci Yeni Poetikası](#). Hece Yayınları, 2019,
- Karaca, Hünkâr. ‘Zamana Adanmış Sözler “Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine” Şiirine Bir Bakış’. *Türk Dili*, vol. 68, no. 791, Nov. 2017, pp. 18–28.
- Karacı, Sadi. ‘Diriliş Şiiri ve II. Yeni: “Sezai Karakoç ve Dönemdeşleri”’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, Ocak 2003, pp. 282–86.
- Karadeniz, Mustafa. [Cemal Süreya'nın Şiir Estetiğinde Poetik Sadakat: Poetika Ve Şiir Arasındaki Mütakabiliyet](#). İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015,
- Karakoç, Sezai. *Çağ ve İlham II: Sevgi Devrimi*. 7th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *Çağ ve İlham III: Yazgı Seçişi*. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2010.
- . *Çıkış Yolu I - Ülkemizin Geleceği: İki Konferans*. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *Diriliş Neslinin Amentüsü*. 6th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1995.
- . *Dirilişin Çevresinde*. 4th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1988.
- . *Düşünceler I: Kavramlar*. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *Edebiyat Yazıları I - Medeniyetin Rüyası Rüyanın Medeniyeti Şiir*. 6th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2014.
- . *Edebiyat Yazıları II - Dişimizin Zarı*. 5th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2014.
- . *Edebiyat Yazıları III - Eğik Ehramlar*. 4th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011.
- . *Edebiyat Yazıları III - Eğik Ehramlar*. 4th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2013.
- . *Fizikötesi Açısından Ufuklar ve Daha Ötesi 3: Doğum Işığı*. 3rd ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2009.
- . *Gün Doğmadan*. 19th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *Gün Dönümü*. 7th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2010.
- . *Hızıyla Kırk Saat: Şiirler III*. Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *İnsanlığın Dirilişi*. 8th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011.
- . *İslam*. 6th Ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 1989.

- . *Medeniyetin Rüyasi Rüyanin Medeniyeti Şiir*.
- . *Mevlâna*. 5th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2012.
- . *Ruhun Dirilişi*. Diriliş Yayınları, 2007.
- . '[Yeni-Gerçekçi Şiir: "İkinci Yeni"](#)'. *Şiir Penceresi*.
- . *Yunus Emre*. 13th ed., Diriliş Yayınları, 2011.
- Karataş, Turan. *Doğu'nun Yedinci Oğlu: Sezai Karakoç*. 1st Ed., Kaknüs Yayınları, 1998.
- Kaufmann, Walter. 'Existentialism and Death'. *Chicago Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, Summer 1959, pp. 75–93.
- . *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. 12th Ed., Meridian Books, 1960.
- . 'The Inevitability of Alienation'. *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales*, vol. 18, no. 52, 1980, pp. 29–42.
- Kekeç, İsmail. 'Düzyazılarından Hareketle Turgut Uyar'ın Şiir Anlayışı ve Bir Eleştirmen Olarak Turgut Uyar'. *Akademik Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 2, Summer 2018, pp. 212–29.
- Kesebir, Ensar. 'Hızırla Kırk Saat ve Modernleşme Vurgusu'. *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 29, Apr. 2015, pp. 247–57.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition For Upbuilding And Awakening*. Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Kiwan, Nadia. 'Abdenour Bidar: Existentialist Islam as Intercultural Translation'. *Secularism, Islam and Public Intellectuals in Contemporary France*, Manchester University Press, 2019, p. 256.
- Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl. *Benim Gözümde Menderes*. 3rd ed., Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 1993.
- Koçak, Ahmet. '[Sezai Karakoç'un Fikrî Yazılarında Doğu ve Batı Medeniyeti Tasavvuru](#)'. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 5, Apr. 2016, pp. 51–63.
- [DOI.org \(Crossref\)](#).

- Koçak, Mesut. '[Mehmed Âkif Ersoy, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek ve Sezai Karakoç Şiirlerinde Bir Medeniyet Öncüsü Olarak Hz. Muhammed](#)'. *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, Dec. 2016, pp. 203–203. *Crossref*.
- Koçak, Orhan. 'Melih Cevdet Anday: After the Second New'. *Red Thread*, no. 2, 2010, pp. 1–13.
- Koçak, Orhan. [Red Thread](#). 2010.
- Koçakoğlu, Bedia, and Ayşe Demir. 'Bir Aziz'in Hasreti Olmak: Sezai Karakoç'un Peygamber Tasavvuru'. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 34, 2015, pp. 123–70.
- Kocher, Matthew Adam, et al. 'Nationalism, Collaboration, and Resistance: France under Nazi Occupation'. *International Security*, vol. 43, no. 2, Fall 2018, pp. 117–50.
- Kolcu, Ali İhsan. *Edebiyat Kuramları: Tanım-Tenkit-Tahlil*. 1st Ed., Salkımsöğüt Yayınları, 2008.
- Kreyche, Gerald F. 'The Impact of Existentialism on Christian Thought'. *Religious Education*, vol. 60, Nov. 1965, pp. 423–26.
- Kuitert, Harminus Martinus. *The Reality of Faith a Way Between Protestant Orthodoxy and Existentialist Theology*. W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1968.
- Kul, Erdoğan. *Ece Ayhan'ın Şiirleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma*. Ankara Üniversitesi, 2007.
- . 'Edip Cansever'in "Çağrılmayan Yakup" Şiirinde Birey Algısı'. *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Türkoloji Dergisi*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2012, pp. 45–65.
- Kurt, Mustafa. 'Şehirdeki Yabancı: Turgut Uyar'ın Şiirinde Modernizm Eleştirisi'. *Gazi Türkiyat*, vol. 22, 2018, pp. 69–78.
- Kurtar, Senem. 'Jean-Paul Sartre'in Mutlak ve Radikal Mücadelesi'. *Doğu Batı Üç Aylık Düşünce Dergisi*, vol. 23, no. 92, Apr. 2020, pp. 103–25.

- Lebow, Richard Ned. '[The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe](#)'. *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, edited by Richard Ned Lebow et al., Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 1–39,
- Leopold, David. '[Alienation](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2018, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Lewis, Gordon R. 'Augustine and Existentialism'. *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1965, pp. 13–22.
- ['Logotherapy and Existential Analysis'](#). *Viktor Frankl*, Accessed 19 Aug. 2022.
- Loutfy, Nour, and George Berguno. 'The Existential Thoughts of the Sufis'. *Existential Analysis: Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, vol. 16, no. 1, Jan. 2005, pp. 144–55.
- Lumbard, Joseph E. 'From Hubb To 'Ishq: The Development of Love In Early Sufism'. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2007, pp. 345–85.
- Machlis, Elisheva. '['Alī Shari'atī and the Notion of Tawhīd: Re-Exploring the Question of God's Unity](#)'. *Welt Des Islams*, vol. 54, no. 2, July 2014, pp. 183–211. *EBSCOhost*.
- Maignial, Charles. 'Communistes et Chrétiens: Réflexions Sur Une Polémique'. *Esprit (1940-)*, no. 119 (2), 1946, pp. 261–69.
- Marcuse, Herbert. 'Sartre'ın Varoluşçuluğu'. *Varoluşçuluk, Fenomenoloji, Ontoloji*, edited by Güçlü Ateşoğlu, translated by Soner Soysal, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2020, pp. 205–36.
- Matin, Kamran. '[Decoding Political Islam: Uneven and Combined Development and Ali Shariati's Political Thought](#)'. *International Relations and Non-Western Thought*, Sept. 2010,.
- McCulloch, Gregory. *Using Sartre: An Analytical Introduction to Early Sartrean Themes*. Routledge, 1994.

- McDonald, William. '[Søren Kierkegaard](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2017, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2017. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Mengüşoğlu, Metin Önal. '[Taha'nın Kitabı](#)'. *Umran Dergisi*, 2017, '[Mevleviyye](#)'. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Accessed 1 May 2022.
- Miller, Gavin. '[R. D. Laing and Theology: The Influence of Christian Existentialism on the Divided Self](#)'. *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 22, no. 2, Apr. 2009, pp. 1–21. *Crossref*.
- Mirvish, Adrian, and Adrian van den Hoven. *New Perspectives on Sartre*. Edited by Adrian Mirvish and Adrian van den Hoven, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- Misselbrook, David. '[An A–Z of Medical Philosophy: X Is for Existentialism: Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre](#)'. *British Journal of General Practice*, vol. 64, no. 629, Dec. 2014, p. 642. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. '[Resurrection as Hope](#)'. *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 61, no. 2, Apr. 1968, pp. 129–47. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- Mounier, Emmanuel. 'Débat À Haute Voix'. *Esprit (1940-)*, no. 119 (2), 1946, pp. 164–90. ---. *Existentialist Philosophies - An Introduction*. Mcgiffert Press, 2007.
- . 'Le Message Des « Temps Modernes » Et Le Neo-Stoicisme'. *Esprit (1940-)*, no. 113 (13), 1945, pp. 957–63.
- . *Personalism*. 1st edition, University of Notre Dame Press, 1989.
- '[Mutasavvif](#)'. *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Accessed 19 Aug. 2022.
- Mutie, Jeremiah. [Death in Second-Century Christian Thought: The Meaning of Death in Earliest Christianity](#). 1st ed., The Lutterworth Press, 2015. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.
- Natanson, Maurice. [Literature, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences](#). Springer Netherlands, 1962. *DOI.org (Crossref)*.

[Nicene Creed](#). Accessed 27 Mar. 2022.

Niederhauser, Johannes Achill. *Heidegger on Death and Being*.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science - With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Edited by Bernard Williams, Translated by Josefine Nauckoff and Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[‘Nikolai Berdyaev’](#). *New World Encyclopedia*,. Accessed 14 May 2022.

[‘Nizam Al-Mulk, Abu Ali al-Hasan Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Ishaq al-Tusi’](#). *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, 2018,.

Norman, Nurul Ain. ‘Ibn Sina’s Theory of the Soul: A Taxonomy of Islamic Education’.

*Islam & Civilisational Renewal*, vol. 12, no. 2, Dec. 2021, pp. 275–89.

Nuyen, A. T. and DePaul University. [‘Existentialism and the Return to Religion’](#).

*Philosophy Today*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2000, pp. 169–76. *DOI.org (Crossref)*,.

Okay, M. Orhan. ‘Ortaasya’ dan Akdeniz Kıyılarına Türkçe’nin Şiir Serüveni’. *Hece*, vol.

53-54–55, no. Türk Şiiri Özel Sayısı, May 2001, pp. 10–18.

Öksüz, Mert. ‘Modern Kelime ve İmgeler Arasında Hızır ile Kırk Saat’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73,

2003, pp. 86–93.

Olsen, Nathan. [‘Putting Doubt into Faith: An Introduction to Christian Existentialism’](#).

*Student Christian Movement*, 27 May 2020,

Onur, Ferhat. ‘Sorgulanmamış Hayat Yaşamaya Değer mi?’ *Beytülhikme Felsefe Dergisi*,

vol. 6, no. 1, June 2016, pp. 307–22.

Orhanoğlu, Hayrettin. ‘Kırılğan Bir Müşahit: Sezai Karakoç Yahut Varlık-İnsan’ın Uğrak

Yeri Diriliş’. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, Ocak 2003, pp. 272–76.

Örnek, Cangül, and Çağdaş Üngör, editors. [‘Turkey’s Cold War: Global Influences, Local](#)

[Manifestations’](#). *Turkey in the Cold War : Ideology and Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan,

2013, pp. 1–18.

- Özata Dirlikyapan, Jale. [Yazınsal Kavrayışta Köklü Bir Değişim: Türk Öykücülüğünde 1950 Kuşağı](#). Bilkent University, Ağustos 2007,
- Özcan, Nezahat. ‘Fuzûlî’nin Leylâ İle Mecnun Mesnevîsinde Aşk - Gelenek Çatışması’. *Gazi Türkiyat Türkoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 6, 2010.
- Özdem, Yavuz. ‘[İkinci Yeni Yazıları](#)’. *Şiir Penceresi*, 2001,
- Özdemir, Emin, and A. Fatih Şendil. ‘Soğuk Savaş Dönemi Algı ile Gerçek Arasında Bir İmge Olarak Türk Solu; Demokrat Parti’nin Sol Hareketlere Yaklaşımı’. *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 12, no. 23, Spring 2016, pp. 327–56.
- Özdenören, Rasim. [Rasim Özdenören: Kahramanmaraş’ta Sezai Karakoç’la Kırk Saat](#). Apr. 2006.
- Özger, Mehmet. ‘The Truth and Metaphor In Islamic Aesthetic -Two Poetic Attitudes: Necip Fazıl and Sezai Karakoç’. *İslâmî İlimler Dergisi*, vol. 8, no. 1, Spring 2013, pp. 311–21.
- ‘[Parti Programı, Yüce Diriliş Partisi](#)’. *Yüce Diriliş Partisi*,. Accessed 15 May 2018.
- Pattison, George. [Anxious Angels](#). Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1999. DOI.org (Crossref). ---. ‘Fear and Trembling and the Paradox of Christian Existentialism’. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context*, Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 211–37.
- Pax, Clyde. *An Existential Approach to God: A Study of Gabriel Marcel*. Martinus Nijhott, 1972.
- Petrović, Gajo. ‘Marx’s Theory of Alienation’. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1963, pp. 419–26.
- ‘[Pîr](#)’. *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*,. Accessed 15 Aug. 2022.
- Polat, Adem. [İkinci Yeni Şiirinin Felsefi Kaynakları](#). Ardahan Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, 2016,

- . [‘Necip Fazıl Şiirinde Batılılaşmanın Getirdiği Kökensek Korku ve “Özne” Direnişisi’](#). *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 12, no. 29, Fall 2017, pp. 427–34. Zotero,.
- Reed, Howard A. ‘Revival of Islam in Secular Turkey’. *Middle East Journal*, vol. 8, no. 3, 1954, pp. 267–82.
- Reyhanoğulları, Gökhan. [‘Mitik Trajik’ten Modern Trajik’e Bireyin Döngüsü: Edip Cansever’in “Medüza” Şiiri Üzerine.’](#) *Turkish Studies - Language & Literature*, vol. 16, no. 3, Sept. 2021, pp. 1699–714. EBSCOhost,
- Reynolds, Jack. [‘Understanding Existentialism’](#). Routledge, 2006,
- Reynolds, Jack, and Pierre-Jean Renaudie. [‘Jean-Paul Sartre’](#). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,.
- Richey, Lance. [‘Existentialism and Christian Humanism: Josef Pieper’s Critique of Sartre Revisited’](#). *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2015, pp. 33–56. Crossref.
- Rivera, Joseph. [‘Toward a Liturgical Existentialism’](#). *New Blackfriars*, vol. 94, no. 1049, Jan. 2013, pp. 79–96. Crossref.
- Rizvi, Sajjad H. [‘Avicenna \(Ibn Sina\)’](#). *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Accessed 3 Apr. 2022.
- Roberts, David E. ‘Existentialism and Religious Belief’. *Pastoral Psychology*, 1957, p. 7.
- Roberts, M., and E. Lamont. ‘Suicide: An Existentialist Reconceptualization’. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, vol. 21, 2014, pp. 873–78.
- Rubin Suleiman, Susan. *Crises of Memory and the Second World War*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008.

- Şafak, Halim. '[Geçmiş, “Sivil Şiir” ve Ece Ayhan](#)'. *Şiir Penceresi*,. Accessed 11 Mar. 2019.
- Şafak, Yeni. '[Dergiciliğe Damga Vuran “Diriliş” Serüveni](#)'. *Yeni Şafak*, 4 Oct. 2014,
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*. Harvard University Press, 2002. Central Campus Library B3279.H49 S32413 2002.
- Sağlık, Şaban. 'Tanrı'nın Gözüyle Bakış Penceresi" Yahut Sezai Karakoç'un Ayinler'i'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, pp. 137–61.
- Şahin, Rukiye. '[Concept of Death in Sufi Thought](#)'. *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 9, no. 5, Spring 2014,
- Şahin, Veysel. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Kur(t)Uluş Değerleri ve Diriliş Estetiği'. *Mecmua Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 2, no. 3, Spring 2017, pp. 29–41.
- . 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Yaratıcı Değerler'. *International Journal of Languages Education and Teaching*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2015, pp. 2727–44.
- . '[Turgut Uyar'ın Şiirlerinde “Ben” ve “Öteki”nin Başkaldırısı](#)'. *International Journal of Language Academy*, vol. 6, no. 22, Jan. 2018, pp. 199–219. *Crossref*.
- Said, Edward. 'İslam, Filoloji ve Fransız Kültürü: Renan ve Massignon'. *Sözleşme*, vol. 1, no. 10–11, Aug. 1998, pp. 33–36.
- '[Saint Augustine](#)'. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Accessed 8 Apr. 2022.
- Salur, Bilge. 'Modernlik Eleştirisi Olarak Varoluşçu Felsefede Otantiklik: Authenticity in Existentialism'. *ETHOS: Dialogues in Philosophy & Social Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 2, July 2021, pp. 1–28.
- Sarıçoban, Gülay. 'Soğuk Savaş Dönemi Sosyo-Kültürel Değişimler'. *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, vol. 38, Winter 2013, pp. 11–28.

- Sarıkaya, Orhan. ‘Konformizm-Nonkonformizm Açısından Edip Cansever’in Şiiri’. *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar: İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, vol. 2, Autumn 2013, pp. 229–45.
- Sartre, Jean Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Philosophical Library, 1956.
- . *Existentialism and Human Emotions*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1957.
- . *Varoluşçuluk*. Translated by Asım Bezirci, 28th ed., Say Yayınları, 2018.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Anti-Semite and Jew*. Translated by George J. Becker, Schocken Books, 1944.
- . *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Edited by John Kulka, Translated by Carol Macomber, Yale University Press, 2007.
- . *What Is Literature?* Translated by Bernard Frechtman, Philosophical Library, 1966.
- Sawchenko, Leslie Diane. *The Concept of the Person: The Contributions of Gabriel Marcel and Emmanuel Mounier to the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. University of Calgary, Jan. 2013.
- Sayers, Sean. [Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes](#). Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011. DOI.org (Crossref).
- [‘Semâ’](#). *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Accessed 20 Aug. 2022.
- Şen, Can. *Sezai Karakoç’un Piyeslerinde Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Etkisi*. no. 9, Jan. 2018, pp. 351–65.
- Şenderin, Zübeyde. ‘Turgut Uyar: Sanat Hayatı ve Eserleri’. *Sosyal Bilimler*, vol. 2, no. 1, Jan. 2012, pp. 143–62.
- Şengül, Servet. ‘Sürgün Ülkeden Başkentler Başkentine Şiirinin Hermeneutik Açılımı’. *Turkish Studies*, vol. 7, 2012, p. 21.

- Sert, İsmail. 'Yıldırım Aydınlığında Bir Ağaç Olarak Şair'. *Hece*, vol. 7, no. 73, 2003, pp. 13–28.
- Shaker, Anthony F. 'Man, Existence and the Life Balance (Mizān) in Islamic Philosophy'. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, May 2015, p. 145.
- Shapoo, Sajid. 'The Understanding of Tawhid in Sufi Classical Period'. *Jurnal Qalbu*, vol. 5, no. 9, June 2018, pp. 214–40.
- Sheen, Erica, and Isabel Karremann, editors. *Shakespeare in Cold War Europe: Conflict, Commemoration, Celebration*. Palgrave Pivot, 2015.
- Simon, Pierre-Henri. '[De La Représentation Spirituelle](#)'. *Le Monde.fr*, 6 May 1946,
- Singer, Sean R. 'Erdoğan's Muse: The School of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek'. *World Affairs*, vol. 176, no. 4, 2013, pp. 81–88.
- Şişman, Gülşah. 'Turgut Uyar'ın "Geyikli Gece" Adlı Şiirine Varoluşsal Bir Yaklaşım Denemesi'. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 10, no. 16, Fall 2015, pp. 1061–76.
- '[Site](#)'. *Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlükleri*,. Accessed 26 Mar. 2022.
- Smith, Andrew W. M. '[Eclipse in the Dark Years: Pick-up Flights, Routes of Resistance and the Free French](#)'. *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire*, vol. 25, no. 2, Mar. 2018, pp. 392–414. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*,.
- Solomon, Robert. *Akılcılıktan Varoluşçuluğa: Varoluşçular Ve 19. Yüzyıldaki Kökleri*. 1st Ed., Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2020.
- . 'Jean-Paul Sartre ve Fransız Varoluşçuluğu'. *Akılcılıktan Varoluşçuluğa: Varoluşçular ve 19. Yüzyıldaki Kökleri*, 1st Edition, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2020, pp. 479–637.

- Stagg, Frank. *Polarities of Man's Existence in Biblical Perspective*. Westminster Press, 1973.
- Stassen, Manfred, editor. *Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings*. Continuum, 2003. Central Campus Library B3279.H49 M2927 2003.
- Steinmetz-Jenkins, Daniel. '[French Laïcité and the Recent Reception of the German Secularization Debate into France](#)'. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, vol. 12, no. 4, Dec. 2011, pp. 433–47. *Crossref*.
- Stewart, Jon, editor. *Kierkegaard's International Reception: The Near East, Asia, Australia and the Americas*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008.
- '[Sufism](#)'. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, 2018,.
- Şur, Şükrü. '[Demokrat Parti ve Atatürk'ün üç ilkesi: Cumhuriyetçilik, Laiklik ve Devletçilik \(1950 - 1960\)](#)'. *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no. 56, 2015, pp. 147–76. *Crossref*.
- '[Superman](#)'. *Encyclopedia Britannica*,. Accessed 12 June 2021.
- '[Surah As-Sajdah - 1:30](#)'. *Quran.Com*,. Accessed 9 Nov. 2021.
- Süreya, Cemal. [Folklor Şiire Düşman](#). Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- . *Üstü Kalsın, Seçme Şiirler*. 33rd ed., Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2019.
- . 'Üvercinka'. *Üvercinka*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014.
- Susen, Simon, and Patrick Baert. *The Sociology of Intellectuals: After 'The Existentialist Moment'*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017.
- Sütçü, Güliz. [Democratic Party and Democracy in Turkey: With Special Reference to Celal Bayar And Adnan Menderes](#). Bilkent University, Feb. 2013,.
- Sweetman, Brendan. *The Vision of Gabriel Marcel: Epistemology, Human Person, the Transcendent*. Rodopi Press, 2008.
- '[Tâhâ Suresi Tefsiri](#)'. *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*. Accessed 21 Mar. 2021.

- Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi, and Zeynep Kerman. ‘Türk Edebiyatında Cereyanlar’. *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler*, Dergah Yayınları, 2000. Central Campus Library PL205 .T234 2000.
- ‘[Tasavvuf](#)’. *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Accessed 13 Aug. 2022.
- Taşyürek, Muzaffer. [Adnan Menderes](#). Anonim Yayıncılık, 2009,.
- Taylor, Charles. [The Ethics of Authenticity](#). Harvard University Press, 2021,
- ‘The Noble Quran’. [Quran.Com](#). Accessed 27 Mar. 2022.
- ‘[Thomas Aquinas](#)’. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed 3 Apr. 2022.
- Thornhill, Chris, and Ronny Miron. ‘[Karl Jaspers](#)’. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Tillich, Paul, et al. *A History of Christian Thought, from Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*. Simon and Schuster, 1972.
- Timur, Kemal, editor. *Sezai Karakoç Sempozyum Bildirileri: Nisan 2012, Diyarbakır*. 1st Ed., Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2014.
- Treanor, Brian, and Brendan Sweetman. ‘[Gabriel \(-Honoré\) Marcel](#)’. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2021, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2021. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,.
- Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Tufan, Tarık. ‘Sadece Kongrelerden Tanıyanlar ve Hiç Bilmeyenler için Sezai Karakoç’. *Hürriyet*, 10 July 2012, p. 1.
- Türer, Osman. [Ana Hatlarıyla Tasavvuf Tarihi](#). Ataç Yayınları, 2011, .
- ‘[Türk Edebiyatından Poetik Metinler](#)’. *Şiir Penceresi*,. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- Turna, Murat. ‘Sezai Karakoç’un “Edebiyat Yazıları”’. *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, vol. 49, 2014, pp. 215–41.

- . ‘Sezai Karakoç’un Gözüyle Yunus Emre, Mehmet Âkif Ve Mevlâna’. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 7, no. 1, Winter 2012, pp. 2025–42.
- Uçar, Aslı. *1950’ler Türkiye’sinde Edebiyat Dergiciliği: Poetikalar Ve Politikalar*. Bilkent University, June 2007.
- Uludağ, Süleyman. *Tasavvuf, Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar ve Tasavvuf Sosyoloji İlişkisi Üzerine*. 2017.
- . ‘[Tasavvufta Semâ](#)’. *Zuhur Dergisi*, no. 12, 2012.
- Ulutan, Burhan. ‘[Allah’ın Kemâli ve Üstün Sevgisi](#)’. *İbn Sina Felsefesi*, Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 2000, p. 176,
- Ünal, Hayriye. ‘Ece Ayhan: Şiirimiz Her İş Yapar Abiler’. *Hece*, no. 70, Ekim 2002.
- ‘[Uncanny](#)’. *Cambridge Dictionary*,. Accessed 14 Aug. 2022.
- Uyanık, Mevlut. ‘[İslam Modernizmi ve Sufilik](#)’. *Bilge Adamlar Dergisi*, no. 18, 2006,
- Uyar, Turgut. ‘Büyük Ev Ablukada’. *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1959, p. 27.
- . ‘[Çıkmazın Güzelliği](#)’. *Şiir Penceresi*,. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- . ‘Göge Bakma Durağı’. *Dünyanın En Güzel Arabistanı*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1959.
- . ‘Sevmek Herkesin’. *Varlık*, no. 391, 1953.
- Uygur, Selda. ‘[Edip Cansever’in Şiirlerinde Yalnızlık](#)’. *Şiir Penceresi*,. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- ‘[Vahdet-i Vücûd](#)’. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Accessed 3 Apr. 2022.
- Varga, Somogy, and Charles Guignon. ‘[Authenticity](#)’. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,.

- Özen, Yener. '[Varoluşçu Felsefeden Varoluşçu Psikolojiye \(Birbirlerini Sürekli Yanlış Anlayanların Ontolojik Bütünlüğü\)](#)'. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, vol. 3, no. 5, 2012, pp. 266–86.
- '[Viktor Frankl](#)'. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed 19 Aug. 2022.
- Vowinckel, Annette, et al. *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*. Berghahn Books, 2012.
- '[Vücûd](#)'. *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Accessed 6 June 2022.
- '[Vüsûl](#)'. *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Accessed 11 Sept. 2022.
- Wade, Sydney, and Efe Murad. '[Garip: A Turkish Poetry Manifesto \(1941\)](#)'. *The Critical Flame: A Journal of Literature & Culture*,. Accessed 14 Dec. 2017.
- Walsh, Fran, et al. [The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King](#). Screenplay, 2003.
- Wheeler, Michael. '[Martin Heidegger](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,
- Whiteside, Kerry H. *Merleau-Ponty and the Foundation of Existential Politics.Pdf*.
- Wilkinson, James D. *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*. Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Withy, Katherine. '[The Methodological Role of Angst in Being and Time](#)'. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 43, no. 2, Jan. 2012, pp. 195–211. *DOI.org (Crossref)*,.
- Wood, Philip R. 'The Historical Conditions of Possibility of the Rise and Fall of Sartrean Existentialism and Existentialist Marxism'. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 4, Summer 1990, pp. 549–68.

- Yalçın, Esra. '[İlhan Berk'in Poetikası ve "Siz Ne Güzeldiniz Benimle Bilemezsiniz" Üzerine Metin Merkezli Bir Bakış](#)'. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, vol., no. 69, 69, Sept. 2020, pp. 247–58. [dergipark.org.tr](http://dergipark.org.tr),
- Yalom, Irvin D. *Existential Psychotherapy*. Basic Books, 1980.
- Yaran, Cafer S. *Understanding Islam*. 1st Ed., Dunedin Academic Press Limited, 2007,
- Yavuz, Deniz. [Sezai Karakoç'un Varoluşçu Düşüncesinde İnsan Sorunu](#). Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Felsefe Anabilim Dalı, 2017,
- Yıldız, Ali. 'Sezai Karakoç'un Şiirlerinde Tasavvuf'. 38. *Icanas Bildirileri*, 2008, pp. 1839–61.
- Yılmaz, Mehmet. 'Kente Alışamayan Uyumsuz Bireyin Öyküsü: Turgut Uyar'ın Geyikli Gece Şiiri Üzerine Bir Tahlil Denemesi'. *Turkish Studies, International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol. 6, no. 3, Summer 2011, pp. 1893–906.
- Yılmaz, Serdar, and M. İnanç Özekmekçi. 'Türk Siyasal Hayatında Pratiğe Geçemeyen Muhalif Bir Söylem: "Sine-i Millete Dönüş"'. *A Never Practiced Opponent Expression in Turkish Politics: 'The Return to Bosom of the Nation'*, vol. 19, no. 2, Dec. 2017, pp. 415–39.
- Young, John W. *France, The Cold War and the Western Alliance, 1944-1949: French Foreign Policy and Post-War Europe*. St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- Yüzyılın Türk Şiiri Antolojisi (3 Cilt)*. Accessed 4 Nov. 2017.
- Zank, Michael, and Zachary Braiterman. '[Martin Buber](#)'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2022, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,.