

The Evaluation of the Movie “Thou Gild’st the Even” in Terms of Existential Philosophy

“Sen Aydınlatırsın Geceyi” Filminin Varoluş Felsefesi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi

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Abstract: This study was conducted to examine how the concepts of existential philosophy are addressed in the movie. Employing phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, the study was carried out with 15 university students. The study data were collected by interviewing the participating students. Within this context, the movie was evaluated through the eyes of existential philosophy using the concepts of existence. The study revealed that the way the characters in the movie handled existence problems was related to their own characters and that life is a place to be questioned and the depth of meaning of life, the anxiety of life, existence and nothingness were all together.

Keywords: Existentializm, relationship between cinema and philosophy, education, philosophy and education.

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Introduction

Cinema, which took shape in the 20th century, is an invention that allows the discovery of reality by reconstructing it with images and sounds. Cinema prompts the subject to rethink by presenting new thought images to the daily perception of the subject. Cinema discovers the power of thought through the use of images. It frees images from the limitations of the human eye. It reminds people of what people miss by presenting it to the 'eye'. This reminder brings people closer to philosophical thought. The seeing eye of the mind, kneaded with thought, transforms images. This process represents participation in the world of cinema. With the 20th century, the search for essence in philosophy gave way to the idea of existence. Existentialism, which focuses on the singular individual, has become an indispensable source for art with its broad perspective and pointing out that thought has no limits. Examples of the influence of existentialism, which has a significant impact on branches of art such as literature, painting, theater and cinema, in cinema, the art of the 20th century, are increasing.

Basic concepts from existential teachings such as existence, nothingness, freedom, death, loneliness and alienation are discussed in the films. Modern directors such as Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni, who deal with the theme of "nothingness" from different angles in their films, use the absence or extinction of human beings as a direct or indirect motif. Bergman clearly references Sartre in his films such as *The Seventh Seal* (1956), *Wild Strawberries* (1957), *Through the Looking Glass* (1961), *Winter Light* (1962), *Persona* (1966); It questions existence with themes such as nothingness, death and anxiety. Antonioni also uses nothingness as the central symbol in his films *The Story of a Love* (1950), *The Setting Sun* (1962), *The Red Desert* (1964) and *I Saw a Murder* (1966) (Kovacs 2010: 101-102). Just like nothingness, alienation is also an existential element that Bergman, Antonioni, Fellini, Resnais and Tarkovsky include in their films. Because modern narrative is based on the idea of telling stories about people who have lost all their basic connections with others, the world, the past and the future, and even those who have lost the foundations of their own personality and become alienated. Especially Godard's early films, *Vagrant Lovers* (1960), *Living Your Life* (1962), *Little Soldier* (1963), *Crazy Pierrot* (1965), depict the wildness of being a modern individual through



the collapse of the romantic hero (Kovacs 2010: 69-70). Film noirs, which are the dark side of the post-war period on the silver screen, depicting a rotten and pessimistic world in every aspect, where dying and killing were legal, chaos, violence and paranoia increased, carry the deep pains of existence. Therefore, it can be easily seen that many existential motifs, from alienation to loneliness, from man’s fate to death to existential choice, from meaninglessness to absurdity, are also used in American noir films. In addition to Woody Allen’s works *Annie Hall* (1977), *Interiors* (1978), *Manhattan* (1979), *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989); The films *Being There* (1979), *Forrest Gump* (1994), and *American Beauty* (1999) are described as important examples of Hollywood existentialism (Savaş 2013: 170).

With the concepts of individual and system, intentionality, choice, freedom and responsibility, death, absurdity, extreme emotions, existence and nothingness, which are the themes of existentialism and existential thought, existentialism begins to use art as a basis for communication. Thus, it is seen that the form of discourse based on objective and systematic justification evolves into an artistic and literary style (Çüçen, 2015: 241). In this context, a study was planned to show the reflection of the idea of existentialism in cinema. The study was created to see how existential elements were handled in the movie *Thou Gild’st the Even*, which was released in 2013 and written and directed by Onur Ünlü. The reason for choosing this film is that it is an example of a black comedy full of fantastic and absurd elements that draws attention with its unique scenario, narrative technique and black and white visuals. The study is important because it questions the meaning of life and finds existential analyses.

This multi-award winning movie was shot in Manisa’s Akhisar district in Turkey. The movie is a kind of love story in which all the characters have extraordinary powers. Cemal is the main character and works as a barber. He can pass and see through walls. Being able to see what is not seen represents that the invisible parts of life actually have a visible side. Yasemin is Cemal’s wife. So, she can move objects by mental power. Her power represents being able to direct people and get them going with her goodness. The Doctor had been exiled to the town. His ability is the blood pouring out of his right eye. It represents the bleeding wounds of the person and the outpouring of the bad side of the person through blood. The



Boss is a businessman who deals in cattle in the town. His power is immortality. It represents the conscience of humanity. No matter what is done, it is impossible to kill him. Defne is a book seller. She can stop time with her hand. Her ability represents art. When art is removed from human life, time stops and life ends. Hunter is one of the residents of the town. He has the power to shoot with his hand. This power represents people who seem friendly but who are actually enemies and shows that it is possible to injure someone not only physically but also spiritually. Nazim is another resident of the town. His characteristic is that he is taller compared to other people. He is actually a giant. This characteristic represents morality. That is why he is taller than everyone else because people who live morally are always bigger and thoughtful than others.

People who live morally are always bigger and thoughtful than others. Since these characteristics of the characters and the plot of the film show the concepts and problems of existential philosophy, what do the reflections of existential philosophy in the film *Thou Gild'st the Even* tell the audience? The foundation problem has been created. Based on this problem, qualitative research (phenomenology) was used as a method in the study. Interviews were held with 15 students taking the philosophy of education course from Atatürk University Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Language Teaching. Thus, the film was evaluated by considering the existential perspectives of these students.

Existential Philosophy

Existential philosophy refers to a type of philosophical inquiry, mainly about humans, that emerged during the depression period in Germany in the 1930s after the First World War (Bollnow, 2004). What is revealed and questioned in existentialism is man himself, his existence and what his existence means. Existential philosophy aims to be a philosophy of life while dealing with human beings with their existence or their relationship with life. Existentialism tries to explain what it means to exist as a human in this world (Sartre, 2019).

Existential philosophy consists of two opposing lines, extending from Kierkegaard to Marcel as theistic existentialism, and from Heidegger to Sartre as atheistic existentialism. In general terms, it is, on the one hand, a philosophy of existence that accepts the existence of the individual as the



starting point, and on the other hand, it is a philosophy of morality and values that tries to understand the place and value of the individual’s existence. (Gürsoy, 1979).

Existentialism, which became systematic with Kierkegaard’s thoughts, theistic Kierkegaard carried the influence of Christian theology in his thoughts. Atheistic Sartre’s condemnation of man to freedom and the responsibility and anxiety that this brings constitute the principles of his thoughts. What Sartre wanted to solve with existential philosophy was to base the value confusion faced by the people of our age with a new understanding of ethics (Sartre J. P, 1966). Existentialism developed in two stages in this context: The first of these is the philosophy of ‘meaninglessness’, which includes concepts such as ‘suffocation’, ‘alienation’, ‘nothingness’, ‘coincidence’, ‘anxiety’. The second is the philosophy of freedom, which includes the main concepts of ‘design’, ‘commitment’ and ‘creating new values’, which focuses on humans as an ethical being. As can be understood from these concepts, existentialism includes more than one concept and meaning. For example;

According to Sartre, existence precedes essence in man. The principle of existence preceding essence finds its basis in freedom. If man were not free, his existence would not precede essence. Sartre derives the notion of existence preceding essence from the of absence of God. If there is no God, at least there is a being whose existence precedes essence (Sartre, 2019).

Establishing the understanding of existence on the absence of God, Sartre divides existence into two categories, namely Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself. Sartre describes Being-in-Itself as something absurd, slippery, and dull. There are no gaps or holes in it. Being is what it is. On the other hand, Sartre refers to Being-For-itself as incomplete, fluent, and indefinite. With these properties, Being-For-itself is equivalent to the existence of human consciousness. For Sartre, the existence of consciousness is the existence of nothingness. According to Sartre, “Consciousness is not what it is, it is what it is not. Nothingness entered the world with man” (Sartre, 1966). When asked what is the first feeling of encountering the absurd on a person, Sartre, who sees Being-in-Itself as absurd, says it is nausea. Existence is an empty form, a twist, added to objects from the



outside without changing their essence. Everything existed when there was no reason to exist—the feeling of redundancy. This sense of redundancy leads to the “absurd” (Sartre, 2010 p.192). Man does not want to be a stranger in the world. On this issue, Marcel cries “ontological friendship”. Even when a person is actually alone, there is a kind of being together. For loneliness is not indifference to the presence of other people, but rather the painful feeling of the absence of the other in the state of loneliness (Wahl J, 1999). According to Kierkegaard, anxiety arises as a result of the individual’s relationship with the world, and despair arises as a result of the individual’s relationship with himself. Anxiety is a human concept. Despair, on the other hand, arises in the situation faced by the individual who is trying to form his self (Kierkegaard, 2004).

Method

Study Design

The study employed the qualitative research method. As the study design, they study used the phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenology examines the phenomena encountered in daily life in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In a phenomenological study, a phenomenon related to a single concept or idea is examined and studies are carried out with individuals who have experienced this phenomenon in order to investigate this phenomenon in depth. The number of the people in the study group can vary between 3 and 15 (Creswell, 2009).

Study Group

The study group consists of students majoring in Turkish Language Education at Atatürk University’s Kazım Karabekir Education Faculty. The study was carried out with 15 freshmen students randomly selected who were taking the Philosophy of Education course.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, interview was used as data collection tool. The data collection process in phenomenology is carried out through in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Interviews should include the environment in which the participants lived the phenomenon, the details of the experience about the phenomenon, and how the experience makes the participants feel and its effects (Güler et al., 2015). While developing the interview questions in the study, interview questions



were formed in line with these steps. In the study, semi-structured interview, one of the interview types in qualitative research, was employed. In addition to the preparation of the interview questions in advance, the semi-structured interview provides flexibility to the researcher during the interview, allowing the questions to be rearranged and probes to be asked (Ekiz, 2003).

Interview Form

In order to make an existential analysis of the movie “Thou Gild’st the Even”, the interview form included two questions. The questions in the form are presented below:

1. Which concepts does existential philosophy discuss?
2. How would you evaluate the movie “Thou Gild’st the Even” according to the concepts of existential philosophy?

Validity and Reliability Study of the Interview Form

For the validity study of the interview form, content validity, internal validity and external validity were examined. The pilot questions developed for the interview form were examined by two experts in Turkish, measurement evaluation and philosophy. The reason why the form was examined by Turkish language experts was to see whether there were any linguistic and semantic shortcomings. Accordingly, the Turkish language experts made revisions to prevent incoherencies and ensure intelligibility. Assessment and evaluation experts helped with the development of the questions and gave the questions their final form. Content validity of the semi-structured interview form, developed for the existential analysis of the film, was ensured by making revisions based on the answers given to the interview questions in the pilot application, relevant literature, and expert opinions. In addition, internal validity was ensured by obtaining the participant confirmation regarding the questions asked in the study and forming interaction by keeping the duration of the interviews within a certain time interval. In order to increase the credibility of the study, the consistency of the findings from the collected data was checked. For this, whether the findings were compatible with the conceptual framework used in the development of the interview form was examined. In addition, the credibility of the study was increased by giving direct quotes from the participants. Furthermore, the external validity of the study was ensured by explaining



the research process and the procedures performed in this process in detail.

In order to ensure the reliability of the interview form, internal and external reliability checks were made. For internal reliability (consistency), attention was paid to present the findings by grouping the common answers and presenting direct quotes without making any comments. Finally, the external reliability of the study was ensured by specifying the place and time of the interview, the conceptual framework used in data analysis, and detailed explanations about the analysis methods (Sart, 2015).

Data Collection

In interpretive phenomenological research, data collection proceeds dialogically with the participant, with the participant's determination (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In the current study, the interview progressed under the determination of the participants with semi-structured interview questions. The interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participants, with their permission, and recorded on a voice recorder. Participants' consent about their willingness to participate in the study was taken. Each interview lasted an average of 15 minutes. In addition, data were also collected by taking notes while recording the interview.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, content analysis was performed. Content analysis involves the process of examining and interpreting the material systematically and in detail in order to reveal patterns, judgments, meanings and themes (Berg & Latin, 2007). During content analysis, codes for each participant were formed, and then the codes from all participants were compared and themes were created. The themes created and the quotes related to these themes are presented in a table. In qualitative research, credibility involves the results obtained by the researcher and the unity between participant statements (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In order to increase credibility at the qualitative stage, long-term interaction was ensured during the study, interaction was made with the participants during the group sessions, and data diversity and process analysis were performed. In terms of consistency and confirmability, the questions and codes were sent to the field expert and common questions and themes were formed. In order to



ensure that the study is transferable, detailed descriptions and quotations are included.

Findings

Findings are presented in line with the answers given to the questions in the interview form.

Findings Regarding the Concepts of Existential Philosophy

First, the study group was asked about which concepts existential philosophy addresses and the findings were formed within this framework. The answers given by the study group on these concepts were divided into themes. These themes were determined according to the answers given by the study group.

Table 1: The Concepts of Existential Philosophy the movie “Thou Gild’st the Even” address according to the study group

Theme	Participant Code	Frequency
Death	S1, S3, S5, S7, S8, S12	6
Existence-Nothingness	S1, S4, S5, S8, S9	5
Alienation	S9, S14, S15	3
Dread/Anxiety	S1, S10	2
Existence Preceding Essence	S2, S4	2
Evil	S7, S11	2
Nausea	S6, S13	2
Absurd	S3	1
Fear	S3	1
Freedom	S4	1
Melancholy	S4	1
Chaos	S7	1
Suffering	S5	1
Putting man into center	S2	1
Despair	S12	1

As seen in Table 1, according to the participants, the concepts existential philosophy the movie addressed were death, existence-nothingness, alienation, dread/anxiety, existence preceding essence, evil, nausea, absurd, fear, freedom, melancholy, chaos, suffering, putting man into center, and despair. A total of 15 themes were determined and 30 views were included under these themes. Accordingly, S1 expressed opinions on three different themes, S2 on two, S3 on three, S4 on four, S5 on three, S6 on one, S7 on three, S8 on two, S9 on one, S10 on one, S11 on one, S12 on two, S13 on one, S14 on one, and S15 on one theme.



Findings Regarding the Evaluation of the Movie “Thou Gild’st the Even” According to the Concepts of Existential Philosophy

The findings discussed in this section were formed according to the most frequently repeated concepts in Table 1.

In the movie “Thou Gild’st the Even”, the most frequently repeated concept in terms of existential philosophy and emphasized by the study group was death. The views of S1, S5 and S8 on death are presented below.

S1: Existentialism is addressed with many examples in this movie, as it is based on man. But let’s try to explain it with a couple of examples. In one of the scenes, the protagonist Cemal asks his hunting friend: “You shot a bird the other day, that bird died and perished”, then he talks about the death of his mother and siblings, that is, their perishment. In existentialism, it is said that people tremble with fear of death. This concern was also addressed here. Later, Cemal continues to ask, “If I didn’t exist, if you didn’t exist, what would happen to this world?” There, the place and importance of man in the universe was addressed. I mean, it said the reason for the existence of the universe is man. I think the most crucial point of the movie about existentialism is the last scene. Our hero, Cemal, says in the last scene: “Whose is all this, these stones, earth, trees... for whom? Where are we in this?” So, man is actually at the forefront in this scene, too, just like he is in the whole movie.

S5: If Cemal was a character that formed his own essence, he’d have been aware of his existence and his reason for being in the world because at two points in the movie, the questions “why do we exist, why do you exist, why do we exist, my moms died, why do we exist, for whom do we exist?”. Existential philosophy focuses on death and its inevitability, as well as on issues such as love and suffering. In the movie, Cemal is a person who could not come to himself after the death of his family, the Çiçek family, and he gets psychological treatment. Yasemin shared the same fate as Cemal and shows us that in this context, death and pain are necessary and essential from an existential point of view.

S8: When Cemal says, “You know you shot that bird, that bird existed, now it doesn’t exist. My mother and siblings also existed, they don’t exist anymore. What would happen if we didn’t exist at all?”, it shows he’s a character stuck between existence and nothingness. These words of the character of Cemal are actually a question of existentialism. Here, he makes the audience think about death, and what the world would be like without death is symbolized by the man who cannot die. The man who doesn’t die in the movie says that he isn’t afraid of anything because of his



condition and that this made him immoral. Death has always been described as a bad thing but the movie emphasizes that death isn't actually a bad thing as it is thought. The main thing that represents existentialism in the movie is the main character of the movie, Cemal. He's stuck between life and death.

While S1 tried to make a connection between the movie and existentialism by referring to the concept of death, dread, existence-nothingness in his answer, S5 tried to do the same by touching on points such as love, suffering, existence-nothingness, and death in his answer. T8, on the other hand, referred to the concepts of death and existence-nothingness in his answer. In the movie, the concept of death is given in association with existence and nothingness. Having lost his siblings and his mother, Cemal questions by evaluating his thoughts about death. He approaches death just like Heidegger's Dasein. In fact, death is a vital phenomenon determining the meaning and value of existence as the extreme limit possibility of Dasein's existence. So much so that Dasein seizes its own existential possibilities with its understanding of death and reaches an authentic interpretation of the true meaning of existence. Thus, according to Heidegger, always lacking in understanding the meaning of his own existence, Dasein has the opportunity to question the integrity of his own life and to reveal it in his authentic mode of existence (Heidegger, 2011). At this point, Cemal shows the Dasein characteristic, too.

Another frequently mentioned concept in Table 1 is existence and nothingness. In this regard, apart from S8, S9 said the following.

S9: The images that take place in the existence adventure of the character of Cemal, who is the only person who questions in the movie, are quite surprising. Everything actually starts with Cemal trying to find his existence. Cemal, who lost his mother and brother in a fire, wants to bring them into existence somehow. That's the reason why he was looking for his mother's necklace. He wants to find a part of his mother in the world and make her existence continue somehow. Some of the pain and sadness he had experienced pushes him to question existence and the universe. His trauma teaches him to think differently and Cemal is alienated from that universe. He thinks, "What's the point of experiencing such a great pain" and he asks "why are we here, why did we experience this pain?"

In her answer, S9 tried to establish a link between existentialism and the movie by referring to the concepts of existence-nothingness and



alienation. Looking at the movie, there is no God there, too. There are people with different characteristics and supernatural events without the intervention of God. The absence of God makes everything free since there is no responsibility and people live as they want. People pass through walls, move objects, stop time and there are invisible people. As in Sartre's concept of Godless. Cemal's skeptical attitude, daydreaming and questioning are due to the fact that he lives in a godless world. Questioning existence and nothingness, Cemal asks, "Why do we live in this world, what would happen if we had never been to this world?". In fact, he sees that this mode of being in the world is connected with nothingness. As Sartre said, nothingness entered the world with man. There should be existence so that there should be nothingness (Sartre J. P, 1966).

On the concept of alienation in Table 1, S14 and S15 stated the following.

S14: *The movie shows us Cemal's emotionlessness, how emotional intelligence prevents us from understanding existence, and how the emotional meaning we give to being human isolates us from the world. Most likely, his trauma taught him to think differently and Cemal became alienated from this universe. He is thinking, "What's the point of experiencing such a great pain," and he wonders, "why are we here, why did we experience this pain". He can't explain his problem either because he lacks knowledge and has no arguments. His problem is bigger than his knowledge. Alienated from himself and the world, Cemal searches for the meaning of life and he's trying to cope with this alien situation.*

S15: *Alienation from the society is told in Onur Ünlü's movie "Thou Gild'st the Even", which takes its name from Shakespeare's book. From the very first scene, we can understand that Cemal is an alienated person from the way he looks around with blank eyes.*

S14 and S15 tried to establish a link between the movie and existentialism by referring to the concept of alienation in their answers. Looking at the movie, Cemal tries to make sense of the events he experienced, but cannot hide his surprise. Cemal's expression of surprise is actually the surprise of encountering the being. According to Marcel, surprise is a state of confrontation with being. Surprise is not about how the world came to be but how it exists now. This is a serious surprise. In Sartre's Nausea (2010), Roquentin feels the same astonishment when he encounters the world.



Rather than where the world came from and where it is going, there is a state of distress felt in the face of world's existence. There is also a burden placed on man by its existence rather than how it exists. There is reckoning and questioning when faced with existence. According to Heidegger, man is the shepherd of being. Just as a mother talks to her child, the shepherd also talks to his flock. What Heidegger is trying to say is that if you do not know how to approach existence, it will not reveal its mystery to you. As Marcel stated, it is important to discover. It is necessary to speak to being according to its language. At this junction, Marcel both shows an existentialist characteristic and uses hermeneutics (Marcel, 1967). Heidegger used hermeneutics in the existential field. Understanding and interpretation of human existence is, in a way, to understand himself. Otherwise, we will be in an alienated world.

On the concepts of dread/anxiety and despair, S10 and expressed the following.

S10: While the movie reveals the concerns of human existence and how it affects life, it also shows the things that dominates human existence, dread, anxieties and obsessions. Each character in the movie has a different worry, obsession, and anxiety. Cemal worrying about his wife cheating on him, the doctor having anxiety about poultry, Cemal's father's having concerns about Cemal, the bookstore girl's worries about love. These are all about the anxious lives they live.

S12: In the movies, first, while the main character is daydreaming and trying to sort things out within himself, his father gives him some warnings. Later, we come across the suicide scene in which Cemal tries to kill himself in a moment of despair. I think the character here thinks that there is no point in living anymore, he prefers to die rather than suffer as he lives. The movie just dives into the scene, the event and the character's environment and life were left for later in the movie. When his doctor told him that they could overcome this by talking, the doctor's eyes bleed. This may represent that Cemal's existential depressions may not be overcome by talking. He responds by using the phrase "crying blood".

S10 and S12 tried to establish a link between the movie and existentialism by referring to the concepts of dread and anxiety and to the concepts of hopelessness and death, respectively. From this perspective, the character Yasemin getting pregnant from the doctor and seeing Cemal as a savior are indications of despair but Yasemin, who demands to take shelter in



Cemal and wants him to save him and stay with him, cannot find a leg to stand on with him because of the reaction she receives. She returns back to her family. She cannot cope with the anxiety she feels about herself and the future and finds the solution in going to Istanbul. With this state of anxiety, Yasemin's rejection by Cemal pushes her to make her own choice. She sees the solution in gaining freedom, that is, leaving the environment she is in. However, while doing this, she does not see what she left behind, but she does it anyway with the anxiety inside her. She sees salvation in separating from Cemal, perhaps in order to make the uncertainty she is living in clear. Even if Cemal wants to stop time and try to reach her, now she struggles in the grip of this despair, too. But the real despair begins after that. With the departure of Yasemin, Cemal, who could turn back the time, continues to live without any hope for his life anymore. In his book *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard discusses Abraham's state of anxiety because although he did not know the reason, he took Isaac to Mount Moria to sacrifice by God's will but at the last moment, he did not sacrifice Isaac, again by God's will. In this moment of anxiety, he has an existence problem in his loneliness and about what to do. Yet, existence is paradoxical. Existence is irrational, not something that can only be grasped by reason. We have emotion, we have excitement, we have a mind, and we are a complete being. He sees that there is no way to get rid of anxiety by reason because if we try to understand only with our minds, then how will we understand our feelings, love and faith? We do not live in a single dimension of science. We are versatile beings. There is the matter of the heart. There is a spiritual dimension. Yet, the mind does not disappear completely. There is a transition to a higher step. Kierkegaard, with a fideist attitude, stated that existence that cannot be completely reduced to reason. On the other hand, it is irrational and paradoxical. He clearly expressed that it is not possible to understand Abraham's situation with pure reason (Kierkegaard, 2011).

As for the fact that existence precedes essence, S2 and S4 said the following.

S2: First of all, we should start with the name of the movie, Thou Shalt Not Kill. Even. The name proves that everything is in the hands of the individual. I mean, it shows that it is in the hands of the individual to bring the darkness to light, and by



using the word “you”, it says a place where people do not exist will always be dark. It shows putting man into the center, that man doesn’t come from the world, on the contrary, the world comes from the man.

S4: The leading actor of the movie is a character whose melancholy is quite strong in terms of his inner journey. We see that each of the supernatural events and people living and found in and around their inner world has a separate purpose. It doesn’t seem strange to the eye that this incredibleness is happening in Anatolia. When we look at the purpose of existence from a religious point of view, it’s quite easy to see that we have a purpose, but when we look at it from other perspectives, man creates himself in the universe with his own hand. If you exist, the world exists, if you don’t exist, it doesn’t exist. The choices you make determine the course of your life. Existence precedes essence. I mean, man first exists and then creates himself with his attitudes and behaviors. Mankind is condemned to freedom because, once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. From the moment he starts his life, man constantly tries to add meaning to his life.

While S2 touched on the principle of existentialism putting man at the center and prioritizing man in his answer, S4 tried to connect the movie with existentialism by mentioning that existence precedes essence in his answer. In this context, Sartre puts forward an existential humanism, arguing that existence precedes essence. According to Sartre, man exists as he understands himself and as he wants to be. That is, man creates its own essence (Sartre, 2010). However, we cannot say that a person is completely free when while choosing since man has to choose. Thus, in a way, the freedom of choice is partially eliminated. In short, we reveal our own essence. In this sense, Cemal realized his existence by choosing to live alone, questioning existence and meaning of life, and seeking the right one. His essence is formed by Yasemin, Defne and other friends who entered her life because after they entered his life, it began to change and take shape and he began to find answers to his existential problems.

S3 evaluated existentialism’s concept of absurd with the concept of nausea, and stated the following.

S3: In the movie, Cemal, experiencing the pain of existence, depicts images such as death, absurd, and fear. Actually, since those around Cemal don’t know about this pain, Cemal seems strange to them. In fact, the doctor’s treatment of him psychologically, the incurability and inextricability of the substance place the people around



Cemal in the image of absurd. This absurdity is actually a way out for Cemal. The absurdity of the absurd degenerates itself with a lie. As in Plato's allegory of the cave, reality is a lie of the reflection of the absurd (fire), that is, the noble lie. Therefore, the reality that Cemal is facing is an irreparable bundle of absurdity. The only thing that will get him out of here is the fire of Zeus. So with the brightness of the poem, he can turn this absurdity into a tragic one. Maybe with Prometheus stealing the fire from Zeus... and constant pus and blood flowing from the doctor's eye, it's a sign of the evil he has committed. When Cemal is taken to the hospital, the blood splashes on him, the girl raped by the doctor is also touched by Cemal, which means that evil is contagious.

Referring to the concept of nausea as a result of absurdity, S6 and S13 said the following.

S6: The vomiting of Cemal and Yasemin in the tea garden under the influence of the pills reminds one of the most basic concepts in Sartre's existentialism, nausea. The individual, or rather mere existence is disgusted with the others and the world. This causes him to vomit. Life is sickeningly beyond the limits of human will. The indifference of those present while they vomited shows how sickening life is. The director also refers to this existentialism with a line. "You know, there was that bird you shot, it doesn't exist now. Neither my mother. Neither my siblings. You know they're not here. We're here. If we were never here, what would happen then? What would happen if we weren't?"

S13: When Yasemin and Cemal start to vomit after taking the pills in the tea garden, this actually represents being disgusted with the others in the world, hatred and nausea that is one of the most basic concepts of existence.

While S3 touched on the leading concepts of existentialism, death, fear, and absurdity in his answer, S6 and S13 associated the concepts of existentialism with the movie by referring to the concept of nausea in their answers. The first starting sentence of Albert Camus' essay 'The Myth of Sisyphus', in which he reveals the absurd as a concept states the essay's purpose: "There is only one really philosophical question, and that is suicide." Like Camus, who does not accept suicide as a solution in his essay that addresses a fundamental issue such as the meaning/meaninglessness of life by using the concept of the absurd, Ünlü also gets the suicide attempt of Cemal, who is in a severe crisis of existence, out of the way almost at the beginning of the movie. This suicide attempt, of course, is far from tragic.



Trying to exchange money for the shopkeepers with the blood flowing from his wrists to his hands, Cemal faints and falls to the ground. The absurd suicide attempt of Cemal, who can pass and see through walls, ends with the suggestion of the 'blood-weeping' Doctor. Doctor İrfan tells Cemal that they will tackle this together by talking. This is just like Camus' novel *The Stranger*. In *The Stranger*, the Frenchman Mersault, who had accidentally killed an Arab in Algeria, indifferently watches the events that leads to his death. Everything happens spontaneously, and Mersault is alienated and indifferent to society, to himself, to his approaching death, to life, to the world, and to his actions. He is detached from society and lives with a feeling of complete absurdity. He has the sense of absurdity. There is emotion but no awareness. Since there is no consciousness, he is almost lost in the flow of events. But in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, the absurd is experienced at a conscious level. Living absurdity at a conscious level is to be aware of the absurdity of what one is experiencing. Since Mersault lives through emotion, he does not act to resolve it (Camus, 2010). Despite all this, he even says that he is satisfied with his situation from time to time, but in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, solutions begin to be found from the moment there is awareness. If there is an awareness, one tries to generate a solution. Sisyphus is treated as a tragic hero by Camus. He is tragic because he is aware of his situation. He is aware that his condition is deplorable since the Gods punished him by making him drag a huge rock to the top of a huge mountain because he spoke in the name of Gods. Every time he takes the rock to the top, the rock comes down again. Although he is aware of his destiny, he does not give in to it. Despite all his efforts, Sisyphus thinks that he surpassed his destiny by removing the rock and standing in front of it despite his destiny (Camus, 2009). What is understood from here is that no matter how absurd and troublesome life is, it is necessary to do the best you can in spite of everything.

Result and Discussion

Containing the concepts of existential philosophy (death, anxiety, absurdity, evil, freedom, existence precedes essence, alienation) as its general plot, the movie presents an absurd environment where there are people with superpowers but ultimately these superpowers do not have any



function because of the characters' "anxieties" about being human. Albert Camus starts from a very similar place while defining the absurd.

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. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows. What follows is the gradual return into the chain or it is the definitive awakening. At the end of the awakening comes, in time, the consequence: suicide or recovery... Simple 'anxiety' is at the beginning of everything" (Camus, 2009).

Cemal's gaze stuck on every rotating object and the wheel that he says starts spinning in his head when he closes his eyes and that he can't stop is like the embodiment of this 'movement of consciousness'. When Cemal cries "You know, there was that bird you shot, it doesn't exist now. Neither my mother. Neither my siblings. You know they're not here. We're here. If we were never here, what would happen then? What would happen if we weren't?", he is so in control of the everyday words of his problem. However, the wheel that is constantly spinning in his head and everything that is spinning around triggers the movement of Cemal's consciousness, anxiety, and feeling of boredom. He wants to wake up but can't wake up.

After the loss of his mother and siblings, Cemal becomes alienated from people and the environment he lives in and questions this. He is constantly in search of meaning by asking questions like "Why did this happen to me? What's the point of experiencing this pain?". For this reason, he keeps to himself and live in his own depression. The character of Cemal, who is alone despite all the people around him, is similar to the character of Abraham in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Kierkegaard describes how Abraham had to sacrifice his son, the only important thing in his life, and his suffering on the way to Mount Moriah, but on this journey, there is not only obligation and suffering. In addition, there is a situation that contradicts the human rules of the society and is not in accordance with ethics. This is discussed by Kierkegaard from a different perspective in



Fear and Trembling. He explained Abraham’s stance against the human rules of society and his fulfillment of God’s 29 commandments, and how Abraham was in a state of loneliness as a result (Kierkegaard, 2011). Cemal escapes from that ‘burning house’ that started his anxiety and from his lost paradise on his motorcycle, which is perhaps the only place where the spinning wheel gives him a sad peace.

Trying to find himself with this loneliness and search for meaning, Cemal constantly asks questions about life and searches for the meaning of life since even when people turn to any object, they are not able to consume the meaning in it. There is a constant meaning loading. The meanings ascribed to the same thing may change with orientations over time. Meaning then has no consumable dimension. Every sense-making is a condition for a new sense-making. It is not possible to penetrate the spontaneity of the world one hundred percent when we look at the whole of existence in itself. However, man can bring it into existence for themselves with their orientation. Man has such a capacity. Everyone looks at the world differently. The world has and in-itself and an objectivity. Everyone lives in the same world, but with the meanings attributed to that world, there is a world that people see from their own window because they actually live. It is not possible to completely consume the meaning of the world in-itself (Sartre, 2019). This theme is also present in the movie. Each character looks at life from his own window and his process of making sense. While the doctor with blood pouring out of his eye, who is normally believed bring good thought to bring good, represents evil, the invisible teacher shows that people cannot see him when he does not present information. Also, in the movie, the man who is very tall means that people with broad knowledge and understanding of value can be big. In fact, this process of existence in them shows the meaning of their existence and character.

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Öz: Bu çalışma varoluşçu felsefe kavramlarının filmde nasıl ele alındığını



incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenolojinin kullanıldığı çalışma 15 üniversite öğrencisi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri katılımcı öğrencilerle görüşülerek toplanmıştır. Bu bağlamda film varoluş kavramları kullanılarak varoluşçu felsefenin gözüyle değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırma, filmdeki karakterlerin varoluş sorunlarını ele alma biçimlerinin kendi karakterleriyle ilişkili olduğunu, yaşamın sorgulanacak bir yer olduğunu, yaşamın anlam derinliğinin, yaşam kaygısının, varoluşun ve hiçliğin bir arada olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Varoluşçuluk, sinema ve felsefe ilişkisi, eğitim, eğitim felsefesi.

