

**A STUDY OF EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY KAFKAESQUE
AND PINTERESQUE CHARACTERS**

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this thesis is to discuss the similarities between Kafka's The Trial, "The Metamorphosis" and "The Judgement", and Pinter's plays namely, *The Birthday Party*, *Old Times*, *Ashes to Ashes* and *The Dumb Waiter*, in terms of their characters' problems concerning their existence and their manners of dealing with these issues. The thesis argues that, as a consequence of being thrown into a meaningless world, characters created by Kafka and Pinter have to deal with existential problems like being alienated, having a limited freedom due to their facticity, and being subject to menace, the source of which is beyond their knowledge. It is also discussed that the characters of these writers apply similar methods; such as dominating the others and resorting to inauthentic existence, concerning their manner of dealing with the problems they face. In other words, this study intends to highlight the fact that both Kafka and Pinter reflect the situation of man, looking for a meaningful, secure existence in an absurd world, filled with disillusionment, loss of faith and failure of communication.

Key Words: Existentialism, Alienation, Facticity, Domination, Inauthentic existence.

ÖZ

KAFKAESK VE PINTERESK KARAKTERLERİN KARŞILAŞTIĞI VAROLUŞSAL SORUNLAR ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu tezin amacı, karakterlerin karşılaştığı varoluşsal sorunları ve bu sorunlarla başa çıkma yollarını göz önünde bulundurarak, Kafka'nın *The Trial*, "The Metamorphosis" ve "The Judgement" adlı eserleriyle Pinter'in *The Birthday Party*, *Old Times*, *Ashes to Ashes* ve *The Dumb Waiter* adlı oyunları arasındaki benzerlikleri tartışmaktır. Bu tez, anlamsız bir dünyaya terk edilmişlik duygusunun sonucu olarak, Kafka ve Pinter tarafından yaratılan karakterlerin, yabancılaşma, faktisiteye bağlı olarak sınırlı özgürlüğe sahip olma ve kaynağı belli olmayan bir tehdiye maruz kalma gibi varoluşsal problemlerle başa çıkmak zorunda olduklarını ileri sürmektedir. Aynı zamanda, karşılaştıkları sorunlarla başetme yolları düşünüldüğünde, bu karakterlerin diğerleri üzerinde baskınlık kurmak ve özgün olmayan bir varoluş şekline yönelmek gibi yöntemler uyguladıkları da tartışılmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, bu çalışma hem Kafka hem de Pinter'in, hayal kırıklığı, inançsızlık ve iletişim kopukluğuyla dolu absurd bir dünyada, anlamlı, güvenli bir varoluş arayan insanoğlunun durumunu yansıttığını vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Key Words: Varoluşçuluk, Yabancılaşma, Faktisite, Baskınlık, Özgün olmayan varoluş.

To my daughter whose existence has made mine meaningful

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Man and his condition in the universe

The 20th century was a period when two world wars took place leaving a great disillusionment behind, which was caused by the Holocaust, death of millions of people in vain, invention of the atom bomb and many more terrorizing events. Therefore, man became intensely concerned with his condition in the world. Being a mortal entity he felt the urge to question the meaning of his existence, for which reason and religion failed to provide a satisfying explanation. Without the meaning he was looking for man became desperate, alienated and lost.

Man lost his faith in God as religion couldn't provide a logical explanation as to why there was so much pain and suffering. When Nietzsche claimed "*God is dead*", he left man with the responsibility of deciding for himself and the task of becoming who he is and achieving dignity as a human being.

In modern psychology, as a result of the discovery of the subconscious, it was realized that man's impulses and instincts as well as his childhood experiences determine his actions as well as the way he perceives the world contrary to the belief that reason is the only source of knowledge; hence, the unconscious became as important as man's consciousness on which Rationalism had been based. Since reason was not absolute anymore, science became insufficient in dealing with issues concerning personal experience.

With the emergence of new theories in linguistics, the function of language as a means to express human experience became ambiguous. Jacques Derrida a Jewish, Algerian-born French critic and philosopher formulated a theory called Deconstruction, which attempts to show that a text has multiple interpretations as it is not a detached, isolated body. According to him, the meaning of words

depends on the context and is subject to personal interpretation. Language is seen as a system of signs. A sign has two components, as suggested by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the signifier and the signified; in other words, the form of a word and the concept of that word in mind. The signifier is present, but the signified has to be inferred since the signifier does not necessarily describe the same signified to every one. These new approaches to linguistics presented the loss of a stable signified, without which language loses its function as a means of communication.

Considering the changes in various fields, the man of the 20th century was struggling to exist in a meaningless world, lost in futile preoccupations. The growing alienation and isolation due to the failure of communication, together with the burden of self-responsibility caused by loss of faith, and the realization of the deficiency of reason to reach absolute knowledge made man desperate.

1.2. Aim of the study

Since modern man was disillusioned, filled with anxiety and desperately in search of a meaning for his existence, many philosophers, writers and playwrights dealt with the condition of man in an absurd world in their works. The struggle of man to exist and the problems he faces in this exertion are reflected in the works of the existentialist writer Franz Kafka and Harold Pinter, the British Absurd dramatist.

According to Camus, Kafka's works are "disturbing adventures that carry off quaking and dogged characters into pursuit of problems they never formulate" (79). Kafka applies the themes of loneliness, alienation, frustration, menace coming from forces beyond the individual's comprehension or control; or sometimes the horror of devoting oneself to a task without questioning its value; or getting lost in the system. His lucid style creates a nightmarish, claustrophobic atmosphere where his characters are either white-collar workers estranged from themselves or individuals alienated from the community while trying to construct an authentic existence. While developing his themes or creating his characters, Kafka applies a language which makes the reader interpret the work, participate in it, while trying

to fill the gap between the literal and the figurative created by the parables or the metaphoric expressions of the writer. Thus, his use of language serves the existentialist subjectivity and personal experience:

For Kafka, language is neither a harmonious, aesthetically self-sufficient system, nor an accurate reflection of external reality...but, rather, a form of signification that is willfully imposed by human subjectivity on an alienated and elusive world. (R. T. Gray 176)

Kafka's novels and stories have been influential on the works of many literary figures, one of which is Harold Pinter. On being asked, during an interview for *The Paris Review*, who had influenced his plays, Pinter explained; "Beckett and Kafka stayed with (me) the most." Kafka's impact is seen in the reflection of the problematic nature of existence in Pinter's works. Pinter "involves us in a Kafkaesque world of anxiety - in a concrete world of realities in which the pattern eludes and involves us." (Burkman 7). Like Kafka, Pinter is concerned with the absurdity of life resulting from the ambiguity of man's position in the world as well as the themes of nothingness, power struggle, domination, menace, man's bewilderment and an existence which has become trite. The characters are usually lower class people trapped in an enclosed space, fighting against a mysterious menace, showing the traumatic nature of existence; or against their own desires by minimizing their form of existence.

The power of Pinter as a dramatist comes from his depiction of characters as well as his use of language. Similar to the effect Kafka produces with the gap between the literal and the figurative, his use of parables and metaphors, Pinter uses silences to create the same effect. According to Pinter,

The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear...One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness...We communicate, only too well, in our silences, in what is unsaid (Pinter: 1977 14).

Therefore, the famous Pinter pause serves to emphasize the failure of language and brings forth the subjectivity that Existentialism stresses.

Kafka's influence when blended with Pinter's genius brings forth plays with originality. Considering the traces of Kafkaesque elements in Pinter plays, the thesis intends to discuss the similarities between these writers' works with respect

to their character depictions presenting the individual's manner of dealing with his situation and the issues about his existence. In order to discuss these similarities Kafka's famous novel The Trial, his striking novella "The Metamorphosis", and one of his short stories "The Judgement" will be compared to Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, *Old Times*, *Ashes to Ashes* and *The Dumb Waiter*.

CHAPTER II

EXISTENTIALISM AS A PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

2.1. Emergence of Existentialism

Existence has always been a matter of great concern for man. He has pursued answers to questions about his condition in the universe he cannot comprehend. The idea that man is trying to exist in a meaningless, absurd world and thus, he is full of anxiety and despair, attracted many philosophers and writers throughout history. However, it was the 19th century Danish philosopher and theologian, Søren Kierkegaard, who inspired his 20th century colleagues with his ideas on the self and its relation to the world, and it was his views that caused him to be regarded as the father of Existentialism. This movement, which finds its roots in the philosophical and theological writings of Kierkegaard as well as the works of the German writer Friedrich Nietzsche, focuses on subjective human experience instead of objective truths. Hence, it can be considered as a reaction against Rationalism, primarily defending the opinion that man is a rational being and this makes him capable of solving every problem. Reason was seen as the ultimate source of knowledge hence it was considered to be positive and flawless; that is, absolute. However, Existentialism claims that reason cannot be absolute as it is a part of human nature and therefore, influenced by human nature. To believe in the certitude of reason is irrational since “all experience shows that the powers of reason have strict limitations; that a purely logical, rational, scientific way of thinking illuminates only a strictly limited sector of reality.” (Roubiczek 1)

According to Existentialism personal experience ought to be considered as real so philosophy should begin with man’s own experience, his inner knowledge; and reason should serve to enrich this knowledge. Personal experience, as opposed to natural sciences, brings subjectivity, which defines man’s existence. The

subjectivity of man comes from the doctrine of Jean-Paul Sartre that *existence precedes essence*, which can be summarized as man defines himself by choosing his own nature, his acts, his values. However, self determination is not an easy task to accomplish; “it is no longer possible to lose oneself in the System or hope to reveal existence by analytic procedures used in the investigation of ‘life’ or the ‘cosmos’. The individual as such, in his unique subjectivity, in his personal existence, is at stake” (Natanson 2). The process of becoming is no longer determined by scientific facts or God; therefore, man’s own existence becomes his problem.

The problematic nature of existence is not only studied by philosophers but also reflected in the works of literary writers. In the 19th century, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky and a century later, the Austrian Jewish writer Franz Kafka, the French writers André Malraux, André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus reflected the self-destructive, unpredictable human nature as well as the existentialist themes of anxiety, guilt, isolation, alienation, anguish, meaninglessness and futility of life in their literary works.

2.2. Existentialism and the Theatre of the Absurd

Similar to the Existentialist philosophy, The Theatre of the Absurd, which emerged as a reaction to the disillusionment of the world wars, deals with man’s helplessness and the absurdity of his existence in a meaningless world. the concept of the absurd is largely based on the philosophy of Camus, discussed in his literary essay on the absurd, published in 1942, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in which the writer argues that the world must be seen as absurd since it is beyond the limits of human understanding. The essay’s opening lines present the absurdity of life by mentioning the condemnation of Sisyphus, the mythical king of Corinth, as a result of annoying the gods. He is sentenced to push a rock up a mountain, watch it roll down to the bottom and each time start pushing it up all over again until eternity. The gods “had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.” (Camus 1). It is suggested that man, like Sisyphus,

is condemned to struggle painfully in this world, to no purpose since the fact that man is mortal makes his existence futile. However, Camus does not consider man's condition as totally sad. He presents his readers with dualisms like happiness and sadness, day and night, life and death. When Sisyphus turns to go down the mountain, he becomes conscious of his condition, the futility of his effort. Nevertheless, that moment of torture becomes his moment of victory;

At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which become his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. (Camus 3).

It is the struggle, although futile, that makes a man conscious of himself; hence, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." (Camus 3). Martin Esslin, the Hungarian theatre critic, throws a light on this issue by explaining:

It is a challenge to accept the human condition as it is, in all mystery and absurdity, and to bear it with dignity, nobly, responsibly; precisely because there are no easy solutions to the mysteries of existence, because ultimately man is alone in a meaningless world. The shedding of easy solutions, of comforting illusions, may be painful, but it leaves behind it a sense of freedom and relief. And that is why, in the last resort, *The Theatre of the Absurd* does not provoke tears of despair but the laughter of liberation. (Esslin: 1965 14)

Although based on the ideas mentioned in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the term "The Theatre of the Absurd" was first coined by Esslin, in his book under the same title, published in 1962. In his work, he used the term to refer to plays having certain characteristics such as a dreamlike atmosphere and meaningless exchanges reflecting the bewilderment, anxiety, fear and confusion man faces. Most absurdist plays have no logical plot the absence of which stresses the meaningless existence of man. Esslin defines "The Theatre of the Absurd" as an expression of the "senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought." (Esslin: 1987 24). He also mentions the names of five playwrights as the representatives of this movement: Eugène Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov and

Harold Pinter, all of whom contributed to this particular type of theatre with their own styles and techniques.

Both Existentialism and the Theatre of the Absurd are concerned with the human condition; that is, all kinds of feelings associated with existence, especially the existentialist anguish, and the unavoidable questioning of the purpose of life; the everlasting search for meaning. The Theatre of the Absurd is an extension of Existentialism. Esslin “defines the absurdist technique as existentialist in form as well as in content- a general breaking up of a rational order of event, character, and setting to better reflect the world as it is perceived.” (Burkman 7)

2.3. Major Existentialists

As Existentialism was pursued by many philosophers, a variety of different schools of the movement emerged and thus made it difficult to give a single and firm definition of what Existentialism is. While looking into the meaning of existence, Jean-Paul Sartre’s existential philosophy will be taken as a basis for the thesis as it seems the most appropriate for the literary texts to be studied.. Nevertheless, it would be suitable to mention some philosophers of the movement starting from Søren Kierkegaard, who is considered to be the father of Existentialism.

According to this Theistic Existentialist , the source of all knowledge lies in the human experience. He was mainly concerned with the individual’s problem of salvation and despair. He claimed that belief in God could not be explained or justified by reason but not believing in Him was just as absurd. Therefore, his philosophy deals with acquiring authentic existence by turning to God and trying to reach him; which can be summarized as the exploration of the self. In order to discover itself the Self goes through three stages, the first of which is the Aesthetic Stage. At this stage the individual looks for sexual pleasures in life and loses himself in a mass of activities, avoiding making choices. Then comes the Ethical Stage when the individual comes to the realization that the life he has lead is illusory and empty. Therefore, he sees the necessity to make choices through which he becomes self-aware. Finally, the Religious State is the period when man realizes

that he can reach God through a “leap of faith”, which is commitment to religion in order to cope with the absurdity of the world.

Another important figure to be mentioned is Friedrich Nietzsche, a 19th century German philosopher whose famous statement “God is dead” caused him to be associated with Nihilism. With the death of God, the belief that life is without a purpose challenged fatalism and the Christian belief in the world beyond the physical one. Instead, Nietzsche proposed the *Übermensch*; that is, the Superhuman, which is a concept of an idealized man defining his own morality. Without God, man has become a self-determined being creating his own fate and taking the responsibility for his acts. Nietzsche suggested that unless man takes risks he fails to live; and he calls this “Will to Power”, the basic human instinct which urges him to survive contrary to Darwin’s theory of survival of man by developing a society based on sympathy.

The Czech-German philosopher Edmund Husserl, famous for his phenomenological approach, was interested in the conscious experience of the individual, rejecting the absoluteness of reason. He focused on the consciousness and its objects. He claimed that personal experience is a means through which the individual perceives the objects in the world, and considering how things are perceived by the people who experience them is necessary to really understand the object world and existence.

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, was also an important philosopher of the movement. Heidegger, practicing Phenomenology in his works, argued that an individual’s activities should be studied with their relation to things in the world; and he believed that philosophy should be a description of experience that is intentional, directed towards an object. This experience is constructed through *Dasein*, human existence. Heidegger based his doctrine on *Dasein*’s being which is temporal. Its temporality comes from the unity of its three parts. Existence, the possibilities of *Dasein* in the future; Thrownness, the limited nature of *Dasein* as existing in the world shaped by the past; and Fallenness, the existence of *Dasein* with other beings both *Dasein* and not *Dasein*; and its relation with them at present. The Heideggerian philosophy was very influential on Sartre’s ideas.

Albert Camus was a French-Algerian writer who was concerned mostly with the notion of the Absurd, which arose from the desire of man to find meaning and purpose in life but finding none. According to Camus, man is lost in a meaningless world, struggling in vain and he tends to escape this situation by losing himself in the routine of this exertion. Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" suggests that humans should accept the absurdity of their condition. Only when man becomes conscious of his futile struggle, does he become conscious of himself, an absurd hero.

Jean-Paul Sartre, who was a French Existentialist, adapted the ideas of different philosophers like Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger in his philosophical works. Sartre, too was preoccupied with the issue of man's existence in an absurd world. The defining characteristic of his philosophy is the tenet of "Existence precedes essence"; that is, self-determination. Sartre draws a line between humans and other things by claiming that the existence of the latter is pre-determined; a carpenter knows the essence of the table he is going to make before it exists; that is, the table has only one possibility of existence. On the other hand, man's existence is not pre-determined by a creator. It does not depend on God's will. Man himself is his own creation as a result of the choices he has made so he has a lot of possibilities of being; he is free. Besides man's faculty of self-constitution, the significance of personal experience and subjectivity construct the essence of Sartre's philosophy. According to him, reason is not absolute; therefore, knowledge that is supposed to be objective based on scientific facts is actually superficial. On the other hand, subjective knowledge is the most valuable, because it is achieved through personal experience.

Sartre, in his work *Being and Nothingness*, which was produced between 1937 and 1943, talks about human beings and the object world as it appears to their consciousness. He claims that there are mainly two different modes of existence which he names 'Being For-Itself' (Etre Pour-soi) and 'Being In-Itself' (Etre En-soi). The first one is the consciousness whereas the latter is the things which 'Being For-Itself' is conscious of; objects.

Consciousness cannot be explained in terms of medicine as it is not a neural activity in the brain for Sartre. Thus he was interested in what is involved in

existing consciously rather than the brain where consciousness dwells; “ Humans do not have minds in the way that they have kidneys, but they are minded in that they enjoy a particular kind of psychological interaction with their situation, an engagement with the world.” (McCulloch 4). Consciousness is not an isolated entity. It is to be conscious of something, an intentional object. Hence, the core of Sartre’s philosophy depends on the relation between the individual and the outside world, and the interdependence of the two; that is, the consciousness and its objects.

Although consciousness is always of the outside world, it is empty. There are neither representations of the intentional objects nor the self. Consciousness “constitutes itself outside in terms of the things as the negation of that thing.” (Sartre: 1996 123). Being conscious of something is only possible by being conscious of not being it. Therefore, consciousness is nothingness, there are not any objects in it. It is free from the world and itself, especially its past and future. This nihilation becomes the starting point of accessible possibilities for human life. This results in making choices over and over again. As Sartre states “The world is mine because it is haunted by possibilities and the consciousness of each of these is a possible self- consciousness which I am; it is these possibles as such which give the world its unity and its meaning as the world.” (Sartre: 1996 104). What a person is not is a possibility of what he can become.

Each possibility can be realised by the act of choosing. Human beings can choose their own nature, the world they live in, their characters, their acts and emotions. Man has the freedom of defining himself by the choices he makes. Whether to be a good person or a bad one is not predetermined. It is the result of our cumulative choices. However, freedom of choice turns out to be a burden as the individual is forced to take responsibility for his acts. Moreover, the task of decision making turns man into a lawmaker who has the responsibility of deciding for all mankind. Sartre exemplifies this responsibility in his essay *Existentialism is a Humanism*.

I decide to marry and to have children, even though this decision proceeds simply from my situation, from my passion or my desire, I am thereby committing not only myself, but humanity as a whole, to the practice of monogamy. I am thus responsible for myself and for all men, and I am creating a certain image of man as I would

have him to be. In fashioning myself I fashion man. (Sartre: 1989 350)

As the choices he makes affect all humanity, man has to bear the result of his choices. He can no longer put the blame on fate or God. He is in a state of forlornness; aware that God does not exist, and he is alone and abandoned.

Freedom acts mostly on the constitution of the self. Sartre claims that the self is outside the consciousness; an object in the world. Hence, it cannot be observed and perceived by introspection. The individual's knowledge of himself is as much as his knowledge of other people; "to take an external view of myself is necessarily to take a false perspective, to try to believe in a self which I have myself created." (Howells 3). It is frustrating to see that one can never know himself in a real sense. As consciousness is the nihilation of the things in the object world, it is the negation of the self as well. Being aware of this nihilation causes anguish which is the dejection resulting from the necessity of man's choosing for himself without having the knowledge if he has made the right choice. It is this consciousness of freedom that puts a burden on man's shoulders.

Man has the tendency to flee from this burden. While escaping the responsibility of choosing, which is an essential part of existential freedom, one falls into 'bad faith'; self-deception. He avoids the consequences of the choices he makes by committing himself to ignorance, pretending that there are not any choices to make, or emotional passions or religion, science or any other system in which the decisions are already made, and thus, he deceives himself and fails to be authentic. Living authentically comes as a result of not avoiding choice and anguish. Nevertheless, inauthenticity is inevitable when man fails to accept his situation, whatever that may be, as it is and take responsibility for his actions. As a consequence, he becomes alienated from himself, prolonging an existence dictated by the norms of the world.

Besides the self-estrangement, there is also alienation from others. Sartre explains this by mentioning a third mode of existence; 'Being for-Others' (Etre Pour-autrui) arising from the interactions of Being For-Itself with others of the same kind; the contact of consciousness with other consciousnesses. As each individual exists in a world already constituted by the other, his consciousness

becomes an object. The other's perception of the individual creates an illusory identity of him that he longs for: "I am put in the position of passing judgement on myself as an object...I recognize that I *am* as the other sees me." (Sartre: 1996 222). Only in the other's recognition, the Look, the self discovers the truth about itself. It is the other's reactions through which he has a knowledge of his facticity¹ which is his body, past, birth, class, character, origin and relation to the other. Being For-Others is what makes people to be viewed as objects. According to Sartre, shame is an aspect of this mode of existence because people can feel shame only when others regard them as shameful. Hence, what the other thinks has the power to shape one's self creation. Each possibility of becoming involves others; however, one cannot control the actions of the others and being aware of this fact causes despair.

Whether I try to be what he sees me as, or escape it, the picture is equally gloomy: my freedom and his are incompatible; symbolically I am bound to seek his death. Whether I love, hate, desire or feel indifference towards the other, his alienation and mine are inevitable and interdependent. (Howells 21)

It is thus inescapable to be alienated both from the self or from the other.

Although Sartre claims that man is the creation of the choices he makes, there are some aspects of existence not chosen by the individual, his facticity. Since consciousness is attained through the body, it is attached to the body and its facticity, which is both liberating, allowing freedom of choice, and limiting as it is finite. There is a contradiction between the facticity and the contingency of the consciousness. Human beings are seen as full of possibilities and this is what makes their existence directed into future; nevertheless, future brings men towards the inevitable death. On one hand, death puts an end to the faculties of man that free him from limitations but on the other hand, it completes, as Sartre calls, the 'fundamental project' of man's existence. Death is a concept that proves the absurdity of life; however, meaning can still be created by man's own decisions and interpretations. As a consequence, Sartre suggests that life should be accepted with all its absurdity but the inescapability of death should not let life yield to meaninglessness.

¹ Facticity: The concrete features of man which are pre-determined thus are not subject to change.

Sartre's philosophy is mainly about freedom and how it acts on the individual and his situation. Man only has his personal experience as a source of knowledge so he is limited to subjectivity. He is also equipped with the ability to make choices. With the freedom of choice man has the power of self-determination, constituting himself as well as having the responsibility of making the right choices both for himself and for the others. In his self creation he can either live authentically, accepting anguish, or live in bad faith and become inauthentic, lost in a system or belief. In any case, man, left alone, abandoned and bound to die, struggles to exist in an absurd world which he cannot understand.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS FACED IN EXISTENCE

3.1. Alienation

Existentialism sees man as a being struggling to exist in an absurd world, the irrationality of which arises from the idea that man has to take responsibility for his life, hence play God, but still he is bound to die. The world around him is so incomprehensible that he could neither be his authentic self nor be disguised as someone else. In their strivings to exist, both Kafka's Gregor Samsa in "The Metamorphosis" and Pinter's Gus in *The Dumb Waiter* face alienation; in the form of self-estrangement as well as alienation from the others, which gradually brings about their death, the final alienation.

According to the existentialist philosophy, self-estrangement is an outcome of fearing to make choices. Human beings are different from the natural objects in the sense that man has the power of self-determination which is frightening. In order to escape from the burden of responsibility, man reduces himself to the status of a natural object whose character is imposed on it from outside, and which exists as already determined. Man's tendency to be a natural object makes him leave his individuality behind and live in a routine, mechanical and conformist way as a part of a system. That is to say, he falls into Bad Faith. Kafka and Pinter in their portrayals of Gregor and Gus, put forward this self-estrangement of man trying to exist within a system that seems to provide him with security as well as control over the others so that he can overcome the problem of existence; however, it turns out that the system destroys the individual, and the result is loss of individuality and inauthenticity; in short, alienation from the self.

“The Metamorphosis”, a novella which Kafka published in 1915, has Gregor Samsa, a committed salesman, as the central figure. Having to provide for his family consisting of a father whose business has failed, a loving mother and a sister, Gregor works continuously until one morning he wakes up and finds himself “transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.” (Meta. 89). Being a commercial traveller, Gregor experiences the “trouble of constant travelling, of worrying about train connections, the bed and irregular meals, casual acquaintances that are always new and never become intimate friends.” (Meta. 90). He leads a mechanical, inauthentic life dedicated to work and family but at the same time, free from the responsibility of being an individual. He does what the system requires hence, he is alienated from himself. As Franz Kuna suggests, Gregor’s self-estrangement stems from “the ‘unnatural’ enslavement to an economic system.” (Kuna 63). Although Gregor is firmly tied to the system that he works for, he is not satisfied with the conditions of his job. If he didn’t have debts to pay, he would have quitted this exhausting job a long time ago. However, being a commercial traveller provides him with a sense of self. Gregor and his family lead a satisfying life owing to his hard work which he takes pride in. Gregor

had set to work with unusual ardor and almost overnight had become a commercial traveler instead of a little clerk, with of course much greater chances of earning money, and his success was immediately translated into good round coin which he could lay on the table for his amazed and happy family. These had been fine times, and they had never recurred, at least not with the same sense of glory. (Meta. 110).

As long as he earns money to pay for his family’s debts and expenses, he gets respect. Moreover, he experiences the satisfaction of making them happy, all of which contribute to his self-estrangement.

Similar to Gregor, Gus in *The Dumb Waiter* is a character who has fallen into Bad Faith, failed to be an individual with freedom of choice and thus, is alienated from himself. Gus, too, is a component of the system as he is a professional killer. He spends his time in a basement with his partner, Ben, waiting for orders to come. He lives in a mechanical way and he describes this routine by saying “you come into a place when it’s still dark, you come into a room you’ve never seen before, you sleep all day, you do your job, and then you go away in the

night again.” (*Dumb* 40). As an assassin Gus has taken many lives; has done what is expected from him. He is dedicated to his job that gives him importance and a sense of existence. Just as Gregor has money to control the lives of the others, Gus has a revolver. The profession that Gus has been performing for years without asking any questions provides him with a so-called Godlike control over other people’s lives; however, this will turn out to be an illusion since he is actually at the bottom of the system which uses him to have its dirty jobs done. Despite the power the job provides, Gus is not content with the conditions of it because it keeps him from the simple pleasures of life. The basement where he awaits does not have any windows which could function as a gateway to the outside world. Gus explains “ Well, I like to have a bit of a view, Ben. It whiles away the time...I like to get a look at the scenery. You never get the chance in this job.” (*Dumb* 40). In his mechanical world, the window seems to be a connection with the human side of Gus, just as it acts as a link between Gregor’s bugness and humanity. Before his metamorphosis, looking out of the window used to give Gregor a sense of freedom but now his sight is dim and the familiar street is “now quite beyond his range of vision” (*Meta.* 112). Both Gregor and Gus are cut off from their individuality, their humanity; therefore, they are self-estranged. They pursue a sense of self, some form of power to make them feel that they exist. Nevertheless, in their exertion to gain power, respectability and dignity they become mechanical beings. They have given up their social and private lives. Neither of them has any hobbies to put forward his individuality. As Gregor’s mother states:

The boy thinks about nothing but his work. It makes me almost cross the way he never goes out in the evenings; he’s been here the last eight days and has stayed at home every single evening. He just sits there quietly at the table reading a newspaper or looking through railway timetables. The only amusement he gets is doing fretwork. (*Meta.* 96)

What is suggested as a hobby by the mother is actually a onetime activity that Gregor has done out of an appeal for that specific picture of a lady in fur. Likewise, Gus does not have any interests to reveal his personality. When Gus starts complaining about the job, Ben claims that Gus is unhappy since he has nothing to occupy his time with.

Ben: You know what your trouble is?
Gus: What?
Ben: You haven't got any interests.
Gus: I've got interests.
Ben: What? Tell me one of your interests. *Pause.*
Gus: I've got interests. (*Dumb* 40)

By neglecting their personal interests and committing themselves to the system hoping to have a sense of self, Gregor and Gus are more and more self-alienated. As Sokel suggests "where (work) is imposed solely by economic necessity, the worker is not merely alienated from himself as an individual; he is estranged from his humanity." (217)

Kafka presents an extreme form of self alienation in Gregor's entrapment in a completely unfamiliar body. Greenberg suggests that Gregor's "metamorphosis is a judgement on himself by his defeated humanity. Gregor's humanity has been defeated in his private life as much as in his working life." (72). Gregor is so estranged from himself that his metamorphosis which is an unexpected, peculiar event does not create a shocking effect on him. In his huge insect body his only concern seems to be whether he would be able to go to work or not. What bothers him is his inability to control his new body, not the fact that it is not human. Gregor is so much preoccupied with the thought of his respectability and reputation, he fails to realize the situation he is in. He accepts it almost as normal. He has the illusion that if he could manage to command his body he would be able to go back to his normal routine.

Gus's self alienation may not appear as severe as Gregor's; however, the very nature of his occupation brings alienation as a conclusion. The way he describes one of the crime scenes which he has created with Ben by killing a girl, presents how detached he is from himself, his human qualities.

She wasn't much to look at, I know, but still. It was a mess though, wasn't it? What a mess. Honest, I can't remember a mess like that one. They don't seem to hold together like men, women. A looser texture, like. Didn't she spread, eh? She didn't half spread. (*Dumb* 52)

It is obvious from the description that the murder was committed violently. However, the reason why Gus recollects the event shows that he feels a kind of

disturbance, may be for the first time in his life, suggesting that he has started to become aware of the terrifying aspects of his job which gives him a sense of self. Just as Gregor accepts his insect body as normal, Gus once accepted killing people as normal, and that's where his self alienation lies.

Besides self-estrangement, alienation from the others is inescapable when characters step out of the system they work for. Just as long you serve the system, you are safe from being the other. Nevertheless, if you fall against the benefits of the system, you cannot escape a shift of place.

Gregor "reveals a mentality which is thoroughly conditioned by the norms and requirements of his work, by the need to be punctual and, above all, by his acute anxiety about living up to the expectation of his superiors." (Kuna 50). However, his superiors to whose service Gregor committed himself, turn their back on him. When Gregor does not show up at work, the bank sends the chief clerk to see what the problem is. Gregor is intimidated by the fact that the firm has sent the chief clerk, not anyone less important. He thinks to himself;

Were all employees in a body nothing but scoundrels, was there not among them one single loyal devoted man who, had he wasted only an hour or so of the firm's time in a morning, was so tormented by conscience as to be driven out of his mind and actually incapable of leaving his bed? Wouldn't it really have been sufficient to send an apprentice to inquire- if any inquiry were necessary at all...(Meta. 95)

Gregor starts to realize that after one little interruption in his service, the system is ready to dispose of him. Gregor wants to come out of his room and explain his situation but not being able to open the door of his room, Gregor is considered to be presenting a discourtesy to the chief clerk. The clerk's reaction to this is harsh. He accuses Gregor of not being a dependable man:

For some time past your work has been most unsatisfactory; this is not the season of the year for a business boom, of course, we admit that, but a season of the year for doing no business at all, that does not exist, Mr. Samsa, must not exist." (Meta. 97)

However, these accusations have no foundation. Gregor tries hard to convince the clerk that he can still catch the eight o'clock train to work and will be

coming to work in a short time. Gregor rejects the truth about his present condition. He is so delusional that he believes he can still function as a salesman. However, failing to accomplish his duties, Gregor becomes the other for the system. Having been rejected from the circle which he has been serving in commitment, he starts questioning the system and finds no appreciation in it.

In the same way, Gus starts to ask questions about the job, which shows that he is attempting to evade his role as a mechanical killer imposed on him, and his humane curiosity is taking the upper hand. Gus wonders about the routine he is in as well as the job, the next victim, the organization, the place. The dumb waiter descends and ascends alternately, bringing notes not having a rational content, envelopes filled with matches. While they are waiting for a new order through the dumb waiter to come, he also questions the purpose of all those cryptic messages sent in unusual ways, by unseen people, and also his position in the organization:

What's he playing all these games for?...We've been through our tests, haven't we? We got right through our tests, years ago, didn't we? We took them together, don't you remember, didn't we? We've proved ourselves before now, haven't we? We've always done our job. what's he doing all this for? What's the idea? (*Dumb* 68)

Gus starts to look for a meaning in the life he lives, and that's when he begins to feel that he is not appreciated, respected; not safe in spite of the fact that he has committed himself to this job, leaving his personality behind. It becomes clear that as long as Gregor and Gus do their duties without asking questions and have no other concerns indicating their personality, they can exist within the system, protected from experiencing otherness.

Gregor and Gus are equally aware of the hypocrisy of the system; therefore, they look for someone to hold on to. In Gregor's case, he turns to his family especially to his sister.; and for Gus this person appears to be Ben. However, both of them suffer the shock of realizing their otherness in the perspectives of their own people.

Gregor has given up his life, his individual self for his family. Although he and his parents were a bit distant, he used to be intimate with his sister and they

used to have long conversations about music. After the metamorphosis, the failure of communication Gregor experiences indicates the degree of alienation between him and his family. He loses his faculty of speech. The words he utters are not comprehensible to the others. The more Gregor feels the urge to express himself and his needs, the more the communication breaks down since they believe that what they hear cannot be human voice. Unfortunately, the alienation grows with the exposition of Gregor's new body. His father's reaction to this huge insect is to drive him back to his place when he comes out by "hissing and crying 'Shoo!' like a savage" (Meta. 104) and throwing apples. Grete seems to be the only person who cares about Gregor's needs. She feeds him and cleans his room. Gregor interprets Grete's behavior wrongly; "And with fine tact, knowing that Gregor wouldn't eat in her presence, she withdrew quickly and even turned the key, to let him understand that he could take his ease as much as he liked." (Meta. 108). Although Gregor interprets that Grete's behaviour stems from her affection to him, he will gradually and in anguish understand that her actions are filled with repulsion rather than affection. He contemplates thoughts of being close and getting her respect again by sending her to the Conservatorium as she is fond of music and plays the violin. He aims to take control once more; however, Grete has started "to consider herself an expert on Gregor's affairs" (Meta. 117) as she makes the decisions about him. Her final verdict makes everything clear for Gregor; "all I say is: we must try to get rid of it. We've tried to look after it and to put up with it as far as is humanly possible." (Meta. 133). Grete, a confidante for Gregor, has become a threat, and Gregor has become the other, the "it" for his family who does not understand him; a family who despises someone of their own blood. Moreover, Gregor happens to learn that he has always been the other in the family. As Greenberg states, "Concealment, mistrust, and denial mark the relation in the Samsa family." (74). Even though Gregor has kept only a little part of the money he earns to himself for the sake of paying his father's debts, he finds out that his father has saved a good sum of money with which Gregor could have paid back some more of the debts, and quit his job in a much shorter time. Realizing that his father has been "the non working beneficiary and exploiter of (his) labor" (Sokel 218), Gregor's alienation

grows, and he gradually becomes an object, “it” for the family. As a consequence, he and his family lock out each other.

In the same way, Gus, has been serving the system for years; however, he has recently come to a realization that the system does not have a gratitude for what he does. Thus, he turns to his partner, Ben. These two professional killers spend most of their time working and travelling together, and sleeping in the same room, commenting on newspaper headlines. Like Gregor and Grete, they used to be closer than they are now. They would go to cricket matches; however, things have begun to change:

Gus: (*excited*). We could go and watch the Villa.

Ben: They’re playing away.

Gus: No, are they? Caaarr! What a pity.

Ben: Anyway, there’s no time. We’ve got to get straight back.

Gus: Well, we have done in the past, haven’t we? For a bit of relaxation.

Ben: Things have tightened up, mate. They’ve tightened up. (*Dumb* 43)

Although Gus is probably unaware, he contributes to the change in their relation. Ben has the habit of reading crime stories in newspapers aloud, expecting a reaction from Gus, who, in return, always encourages Ben to read more. This is the role appointed to Gus in this partnership. However, Gus starts to question the news, the motives behind the crimes committed; “Gus is now overtly failing to fill his appointed role in his relation with Ben. Gus has stopped laughing; he has already allied himself with the wrong side.” (Raby 49). By refusing to side with and laugh along with Ben, he alienates himself from him, bringing on his own destruction. Despite presenting an attitude which places him on the opposite side of Ben, Gus continues to share his curiosity, his concerns and desires with Ben. Nevertheless, Ben is disturbed by the constant questions of his partner so he urges Gus to stop wondering and do his job. Moreover, he sometimes applies violence by hitting his shoulder or grabbing him by the throat. Ben’s attitude shows that if you choose to be outside the system by questioning its ways, you will become an object to it. So Gus becomes an object to his partner with whom he has been working for years. Ben locks him out by avoiding meaningful conversations with

him. Furthermore, Gus will become the target, the victim of Ben in the end. Unlike Gus, Ben will not fail to accomplish what is assigned to him.

Both Gregor and Gus experience the sense of being alienated from the people whom they have always considered to be intimate .

Kafka describes alienation as “something to be overcome, and not to be cherished. It is a symptom of the inhumanity of modern society that can be turned into an analytical tool for the discovery of genuine choices.” (Kuna 63). In other words, alienation could function as a gateway to the realization of individualism. Nonetheless, as soon as Gregor starts to shift from inauthenticity to authenticity pursuing his individual needs and desires and therefore, coming closer to himself by making choices about his life, he becomes more and more alienated from the others.

Gregor begins to get used to his condition as an insect. Moreover, he becomes aware of his needs which he has neglected so far so as to provide for his family. He discovers his individuality, his uniqueness. Gregor’s new body has different demands. Gregor does not feel the same desire for the things he used to love. After becoming an insect, he has started to grow a taste for stinking, rotten food whereas “the fresh food... had no charms for him, he could not even stand the smell of it and actually dragged away to some little distance the things he could eat.” (Meta. 108). While moving away from his former self, Gregor is discovering a new, authentic being. He tries to unite his human needs with his insect needs. He neither wants to be cut off completely from his humanity nor neglect his bugness. He discovers that he has the right to make his own decisions and his first decision is to take the control of his life back. When Grete decides to take away the furniture in his room so as to give him more space to crawl, Gregor realizes that he will lose everything he has, related to his human background so he makes up his mind to defend what is his. Suddenly, he catches the sight of the picture of the lady in fur. He crawls up to the wall and hides the picture under his huge body; “ Well, just let her try it! He clung to his picture and would not give it up. He would rather fly in Grete’s face.” (Meta. 119). However, Gregor’s determination makes matters worse. His strivings to be authentic by making his own choices are not welcomed by the

household. His mother faints witnessing the sight of him clinging on the wall, and when his father comes home he bombards him with apples, one of which gets stuck in Gregor's back, infecting the area. He receives hostility from the people he loves. What is more, Grete announces that the creature is not her brother any more.

As soon as Gus discovers that his seemingly safe existence in the system is an illusion, he starts to be aware of his individuality, in the same way Gregor does. Gus begins to be more concerned with his own needs. Some food and drink orders are delivered continuously through the dumb waiter or the speaking tube, so Ben and Gus send all they have upstairs. However, the "upstairs" is never pleased with what they send; the cake is stale, the chocolate is melted, the milk is sour. In the end, having craved for a cup of tea all day, Gus rebels when they receive an order of tea: "What about us? I'm thirsty too. I'm starving. And he wants a cup of tea... We send him up all we've got and he's not satisfied. No, honest, it's enough to make the cat laugh." (*Dumb* 63). While his individuality, his needs take over, he becomes the other, alienated from the rest. Both Gus and Gregor turn to themselves in search of an authentic self as a result of their alienation caused by their failure to answer the requirements of the system. However, this only aggravates the degree of their alienation.

Neither Gregor nor Gus manages to stabilize his existence because of failing either to exist in the system or to create an authentic self. Stuck in between, their existence becomes a curse in the end, so they invite their own destruction.

Gregor gives up in the end, filled with anger towards his family's negligence of him. The charwoman, an old but strong widow takes over Grete's responsibility of dealing with issues concerning Gregor. The family starts using his room as a store room, pushing things they do not use anymore into it. Gregor's territory, his privacy is violated. Moreover, Gregor is dying of a spiritual starvation, not having been able to reconcile his insect needs with his humanity. On hearing his sister playing the violin, he wonders " Was he an animal, that music had such an effect upon him? He felt as if the way were opening before him to the unknown nourishment he craved." (*Meta* 131). Finally, Gregor dies desperate by being an individual stuck in an insect body, despised and rejected by the others.

Hearing his sister's wish that he disappeared causes Gregor to surrender. According to Preece, "The promise of family respect and honour [Gregor] so desires in return for sacrificing his happiness will come to him only when he becomes a real sacrifice - after he is dead." (Preece 90). Gregor dies as an outcome of neither starvation nor the inflammation on his back. What kills him is the expectation of regaining dignity by making his family satisfied once more. He dies alone, having constantly experienced alienation one way or the other. When Gregor dies his body does not seem as disturbing as it has been. It is smaller now and also flat and dry. The charwoman takes care of it as if she were taking care of the garbage. Gregor has become a lifeless object to which his family members are indifferent.

Gus invites his destruction by questioning the routine he has always been in, brought in by the system, and while doing this he remains unaware of the coming danger. Ben is disturbed by Gus's persistent inquiries:

Ben: You never used to ask me so many damn questions. What's come over you?

Gus: No, I was just wondering.

Ben: Stop wondering. You've got a job to do. Why don't you just do it and shut up? (*Dumb* 49)

Behind Ben's inference there is a crucial concept of Existentialism; if you dedicate yourself to your job and do not question it, you have a seemingly safe existence; however, if you refuse to be a part of it, you will become an object to it, which is alienated and discriminated. Gus questions the essence of existence but

the act of questioning motives, consequences or the system as a whole invites catastrophe, until Gus is pushed into the abyss and destroyed, to fall in rank with legions of Kafkaesque, Hemingwayesque, and Camuesque heroes all of whom have with mixed feelings of apprehension and expectation for the unknown, asked the most dangerous question of all: who is upstairs? (Deleon 23).

The system's expectations and Gus's curiosity and his desire to fulfill his personal needs do not coincide. Like Gregor, Gus is also stuck in between, and gives up in the end. He stops his inquiries but he is also detached from the routine

he has been dwelling in. Ben goes back to his habit of reading stories but this time the content is empty and Gus barely shows an interest in it:

Ben: Have you ever heard such a thing?
Gus: (*dully*). Go on!
Ben: It's true.
Gus: Get away.
Ben: It's down here in black and white.
Gus: (*very low*). Is that a fact?
Ben: Can you imagine it.
Gus: It's unbelievable.
Ben: It's enough to make you puke, isn't it?
Gus: (*almost inaudible*). Incredible. (*Dumb 69*)

The loss of attention and feeling of defeat is apparent in the fading voice of Gus. He can neither be the killer obeying the orders without questioning them nor be the authentic person whose decisions reflect the responsibility and individuality of him. When in the last scene Gus goes to the lavatory to have a glass of water, he puts his gun away; that is, his individuality takes over his identity as a killer. As soon as he returns to the room, he sees Ben pointing his gun towards him. Gus is caught unprepared; he remains naked without his revolver, his only possible means of protection as well as his means of existence. Gus is reduced to the status of his victims he has killed; and thus has become an object. Ben murders him in apathy.

The deaths of both characters present their final alienation. Death “would not confer meaning to our lives; in fact, by depriving us of the dimension of the future it would deprive even our past and present of all meaning.” (Olson 206). When Gregor and Gus die, all the possibilities come to an end; lives have been lived and have become the past now. Their past selves are the other for them; therefore, they are alienated from both themselves and the others in their death.

In the portrayals of Gregor and Gus, one of the most crucial problems that man faces in his struggle to acquire a meaningful existence, which is alienation, is presented. Both characters go through the same stages and levels of estrangement. In the beginning, Gregor is so alienated from himself that he has metamorphosed into an insect, a totally strange being to himself. This new self, incapable of humanly functions, gradually arouses a sense of individuality in Gregor. He begins to question his existence and decides to take control of his life by choosing for

himself. However, being abandoned by the system as a result of failing to accomplish his duties both as an employee and a son, he becomes the other, and therefore, his self-estrangement changes into another form of alienation. Similarly, Gus, who is a dedicated professional, a cold blooded killer, is certain to have gained a secure, meaningful existence, a stable place in this world at first. He has fallen into Bad Faith, has been alienated from himself until one day he starts to question his position in the system and lets his individual concerns, his private life strip him off his mechanical role. On the road to authenticity, he finds himself on the opposite side, becoming a mere object that has no significance for the system. Consequently, Gregor and Gus can neither be inauthentic, in the safe hands of the system, nor authentic taking the responsibility of their actions, which brings about their final alienation, death. Gregor and Gus are so alienated from themselves as well as the others that, they are neither individuals nor the other; and when they die in the end, they become nothing.

3.2. Facticity

According to the Existentialist philosophy man is capable of choosing his own nature, creating himself. Unlike the objects of the world, he is not pre-determined; however, there are some aspects of man which are concrete and pre-determined; namely, his facticity. Man's freedom of choice is contradictory to his facticity that consists of things that cannot have been chosen by man; such as, one's date and place of birth, language, body, origin or the previous choices he made; that is, his past. On one hand, facticity limits freedom by restricting man's future possibilities, but on the other hand, it is a condition of freedom since the value one gives to his facticity is freely attributed by his very own self; to be precise, one can still choose the meaning of his facticity which, in return, can operate as a means of projecting oneself into the future. Even so, as far as the works of Kafka and Pinter are considered, it appears that facticity acts as a limitation on freedom. Both Gregor

Samsa in “The Metamorphosis” and Rebecca in *Ashes to Ashes*, a one-act play, experience anguish, restrained by their facticity.

Anguish caused by the facticity of body is what both Gregor and Rebecca experience. Their body is an obstacle before their freedom. They see themselves through the eyes of the other reflected in his attitudes and reactions against them. The Look, the way that the Other perceives the one, contributes to the constitution of one’s facticity by objectifying the person it sees. Therefore, body can either be an object of detestation or an object of desire.

Gregor, who goes through a metamorphosis and turns into a huge insect, suffers from the effects created by the facticity of his new body. Gregor’s body, consisting of an “armor-plated” hard back, a “domelike brown belly divided into stiff arched segments” (Meta. 89) and a number of thin legs waving helplessly, does not bother him until he is exposed before the others; his family members as well as strangers. He thinks to himself, on seeing his body, “If they were horrified then the responsibility was no longer his and he could stay quiet. But if they took it calmly, then he had no reason either to be upset, and could really get to the station for the eight o’clock train if he hurried.” (Meta. 98). Gregor is concerned about what the others will think about his new look; however, he does not realize how extremely he is different from the physical qualities of a human. After his metamorphosis it takes Gregor a long time to be able to control his body. When he manages to do so, he tries to get out of his room where he has been stuck because of his condition. Everybody outside the room awaits in curiosity as it is not a habit of Gregor’s to be late for work. The common opinion is that he is ill so everybody wants to help him desperately. His mother calls out to Grete to go for the doctor whereas his father urges the maids to get a locksmith. There is an atmosphere of panic. However, as soon as Gregor comes out of his room, all the concerns for him shift into fear, anger and disgust. The chief clerk sent by his employer to inquire why Gregor has failed to show up at work stands open mouthed and slowly backs away; and his mother falls on the floor, fainting whereas his father first gets angry and then weeps covering his eyes with his hands. Gregor’s body has now become a barrier in front of his freedom. He perceives himself as an object of disgust through

the others' looks: "Gregor did not go now into the living room, but leaned against the inside of the firmly shut wing of the door, so that only half of his body was visible and his head above it bending sideways to look at the others." (Meta 100). Seeing himself in The Look of the others he feels the urge to hide himself. He experiences shame. Moreover, Gregor's insect body will cause much more than shame. Having seen Gregor, the chief clerk runs away:

the suddenness with which he took his last step out of the living room would have made one believe he had burned the sole of his foot. Once in the hall he stretched his right arm before him toward the staircase, as if some supernatural power were waiting there to deliver him. (Meta. 102)

Thus, Gregor becomes aware of the fact that he has lost the chance of keeping his job. His new appearance also causes Gregor to receive hostility from his father, which will contribute to his death. His father drives him back to his room with a stick, applying force that injures the huge insect, and finally locks him up. Owing to his body, Gregor loses his freedom besides his job. His body becomes a disgusting object to be hidden.

The closest person to him, his sister Grete, who is now in charge of him, although a considerable time has passed since the metamorphosis cannot get used to his sight; and it is through the eyes of Grete, Gregor understands the degree of his hideousness. Gregor hides himself under the sofa before Grete comes to clean his room, but one day Grete enters the room earlier than usual and finds him looking out of the window, which makes her jump back in alarm and escape. He realizes that even a small part of his body that can be seen from under the sofa must be very disturbing for Grete so he decides to cover his body with a bed sheet, which takes him four hours to do. He thinks

Had she considered the sheet unnecessary, she would certainly have stripped it off the sofa again, for it was clear enough that this curtaining and confining of himself was not likely to conduce to Gregor's comfort, but she left it where it was, and Gregor even fancied that he caught a thankful glance from her eye. (Meta 114).

This labour of Gregor proves to him that his sight is extremely repulsive for Grete, so he imprisons himself to escape The Look.

In the course of time, everybody starts to get used to the situation. Gregor discovers his new body whereas the family begins a new life without the financial support of Gregor; the father is employed in a bank, the mother is working for an underwear firm and the sister has a job as a salesgirl. They have also hired rooms to three lodgers. The family seems to have forgotten that Gregor exists. Nobody except for the charwoman who is entrusted with looking after Gregor, sees him. As Gregor grows accustomed to his new body and its different functions like being able to climb walls, and as his family members begin to consider him non-existent, he starts to become indifferent to his appearance. One evening when Grete is playing the violin at the presence of the three lodgers, Gregor comes out of his room in a vain expectancy that Grete will understand his affection and appreciation for her. To his surprise for the first time he does not feel any consideration for what others think of him although he is more repulsive than before because of the dust and residues of food covering his body:

his indifference to everything was much too great for him to turn on his back and scrape himself clean on the carpet, as once he had done several times a day. And in spite of his condition, no shame deterred him from advancing a little over the spotless floor of the living room. (Meta. 130).

When Gregor unconcernedly makes his appearance on the scene, he once more invites The Look. This time he feels ashamed as a consequence of shaming his family in the presence of the lodgers. Therefore, Gregor's body has become an object to be destroyed. Grete announces that it is impossible to go on like this and declares they have to get rid of him. Gregor is stripped off his freedom due to his insect body. Gregor has not chosen to become an insect but in time he grows accustomed to himself; however, he becomes an object of disgust for the others and loses his freedom.

In *Ashes to Ashes*, Rebecca's body, unlike Gregor's, does not become an object of disgust; on the contrary, it becomes an object of an abusive desire driven by aggression. In the very beginning of the play Rebecca, a woman in her forties, tells Devlin, who is implied to be her husband, her recollections of a lover. She describes how this lover used to make her kiss his fist and the palm of his hand, and tells him how she obeyed willingly, asking him to put his hand round her

throat. She claims that he did all these acts out of adoration. Devlin inquires further into Rebecca's memories of this sexual abuse:

Devlin: And your body? Where did your body go?

Rebecca: My body went back, slowly but truly.

Devlin: So your legs were opening?

Rebecca: Yes. *Pause.* (*Ashes* 7)

Devlin talks about Rebecca's body as if it were separate from her, an individual object. Rebecca yields to the exploitations of the so-called lover, in whose looks as well as Devlin's, she experiences the transformation of her body into an object. Not protesting against these acts, Rebecca presents a masochistic attitude. She seems to have a desire "to be manipulated, looked at, and humiliated in order to experience the weight and solidity of being of which freedom necessarily robs us." (Olson 179). By letting her body become a toy in the hands of the other, Rebecca escapes the responsibility of making choices. Therefore, her body becomes a facticity preventing her from existing freely without the other.

However, on the other side of this masochistic attitude there lies sadism. Devlin is disturbed by the lover existing in Rebecca's memories, wondering if she has been unfaithful to him. He expresses his anxiety in these words; "Put yourself in my place. I'm compelled to ask you questions. There are so many things I don't know. I know nothing...about any of this. Nothing. I'm in the dark. I need light." (*Ashes* 11). The idea that another male has had control over Rebecca's body, which should have belonged only to him, makes Devlin feel insecure. In one occasion Rebecca tells him an incident about a pen she wrote a note with. As soon as she finishes writing she puts the pen down but it rolls off the table. Devlin uses the pen as a metaphor for Rebecca's body:

Rebecca: It rolled right off, onto the carpet. In front of my eyes.

Devlin: Good God.

Rebecca: This pen, this perfectly innocent pen.

Devlin: You can't know it was innocent.

Rebecca: Why not?

Devlin: Because you don't know where it had been. You don't know how many other hands have held it, how many other hands have written with it, what other people have been doing with it. You know nothing of its history. You know nothing of its parents'

history.

Rebecca: A pen has no parents. (*Ashes* 33)

Devlin sees Rebecca's body as a tool or object to be possessed. What he suggests here is that Rebecca is guilty of infidelity. He wants to take the upper hand by blaming her so as to overcome the threat created by the memories of the lover. Devlin is made to share his authority over Rebecca. Grebowicz suggests:

Men are understood only in their superior position to women, their institutional ownership of women's bodies...Rebecca must belong to Devlin in that he must enjoy exclusive sexual propriety over her body and be capable of protecting that propriety. Hence, his overdetermined interrogation. (Grebowicz 94)

Devlin wants to learn everything about this man; his name, his nationality; what is more, he asks Rebecca the reason why she has not confided in him, but she remains indifferent, lost in her memories. He attempts to take her out of the past where she is locked; "Now look, let's start again. We live here. You don't live in...Dorset...or *anywhere* else. You live here with me. This is our house. You have a very nice sister. She lives close to you. She has two lovely kids. You're their aunt. You like that." (*Ashes* 65). Devlin, by reminding her of her roles, tries to re-establish his authority. Nonetheless, towards the end of the play Rebecca loses herself more in her memories. The more she gets detached from the present, the more Devlin feels insignificant, so he tries to use her body to reduce her to the status of an object. By treating Rebecca exactly in the same way that her so-called lover has done, he associates himself with the sadistic lover. He urges her to kiss his fist and palm; forces her to ask him to put his hand round her throat; however, he lets go off her because this time she does not respond to these violent acts, which causes this sadist project to fail since "the sadist wants to capture the other's freedom, it is necessary that the victim voluntarily and of his own free will determine the moment of humiliation." (Olson 180). Although Rebecca's resistance to Devlin's violence could be interpreted as a discovery of her own power, the way she embraces silence in the end is not a triumph. Rebecca's body becomes neither an object of desire for Devlin nor a means through which she experiences a sense of self in the end. Due to the fact that she is totally lost in her memories; mentally

locked in, she does not feel the presence of the Other. Therefore, without a watcher her body does not become a facticity for her anymore.

In both works body becomes a limiting element in the lives of Gregor and Rebecca. They experience alienation and otherness as they are reduced to the status of an object because of their bodies which they have not been given the opportunity of choosing.

Language and race are another type of facticity of man, producing anguish. Gregor now belongs to the insect family, no more equipped with the faculty of speech whereas Rebecca represents the Jewish as there are references to the Holocaust in the play. Both characters are discriminated against due to their characteristics which are not in their control.

Gregor, being an insect, can no longer enter into the symbolic order; that is, human language. His capacity for language is limited to making only “a twittering squeak...which left the words in their clear shape only for the first moment and then rose up reverberating around them to destroy their sense” (Meta 91). Even though he retains a human consciousness, he is not capable of speaking a language comprehensible to man. In the beginning of the story, Gregor tries to explain his situation to the chief clerk waiting for an explanation outside his room; nevertheless, nobody is able to understand a word of what he has said. As his mother sends Grete for the doctor since she is convinced that he is ill, she draws the attention to how he speaks. The clerk comments that it is not human voice. Gregor’s words are “no more understandable, apparently, although they seemed clear enough to him, even clearer than before, perhaps because his ear had grown accustomed to the sound of them.” (Meta. 99). Although his ideas flow in a stream of consciousness, he cannot express them in terms of any human language. When there is a need for communicating with Gregor, the others do not use normal language as they are certain that he cannot understand them. His father makes hissing sounds when trying to drive Gregor back to his room while the charwoman talks to him as if she talked to a little pet; “Come along, then, you old dung beetle” (Meta. 127). Although Gregor is willing to express himself and in fact, he may, he is restricted by the others’ perception of communication. The loss of a

comprehensible language “has far-reaching consequences: it amounts to an unconscious renunciation of his participation in the symbolic order. The metamorphosis thus allows him to abandon a social identity.” (Preece 37), which in turn brings about his desertion. His separation from the human language becomes an obstacle before his freedom of expression. Moreover, the lack of human language causes Gregor’s presence, actions and intentions to be interpreted wrongly; and each attempt of Gregor to communicate results in violence. When Gregor’s mother sees him on the wall trying to protect the picture of the woman in fur from Grete’s invasion of his room, she faints. Gregor comes out of his room with the good intention of helping Grete take care of the mother. Then his father comes and he is told briefly about the event. The father gets angry “assuming that Gregor had been guilty of some violent act. Therefore, Gregor must now try to propitiate his father, since he had neither time nor means for an explanation.” (Meta. 120). The erroneous interpretations of his father will actually result in the death of Gregor. Without a means of communication accepted by the people around him; that is, a known human language, Gregor is discriminated against, feared and despised. The more the lack of communication grows, the more the others try to avoid him. Gregor’s incapability of expressing himself through a meaningful language limits his freedom, becomes a barrier before him hence language becomes his facticity.

In spite of the fact that, Rebecca is not faced with a language barrier, she is discriminated against just like Gregor as she is implied to be a Jew. “ In Hitler’s Germany the Jew’s ‘crime’ was literally being born and by (Nazi) definition their existence as such contaminated the state.” (Innes 332). Thus, Rebecca’s Jewishness as suggested in her memories has caused her to be faced with persecution. She has recollections of being taken to trains where babies are torn from “the arms of their screaming mothers.” (*Ashes* 27), and people walking into the sea conducted, obviously forced, by ‘guides’ and drowning. She also remembers going to a factory with her lover. This factory is actually a historical reference to a secret work camp called Dora, where rockets were built by slave workers supplied from the Buchenwald concentration camp. All the terrible experiences that Rebecca

remembers going through are a result of her Jewish origin which is her facticity limiting her freedom.

One's past self is a facticity, as well. As long as there is a unity of past with present and future, a person can make choices for future possibilities. The meaning of the past depends on the significance given to them; hence, one who is stuck in his past and cannot reflect it to present or future, cannot create for himself a new self either. Both Gregor and Rebecca have failed to reconcile their past with present.

After the metamorphosis, Gregor is stuck, existing in two situations: Gregor, the salesman and Gregor, the insect. And as the past fades away and the present emerges, Gregor fails to project himself to the future and become authentic; as a substitute, he tries to hold on to his past self as this new form terrorizes the present. "The existence of a nothingness between myself and my past, myself and my future...means that I live under the obligation of constantly remaking my Self." (Macann 120). However, Gregor is unable to restructure himself so his past becomes his facticity as he refuses to take into consideration the changes that occur. Moreover, he chooses to dwell in his past since "he feels guilty for having plunged his family into misfortune. He is ashamed. He seeks to hide, to make himself invisible." (Sokel 221). In the past Gregor has committed some acts which can be described as cowardly since he has avoided making choices by committing himself to his work, and by sacrificing himself for his family. He has lost his humanity in the system, by assuming his father's debt, long before his metamorphosis. Although he has always been a victim, he alters this reality by creating a version of his past self as a hero, a provider for the family. He is stuck in the past and thus he continues to remake the mistakes of his past self. After being exposed to normal people in the morning of his metamorphosis, Gregor still continues to contemplate thoughts of going back to his normal life; that is, his work mainly, despite the terrified departure of the chief clerk; "And without remembering that he was still unaware what powers of movement he possessed, without even remembering that his words in all possibility, indeed in all likelihood, would again be unintelligible" (Meta. 102), Gregor runs after the clerk, believing

that if the clerk can be persuaded that he can still work efficiently, his family's future will be safe. It is true that Gregor has some concerns about the future; nonetheless, his future designs exceed his capacity as an insect. In spite of the fact that neither the clerk nor the members of his own family can bear his existence, he has the delusion that he can provide for the family just as he used to do in the past.

Gregor cannot accept the fact that he has become a gigantic insect and he cannot carry out humanly functions to any further extent. He has lost his taste for normal food and he sleeps under the bed. He enjoys "hanging suspended from the ceiling" which he finds "much better than lying on the floor" (Meta. 115). Although he does not possess the ability to write, let alone hold a pen, he wants his writing table to stay in his room. His previous habits, his former routine are no longer available to him; nevertheless, he does not notice this fact. Instead of leaving the house and starting a new life, maybe in the wild, as his insect nature requires, Gregor chooses to stay where he is, stuck in his human past and unable to accept his new self. His attachment to his past self prevents him from embracing his new existence.

In Rebecca's case, past is a facticity preventing her from creating an authentic self. At the beginning of the play Rebecca reveals memories about a lover whose existence is full of inconsistencies. First, she tells Devlin that this lover of hers was a courier, later a guide in a travel agency. Then he becomes a respected person, maybe the owner of a factory in her memory, and finally, she remembers him as a man walking down the platform of the local railway station and tearing "all the babies from the arms of their screaming mothers." (*Ashes* 27). These variations in her recollection of the lover who is actually the personification of a Nazi soldier, present the idea that Rebecca tries to escape the horrifying aspects of the past by re-creating it in a more acceptable and appealing manner. Although the lover is abusive and brutal, she refuses to see it from that perspective. When Devlin proposes that the lover tried to murder her by strangling her, she objects to this idea:

Rebecca: No, no. He didn't try to murder me. He didn't want to murder me.

Devlin: He suffocated you and strangled you. As near as makes no difference. According to your account. Didn't he?

Rebecca: No, no. He felt compassion for me. He adored me. (*Ashes* 45)

Her own version of the past is not as terrifying as it actually is. Rebecca, by negating the past tries to escape it. According to Natanson,

This negation may be accomplished either by stopping at a certain period in one's life and refusing to take into consideration or even admit the changes that occur, or by clinging to the fact that changes are always taking place in one's situation, and refusing to be held accountable for what one has done in the past. (Natanson 82).

Rebecca lives in her own version of the past cut off from her present, especially from Devlin. Devlin suggests starting all over again; however, Rebecca states that it is impossible to begin anew once you finish. Devlin opposes this idea but in her mind Rebecca believes that they have ended again and again, stuck at a point in the past, recycling it. There is a gulf between the couple as a result of Rebecca's entrapment in the past, which is reflected in the singing sequence:

Rebecca: (*singing softly*) 'Ashes to ashes'-

Devlin: 'And dust to dust'-

Rebecca: 'If the women don't get you'-

Devlin: 'The liquor must.' *Pause*. I always knew you loved me.

Rebecca: Why?

Devlin: Because we like the same tunes. (*Ashes* 69)

The song has a different connotation for Rebecca. *Ashes* obviously stand for the crematoriums, referring to the Nazi genocide. According to Grimes, "the song 'Ashes to Ashes,' if woven into the texture of daily life by those who never stop contemplating the Holocaust, can be slight but effective memorials to its victims." (Grimes 82). Therefore, contrary to what Devlin claims, they are playing different tunes indeed. Rebecca cannot relate herself to the present, where Devlin actually is. Hence, communication between the two fails.

The fact that Rebecca fails to transcend herself into the future is a consequence of feeling empathy for the victims of history; she shares the guilt of witnessing the genocide. Rebecca cannot have experienced the Holocaust; in fact, she admits it when Devlin interrogates the authority that Rebecca believes herself

to have, to discuss atrocity. She says: "I have no such authority. Nothing has ever happened to me. Nothing has ever happened to any of my friends. I have never suffered. Nor have my friends." (*Ashes* 41). However, she suffers the pain the genocide has caused as real; "Through Rebecca, Pinter illustrates imagination as moral engagement...Rebecca transcends victimhood through empathizing with others." (Kremer 951). The feeling of guilt arises from Rebecca's being a passive spectator of her memories. She describes a scene in which a crowd of people walk into the sea, referring to a mass suicide or murder in Dorset, which she watched through the window of her house on "such a lovely day" (*Ashes* 49). Watching this terrible event from a distance, safe from the violence of it, and not doing anything make Rebecca a contributor to these crimes. She is conscious of her share of guilt, which she illustrates through her description of a condition she calls "mental elephantiasis", in which "you spill an ounce of gravy which surrounds you on all sides and you suffocate in a voluminous sea of gravy. It's terrible. But it's all your own fault. You brought it upon yourself. You are not the *victim* of it, you are the *cause* of it." (*Ashes* 51). Rebecca remains to be the by watcher until she reveals an event about a woman whose baby girl was taken away from her at the train station where most probably she was being sent to a concentration camp with all the other Jews. She suddenly changes the subject of the story from the third person 'she' into first person singular 'I' and starts telling this horrible recollection, her voice echoing:

I took my baby and wrapped it in my shawl... And made it into a bundle...And held it under my left arm...And I went through with my baby...But the baby cried out...And the man called me back...And said what do you have there...He stretched out his hand for the bundle...And I gave him the bundle...And that's the last time I held the bundle. (*Ashes* 77)

Rebecca, by giving the baby without resistance, enunciates her responsibility for the loss of her baby as well as the sufferings of the others. As mentioned above in the condition of mental elephantiasis, Rebecca becomes aware at this point that she is not the victim anymore; she is the cause of the pain "because it was you who spilt the gravy in the first place, it was you who handed over the bundle." (*Ashes* 51). However, immediately after admitting responsibility

for the past, she falls apart. She denies even having a baby. The responsibility is too much to carry for Rebecca so she falls silent in denial. She is unable to put up with the tormenting past; “through her final isolated silence, Pinter raises the possibility that imaginative, emotive knowledge of history may be so personally consuming as to end in stalemate and futility.” (Grimes 74). The past is a facticity for Rebecca as it prevents her from residing in the present freely; moreover, it keeps her from projecting herself to the future. In order to escape the pain, guilt and responsibility of the past, she alters it so that it could be much more acceptable.

In their struggle to exist, Gregor and Rebecca are deprived of their freedom hindered by their facticity. Although it is not possible for them to change their bodies, origin or pasts, it is possible to decide on the meaning that they want to attach to their facticity, which requires taking the responsibility of making choices. Neither Gregor nor Rebecca manages to fight back the burden of responsibility and thus, they allow their facticity to take over, imprison them in their bodies, memories. Unable to create an authentic self, these characters experience the anguish of exercising a limited form of freedom.

3.3. Menace

Man has always been in search of a secure way of existence which will help him overcome his thrown condition in a world beyond his knowledge. Straining to proceed on this rocky road, he comes across plenty of difficulties, detaining him from constructing his Self. One of these major problems is menace, coming from outside, created by unknown forces and threatening man; therefore, causing uncertainty and anxiety about his existence. Kafka’s novel The Trial and Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* demonstrate menace at work, slowly creeping into the ordinary lives of the main characters, intruding into their territories surrounded by walls vigilantly built to protect their vulnerable beings.

As Pinter suggests “Given a man in a room and he will sooner or later receive a visitor...A man in a room who receives a visit is likely to be illuminated or horrified by it.” (Pinter: 1998 14). Kafka’s Joseph K., the Junior Manager of a bank and the pianist, Stanley Webber in *The Birthday Party* receive the visitor Pinter mentions. However, they are horrified rather than illuminated. These two men are comparable with respect to the way they are exposed to menace and the reaction they display. In both works there is an “irruption of a bizarre and arbitrary violence into an ordinary life” (Williams 19).

The Trial begins with the arrest of Joseph K. in his room in the morning of his thirtieth birthday despite not being guilty of a crime. While expecting his landlady’s cook, Anna, to bring his breakfast, a man wearing a black suit decorated with “all sorts of pleats, pockets, buckles, and buttons” (Trial 4) comes in. In a few minutes, K. discovers the presence of another man sitting next door. The two men, Franz and Willem, who turn out to be K.’s warders, proclaim that he is under arrest but they do not tell the reason for it as they claim to be unauthorized. His arrest is presented as something trivial, and at first, he suspects everything to be a mere joke played on him by his colleagues. He decides “ if this was a comedy he would insist on playing it to the end.” (Trial 8). When later, the Inspector and three young men, who are clerks in K.’s bank join the two warders, he becomes aware that there is nothing funny about his situation. Although he is accused of something, he cannot remember committing any offense against the law that he can be charged with. He questions the authority that is carrying out these proceedings, and he wants to know who is behind his arrest; nevertheless, nobody is equipped with the knowledge to throw light on K.’s condition, implicating that there is a higher authority than these people who participate in his arrest. Not getting any satisfying answers to his questions, K. “was thrown into a certain agitation, and began to walk up and down- nobody hindered him- pushed back his cuffs, fingered his shirt-front, ruffled his hair, and as he passed the three young men said: ‘This is sheer nonsense!’” (Trial 17). However, his discomfort lasts only until he is informed that being under arrest does not have to keep him from going to work or leading his normal life, which makes K. think that his arrest is not as terrible as it

seems. As a result, K. goes back to his normal routine except for having to show up at the court from time to time.

Similarly, Stanley's life is intruded into by two strangers one day. Stanley lives in a lodging house owned by a couple, Pete and Meg Boles. He is a pianist but he does not perform anywhere. Moreover, the idea suggested in the beginning of the play is that he does not step out of the house. Meg and Lulu, an acquaintance, insist on his going out with them but he refuses their offer:

Lulu: Don't you ever go out?...I mean, what do you do, just sit around the house like this all day long?...Why don't you wash? You look terrible...Come out and get a bit of air. You depress me looking like that.

Stanley: Air? Oh. I don't know about that. (*Birthday* 15-16)

This conversation describes the monotonous life Stanley lives, deprived of any meaningful aim. His physical appearance contributes to the portrayal of this miserable man, unshaven, sloppy. Stanley's dull life occasionally takes on a lively note by his comic relation with Meg.

Stanley's intruders, Goldberg and McCann are the representatives of two minority groups, Jews and Irish Catholics, who are strictly attached to traditions. As Pinter states in his letter to Peter Wood, the director of *The Birthday Party*, they are the "dying, rotting, scabrous, the decayed spiders, the flower of our society. They know their way around. Our mentors, our ancestry." (Pinter: 1998 10). Just like the warders who arrest K. without a specific charge, Goldberg and McCann are the representatives of a greater authority that is after Stanley.

Both K. and Stanley have been leading ordinary lives providing them with a seemingly secure existence. However, "The world is malevolent. One can rely upon nothing. What is apparently secure is not secure." (Dukore 25). Thinking that they are standing on solid ground, K. and Stanley underestimate the significance of the situation they are in, and they enter into a power struggle with the intruders. They disregard the fact that the people they struggle against are the smallest part of the iceberg. Just for a little while K. and Stanley believe themselves to be in charge, being under the illusion that they can take the upper hand, and sit on the upper part of the seesaw.

After the arrest, K. is released to go to work and his normal life. One day he receives a telephone call informing him that he is required to attend a short inquiry about his case the following Sunday morning, as it is the most convenient day of the week for K. The Court of Inquiry where the trial will take place is on Juliusstrasse, a suburban street which K. is unfamiliar with. K. spends more time than he has intended to do in this district inhabited mostly by poor people. One hour and fifteen minutes later than the specified time, K. arrives at the court, which is actually a small room on the fifth floor of a tenement, filled with men dressed in black Sunday coats. The Examining Magistrate, who is a fat little man draws the attention to the fact that K. is late. K. confidently states "Whether I am late or not, I am here now." (Trial 49). The crowd responds to this statement with a loud applause, which makes him believe that "these people are easy to win over." (Trial 49). The reaction of the crowd causes K. to become more self-confident. Therefore, when the interrogation starts K. seemingly gets the upper hand against the Magistrate, with whom he confuses the authority threatening him, thinking that his status as the chief clerk of a bank provides him with power. He stands against the Examining Magistrate and the authority he represents. He makes a speech about the absurdity and unlawfulness of his arrest, this trial, accompanied by making mockery of the Magistrate and some gestures like striking the table with his fist. Moreover, he gets support from the crowd when he states that his arrest is of no great importance since he does not take it seriously, but "it is representative of a misguided policy which is being directed against many other people as well." (Trial 53) and he claims to be the spokesperson of these people. He continues his speech by asserting the presence of an organization behind all these nonsensical actions:

An organization which...employs corrupt warders, oafish Inspectors, and Examining Magistrates of whom the best can be said is that they recognize their own limitations. And the significance of this organization, gentlemen? It consists in this, that innocent people are accused of guilt, and senseless proceedings are put in motion against them, mostly without effect, it is true, as in my own case." (Trial 57).

Although K. seems to be dominating the inquiry, making the Magistrate feel embarrassed from time to time, he wins no obvious victory at the end of the

interrogation. He realizes that the crowd which seemed to be on his side, shouting “Bravo!” during his speech, consists of officials, agents of the organization as they all wear the same badges on the collars of their coats. The Magistrate concludes the interrogation by saying that K. may not be aware of his situation, and adds: “today you have flung away with your own hand all the advantages which an interrogation invariably confers on an accused man.” (Trial 60). K. does not take this remark seriously and does not realize that he cannot fight back this menace surrounding him.

Just like Joseph K., Stanley struggles against the force menacing him. In a summer morning, Goldberg and McCann arrive at the lodging house where Stanley lives. They are dressed in black suits and carry two suitcases and a brief-case. From the moment they knock at the front door, Stanley secretly watches the two men come in and take seats, and he flees unobtrusively, which indicates that he is somehow uneasy. When Meg enters the living room she sees the two strangers who would like to take a room. Goldberg, extremely kind, asks questions about the lodgers, and collects information about Stanley. Meg provides them with information more than they would like to know. She tells them his name, his job and also informs them that ‘today’ is his birthday, which is totally Meg’s own perception. This gives Goldberg the idea to celebrate it with a birthday party. Meg, thrilled with the idea, takes them to their room. After making sure there is nobody in the living room, Stanley comes in, and Meg joins him a moment later. Stanley anxiously demands to know who the two men are, and upon hearing the name Goldberg, he falls silent. The implications of Stanley’s future violence are presented when Meg hands him a boy’s drum as a birthday present at the end of the first act. Stanley puts the drum around his neck and marches, beating it. As the stage directions state “ the beat becomes erratic and uncontrolled...his face and the drumbeat now savage and possessed.” (*Birthday* 23). The drum can be considered as the representation of the primitive instincts of man, survival. When Stanley meets Goldberg and McCann, who are going to “bring him out of himself” (*Birthday* 22) and turn him into a new man, he enters into a power struggle with them. First, he encounters McCann, who is implied to have less authority than

Goldberg. Stanley, who has not taken a step out of the house for ages, suddenly changes his attitude and decides to go out but McCann intercepts his way:

McCann: Were you going out?

Stanley: Yes.

McCann: On your birthday?

Stanley: Why not?...I am going to celebrate quietly on my own.

McCann: That's a shame.

Stanley: Well if you'd move out of my way... (*Birthday* 26-27)

Not being allowed to go out, Stanley drops the idea. Next, he tries to convince him that he is not the person they are looking for, and tells him about his plans to go back home, settle down; however, McCann does not show the slightest interest in his words, which builds up a tension between the two. They start to jostle each other. Finally, as a last resort, Stanley invites him out for a drink, trying to bribe him or to come to good terms with his oppressor. When Goldberg makes an entrance on the scene, Stanley tries to get the upper hand so he threatens the two men. He displays a patronizing attitude towards them:

Stanley: I'm afraid there's been a mistake. We're booked out. Your room is taken. Mrs. Boles forgot to tell you. You'll have to find somewhere else.

Goldberg: Are you the manager here?

Stanley: That's right.

Goldberg: Is it a good game?

Stanley: I run the house. I'm afraid you and your friend will have to find other accommodation.

Goldberg: Oh, I forgot, I must congratulate you on your birthday.(He offers his hand) Congratulations.

Stanley: (ignoring Goldberg's hand) Perhaps you're deaf.
(*Birthday* 32)

Goldberg calls Stanley's bluff in claiming power, and he ignores him; what is more, he does not recognize him as a threat. Nonetheless, Stanley is not ready to give up yet as seen in the scene in which the two sides of the struggle urge each other to sit down.

McCann: Sit down.

Stanley: Why?

McCann: You'd be more comfortable.
Stanley: So would you.
McCann: All right. If you will I will.
Stanley: You first. (McCann slowly sits R of the table)
McCann: Well?
Stanley: (Moving above the table) Right. Now you've both had a rest you can get out. (*Birthday* 34)

Obviously, sitting down represents obedience and submission. Refusing to do what he is told, Stanley is seen on the upper side of the seesaw for the last time. However, he is delusional about being triumphant.

Both in the case of Joseph K. and Stanley, their decline in the war against menace begins, following the slight victory over the organization. The more they try to fight back the terrorizing effects of the outside menace, the more they get stuck in the mud.

After his first interrogation, K.'s life starts to change. In his workplace, he witnesses how the two warders are being whipped in a store room as a result of the complaints he has made to the Magistrate about how they took his belongings and ate his breakfast during his arrest. One of the warders, Willem explains "We are only being punished because you accused us; if you hadn't, nothing would have happened, not even if they had discovered what we did." (Trial 105). Feeling responsible for the condition of these two men, K. tries to convince the flogger that the men do not have to be whipped; nevertheless, he cannot stop him even though he offers a bribe. This primitive and violent way of punishment makes him very uncomfortable, as it gives a clue about the irrationality of the way the system works. He comes to a conclusion that it is impossible to deal with everything happening to him alone so he begins to search for allies.

In the course of his trial, K. encounters people, especially women, whom he thinks could be of some help to slip out of his situation. For instance, K. is visited by his uncle who feels concerned about his nephew. He tries to convince K. that he will be ruined if he does not pull himself together and accuses him of being indifferent. K. stands up against his uncle saying "it's no use getting excited, it's as useless on your part as it would be on mine. No case is won by getting excited, you might let my practical experience count for something, look how I respect yours, as

I have always done, even when you astonish me.” (Trial 121). Unfortunately, K. still does not have a clear view of the seriousness of his case. However, he agrees to resign himself to his uncle’s judgment; so K. is taken to a lawyer, Huld, a friend of his uncle, to consult. Huld is with the Chief Clerk of the Court at that time. Although the reason why they come together with these men is to seek a solution to K.’s problem, he is absent in the meeting, having a sexual intercourse with Huld’s seductive nurse, Leni. This incident causes him to be more and more distracted from his case.

K. continues to search for aid that may come from minor characters. He is advised by a manufacturer, an important client of K., to visit a painter, Titorelli, who draws the portraits of the magistrates of the court. K. gets the impression that Titorelli has a certain influence on these magistrates. Unable to understand that insignificant people like Titorelli are mere servants of the system, K. decides to write a letter to him and invite him to the bank so as to discuss his situation. Fortunately, he is warned by the manufacturer about the dangers of such an action. K. “was horrified at his own lack of sense...Had he really lost his powers of judgment to that extent already?” (Trial 172). K.’s confidence in himself starts to wear off as his quest for salvation has been poorly conducted. Moreover, he loses concentration in his work, which becomes insufficient and causes him to lose his prestige in the bank and to be humiliated by his co-workers. When the manufacturer leaves, K. decides to leave work to see Titorelli immediately. While getting prepared to go out, he notices three men waiting for him. He apologizes to them for not being able to help as he has an urgent business to attend. The Assistant Manager, who waits for an opportunity to stalemate K., does not miss the chance and takes K.’s clients away from him. “While with the vaguest and – he could not but admit it – the faintest of hopes, he was rushing away to see an unknown painter, his prestige in the Bank was suffering irreparable injury.” (Trial 175). Searching for allies here and there, he goes to places he has never been before or does things which do not belong to his normal routine. A year after his arrest it is impossible to find any slight reminiscence of the attitude K. presented in the beginning. He starts to lose his knowledge of place, time and reality. As Kundert-Gibbs states in his article; “the one who knows where he is has the

power...K. wants to return to the normal world where he had knowledge and power where he was in control.” (158). However, he fails to gain the control, and thus, becomes more and more vulnerable to menace.

Likewise, Stanley does not return home with a victory. Menace starts to overcome him in the second act. During the party thrown to celebrate his birthday, Goldberg and McCann start to ask questions one after another, but do not wait for the answers. As Dukore points out; “Stanley hardly has an opportunity to get a word in edgeways.” (32). He faces too many charges to deal with. His interrogators accuse him of betraying the organization, of throttling his wife, but at the same time, of not getting married, of contaminating womankind, of picking his nose, and many other things ranging from very serious to insignificant. These accusations, conflicting within themselves, do not make any sense, but the impact they create on Stanley is big. At the end of the interrogation, Stanley is left speechless for a while. The fact that Goldberg and McCann convey this questioning just before Stanley’s birthday is significant as “Birthday not only means the anniversary of one’s birth, it also means the day of one’s birth, and in *The Birthday Party* the celebration of the former helps to create the latter.” (Dukore 29). The forced birthday will bring the birth of a new Stanley. An important point here is that, although Stanley states that his birthday is not until next month, he does not reject the idea that it is ‘today’ completely. As a result, Goldberg and McCann use the party planned for Stanley as a means to threaten him.

During the party, Stanley’s usual self has completely worn off. He exhausts himself while trying to overcome the outside menace. At a point of the celebrations, a game called Blind Man’s Buff is played. When it is Stanley’s turn, they blindfold him; moreover, McCann breaks his glasses. Just before the party, Stanley’s faculty of speech was destroyed, now his sight is taken from him. Following this McCann puts the drum, the present from Meg, in front of Stanley so that he will fall down and in this way McCann hinders his ability to walk. As a consequence, Stanley is drained; he is not the same any more. Following that scene, suddenly the lights go off. In the light of the torch, Stanley is seen strangling Meg and later bending over Lulu, lying on the table spread-eagled. By applying physical and sexual violence over the two women, Stanley unconsciously tries to

regain power; however, his efforts make him only powerless like a wild animal struggling to get out of a decoy. He transforms from the pianist into the drummer, from the civilized to the primitive. He loses his identity. In the final act, Goldberg and McCann attack Stanley verbally:

Goldberg: We'll make a man of you.
McCann: And a woman.
Goldberg: You'll be re-oriented
McCann: You'll be rich.
Goldberg: You'll be adjusted.
McCann: You'll be our pride and joy. (*Birthday* 66)

The sequence goes on with numerous impositions. Meanwhile Stanley goes catatonic. On being asked to express his opinion, Stanley begins to tremble. He makes an attempt to speak; however, he can only make “ Uh-gug-ug-gug-eeehhh-gag” or “Caah-caahh” (*Birthday* 67) sounds like a baby. He is now ready to be taken away, ripped off his identity by the mysterious authority.

Joseph K. and Stanley become the victims of a force they are incapable of understanding. Both of them, humiliated and reduced to the level of insignificant objects, lose the battle with the people intruding into their lives. They fail to see that the people they enter into a power struggle with so as to overcome the menace, are the servants of the organization behind the menace. Although the intruders apply force on K. and Stanley, they do not possess ultimate power. So where this menace comes from is ambiguous.

In The Trial, K. is required to show the cultural places in town to an Italian customer who is of great importance to the bank. He is supposed to meet him at the cathedral. When he arrives there, instead of the customer a priest who works for the court calls out to him, and tells him a story which actually presents the condition of K., and gives an insight to the ways of menace surrounding him. According to the story a doorkeeper stands before the door of the Law and a supplicant from the country comes and “begs for admittance to the Law.” (Trial 267). However, the doorkeeper tells him that he cannot admit the man at present, and steps aside leaving the entrance free. On seeing that the supplicant tries to pass through the door, he states; “If you are so strongly tempted, try to get in without my permission. But note that I am powerful. And I am only the lowest doorkeeper.” (Trial 267). The supplicant takes a second look at the man and

decides to wait until he is permitted to enter. Many times he tries to bribe the doorkeeper. He wastes away day by day, striving to convince the man. He even “begs the very fleas (in the doorkeeper’s fur) to help him and to persuade the doorkeeper to change his mind.” (Trial 268). He waits for years until he comes to the point of death. Before he dies he asks if everyone wants admittance to the Law, why he has not seen anybody else attempting to enter. The doorkeeper’s answer is horrifying; “No one but you could gain admittance through this door, since this door was intended for you. I am now going to shut it.” (Trial 269). The doorkeeper, who stands at the door of the court is a part of the high law, and has a power on the supplicant. On the other hand, he is one of the lowest of the low servants. The doorkeeper is someone “who both points the way to transcendence and guards the way” (Kundert-Gibbs 153). At first, K. interprets the story as the doorkeeper’s abuse of power; the priest points out that the doorkeeper might as well be the deluded person. As the door is intended for the supplicant, the doorkeeper has to wait for many years only for this man. The supplicant waits there “of his own free will...But the doorkeeper is bound to his post by his very office, he does not dare to go out in the country.” (Trial 274). Therefore, the doorkeeper is not the one who has the ultimate power, just like K.’s warders and all the other people he fights against or seeks the help of. The source of the menace is still unclear as K. does not dare to pass the doorkeeper but only encounters insignificant people with their insignificant power.

The source of menace is also ambiguous in *The Birthday Party*. Although the intruders seem to be the powerful party, it is implied they are the simple servants of a greater authority, just as all the people that K. pursues are the lowest people in the system. It is clearly stated in the third act of the play, when Petey asks how Stanley is, after his victimization. The answer comes from Goldberg; “I’m not really qualified to say, Mr. Boles. I mean, I haven’t got the qualifications.” (*Birthday* 56). This shows that Goldberg and McCann are attached to a higher authority. Further proof of the fact that they are not individuals with authenticity but products of traditionalism, religion, politics emerging from a higher authority comes when Goldberg explains; “I’ve always been as fit as a fiddle. All my life I’ve said the same. Play up, play up, and play the game. Honour

thy father and thy mother. All along the line. Follow the line, the line, McCann, and you can't go wrong. What do you think, I'm a self-made man?" (*Birthday* 61). As the intruders of Stanley admit that they are the robots of the system, the origin of menace remains a mystery.

The question in both works is how the lowest servants of the system can become dominant, gaining superiority over K. and Stanley; in short, why these two men are menaced. The answer is, in their struggle against the menace, they are not certain of their identities, thus, they are self-estranged, unable to create an authentic existence. As a result, they build up their own mazes, in which they are lost. K. and Stanley are responsible for their destructions. K. is killed on his thirty-first birthday whereas Stanley is murdered spiritually on his forced birthday. In both cases, they are defeated. When K.'s murderers arrive at his place in "frock coats, pallid and plump, with top hats" (Trial 279), he understands that his existence has come to an end. He realizes the vainness of resistance; "There would be nothing heroic in it were he to resist, to make difficulties for his companions, to snatch at last appearance of life by struggling." (Trial 282). K. lets the men take him wherever they want. He runs towards his death, almost embracing it. When the three come to a deserted place out of the town, the two men take off K.'s clothes and lay him on the ground. One of them takes out a butcher's knife, and kill K. like an animal which is being sacrificed for the gods.

K. is depicted as a person who is alienated from himself and is to be reconditioned. Just like the supplicant in the priest's story waiting to be admitted to Law, K. can no longer exist independently of his case, which has become his life. The supplicant and K. pursue only one goal, and put everything they got into it, pushing aside all the other future possibilities and choices in life. According to Kraft; "The task imposed on K. was to find the way back to that (alienated) self to recognize it, and to realize it." (43). However, despite the fact that K. only has to look into himself, he seeks help from outside, from insignificant people. K. fails to understand and protect his own world, and he gives more authority to those small people by valuing their judgment more than his own, becoming susceptible to menace.

Likewise, after his birthday party Stanley is readjusted by Goldberg and McCann. He comes onto the stage dressed in a black suit with a shaven face whereas he was in pyjamas and unshaved before. He is speechless and 'blind' holding his broken glasses in his hand. According to Pinter, what makes Stanley fail in his struggle against menace is that he is not aware of his own identity; therefore, he cannot express who he is:

Stanley cannot perceive his only valid justification - which is, he is what he is - therefore he certainly can never be articulate about it. He knows only to attempt to justify himself by dream, by pretence and by bluff, through fright. If he had cottoned on to the fact that he need only admit to himself what he actually is and is not-then Goldberg and McCann would not have paid their visit, or if they had, the same course of events would have been by no means assured. (Pinter:1998 10)

Stanley lives away from his true self, and as a result, he loses his struggle against Goldberg and McCann. He is formatted like a computer, and made ready for restructuring. K. pays the price of ignoring his real identity by being condemned to death while Stanley is emptied and rearranged according to the norms of the threatening force. As Pinter states "the intention of the visitor is to strip the man of his delusion, and if this is successful, he may then clothe the man in one of his own." (14).

In both The Trial and *The Birthday Party*, the main characters are subject to a menace the source of which is ambiguous. Joseph K. and Stanley Webber struggle against this menace without realizing the size of it, thinking that they are dealing only with people. At first, they seem to have control over the others. They also appear to be unshaken by the counter strikes coming from them. However, in the course of these two works, the main characters start to slide down to the lower side of the power seesaw. Both K. and Stanley fail to see that what brings their destruction is not the threat coming from the intruders, instead, it is their self-alienation, their inability to look inside themselves. They have been in a self-destructive mode the whole time, and their very own selves are responsible for the intrusion as they let the threat in their lives and the menace "drag (them) back to a wife, a shop, stripped trousers and black jacket, duty, respectability, death."

(Williams 21). In the end K. and Stanley are deserted bringing menace on themselves.

CHAPTER IV

RESPONSES TO EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS

4. 1. Domination

4.1.1. Altering Reality

In their struggle to dominate the others, the characters created by Kafka and Pinter use different methods, one of which is to alter reality. According to Sartre, there are two types of people; the ones who lead a real life and the others choosing to lead an imaginary life. He claims that by choosing the imaginary “one not only flees from the content of the real (poverty, disappointed love, business failure, etc.), one flees the very form of the real, its character of presence, the type of reaction that it demands of us, the subordination of our conduct to the object” (Sartre: 2004 147). He sees imagination as a fundamental aspect of changing the real world. One can believe in the world he imagines; moreover, he may attempt to make the others believe in his version of reality, and by doing so he thinks that he has control over them. The Kafkaesque and Pinteresque characters try to dominate the others by presenting their version of truth which is imaginary; thus, ambiguous. This mentally constructed reality provides the characters with control, as the one who knows can rule. On the other hand, the one who is left in a state of doubt is powerless.

In Kafka’s story, “The Judgment” there is a struggle for domination by altering reality so as to become noteworthy and powerful. The story is about Georg Bendemann, a young merchant who dwells in his own small world he has created in his mind. After losing his mother two years before, Georg begins to reside in the same house with his father who has his own business that improved unexpectedly

during the last two years. Although they live and work together, they have little communication. Georg is engaged to the daughter of a wealthy family, Fraulein Frieda Brandenfeld, with whom he usually discusses his friend in Russia. This friend is said to have run away to St. Petersburg, discontent with his prospects in his homeland. Georg attempts to dominate his friend and at the same time control his fiancée through the image of his friend.

According to Georg, his friend wears “himself out to no purpose” and he depicts him as a diseased, anti-social man; “his skin was growing so yellow as to indicate some latent disease. By his own account he had no regular connection with the colony of his fellow countrymen out there and almost no social intercourse with Russian families.” (Judge. 77). George does not approve of his friend’s lifestyle so he draws a line between himself and his friend. They keep in touch by writing letters to each other; however, Georg keeps the changes and improvements in his life behind a veil of secrecy and lets his friend know only the things he wishes to be known, thinking “What could one write to such a man, who had obviously run off the rails, a man one could be sorry for but could not help.” (Judge 77). Georg disparages his friend and by doing so he gets a feeling of dominance over him. Moreover, George tries to secure the border he has drawn between himself and the friend by keeping him away from his life. For example, he does not inform his mate about how his business has improved or his engagement to Frieda. He only mentions some insignificant topics or mere gossip in his letters as he believes that “one could not send him any real news such as could frankly be told to the most distant acquaintance.” (Judge 78). Georg’s attitude towards his friend seems ironically hostile. Despite the fact that he appears to pity him, he does not consider his friend so close as to tell him real news. When Georg’s fiancée asks him the reason why he does not invite his friend to their wedding, he replies; “He would probably come, at least I think so, but he would be hurt, perhaps he would envy me and certainly he’d be discontented and without being able to do anything about his discontent he’d have to go away again alone.” (Judge 79). George seems to be doing this out of feeling sorry for his friend; nonetheless, his real intention seems to be to ensure his story; that is, his side of the reality about this friend in Russia. The way he keeps his friend at a distance arouses ambiguity about their relation which

might be Georg's creation, something to make him feel confident by showing how thoughtful, strong and reasonable he is, especially when compared to his friend. It is not clear in the story whether this friend is really the person implied by Georg. Through the image of his friend, which Georg depicts as inferior to him, he tries to create a self appealing both to himself and his fiancée. He does not seem to want her to meet this friend because he does not wish her to have her own perception of his friend who, in reality, may be successful, handsome or sociable unlike the image Georg presents. He would rather tell his fiancée what he wants her to know. In this way he tries to control his fiancée's thoughts.

A similar case of changing reality in order to dominate the others is observed in Pinter's *Old Times*, which as Cahn states "is the dramatization of a labyrinthine system of memory images, some of which we understand to be factual, but many others of which may be created or purposefully distorted so that the speaker can assert his or her authority over the present." (Cahn 103).

The play begins with a scene, in which a married couple, Deeley and Kate talk about an old friend of Kate's who is coming over. Deeley is surprised at the fact that Kate has never mentioned Anna, whom she shared her room with twenty years ago. He wants to learn as much as possible about this friend. He asks about her appearance, eating habits, marital status and the level of intimacy between the two women. With the arrival of Anna a struggle begins between Deeley and Anna, both to overpower each other and to dominate Kate.

The existence of this mysterious friend gives rise to a kind of insecurity in Deeley because the fact that Kate has not told him anything about Anna creates an ambiguity about whom Kate really is. Thus, Deeley's role as a husband and his position in Kate's life are threatened. On the other hand, Anna, searching for comfort in the reminiscences of an old friendship is faced with a strong rival. Both the friend and the husband try to overcome the fear of being less important than the other. Therefore, the battle to win Kate over starts between the two who gird themselves with their own versions of reality.

As Dukore suggests “Memories arouse rivalry and battles for domination through participation in a past or through one’s ability to persuade another to accept an interpretation of it.” (Dukore 90). In their vain attempts to dominate each other, Deeley and Anna resort to their memories, the actuality of which is ambiguous. First, Anna enters the scene revealing a summary of her shared past with Kate:

Queuing all night, the rain, do you remember? my goodness, the Albert Hall, Covent Garden, what did we eat? to look back, half the night, to do things we loved, we were young then of course, but what stamina, and to work in the morning, and to a concert, or the opera, or the ballet, that night, you haven’t forgotten? and then riding on top of the bus down Kensington High Street, and the bus conductors, and then dashing for the matches for the gasfire and then I suppose scrambled eggs, or did we? who cooked? both giggling and chattering, both huddling to the heat, then bed and sleeping, and all the hustle and bustle in the morning, rushing for the bus again for work...to be poor and young, and a girl, in London then. (*Old* 17-18).

The life Anna presents is an active, busy life spent in music and entertainment venues, wealthy and popular corners of London, packed with actors, writers, artists and people of that sort; unlike the life Kate has been leading with Deeley as they live in a quiet farmhouse by the sea. Anna uses her memory to expose the dullness of the life Deeley has provided for Kate; moreover, she implies that Kate may one day want to go back to the vigorous days by saying “How wise you were to choose this part of the world, and how sensible and courageous of you both to stay permanently in such a silence” and she adds, upon hearing that Deeley often goes away on business and leaves Kate alone, “No one who lived here would want to go far. I would not want to go far, I would be afraid of going far, lest when I returned the house would be gone”. (*Old* 19) Anna, by using the image of house refers to Deeley’s marriage, and implies the house may disappear, collapse if Anna attacks hard enough with her own version of the truth about Kate. In return for Anna’s memory Deeley tells his memory of how he met Kate at the cinema where he went to see *Odd Man Out*. He goes one step further and attacks by telling very intimate things about himself and Kate; “And then at a slightly later stage our naked bodies met, hers cool, warm, highly agreeable...I touched her profoundly all

over.” (*Old* 31). Deeley describes such a private moment so as to defeat Anna, whom he believes to know nothing about Kate’s sexuality. Revealing this memory, Deeley claims Kate’s body. However, a counter attack comes from Anna. She challenges the relevance and the actuality of memories; “There are some things one remembers even though they may never have happened. There are things I remember which may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place”. (*Old* 32), and goes on to tell her account of reality. To Deeley’s surprise, she discloses a memory about Kate and a stranger:

Anna: He was lying across her lap on her bed.

Deeley: A man in the dark across my wife’s lap?

Anna: But then in the early morning...he had gone.

Deeley: Thank Christ for that. (*Old* 33)

Anna uses Deeley’s weapon, Kate’s sexuality as a trump in order to make him jealous and gain dominance over him. Both Anna and Deeley resort to their memories, the reality of which is vague, as neither of these memories is completely verified by Kate. In their memories, each one has a different image of Kate. Deeley describes the young Kate, the woman with whom he decided to get married twenty years ago;

a girl not long out of her swaddling clothes whose only claim to virtue was silence but who lacked any sense of fixedness, any sense of decisiveness, but was compliant only to the shifting winds, with which she went, but not *the* winds, and certainly not my winds...A classic female figure, I said to myself, or is it a female posture, one way or the other long outworn. (*Old* 35-36).

Deeley’s perception of Kate is a shallow, feeble woman incapable of deciding for herself, a woman without life. On the other hand, Anna presents a different Kate. She gives the example of water ripples that emerge when a stone is thrown into the river so as to check if the water is cold or not, and claims that unlike some people who act without hesitation “Katey would always wait not just for the first emergence of ripple but for the ripples to pervade and pervade to the surface” (*Old* 36-37) and yet she may not jump into the water. Considering the fact that Kate married Deeley, Anna says “But in this case she did jump and I knew therefore she had fallen in love truly and was glad” (*Old* 37). Anna’s depiction of Kate is both of a passionate woman who is capable of loving and committing

herself to a man, and a vigilant person who thinks twice before taking her steps unlike Deeley's portrayal of her as a woman that can easily be carried away with winds, manipulated. There are two different, actually opposite versions of Kate, which are the creations of two different minds. However, Deeley and Anna, sometimes agree on some points concerning the personal characteristics of Kate. For instance, Deeley makes a statement about Kate's living in a world of dreams. He says, "Sometimes I take her face in my hands and look at it...Then I kind of let it go, take my hands away, leave it floating". (*Old* 24). Deeley's depiction of Kate does not have a common ground with the real Kate, who objects to this statement and attempts to bring them back to reality by saying "My head is quite fixed. I have it on." (*Old* 24). However, Anna agrees with Deeley's suggestion that Kate is a dreamer, and she reveals a memory about how Kate thought herself to have slept through a day although, according to Anna, she did not. At this point the two versions of Kate intersect; nevertheless, both Deeley and Anna live away from the real, present Kate; they prefer to live with their own version of Kate, ignoring her authentic self as it is easier than facing the real Kate, who actually has the potential to threaten their existence.

The characters, Georg, Deeley and Anna, diverge from reality in their struggle for domination; however, their attempts are interrupted from time to time. At a point in "The Judgment", the father tries to awaken Georg to the reality outside his creation. George decides to write a letter to his friend after a long period of hesitation about whether to inform him about his engagement or not. When he finishes the letter, he goes to his father's room where he has not been for a long time, and informs him about it, presenting an image of a considerate young man. Despite his expectancy of receiving respect from and approval of the old man, to his amazement, the father reacts in a fashion that Georg has not foreseen:

You've come to me about this business, to talk it over with me. No doubt that does you honor. But it's nothing, it's worse than nothing if you don't tell me the whole truth...don't deceive me. It's a trivial affair, it's hardly worth mentioning, so don't deceive me. Do you really have this friend in St. Petersburg? (Judge. 82)

The old man thinks that this news about Georg's marriage is insignificant. He questions the existence of this friend in Russia, which means breaking through

the territory of Georg's world. What the father does is belittling his son by doubting him, and hence he is threatening his secure castle. Georg feels embarrassed faced with the old man's question. The father gains dominance over Georg by mocking the things that are important to him; therefore, George is reduced to a level of insignificance when his virtual world that he has put his energy in creating, is threatened.

Similarly, the struggle between Deeley and Anna so as to gain dominance over Kate is sometimes interrupted by Kate, who is the subject of the conversations between the two opponents but at the same time who is out of these exchanges:

Kate: You talk of me as if I were dead.

Anna: No, no, you weren't dead, you were so lively, so animated, you used to laugh.

Deeley: Of course you did. I made you smile myself, didn't I? walking along the street, holding hands. You smiled fit to bust.

.....

Anna: You weren't dead. Ever. In any way.

Kate: I said you talk about me as if I am dead. Now.

Anna: How can you say that, when I'm looking at you, seeing you so shyly poised over me, looking down at me. (*Old* 34-35)

Kate wants to draw the attention of Deeley and Anna to her presence but they are so obsessed with their own worlds designed by their memories of Kate that she cannot succeed. In fact, there is a fourth person in the play; that is, the imaginary Kate who is easily amused, lively, shy and affectionate, just like the person that Deeley and Anna wish her to be. So they try to impose the characteristics of the imaginary Kate on real Kate. However, Kate does not show any sign of affection or submission.

Both the father's disbelief and Kate's sarcastic commentaries point out the coming danger that the roles are to be changed in the game of dominance. All these three characters, Georg, Anna and Deeley start to increase the dose of the domination they apply when faced with warnings; therefore, they attempt to reduce the others to a helpless situation by imagining them in a childlike incapability. Georg, on receiving a negative reaction from his father, shifts his attention from his friend and fiancée to the old man. He has only one card to play, and that is to create a pathetic version of his father that he can control without difficulty. In spite of the

shame created by his father's question whether that friend of his really exists or not, Georg avoids answering it and changes the focus of the conversation from himself to his father. He states that business is not good for the old man's health;

Never mind my friends. A thousand friends wouldn't make up to me for my father. Do you know what I think? You're not taking enough care of yourself. But old age must be taken care of...if the business is going to undermine your health, I'm ready to close it down tomorrow forever. (Judge 82).

By trying to make his father believe that he needs to retire, Georg actually attempts to deprive the old man of his authority and productivity, which will make him dependent on his son. Georg also suggests that his father's room should be changed as it is too dark and airless; "We'll have to make a change in your way of living...We'll change your room, you can move into the front room and I'll move in here." (Judge. 83). This suggestion presents Georg's wish to make his father leave the throne to him. The son tries to downsize the father's self confidence and shake his authority by making decisions about his life without consulting him. Georg treats his father like a child. While taking off his clothes in order to let him sleep, he tries to convince his father that he knows this friend in Russia; "I remember that you used not to like him very much. At least twice I kept you from seeing him, although he was actually sitting with me in my room...But then, later, you got on with him very well." (Judge. 83). Georg suggests the idea that his father has a faulty memory because he is old and therefore, he attempts to control him mentally with his own version of truth. Moreover, Georg tries to dominate the old man physically as well by cradling him like a baby. While carrying the old man to his room in his arms, Georg realizes that his father plays with his watch chain on his breast, like a child. When they arrive in the room, Georg "could not lay him down on the bed for a moment, so firmly did he hang on to the watch chain." (Judge. 84). Georg lays his father on the bed and covers him up firmly, as if he were burying him. He seems to have become successful in the war of domination by making his father believe in the image created by his son, the picture of a feeble old man who needs to be taken care of.

Just as Georg turns his attention to his father, Deeley and Anna, seeing the potential threat on Kate's side, give a break in their struggle to dominate each

other, and they focus more on controlling Kate. They try to diminish her to the status of an infant. In the second act, Kate goes to the bathroom to take a shower. Meanwhile, Deeley and Anna talk about Kate's inability to dry herself properly after having a bath; therefore, they decide that she needs help. They urge each other to do the task:

Anna: Well, dry her yourself, in her bath towel. *Pause*

Deeley: Why don't *you* dry her in her bath towel?

Anna: Me?

Deeley: You'd do it properly.

Anna: No, no.

Deeley: Surely? I mean, you're a woman, you know how and where and in what density moisture collects on women's bodies.

Anna: No two women are the same. (*Old 55-56*)

Their abstention from doing the task of drying Kate shows their fear of facing the real Kate and her power. And then suddenly Deeley comes up with an idea, instead of drying her with a towel, he suggests doing it with powder. It is common to powder babies so what lies beneath this idea is to create a helpless Kate. By disregarding her as an individual out of their control, they try to overcome their fear of being dominated by her. Therefore, they choose to believe in a Kate who is weak and needs their attention, like a baby. However, Kate "invalidates their intentions by entering already dry and wearing a bathrobe. Apparently she does not need them as much as they need her." (Peacock 111).

In both works, the characters are eventually forced to come out of their territories secured by their virtual worlds created by their virtual realities. However, once they are out they cannot return to their safe castles. Their rivals whom they have tried to reduce to the level of insignificance, are stronger than expected. As a result their worlds fall apart.

In "The Judgment", the first crack in Georg's shell appears when his father forces him to admit that he does not have a friend in Russia. Moreover, Georg's attempt to beat off this threat by applying dominance over his father does not turn out to his advantage. After laying his father on the bed, the old man asks whether he is covered up well or not. Georg nods; however, his father suddenly throws the blankets off and rises almost touching the ceiling: "You wanted to cover me up, I

know, my young sprig, but I'm far from being covered up yet. And even if this is the last strength I have, it's enough for you, too much for you." (Judge. 84). The old man's act of jumping out of the bed and his statement present the idea that truth cannot be buried. This time it is the father's turn to take over. He reveals his ideas about Georg and his friend in Russia;

Of course I know your friend. He would have been a son after my own heart. That's why you have been playing him false all these years...And now that you thought you'd got him down, so far down that you could set your bottom on him and sit on him and he wouldn't move, then my fine son makes up his mind to get married. (Judge. 85)

The father uncovers the motives behind Georg's acts, the reasons why he has written letters full of lies and how he has built up a false image of himself by degrading his friend. He also accuses Georg of disgracing the memory of his mother, betraying his friend and trying to overpower his father "in order to make free with her (Frieda) undisturbed" (Judge. 85). Faced by the reality his father suggested, "Georg shrank into a corner, as far away from his father as possible. A long time ago he had firmly made up his mind to watch closely every least movement so that he should not be surprised by any indirect attack, a pounce from behind or above." (Judge. 85). Yet, he is caught unprepared and has lost all the power he has. As Georg's authority fades his father's grows bigger. The father tells his son that he knows this friend in Russia better than Georg since he has always been in touch with him all these years while Georg has been living in his own illusory world thinking that he has control over everything around him. As Rolleston states "Georg has organized both the landscape and the relationships of his life into a theatre with himself at the centre." (Rolleston 93). However, in the end, he is reduced to nothingness when his father states;

So now you know what else there was in the world besides yourself, till now you have known only about yourself! An innocent child, yes, that you were, truly, but still more truly have you been a devilish human being! – And therefore take note: I sentence you now to death by drowning! (Judge. 87)

In his father's opinion, Georg's alteration of reality was once innocent, childish as children tend to live in a dream world in which they create imaginary

companions; however, Georg's attempts to overpower his father brings about his end. His punishment is severe. Georg is condemned to death by his own father. There is nothing left for him to do other than committing suicide, so he hastily runs out of the house and throws himself off the bridge into the water.

Georg is uprooted from a normal world which he has illegitimately manipulated to his own ends...(He) fails because he cannot transfer the entire world into the controlled environment of his personal stage. He stumbles off-stage inadvertently, into the darkness of his father's room. (Rolleston 94).

Deeley and Anna go through a similar experience while trying to take control of Kate. As the reality changes gradually, the world the husband and the old friend constructed in their minds begins to tumble down. As their realities shaped by their memories become ambiguous, their existence becomes vague as well. In the second act, Deeley and Anna continue to reveal their memories and Deeley admits that he remembers Anna from The Wayfarers Tavern, a place vibrant with "poets, stunt men, jockeys, stand-up comedians, that kind of set up" (*Old* 49). Although Anna denies having a recollection of the things he mentions, with a bit of a compliment coming from Deeley, who says that she was "the darling of the saloon bar" (*Old* 49), she remembers the events but not Deeley. In a later stage Deeley will use this memory against Anna to shake Kate's confidence in her. Then Kate comes out from the bathroom and the struggle for domination begins. Kate and Anna start a conversation about some men about whom Deeley does not know anything so he is left outside. Anna takes the upper hand by talking about Kate's first blush. Deeley attacks in turn by bringing forward Anna's husband who is in Sicily ; "you're here with us. He's there, alone, lurching up and down the terrace, waiting for a speedboat, waiting for a speedboat to spill out beautiful people, at least." (*Old* 67). He suggests that Anna's husband, left alone in a beautiful villa, surrounded by all sorts of riches may betray her while she is away. However, Kate rules out his attack by saying that he may leave if he cannot stand Anna's existence, which causes Deeley to expose his common past with Anna in a rather harsh manner. He tells Kate about the first time he met Anna in a tavern where he watched her sitting;

She didn't have any bread, so I bought her a drink. She looked at me with big eyes, shy, all that bit. She was pretending to be you at the time. Did it pretty well. Wearing your underwear she was too, at the time. Amiably allowed me a gander. Trueblue generosity. Admirable in a woman. (*Old 69*).

Deeley draws a portrait of a cheap woman, which will belittle Anna in the eyes of Kate. "Whether Deeley's story is the truth is not important. What matters is that Kate accepts it as truth and in doing so casts doubt on Anna's purity." (Cahn 115). From this point on, Anna's existence starts to lose its actuality. Deeley goes on telling his recollection about Anna; "I took her into a café, bought her a cup of coffee,... She thought she was you, said little, so little. Maybe she was you. Maybe it was you, having coffee with me, saying little, so little." (*Old 69*). Kate intensifies the ambiguity of Anna's presence. She destroys the 'Kate' in Deeley's mind by presenting her own account of reality infiltrating into the memory shared by Deeley and Anna. She tells why Anna was attracted to him years ago when they went to the café:

Kate: She found your face very sensitive, vulnerable...She wanted to comfort it, in the way only a woman can.

Deeley: She wanted to comfort my face, in the way only a woman can?

Kate: She was prepared to extent herself to you.

Deeley: I beg your pardon?

Kate: She fell in love with you.

Deeley: With me? (*Old 70*)

In fact, when talking about how Anna felt, Kate reveals her own feelings, the truth about herself which Deeley has never known, never been interested in as he has always been possessed with his version of his wife in his memories rather than her real identity. Being excluded from that memory, Anna intervenes and affirms that the woman with whom Deeley flirted twenty years ago was her. However, Kate swiftly eliminates Anna by presenting her harsh truth;

But I remember you. I remember you dead. *Pause*. I remember you lying dead. You didn't know I was watching you. Your face was dirty. You lay dead, your face scrawled with dirt...Your pupils weren't in your eyes. Your bones were breaking through your face. (*Old 71-72*).

Anna does not exist in Kate's world hence she loses the battle of dominance. Regarding Deeley, he has his share of Kate's victimization. After virtually killing Anna, Kate explains Deeley's place in her world by unfolding her memory. She tells him how she tried to cover his face with dirt just like she had done to Anna, and how he resisted with force. Unlike Anna, Deeley didn't let her dirty his face, "He suggested a wedding instead, and a change of environment. *Slight pause*. Neither mattered" (*Old* 73). Although both Deeley and Anna tried to dominate each other so as to become significant in Kate's life, at the end of the play they are faced with Kate's reality in which neither of them is superior to the other; in fact they are equally unimportant. The only difference between the two is that Deeley resisted to be virtually killed, instead he committed himself to Kate by marrying her. However, in either case things have not turned out to be in their favour; they are dominated and victimized. "Deeley's effort to sabotage the relationship between the women, to claim his own greater importance to Kate, only sabotages his relationship with Kate, and at the end he is reduced rather than enlarged in his attempts to destroy or at least to damage an old friendship." (Prentice 200). As a consequence of Kate's exposure of her own feelings and perception of the past, Deeley starts to cry and is silenced. Likewise, Anna is reduced to the status of an object, lifeless, insignificant. Kate "creates narrative that dominates the narratives of the other two, and that mastery ensures personal domination." (Cahn 117). As the others diminish, Kate becomes triumphant by means of her reality.

In both works there is a struggle for domination because only the one who dominates can exist, and the method used is altering reality and forcing the others to accept this reality. In "The Judgment" Georg is trapped in his virtual world, in which he has the power, taking everything under control. Nevertheless, he is faced with the truth about his life and his relations to other people, and he surrenders the control of his life to his father in the end. All his trials to preserve his secure world have turned out to be in vain. Similarly, in *Old Times* the battle for gaining dominance over Kate, that is, being a best friend or a good husband to her or not, makes Deeley and Anna confide in their memories, providing them with a reality that seems perfect, which, in turn, causes them to diverge from the real world

outside. In the end, both Deeley and Anna are condemned to be mere objects. Therefore, all these attempts to overcome the troublesome nature of existence by dominating others by using a mentally constructed reality as a weapon fail. Georg, Deeley and Anna lose the battle whereas the father and Kate become triumphant. However, it is ironic that the truth imposed by Georg's father and Kate is as ambiguous as the others' reality. It seems that the one who presents his or her reality more effectively and more violently is able to dominate the others.

4.1.2. Gender Power

Methods of applying power over the other who has the potential to threaten one's existence vary. In order to be able to dominate the other, characters may alter reality as discussed in the previous chapter or they can resort to their sexual identities or roles cast on them; use the power provided by and peculiar to their gender. Sometimes the overpowering is observed in the relation between a mother figure and a son or sometimes domination appears in the form of a sexual abuse.

The female representatives of the struggle between mother and son are Frau Grubach in The Trial and Meg in *The Birthday Party*, both of whom have an attachment to their lodgers in a motherly way. Each woman strives for maternal domination, but is dominated by the son.

Joseph K.'s landlady, Frau Grubach, has a weakness for K., whom she takes as a son. K. shares the same feelings for her to a certain extent. In the evening of the day K. is arrested, he pays a visit to Frau Grubach in her room in order to talk to her about his arrest, the interrogation and all the nasty things that happened in the house early in the morning. Although the hour is late, Frau Grubach welcomes K. as "she was always glad to have a talk with him, he knew very well that he was her best and most valued boarder." (Trial 24-25). Just as Frau Grubach has matronly sensitivity to K., he has feelings of respect and gratitude towards her. He appreciates the way she takes care of the house with a skill that is only peculiar to

women, especially mothers. Once in her room K. explains the reason why he has disturbed her late in the evening, Frau Grubach advises him not to take what happened in the morning so seriously and says “It’s a matter of your happiness, and I really have that at heart, more perhaps than I should, for I am only your landlady.” (Trial 26). Although Frau Grubach is aware of the fact that there is not a blood tie between her and K., she tries to show her fondness for him and comfort him in the way that a mother can so as to attain a little bit of the son’s affection. She tells him her opinion about K.’s arrest based on what the two warders who came to arrest K. said to her;

You are under arrest, certainly, but not as a thief is under arrest, that’s a bad business, but as for this arrest – It gives me the feeling of something very learned, forgive me if what I say is stupid, it gives me the feeling of something learned which I don’t understand. (Trial 26).

Frau Grubach considers her ‘son’ above blame and wants to set K. at ease but she is neither aware of what is going on nor what she is saying. She is a dumb mother figure, which makes her an easier person to manipulate and dominate. K.’s awareness of being dear to Frau Grubach, gives him a sense of having dominance over her. He can make her do whatever he wants, which is displayed in the scene when K. tells Frau Grubach that he wants to talk to Fraulein Bürstner, another boarder in the house, since the interrogation took place in her room without her knowledge. Seeing how K. is disturbed about the fact that the young woman’s room has been violated, Frau Grubach claims that Fraulein Bürstner will not be able to recognize any effects of the violation as she has already taken care of it. Like a mother, she clears up everything that may discomfort K.. The role she has cast for herself as a benevolent mother makes her believe that she has dominance on K., her virtual son. However, she is not as dear to K. as he is to her. K. complains to Frau Grubach about Fraulein Bürstner, who is not back home yet; “‘She often comes home late,’ said K., looking at Frau Grubach as if she were to blame for it. ‘Young people are like that,’ said Frau Grubach apologetically, ‘Certainly, certainly,’ said K., ‘but it can go too far.’ ‘That it can,’ said Frau Grubach.” (Trial 28). K. criticizes her motherhood, accusing her of being incapable of controlling her ‘daughter’; nonetheless, he does not do this out of brotherly

feelings for Fraulein Bürstner. He uses Frau Grubach's motherly love towards him as a means of manipulating her to dominate Fraulein Bürstner, who leads a rather carefree life for a young, single woman. Frau Grubach, unaware of K.'s intentions, confides in him and starts to grumble about Fraulein Bürstner; "This very month I have met her twice already on outlying streets, and each time with a different gentleman." (Trial 28). She goes on telling him that she is inclined to have a word with her on the subject. Nevertheless, K. suddenly changes his attitude and says, in fury, that Frau Grubach has misunderstood his remarks about the young woman. This abrupt shift in his manner shows that K. has seen that things are getting out of his control so he scolds Frau Grubach and warns her not to tell a word of this conversation to Fraulein Bürstner. The old woman tries to defend herself and justify her cause by stating that she only worries about the respectability of her house, which gets a harsh, furious response from K.; "if you want to keep your house respectable you'll have to begin by giving me a notice." (Trial 29). K. threatens Frau Grubach that he will leave her house, and abandon her. Faced by the fear of losing a son, she tries to elucidate her motive in speaking like that, but K. disregards her efforts and goes to his room, not paying any attention to her persistent knocks at his door.

Frau Grubach's power as head of a household, earner of money, and a guardian of decency is undermined by the servility with which she performs typically feminine tasks for her well-situated lodger and by her maternal affection towards a young man. (Boa 191).

Thus her motherly affection and her services are exploited by K., whose favour she tries to gain.

Frau Grubach supplies bed, food, care and affection for her boarders. She is so dedicated to them that she only finds a little free time for herself in the evenings. She looks after them carefully, which, as she feels, provides her with a privilege for motherly domination, letting her interfere with their lives; however, she ignores the fact that she is only the landlady and paid for her services. Although she sees her relation with K. as being different than that with the other boarders, and despite the fact that K. confides in her like a son, he also dominates her for his own good by exploiting her maternal affection for him.

Meg, in *The Birthday Party*, is equivalent to Frau Grubach, with some slight differences. She has a boarding house by the sea which she runs with her husband, Petey. Meg is both a dominant wife and a mother figure resembling Frau Grubach in the way that she takes her lodger, Stanley Webber, as a son. Meg strives to assert control over the two men in her life.

In the opening scene of the play, Petey and Meg are in their kitchen. Meg is seen as the dominant figure in the marriage. She serves breakfast consisting of cornflakes with milk followed by fried bread and asks Petey's opinion on the cornflakes and the fried bread forcing him to praise her.

Meg: Is it nice?

Petey: I haven't tasted it yet.

Meg: I bet you don't know what it is.

Petey: Yes, I do.

Meg: What is it, then?

Petey: Fried bread.

Meg: That's right. (*Petey eats and Meg watches him.*)

Petey: Very nice.

Meg: I knew it was. (*Birthday 3-4*)

Meg plays her role as a wife, taking care of her husband, almost glorifying herself, and she wants to be appreciated for her services which actually are not worthy of note, considering what she offers for breakfast is cornflakes with sour milk, fried bread and cold tea. However, Petey avoids clashing with Meg over this issue. As stated by Sakellaridou, Petey, "the victim of an oppressive, stupid wife, has in a sense the upper hand in his marital relationship. Through solid self-control, verbal silence and physical absence he fights effectively his wife's domination." (Sakellaridou 42). However, the fact that Petey is not articulate does not entitle him as the victorious part in the struggle for domination; instead it turns him into an emasculated man, submitting to his wife's game of dominance.

Meg intends to dominate Stanley in the way she does Petey, who seems to yield to her supremacy by lapsing into an ignorant silence. In the beginning of the play, when Petey reads Meg a piece of news about someone who has had a baby, Meg asks the gender of it, and learning that it is a girl, she exclaims "Oh, what a shame. I'd be sorry. I'd much rather have a little boy." (*Birthday 3*). Meg, who is

fond of boys takes Stanley as the son he longs for. Although Stanley is a grown up man, she treats him like a child, going to his room freely, making him drink his tea. She applies a maternal authority on Stanley. For instance, she calls Stanley for breakfast shouting; “Stan! I’m coming up to fetch you if you don’t come down. I’m coming up! I’m going to count three! One! Two! Three! I’m coming to get you!” (*Birthday* 5). Meg threatens Stan playfully, in the way that a mother who wants her little child to follow her orders does. However; in contrast to Petey’s submission to Meg’s treatment, Stanley has a critical, mocking attitude towards her. When Meg asks Stanley’s opinion about the breakfast, expecting to get a compliment, he says it is horrible and he adds that the milk is sour. Meg holds Petey as an example claiming that he has willingly eaten his breakfast without any complaints, and Petey confirms this statement. Petey submits to Meg whereas Stanley is rebellious. Moreover, Stanley shakes Meg’s power by criticizing her wifedom, making use of the opportunity created by Petey’s leaving for work without drinking a cup of tea:

Stanley: You’re a bad wife.

Meg: I’m not. Who said I am?

Stanley: Not to make your husband a cup of tea. Terrible.

Meg: He knows I’m not a bad wife.

Stanley: Giving him sour milk instead.

Meg: It wasn’t sour.

Stanley: Disgraceful. (*Birthday* 7)

Stanley makes fun of Meg’s game of pretence that she is both a good wife and a mother. Unlike Frau Grubach, Meg is not a skillful housewife. What is more, although Meg treats Stanley like a son she also has an incestuous desire for him, which makes her disgusting in his view. In the scene when Stanley urges Meg to get the house cleaned and change his room with a more convenient one, she says in a sensual tone and stroking his arm “Oh, Stan, that’s a lovely room. I’ve had some lovely afternoons in that room.” (*Birthday* 10) and she fondles him. Disgusted with her attitude, he throws off her hand and leaves the room hastily. Therefore, “when Stanley turns down her erotic gestures he gives a decisive blow to her feminine power by exposing and then ridiculing her repressed sexuality.” (Sakellaridou 33). This time in the struggle for domination Meg is not the triumphant party as she taints her motherhood by confusing it with her sexuality.

Struggle for domination also shows itself in the form of sexual abuse. In both works characters, male or female, use their sexuality almost sadistically as a weapon to dominate the opposite sex. In The Trial there are mainly two characters who dominate the other sexually; Joseph K. and Leni.

Throughout Kafka's novel K. is attracted to many women one of which is Fraulein Bürstner, a working girl who earns her own money and lives independently, spending her free time in theatres and going out with men. In the evening of his arrest, K. waits awake until late, determined to talk to Fraulein Bürstner. As soon as she arrives home, K. demands to talk to her, and she asks him into her room, as she is concerned about waking everybody up, which will result in staining her name. In the room K. apologizes to her for the violation of her privacy, as he is the object of the interrogation which took place in her room. He goes on telling her about his arrest which arouses a certain kind of interest in the young woman. She inquires into the details of the interrogation but in the process of time K. is distracted by the charms of Fraulein Bürstner; "he was no longer thinking of what he was saying, for he was completely taken up in staring at Fraulein Bürstner, who was leaning her head on one hand – her elbow was resting on the sofa cushions – while with the other she slowly caressed her hip." (Trial 34). The young woman's body, so appealingly exhibited, makes K. want to possess her all the more. In order not to leave her room, he begins to go into the details of his interrogation, dramatizing it. Carried away by his performance, he raises his voice, which causes the Captain sleeping next door to knock at the door. Fraulein Bürstner, fearing for her reputation turns pale and begs K. to leave the room. K. uses this golden opportunity to take advantage of the young woman who does not know what she is doing in a state of fear, and he kisses her. He tries to comfort Fraulein Bürstner who is in a state of panic by saying that the Captain is Frau Grubach's nephew and adds "you know how she almost venerates me and believes absolutely everything I say. She is also dependent on me, I may say, for she has borrowed a fair sum of money from me." (Trial 37). By abusing his landlady's weaknesses, K. tries to assure her that no harm will be done to her or her reputation as he can convince Frau Grubach that he assaulted her. K., under the cover of taking responsibility for his actions, means to overpower Fraulein Bürstner, putting

her into a position of a weak woman who cannot protect herself. However, having composed herself, the young woman objects to being guarded by a man and says “I can bear the responsibility for anything that happens in my room, no matter who questions it.” (Trial 37). As a working woman she is a threat to men in a male dominant society. Thus, she is to be taken under control, and under the guise of protection K. attempts to dominate her because only the weak needs security provided by the strong other. Fraulein Bürstner objects to being subjugated by K, by declaring independence and the control of her life, which makes K. much more attracted to her and he desperately wants to dominate her. Fraulein Bürstner, who is the representative of the economically independent women, falls into the male defined category of neither a virgin nor a whore, which “turns male desire for a ‘good girl’ into a violation of innocence.” (Boa 196). Therefore, K.’s lasciviousness gets hold of him, and while leaving her room, K. “seized her, and kissed her first on the lips, then all over the face, like some thirsty animal lapping greedily at a spring of long-sought fresh water. Finally he kissed her on the neck, right on the throat, and kept his lips there for a long time.” (Trial 38). K.’s animal like behaviour suggests a vampirical act. As the Dracula legend suggests, the vampire sucks the blood of his woman victim, a virgin, in an erotic fashion and makes her a slave, hypnotized by his supernatural powers. For the time being Fraulein Bürstner seems to have yielded to K.’s domination. K. “has succeeded in turning her first into an odalisque and then into a tired, passive recipient of animalesque kisses which rob her of her vitality; returning bowed to her room she looks like an asexual, passionless bourgeois fiancée.” (Boa 200). However, later in the novel, it is seen that K. has not been successful at all. The young woman avoids meeting K. in the days following their encounter and finally she sends her friend Fraulein Montag to talk him out of anticipating anything from her since she by no means wishes to see him again. Overpowered by Fraulein Bürstner’s virtuous attitude, K. tries to hide his humiliation and defeat under a veil of insult directed to her; “ he knew that Fraulein Bürstner was an ordinary little typist who could not resist him for long.” (Trial 100). He has the same opinion with many men that a woman having an insignificant position in the patriarchal society is sooner or later bound to submit herself to male dominance and abuse.

K. is the example of a typical male who wishes to control and violate the free and the untouched. On the other hand, Leni symbolizes the female dominance, from which K. manages to escape narrowly, just like Fraulein Bürstner had done when he harassed her. K. meets Leni when his uncle, on hearing that his nephew has been arrested, comes to help him and takes him to his lawyer friend, Huld. K. and his uncle are greeted by Leni, the nurse of Huld, who is old and sick. This young girl has a “doll-like rounded face” (Trial 124) and a hand two middle fingers of which are attached by a web of skin which is associated with witchhood in the Western culture.

When K. and his uncle are in the lawyer’s room, Leni breaks a plate on purpose so as to draw K.’s attention to herself, and she succeeds in it. She tempts K., who continuously asks questions about the portraits of Examining Magistrates on the walls, hoping to find something to help his case. Leni uses her sexuality skillfully. She sits on his lap, “making herself at home on his knee by smoothing her skirt and pulling her blouse straight.” (Trial 135). Leni artfully drives K. under her spell like a witch and dominates him sexually; “She clasped his head to her, bent over him, and bit and kissed him on the neck, biting into the very hairs of his head.” (Trial 138). Leni assaults K., like a savage animal, evoking his violent, vampirical treatment of Fraulein Bürstner. By surrendering to Leni, who is both the nurse and the mistress of the lawyer who may be of some help to him, K. damages his case severely according to his uncle. Therefore, “female sexuality appears as a lure which threatens to distract men from their heroic destiny as patriarchs who make, or, like Odysseus, restore the law or who, like K., are accused under the law to which they must answer.” (Boa 214).

Leni dominates K. mesmerizing him with her sexual power. However, the spell is broken when K. visits the lawyer, Huld, so as to dismiss him from his case and meets a tradesman named Block. This man whose case has been going on for years without any significant improvements, has become Huld’s toy. The lawyer rarely admits Block to his room and when he does, he deliberately calls him at inconvenient times to avoid him. Therefore, Leni has let him live in the house so that he can be ready when he is called for. Nevertheless, Block is not like a guest in

the house but rather like an obedient dog. He is kept in a room without windows. K., unlike Block, sees Huld whenever he wishes to see him, and this time he is in the lawyer's room inclined to dismiss him, which is not approved by anybody in the house. Therefore, Huld, together with Leni, attempts to show how he is expected to behave, and calls Block, who comes in excitement. K. witnesses a scene in which Block is humiliated in a theatrical fashion. The poor tradesman willingly obeys what he is told to do and sidles up to the lawyer like a dog, kneeling by his feet in vain expectancy that he will get a bone, a bit of information about his case. Leni plays the role of the keeper of Block so Huld, instead of directly addressing Block, asks Leni how he has spent his day. She gives the outline of his activities, "I locked him into the maid's room...to keep him from disturbing me at my work...he was kneeling all the time on the bed, reading the papers you lent him...Then at about eight o'clock I let him out and gave him something to eat." (Trial 242-243). The obedient behaviours of Block earn him the prize of learning how his case has been going on. After tantalizing Block for some time, Huld reveals the fact that there has not been a significant improvement yet. Block, disappointed by Huld's remarks, collapses but Leni "in a tone of warning, catching him by the collar and jerking him upward a little" (Trial 246) forces him to pay attention to the lawyer. This show has been displayed on purpose, to teach K. to be obedient and submissive. The woman whom K. was attracted to and hoped to get help from, turns out to be a woman who has the power to bring about his end. By trusting Leni, who uses her sexuality as a means of applying power over man, he could have become her dog like Block.

Similar to The Trial, *The Birthday Party* presents the exercise of authority over the other through sexual abuse. Goldberg, one of the strangers who comes to take Stanley away molests Lulu, a young friend of Meg, sexually. During Stanley's birthday party Lulu and Goldberg are drawn together since Lulu is impressed by the speech he made to congratulate Stanley. Goldberg seizes the opportunity and turns this admiration of Lulu into benefit.

Goldberg: Lulu, you're a big, bouncy girl. Come and sit on my lap.

Lulu: Do you think I should?

Goldberg: Try it.

Lulu: I'll bounce up to the ceiling.
Goldberg: Take a chance. (*Birthday* 45)

Goldberg's offer and his statement that she is a bouncy girl have sexual connotations, inasmuch as the word 'bouncy' meaning lively also implies sexuality as it is derived from 'bounce' meaning to jump. Lulu willingly does what Goldberg suggests; however, it is not certain whether she is totally aware of his intentions. Lulu admits that she trusts him and asks him if he has a wife. Goldberg tells he once had a wife and goes on:

What a wife. Listen to this. Friday, of an afternoon, I'd take myself a little constitutional, down over the park...I'd say 'hullo' to the little boys, the little girls – I never made distinctions – and then back I'd go, back to my bungalow with the flat roof. 'Simey,' my wife used to shout, 'quick, before it gets cold!' And there on the table what would I see? The nicest piece of rollmop and pickled cucumber you could wish to find on a plate. (*Birthday* 46).

The picture Goldberg presents Lulu is a perfect one, with a good, decent man who goes for walks in the park, chats to children, and has a responsible wife aware of her duties, which increases Lulu's attraction to and confidence in him. She confesses that she has always liked older men as "they can soothe you." (*Birthday* 47). The young girl finds a sort of comfort and safety in Goldberg's maturity and sophistication. Lulu is a simple girl who can easily be deceived. She is incapable of reading the signs behind Goldberg's behaviour and words, hence she fails to see his real intention. The flirtation between them goes on all night accompanied by alcoholic drinks. They spend the night together. In the morning Goldberg and McCann are ready to leave the house taking Stanley with them. However, Lulu turns up looking nervous and angry, sobered up after the night of violent celebration. She calls Goldberg to account for the previous night and the thing that happened between them. On seeing that he only responds with levity, she says uneasily:

Lulu: What would my father say if he knew? And what would Eddie say?
Goldberg: Eddie?
Lulu: He was my first love, Eddie was. And whatever happened, it was pure. With him! He didn't come into my room at night with a brief-case!

Goldberg: Who opened the brief-case, me or you? Lulu, schumulu, let bygones be bygones, do me a turn. Kiss and make up. (*Birthday* 63).

Lulu tries to make him understand that she is not a girl who is fond of one night stands. In fact, the way she feels responsible towards her father makes her a conservative girl. Lulu feels deceived because she has trusted Goldberg, who cunningly disguised himself as a good, respectable husband who once had a marvelous wife. The fatherly figure at the party has turned into an old womanizer, who makes fun of her despair and her moral values. Moreover, the brief-case Lulu mentions is an implication to Goldberg's sadomasochistic tendencies, from which she got her share. She accuses Goldberg; "You quenched your ugly thirst. You taught me things a girl shouldn't know before she's been married at least three times...You didn't appreciate me for myself. You took all these liberties only to satisfy your appetite." (*Birthday* 64). Lulu's body has become an object of male dominance just like Fraulein Bürstner has become K.'s object on which he exercised his sexual desires to a certain extent. Although Fraulein Bürstner knew how to rule out K.'s designs on her, Lulu was used and thrown aside. Goldberg's partner, McCann's comment on the issue summarizes the male view on women who take liberties. He states that Lulu had a long sleep and adds; "Your sort, you spend too much time in bed." (*Birthday* 64). He categorizes her and suggests that she is a woman who satisfies the sexual needs of men. He blames Lulu for bringing these on herself by acting freely. Moreover, he forces her to confess her sin, pressing her on her knees, acting like a priest. McCann, being Irish, is the symbol of a strict Catholicism, which shows another side of patriarchal authority over women and that is, religion and its male dominant institutes.

Both Frauline Bürstner and Lulu are terrorized under male sexual abuse though each case has a different ending. K. on the other hand is faced with sexual harassment coming from Leni; however, although he is sexually dominated, he cannot be considered as abused since the outcome of his relation with Leni has not caused him to be humiliated like the two women yet still he has lost something; a chance to get an advantage in his trial with the help of the lawyer.

Sexuality is used to dominate not only the opposite sex but also individuals of the same sex. In both works there are examples of males who try to possess or use women to control their male opponents.

After his first interrogation on a Sunday morning, K., since he has not received a new summons informing him about the date of the next inquiry, assumes that there might be another trial and goes to the court the next Sunday morning. However, when he arrives there he finds the courtroom empty except for the wife of an usher. The woman and her husband actually live in the courtroom, turned into a fully furnished flat when an interrogation does not take place. K. disgustedly remembers seeing the woman before in an inappropriate situation with a man in the court during his trial. K. despises the woman more having learnt that she is married, and he criticizes her for being adulterous. However, the wife of the usher justifies her disloyalty,

The man you saw embracing me has been persecuting me for a long time...There's no way of keeping him off, even my husband has grown reconciled to it now; if he isn't to lose his job he must put up with it, for that man you saw is one of the students and will probably rise to great power yet. (Trial 63)

The husband, by agreeing to share his wife with other men, tries to secure his job. What the husband does, makes K. realize the possibility of exploiting the woman. He thinks she may be of use to his case; therefore, he shows an interest in and affection towards her holding her hand and acts as a confidant. The woman, having seen K.'s courageous defense in his first interrogation, hopes that K. may be able to improve the conditions in the court that may change her life, so she offers herself to K.. Meanwhile, K. seeks ways of using her for his own good. He wants to learn if he can benefit from her relations with the officers of the court, especially the Examining Magistrate, who, as the wife claims, has designs on her, which is proven by the fact that he has sent her a pair of silk stockings. While K. is being intimate with the wife, the student whom the woman has mentioned before is watching them. This young man "was small, his legs were slightly bowed, and he strove to add dignity to his appearance by wearing a short, straggling reddish beard, which he was always fingering." (Trial 69). In spite of the fact that he is far from being attractive, the student is able to have a sexual intercourse with the usher's

wife as he may provide a better future for her by attaining a higher position in the court one day. Thus, there is a mutual exploitation between the woman and the student.

The student, not being able to stand the sight of the woman beside K., calls her with a movement of his finger to the window by which he stands, and the woman quietly obeys, leaving K., who has figured out how to take advantage of this loose woman:

there could be no more fitting revenge on the Examining Magistrate and his henchmen than to wrest this woman from them and take her himself. Then some night the Examining Magistrate, after long and arduous labour on his lying reports about K., might come to the woman's bed and find it empty. Empty because she had gone off with K., because the woman now standing in the window, that supple, voluptuous warm body under the coarse heavy, dark dress, belonged to K. and to K. alone. (Trial 70-71).

The wife of the usher has become the prize of war between men who fight for dominance. K. becomes impatient to win his award and argues with the student, which results in the student's lifting the wife in his arm and running away. K.'s attempt to save her is fruitless due to the fact that she prevents him from doing so, fearing that she would miss out the benefits she may get from the student. Losing the prize, K. feels disappointed, and dreams of taking revenge on the student by taking him to Elsa, a waitress in a cabaret at night and a whore during the day, whom K. visits regularly; "he pictured to himself the highly comic situation which would arise if, for instance, this wretched student, this puffed-up whippersnapper, this bandy-legged beaver, had to kneel by Elsa's bed some day wringing his hands and begging for favours. This picture pleased K." (Trial 73). K. loses the away match and he looks forward to fighting in his own territory. Sexually exploiting women is a way of proving manhood. The party who gets the woman is the victorious side in the war of domination. Therefore, K. loses the struggle for domination to the unattractive student and goes away empty-handed, giving up his designs on the wife.

Similar to the usher's wife, Meg, in *The Birthday Party*, is used by males, Goldberg and McCann to dominate the other male, Stanley. Goldberg and his

partner are two men who have come to Meg's house with a purpose which is to create a new Stanley by menacing him and to take him away. In order to hide their motive for being there they behave in an extremely courtly manner towards Meg when they first meet:

Meg: Very pleased to meet you. (they shake hands)

Goldberg: We're pleased to meet you, too.

Meg: That's very nice.

Goldberg: You're right. How often do you meet someone it's a pleasure to meet?

McCann: Never Goldberg. But today it's different. (*Birthday 20*).

There lies a hidden objective under the courtesy and compliments of Goldberg and McCann towards Meg, which is to win her confidence and prevent awakening Meg's motherly feelings for Stanley in case she may get in their way by trying to protect her son from strangers. They take advantage of Meg's being a mother, though not a real one. By using her love for Stanley, Goldberg persuades Meg to throw a birthday party for her dear son; a party by which he will be victimized. Therefore, Meg unintentionally becomes the collaborator of Stanley's persecution.

Goldberg praises Meg's feminine qualities to manipulate her. Just before Stanley's birthday party Meg shows her dress to him and asks his opinion about it.

Goldberg: It's out on its own. Turn yourself round a minute. (*Meg turns round*) I used to be in the business. Go on walk up there.

Meg: Oh, no.

Goldberg: Don't be shy. (*He slaps her bottom*)

Meg: Oooh!

Goldberg: Walk up the boulevard. Let's have a look at you. (*Meg crosses to the french windows*) What a carriage. What's your opinion, McCann? Like a countess, nothing less." (*Birthday 40*).

Goldberg exaggerates the whole scene and pampers Meg. Although he treats her as a cheap woman by slapping her bottom, he at the same time makes her believe that she is a noble woman, a countess. Meg, proud of herself, walks up and down the room, unaware of being an object of humiliation as well as domination. Goldberg "knows how to manipulate her and put her out of the way by exploiting her feminine vanity. As a man of the world he puts up a show of false gallantry and employs trivial and totally unconvincing flatteries." (Sakellaridou 33)

During the party McCann constantly fills Meg's glass, numbing her mind so that she does not realize how Stanley is terrorized and silenced. Meg becomes a part of this vicious activity by being a bystander. Stanley is humiliated and victimized during the game of blind man's buff. Stanley is blindfolded, McCann breaks his glasses and puts the drum given as a present by Meg in his way so that he will fall over. However, intoxicated by alcohol and flatteries, Meg fails to see Stanley's situation and to protect him. In the following morning she finds the drum which is broken but she does not remember why; the only significant thing she remembers is that she "was the belle of the ball" (*Birthday* 69) and it was a wonderful, enjoyable party. She tells Petey that she went up to give Stanley his tea early in the morning and saw McCann there, who said they were talking. She does not suspect that there is something wrong and says "I think they are old friends. Stanley had a lot of friends. I know he did...I came down again and went on with my work. Then, after a bit, they came down to breakfast. Stanley must have gone to sleep again." (*Birthday* 54). Meg sees nothing bad in their treatment of Stanley. Goldberg and McCann so successfully achieve their goal that when Goldberg's big van comes to take the recreated Stanley away, Meg is not suspicious of anything wrong; moreover, she is relieved to learn that the van belongs to Goldberg. Meg trusts these two men completely, which is a proof that all the flattering has paid back. Goldberg and McCann have used Meg for their own good by exploiting her womanhood in order to clear the way to dominate another male, Stanley.

Gender, which is a facticity limiting ones freedom, may on the other hand become the other's weapon to attain victory in the war of domination. As long as it is used properly gender can be a powerful tool with which one can victimize, abuse, humiliate the other and become significant confirming his or her existence. Frau Grubach and Meg apply maternal domination over the people whom they see as their sons, but neither of them is triumphant in the end inasmuch as their motherly affection is exploited, and it turns out that they become dominated. Female sexuality is seen as both something to be abused and a tool for domination. The way K. and Goldberg sexually molest young girls; Fraulein Bürstner and Lulu shows the animalesque side of male domination whereas K.'s temptation by Leni is an example of how women can use their sexuality as an instrument to manipulate

men. In addition, female body may be an object of desire but at the same time it is a means providing men with the opportunity to overpower other men; just as it is in the case of the wife of the usher and Meg, both of whom are used to defeat, eliminate, victimize or dominate the other males on the way. All these characters in both works have different motives when dominating the other; however, the common thing about them is that they make use of the power that their genders provide them with.

4.1.3. Use and Non-use of language

For man who is thrown into an absurd world language is no longer a means to establish a bond between people as words convey a multiplicity of meanings, causing a kind of insecurity in the individual who can neither understand the other nor make himself understood by the other accurately. However, this inadequacy of language could function as a weapon to put the other out of action in the war of dominance. Language “does not fail to communicate; in fact, it communicates all too well its aggressive, leveling tendencies.” (Malkin 39). By verbal assaults, repetitions, empty clichés or inarticulate noises language becomes a lethal weapon. Non-use of language is as important as the use of it in the struggle for domination. According to Pinter,

The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness...we communicate only too well, in our silences, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is a continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. (Pinter: 1977 14)

Silence is no less powerful than speech as it holds the potential to destroy the other's personality by leaving him in ambiguity or ignoring his existence. Use

and non-use of language in order to apply dominance over the other is present in Kafka's novella "The Metamorphosis" and Pinter's play *Ashes to Ashes*.

Failure of communication due to the inadequacy of language brings about ambiguity which arouses curiosity. The one who is left without answers in the midst of silence, or repetitions and meaningless exchanges experiences the insecurity of not knowing what the other knows. Therefore, he is overpowered, dominated by the other who has the knowledge he lacks. In the case of Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of "The Metamorphosis", the failure of communication is severe, which, in turn, aggravates the degree of curiosity. Finding himself trapped in an insect body which is not able to perform simple human acts like unlocking a door and going out of a room, Gregor fails to go to work, which is something he has never done before and thus something arousing curiosity among the members of the family as well as the chief clerk of the company he works for. While Gregor is striving to get out of the room using his toothless new mouth, the others outside demand to know what is happening inside, at first, out of consideration for Gregor but then out of impatience, anger and curiosity. Although Gregor attempts to communicate and explain the reason why he has not been able to show up, the words he utters bear no meaning for the people on the receiving end. Realizing this fact, Gregor keeps his sentences short, and while speaking he tries to "make his voice sound as normal as possible by enunciating the words very clearly and leaving long pauses between them." (Meta. 92) with the intention of giving them time to comprehend and figure out his words, and by doing so he manages to convince the others that everything is alright, and thereby satisfy their curiosity for a while. However, as time passes by, the others become more and more impatient. The presence of the chief clerk who has come to inquire the reason for Gregor's unattendance, makes the matters worse. He accuses Gregor, "Here you are, barricading yourself in your room, giving only 'yes' or 'no' for answers, causing your parents a lot of unnecessary trouble and neglecting – I mention this only in passing – neglecting your business duties in an incredible fashion." (Meta. 96). The family members faced with the danger of Gregor's losing his job, become worried; the father knocks at the door furiously with his fists whereas his sister, Grete sobs in the next room. Gregor's short and dissatisfying answers are interpreted as signs

of his unwillingness to come out and accomplish his duties, which puts the family future in danger, and this in turn creates anger and pain among the others, whereas guilt overcomes Gregor due to his failure to provide for his family. Nevertheless, Gregor appears to be the winner of the first round as he, though not deliberately, predominates over the others by his suspicious secrecy.

The relation between Devlin and Rebecca is similar to the one between Gregor and the others in the beginning. Devlin, tormented by the existence of his wife's former lover, demands to learn every detail about this man. In the first scene Rebecca recalls a moment when her lover reached out his fist to her and made her kiss it. As she gives more details of the scene, Devlin becomes more desperate to learn everything. He bombards her with questions, and at a point he asks,

Devlin: Do you feel you're being hypnotised?

Rebecca: When?

Devlin: Now.

Rebecca: No.

Devlin: Really?

Rebecca: No.

Devlin: Why not?

Rebecca: Who by?

Devlin: By me.

Rebecca: You?

Devlin: What do you think?

Rebecca: I think you're a fuckpig. (*Ashes* 7 – 9)

As Malkin states, one of the most “recurring verbal devices through which language domination operates...(is) the ritualization of language and a resultant verbal hypnotism.” (Malkin 40). The questions Devlin asks are intended to put Rebecca in a trance, in which she would be harmless, controllable. Moreover, a person under hypnosis can be made to reveal everything in his or her mind, which, in Devlin's case, would provide him with the answers to his questions he so desperately craves to know. If Devlin manages to learn about Rebecca's past, he thinks he will be able to strip her off her mystery, leaving her naked, powerless. His continuous questioning is a stratagem to overcome the feeling of insecurity by stalemating and dominating his wife. However, Rebecca's short, firm answers and her final comment eliminate Devlin's attempts to overpower her. Moreover, each

question he asks in search of information about this man is, from now on, faced with Rebecca's constant evasion.

Devlin: Listen. This chap you were just talking about...I mean this chap you and I have been talking about...in a manner of speaking...when exactly did you meet him? I mean when did all these happen exactly? I haven't...how can I put this...quite got it into focus. Was it before you knew me or after you knew me? That's a question of some importance. I'm sure you'll appreciate that.

Rebecca: By the way, there's something I've been dying to tell you.

Devlin: What?

Rebecca: It was when I was writing a note, a few notes for the laundry. Well...to put it bluntly...a laundry list. Well, I put my pen on that little coffee table and it rolled off. (*Ashes* 33 – 35)

Devlin is desperate to get an insight into Rebecca's mind, memories, and he pulls himself together and frankly asks her a question; nevertheless, she reveals a totally unrelated memory. Rebecca changes the subject whenever faced with insistent questions or she gives irrelevant answers on purpose, leaving him in ambiguity; as a result Devlin gives up, saying "I'm letting you slip. Or perhaps it's me who's slipping...I'm in a quicksand." (*Ashes* 39). While Devlin talks about his despair due to not being able to have a meaningful conversation with Rebecca, she comments on his metaphor by likening him to God. This gives Devlin the opportunity to show Rebecca what will happen if she does not rescue him by clearing away the doubts and questions in his mind; "You think God is sinking into a quicksand?...Be careful how you talk about God. He's the only God we have. If you let him go he won't come back. He won't even look back over his shoulder. And then what will you do?" (*Ashes* 39). He, in a way, threatens to leave her. He also emphasizes the might of God and how he fills in silence, which is something Devlin fears. However, silence is what makes Rebecca powerful. Like Gregor, Rebecca does not open the door to the others; the door which conceals the truth. However, while Rebecca's secrecy is deliberate, Gregor's is unintentional. In either case, this ambiguity due to lack or avoidance of communication causes the others to feel insecure and dominated.

Both Gregor and Devlin go through a slow process of realizing the impossibility of communication. Gregor, who is overwhelmed by the guilt of failing as an employee and the provider of the family, wants to show himself and clear the doubts about his intentions. However, as soon as he manages to come out of the room feeling a strong urge to express himself, the sight of him eliminates the possibility of any kind of communication between him and the others. The chief clerk runs away in terror, Gregor's mother faints and the rest are left in shock. Although Gregor cannot use human language as a means of communication anymore.

He speaks continually, tries to explain and excuse himself, and his arguments seem extremely reasonable to him. But after several minutes he perceives that no one understands him any longer. No one even knows that he is speaking. What he judges to be reasonable language is for the others nothing more than the noise of a disgusting animal. (Landsberg 138).

Gregor's domination over the others created by his suspicious silence, drawing the others to him like a magnet, is over when the veil of secrecy is lifted, uncovering his new existence, and having lost his superior position in the battle of domination, Gregor goes back to his room.

Unlike Gregor, Rebecca, who has been the dominant figure holding information in her hands does not lose her place. However, Devlin goes on trying to break the walls around Rebecca until he sees the impossibility of it.

Devlin, not being able to receive a satisfying answer from Rebecca, attempts to arouse guilt in her, just as Gregor is made to feel guilty by the others he is responsible to. He uses the story of the rolling pen, mentioned before, as a metaphor for Rebecca, who claims that the pen was innocent. In an interview, Katie Mitchell, the director of the 2001 staging of *Ashes to Ashes*, states that Devlin is "playing in a light word-play zone, but actually he's cutting under because he's starting to use the pen as a vehicle to get to *her* about the lover. So the pen becomes *her*." (Smith 192). He proposes the idea that the pen might be guilty as they do not know anything about its history. Devlin's self-confidence is shaken with the possibility that his wife might have had a relation with another man;

therefore, he tries to find out about Rebecca's past, her affairs which she deliberately keeps from him, by making her feel mortified. However, unlike Gregor, Rebecca does not experience any kind of guilt, and she skillfully evades this accusation. Rebecca is on the high end of the power seesaw as long as Devlin does not know what she knows. By avoiding giving him information, she keeps him out of her inner world, her past. Just like Gregor is locked in his room, Devlin slowly realizes that he is locked out of Rebecca's world.

In each house silence begins to reign, like a disease in the incubation period, bearing in it the growing domination. As Pinter suggests there are two kinds of silences: one emerges when no word is articulated and the other, when a rush of language is employed.

Following the exposition of Gregor's new form, silence governs the Samsas' house. Gregor, involuntarily becomes silent as he does not have a means to communicate. On the other hand, the other members of the family fall into silence because of the fear of getting involved with the unknown. They avoid communicating with Gregor, trying to ignore his existence pretending he is not there. As Pinter suggests "Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone else's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility." (Pinter: 1977 15). Gregor realizes the uncommon silence encroaching on their lives;

He could see through the crack of the door that the gas was turned on in the living room, but while usually at this time his father made a habit of reading the afternoon newspaper in a loud voice to his mother and occasionally to his sister as well, not a sound was now to be heard...although the flat was certainly not empty of occupants. (Meta. 106)

What lies beneath the father's silence is more than the shock of seeing that his son has metamorphosed into an insect, it is mostly his inability to cope with the situation and the fear of it; a fear which has its roots in the past. "Between the father and son there was hidden but quiet conflict, drawing one away from the other, giving one dominance and the other subservience." (Kluback 98). Before the metamorphosis, Gregor was in charge of the family, providing for them financially.

He was the dominant figure in the family. However, when everything was being taken care of by the son there was still not a meaningful communication between the members of the family. The father used to read the newspaper aloud, which is not a real exchange of ideas but rather of articulating sentences composed of words to fill in the silence so as to avoid contact with the dominant figure, Gregor. But now, the father goes through a period in which he is not certain of what to do and he feels rage against his son for destroying the order that he has got used to, thus his silence bears in itself violence which will be exposed eventually. Throughout the story, whenever faced with Gregor the father treats him like a wild animal that cannot be talked to. He either chases him away into his room using a newspaper or a broomstick, crying “Shooo!”, or he bombards him with apples so that he will go back to his dwelling. Although Gregor has become an insect that does not possess the capacity to communicate in human terms, ironically he communicates extremely well with the reader. On the other hand, his father, having the faculty of speech appears as a savage person, frequently resorting to physical brutality to subjugate Gregor, whom he sees as a threat. However, from time to time the father’s silent attacks are accompanied by innuendos targeted to Gregor but not directly said to his face. For instance, Grete delivers her perception of how her mother faints upon seeing Gregor hanging on the wall.

‘Just what I expected,’ said his father, ‘just what I’ve been telling you, but you women would never listen.’ It was clear to Gregor that his father had taken the worst interpretation of Grete’s all too brief statement and was assuming that Gregor had been guilty of some violent act. (Meta. 120).

The father’s implication that every kind of mean, evil behaviour can be expected of Gregor, leaves Gregor with a need to express himself more. Every son longs to be appreciated by the father; however, Gregor is despised and looked down upon by his father. Underneath the father’s attitude lies the intention of overpowering Gregor by aggravating the guilt in him which stems from his failure to take care of his family owing to his metamorphosis. Now he has to face the charges of not being a good, considerate son.

Silence in Gregor’s house is like a bomb which is bound to explode, foretelling the encroaching domination. Similarly, the silence between Devlin and

Rebecca, which is not only a literal one but also a silence consisting of exchanges not directly communicating a real meaning, is the harbinger of what awaits them. Devlin, who has been trying to gain his authority as a husband by means of communicating verbally, persuading Rebecca to confide in him, is challenged by his wife who ignores his existence by refusing to supply any relevant answers to Devlin's inquiries. Therefore, just as Gregor accepts his absurd fate, Devlin, gradually gives up asking questions about the lover; that is, he starts to accept his subordinate position. Instead, he suggests going to the cinema, and then starts a conversation about Rebecca's sister, Kim and her kids, Ben and Betsy. Kim, who has been betrayed by her husband, is on the verge of a decision about whether to forgive him or not as he wants to come back, having given the other woman up. Devlin asks Rebecca what her sister thinks:

Rebecca: She'll never have him back. Never. She says she'll never share a bed with him again. Never. Ever.

Devlin: Why not?

Rebecca: Never ever.

Devlin: But why not?

Rebecca: Of course I saw Kim and the kids. I had tea with them.

(*Ashes* 61)

Although Devlin asks about Rebecca's sister to change the subject, as Prentice suggests "Kim's husband's infidelity and Kim's refusal to take him back...provides these two (Devlin and Rebecca) a Rorschach² upon which they may project their own unspoken discard." (Prentice 378). Therefore, by telling about her sister's ideas, Rebecca may be disclosing her perception of her own marriage, implying that she will never let Devlin into her memories, her life, and when Devlin tries to inquire further, she changes the course of conversation pretending not to hear the question. Rebecca gives a clear signal that all the attempts of Devlin to penetrate into her privacy are in vain, similar to Gregor's attempts which are misinterpreted by the members of his family.

² Rorschach is a test applied in psychology so as to get an insight to the personality traits and conflicts of a person; also known as the ink test.

In Kafka's story, the authority gradually shifts from Gregor, who was once in charge of the family, to the father and partly to the sister, both of whom gain self-confidence in time. However, in *Ashes to Ashes*, the dominant party remains the same although Devlin strives desperately to attain power.

In the course of "The Metamorphosis", the father becomes the dominant figure in the family, finding a job and getting family affairs in hand. Gregor observes the physical change in his father, who used to lie in bed most of the time and whenever he got up he could not stand without the help of the others or his walking stick.

Now he was standing there in fine shape; dressed in a smart blue uniform with gold buttons, such as bank messengers wear; his strong double chin bulged over the stiff high collar of his jacket; from under his bushy eye-brows his black eyes darted fresh and penetrating glances. (Meta. 121).

The father's new look resembles Gregor in the photo on the wall of his room as a lieutenant in military service; carefree and respectable. However, things are not the same anymore. Gregor, who once received affection and care from his mother and sister, is now neglected and replaced by his father. While Gregor descends, losing his authority over the family because of being unable to communicate and because of his involuntary silence, the father ascends. As he gains the respect of his wife and daughter, he also gains self confidence gradually. His parasitic former existence is destroyed, and the father whose only way of communication used to consist of reading newspapers aloud and showing physical aggression towards Gregor, is metamorphosed into a man who is articulate. In the end, the father breaks his silence and shows his reactions verbally. The family admits three lodgers to the house in search of financial support, and when the Samsas are given notice by the lodgers "because of the disgusting conditions prevailing in this household and family" (Meta. 132), the father falls into his chair, unable to utter a word. However, as soon as the news of Gregor's death is announced by the charwoman the next morning, the father stands against the lodgers and orders them to leave his house confidently; and he follows them out to make sure that they are obedient. With the disappearance of his son from the way, the father attains complete authority.

Grete's silence emerging from similar reasons to the father's silence caused by fear and despair, gradually becomes her stratagem to overpower Gregor by ignoring his existence. Grete is the only person who looks after Gregor. In the beginning, she remains silent in her brother's presence, convinced that he can no longer comprehend human speech. However, from time to time she makes comments like "Well, he liked his dinner tonight." (Meta. 109) and some similar insignificant statements when she enters Gregor's room and observes that he has finished up his food. Despite the fact that Gregor is in the room with her, she avoids talking to him and instead, she treats him as a third person, or as if he were not there and did not exist. In time Grete gets used to her brother's condition; moreover, she takes the task of looking after him more seriously and passionately, not out of pity or affection but out of self-satisfaction. Her strong attachment to her duty is seen as "the enthusiastic temperament of an adolescent girl, which seeks to indulge itself on every opportunity...to exaggerate the horror of her brother's circumstances in order that she might do all the more for him." (Meta. 117). Therefore, the task of looking after Gregor provides her with a sense of authority. Furthermore, what she does is respected by her parents, which increases her self-confidence. Gregor "often heard them expressing their appreciation of his sister's activities, whereas formerly they had frequently scolded her for being as they thought a somewhat useless daughter." (Meta. 114). With the help of this silent domination Grete applies, her status in the family changes. As she becomes more confident, she becomes articulate like her father. In the scene where Gregor clings to his picture on the wall so as to protect it from Grete's invasion of his room and unfortunately his mother, to her horror, catches sight of him, Grete calls out his name, "shaking her fists and glaring at him. This was the first time she had directly addressed him since his metamorphosis." (Meta. 119). By breaking her silence, she shakes off her impotence. Grete, who used to be the amiable and sensitive sister, has become a tough, powerful girl.

Gregor is forced to endure all the domination and victimization applied to him by his family members since he has to remain silent lacking a language to express himself. In the end, Gregor is locked in and left to die. None of the family

members attempts to save him. Moreover, his own sister reaches a verdict that Gregor must go and proclaims:

that's the only solution, Father. You must get rid of the idea that this is Gregor...If this were Gregor, he would have realized long ago that human beings can't live with such a creature, and he'd have gone away on his own accord...As it is, this creature persecutes us, drives away our lodgers, obviously wants the whole apartment to himself. (Meta. 134)

Grete, by announcing that the insect is not Gregor, verbally kills him, and she ascribes all kinds of savage intentions to Gregor, making him diverge from humanity in their perception. Without the language, Gregor is misunderstood, feared, despised, and exposed to accusations, physical and verbal violence as well as negligence and indifference by silent treatment, and hence, he is isolated, expelled from the family, overpowered, and in the end he dies of the infection caused by one of the apples thrown at him by his father; what is more, he dies of the feeling of insignificance.

Gregor, who used to be on the upper side of the scales, has now descended. Devlin, on the other hand has never had the upper hand; however, he is bound to go down much deeper. Devlin, who has stopped asking about the man, now he tries to make Rebecca understand how he feels, "Why have you never told me about this lover of yours before this? I have the right to be very angry indeed. Do you realize that? I have the right to be very angry indeed. Do you understand that? *Silence.*" (Ashes 71). The silence at the end is an indication of Devlin's expectancy to get an answer to, at least this simple question. Nevertheless, Rebecca neither answers nor shows any sign of sympathy. Instead, she starts a long monologue, eliminating the possibility of a conversation. Rebecca lives no longer in the present or in their house in the country. She describes herself as standing in a room at the top of a building and watching an old man and a small boy, later accompanied by a young woman holding a baby, kissing her and listening to her heartbeat. The more Rebecca loses herself in her monologue, the more she locks her husband out. Devlin, intimidated by the impossibility of reaching Rebecca through the means of language, becomes savage and applies physical violence as a last resort, reenacting the scene between Rebecca and her former lover.

Devlin: Kiss my fist.
She does not move.
He opens his hand and places the palm of his hand on her mouth.
She does not move.
Speak. Say it. Say 'Put your hand round my throat.'
She does not speak.
Ask me to put my hand round your throat.
She does not speak or move.
He puts his hand on her throat. He presses gently. Her head goes back.
They are still.
She speaks. There is an echo. His grip loosens. (Ashes 73-75)

Devlin attempts to win the battle of domination by brutal force. He forces Rebecca to obey his orders, standing at a higher position to her and trying to make her kiss his hand, which is an act of courtesy, obedience and loyalty. However, the way Rebecca remains silent and motionless, totally ignoring his existence, makes Devlin surrender. When Rebecca speaks again he takes his hand from her throat. The monologue goes on but this time Rebecca's voice echoes, doubling the effect it creates on Devlin, who is reduced to nothingness and left out eventually.

In both "The Metamorphosis" and *Ashes to Ashes*, the characters struggle to dominate each other, to become noteworthy. In their exertion they use words and silences as weapons to subjugate, victimize or oppress the others. Gregor, who once held the power in his hands due to being the earner of money and the one who had the answers to the others' questions, is pulled down from the summit by his father and sister. His silence; that is to say, his inability to communicate brings about his fall. Overcoming their fears, they gain confidence and break their silence, condemning Gregor to death. Likewise, Devlin is overpowered by his wife's silent domination. Although, in the end, Devlin does not die like Gregor, he is killed spiritually. The power of language lies not in its communicating qualities but rather in the way it conceals the truth about the individual who wants to cover his vulnerability by filling in the silence that may be pregnant to violent intentions. And the power of silence emerges from the fact that it creates ambiguity and furthermore, it is a medium to destroy one's personality as remaining silent is a way of ignoring the other's existence.

4.2. Inauthenticity

Authenticity, which is the most important existentialist virtue, is a term coined by Heidegger first, and later taken over by Sartre, who describes the authentic man as a “person who undergoes a radical conversion through anguish and who assumes his freedom. He recognizes himself, not as the shepherd of Being, but as the cause of there being a world and as the unique source of the world’s values and intelligibility.” (Olson 139). What Sartre suggests is that authenticity is assuming responsibility for being free, for the choices the individual makes and for the results of these choices. However, this moral responsibility that freedom of choice lays on man can be a burden. Hence, man finds ways of fleeing from this burden, consciously or unconsciously; that is, he becomes inauthentic. Inauthenticity basically has two forms; denying one’s past, refusing to take responsibility for his past actions, or denying that his future is free and full of possibilities, believing that he is a predetermined being. This escapist attitude can be observed in both the Kafkaesque and Pinteresque characters who choose inauthenticity as a response to existential problems.

In Kafka’s novel The Trial and Pinter’s *The Birthday Party*, inauthenticity comes in the form of guilt, concerning the main characters Joseph K. and Stanley Webber, both of whom are accused of things which they deny having committed; thereby, denying their past.

Kafka’s novel starts with the statement that “Someone must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning.” (Trial 3), and throughout the novel neither K. nor the reader is provided with an explanation about the reasons underlying this arrest. However, there are some clues which show that K. has a sense of guilt which he rejects. When the two warders, Franz and Wilhem come to arrest him, K. thinks the whole affair to be a joke played on him possibly by his colleagues in the bank where he works. However, he decides not to disclose his thought so as not to be considered a man

who cannot take jokes. Despite the fact that he does not take the arrest seriously, in his room where he is supposed to wait for the Inspector, the idea of suicide crosses his mind.

K. was surprised, at least he was surprised considering the warders' point of view, that they had sent him to his room and left him alone there, where he had abundant opportunities to take his life. Though at the same time he also asked himself, looking at it from his own point of view, what possible ground he could have to do so. Because two warders were sitting next door and had intercepted his breakfast? To take his life would be such a senseless act that, even if he wished, he could not bring himself to do it because of its very senselessness. (Trial 12)

Although K. thinks committing suicide to be an absurd act to undertake as he is innocent, the way he over-analyzes the idea of killing himself seems as if he is trying to make himself believe in his innocence and the unnecessary of suicide. What, then, might be his guilt? K. has a weakness for women by whom he is easily tempted. The fact that K. has sexual intercourse with a prostitute, Elsa, which is against the moral codes of the society, could be his guilt. In the scene where K. goes to the court, though not asked to do so, on the following Sunday after his first trial, he is led by the usher to the offices of the court located in the attic. This gloomy, airless place makes K. so sick that he loses the ability and strength to get out alone. A girl who sees K.'s desperate situation tells him what he experiences is normal for someone who has come to the offices for the first time. K. explains that he does not usually suffer from these attacks and is surprised and goes on telling that he, too is an official and accustomed to office air but that this one is more than he can bear. He asks the girl and a man, who is said to be the representative of the Information Bureau, giving clients all the information they need, to help him out. However, the man does not respond immediately but laughs, keeping his hands in his pockets and says to the girl "It's only here that this gentleman feels upset, not in other places." (Trial 86). His sarcastic attitude is a reference to the fact that K. visits a prostitute regularly, in an indecent place and yet he does not feel any kind of disturbance. K.'s habit of seeking sexual pleasures is an inauthentic attitude, in that passion and instincts are not supposed to be the determinant factors in committing acts.

If human beings find it congenial to interpret passions as things with weights which compel us to act, it is only because they do not want to recognize their freedom. The concept of passion is simply a 'deterministic excuse' for freely chosen behaviour we do not wish to acknowledge as ours. (Olson 148)

Therefore, K. is, in one way, guilty of being inauthentic as a result of refusing to recognize his freedom by interpreting his passions as the cause of his acts. Although K. most probably does not know the reason why he is accused, he in a way accepts his guilt by becoming defensive.

Instead of taking the responsibility of his past actions, K. spends the time between his arrest and his death searching for allies whom he thinks would be of some help in his case. He encounters a number of women, mainly Leni, the lawyer's nurse and the usher's wife, believing in the idea that "Women have great influence. If I could move some women I know to join forces in working for me, I couldn't help winning through. Especially before this court, which consists almost entirely of petticoat-hunters." (Trial 265). While having the intention of benefiting from these women one way or the other, he finds himself tempted by their sexuality, and once more he shows an inauthentic attitude, following his instincts in search of a way to escape responsibility for his own being.

K. also seeks the help of men one of whom is Titorelli, the court painter, whom K. is advised by one of his bank clients to visit so as to take advice. Despite the fact that Titorelli has no real official connections, he seems to have knowledge of the court's affairs, which "made the painter an excellent recruit to the ring of helpers which K. was gradually gathering round him." (Trial 189); nonetheless, K. quickly changes his mind when he hears him say that he wishes to help him since he is completely innocent, "The repeated mention of his innocence was already making K. impatient. At moments it seemed to him as if the painter were offering his help on the assumption that the trial would turn out well, which made his offer worthless." (Trial 190). Titorelli declares K. innocent because that's what K. claims. Although the painter has neither the authority nor the evidence to conclude that K. is not guilty, K. feels relieved because he desperately needs to hear the confirmation of his innocence from someone else. However, a few minutes later, Titorelli makes a statement which is contradictory to the one he has just made. He

sets out three possible acquittals before K, consisting of definite acquittal, ostensible acquittal and indefinite postponement. He tells K. about the definite acquittal.

As far as I know, there is no single person who could influence the verdict of definite acquittal. The only deciding factor seems to be the innocence of the accused. Since you're innocent, of course it would be possible for you to ground your case on your innocence alone. But then you would require neither my help nor help from anyone. (Trial 191)

Titorelli, just like the young man in the offices, implies that K. is guilty inasmuch as he seeks too much outside help. The fact that K. pursues every opportunity to prove himself innocent arouses the question why he exerts himself so much if he has not committed any offense. K. "professes his innocence, but his very denial evolves into proof of his guilt. (Katchadourian 109). K.'s behaviours show that he does not himself believe that he is innocent but he all the same rejects who he is, which is inauthentic.

Another clue to prove that K. is guilty is presented when he is required to go to the cathedral to meet an Italian visitor, one of the most important clients of the bank. K. sees a priest while expecting to find his client. Although the church is empty the priest is just about to preach a sermon which K. is not inclined to listen to. Just as he is leaving the church, the priest calls out his name. K. pauses in hesitation and remains silent, looking down at the ground like a child who is caught red handed.

For the moment he was still free, he could continue his way and vanish through one of the small, dark, wooden doors that faced him at no great distance...But if he were to turn round he would be caught, for that would amount to an admission that he had understood it very well, that he was really the person addressed, and that he was ready to obey. (Trial 262)

The small, dark, wooden doors represent the gateways opening to K.'s dark side, his unconscious where the motives behind his acts dwell; his id which does not have any sense of responsibility. On the other hand, the priest is the representative of religion, God and moral values. K. may go on pretending to be innocent or he could face his guilt. Having stood there for a while, he cannot help turning his head a little to check on the priest who catches his glimpse and calls

him nearer. The priest expresses his concerns about K.'s case, and tells him he fears that it will end badly, which K. immediately objects to by saying that he is not guilty. He says "it's a mistake...how can any man be called guilty? We are all simply men here, one as much as the other." (Trial 264). The priest's reply is significant, "That's true,...but that's how all guilty men talk." (Trial 264). K. is guilty not only before the court but also before God. However, he does not accept it. Although it is never clearly stated in the novel what K. is charged with, as Martin Greenberg suggests, "Joseph K.'s wrongdoing consists in the complaint, which he never ceases making until just before the end, that a wrong has been done to him." (Greenberg 241)

Just as Joseph K. is arrested by Franz and Wilhem without any clear reason, in *The Birthday Party*, two men called Goldberg and McCann come to the boarding house where the protagonist, Stanley stays; threaten him and take him away. Similar to Kafka's novel, in Pinter's work the reason why Stanley is terrorized by these men is not mentioned. However, like Joseph K., Stanley shows signs of guilt.

In the opening scene of the play, the owners of the boarding house Meg and Petey are having a conversation, in which the husband informs the wife about two strangers he met the previous night, who wish to stay in their place for a couple of nights. Later, when Stanley gets up, Meg tells him what her husband has told her earlier, which makes Stanley curious as well as nervous. He starts to pace up and down and ask questions about whom these people are and why they have chosen this place. Then he suddenly changes his attitude.

Stanley: (*decisively*) They won't come.

Meg: Why not?

Stanley: (*quickly*) I tell you they won't come. Why didn't they come last night if they were coming?

Meg: Perhaps they couldn't find the place in the dark.

Stanley: They won't come. Someone's taking the Michael³. Forget all about it. It's a false alarm. A false alarm. Where's my tea?
(*Birthday* 11)

³ To take the Michael: (*slang*) to tease, to make fun of.

The uneasiness of Stanley hints that he might have an idea about who these people are and the reason why they are here. However, he seems to be in need of convincing himself that they will not be coming. Like K. he thinks it to be a joke and wants to believe that there is no approaching danger in reality. therefore, he changes the subject of the conversation, a vain attempt to escape the thought of the threat. A little later in the play, Stanley, disturbed by the exaggerated motherly affections of Meg, wants to intimidate her by talking about some mysterious people coming to her house in a van and they have a wheelborrow inside. Meg objects to this in terror.

Meg: (*breathlessly*) They haven't.

Stanley: Oh yes they have.

Meg: You're a liar.

Stanley: A big wheelbarrow. And when the van stops they wheel it out, and they wheel it up the garden path, and then they knock at the front door.

Meg: They don't.

...

Stanley: They're looking for someone. A certain person. (*Birthday* 14)

The way Stanley talks about the unidentified danger coming from ambiguous people, is like the harbinger of the events that will take place, almost as if he foresees the future; however, this shows that he knows exactly what will happen just as a criminal knows that he will go in jail if he is caught; that is to say, "Stanley's fear of the men...presupposes that if the men are after him *he* must be guilty of a crime." (Prentice 36).

The conversation between Stanley and Meg goes on until there is a knock at the front door, causing Stanley to slither to the hall like a snake. Fortunately, the person who has come is Lulu, a young friend of Meg's. Through Lulu, Stanley's physical portrait is given: a man who does not shave, take a shower or go out, dwelling in a house where he has the least possible contact with people as he is the only lodger. In short, he lives the life of an outlaw hiding from the authority. One cannot help but ask the reason why he hides if he is not guilty and running away from someone or something. Moreover, when, finally, the two strangers, Goldberg and McCann arrive, Stanley hastily leaves the scene without being seen. Later, he

interrogates Meg, rather anxiously. He desperately urges her to remember what the men's names are, and when Meg barely articulates 'Goldberg', Stanley slowly sits and remains silent, almost lost, deep in thought. Meg, seeing him upset, tries to cheer him up by giving him his birthday present, which is a boy's drum. Stanley puts it round his neck and starts to beat it, which evokes funeral drums.

In the second act, when Stanley meets McCann, he tries to convince him that he is not like what he appears to be, a loser. He attempts to justify his stay in this boarding house, spending his days only sleeping and eating, by saying that his business, which he considers giving up, has dragged him to this place, and contrary to his expectations it has been a long time since he came. Besides, he adds that he intends to go back to his hometown where he used to lead a peaceful life. Stanley, by giving some details about his life, tries to form a kind of a relation with McCann, through which he might be able to arouse a feeling of empathy in him towards a man who has been wrongly accused. Stanley explains:

You know what? To look at me, I bet you wouldn't think I'd led such a quiet life. The lines on my face, eh? It's the drink. Been drinking a bit down here. But what I mean is – away from your own – all wrong, of course – I'll be all right when I get back – but what I mean is, the way some people look at me you'd think I was a different person. I suppose I've changed, but I'm still the same man that I always was. I mean, you wouldn't think, to look at me, really – I mean, not really, that I was the sort of bloke to – to cause any trouble, would you? Do you know what I mean? (*Birthday* 29)

What Stanley does is to accept his present condition by frankly confessing his misdeeds, such as his drinking, living isolated, wasting his time sleeping all day, but while doing so he intends to excuse them by arguing that they have been, as Olson says "required by some accidental or unusual external circumstance, that his true self is in no way responsible for them." (Olson 140), which is a way of not taking responsibility for his acts; blaming his business for leading the life he has today. Although he is aware that he has done something wrong, he rejects the idea that he should be judged for something he has committed unintentionally, as a result of circumstances. Therefore, he is being inauthentic. Despite the fact that Stanley struggles hard to make McCann believe that by nature, in his essence, he is

a good man, he is not able to succeed as McCann's reply to his question whether he understands the argument or not is only a 'No', which causes Stanley to become aggressive. He grabs McCann's arm and forces him to believe that he and his partner are making a mistake; that he has not done anything wrong. However, when these attempts fail too, he tries to approach McCann, an Irish man, by saying:

I know Ireland very well. I've many friends there. I love that country and I admire and trust its people. I trust them. They respect the truth and they have a sense of humour. I think their policemen are wonderful. I've been there. I've never seen such sunsets.
(*Birthday* 30)

While praising the country and its people Stanley tries to win the heart and mind of McCann. Moreover, he implicitly states that his previous behaviours like grabbing his arm, should not be taken seriously, and he suggests going out for a drink that seems to be done for the purpose of attaining a friendly compromise. Just like Joseph K., Stanley mingles with the servants of the system so as to prove his innocence which he himself is not certain of.

Through The Trial, it is implied that Joseph K.'s guilt sexual; however, the crime Stanley has committed is failing to live. Following Stanley's conversation with McCann, Goldberg comes in and congratulates him on his birthday, which is received with hostility. Goldberg, ignoring Stanley's unfriendly attitude, talks about the importance of birthdays enthusiastically;

What a thing to celebrate – birth! Like getting up in the morning. Marvellous! Some people don't like the idea of getting up in the morning. I've heard them. 'Getting up in the morning,' they say, 'what is it? Your skin's crabby, you need a shave, your eyes are full of muck, your mouth is like a boghouse, the palms of your hands are full of sweat, your nose is clogged up, your feet stink, what are you but a corpse waiting to be washed?' Whenever I hear that point of view, I feel cheerful. Because I know what it is to wake up with the sun shining, to the sound of the lawnmower, all the little birds, the smell of the grass, church bells, tomato juice...(
Birthday 33)

Goldberg, in his description of people who do not like getting up early, reveals his perception of Stanley, likening him to a corpse, considering his present

state. According to him Stanley is incapable of celebrating life and perceiving the beauty of it with all his senses; moreover, he fails to take responsibility for his life, and avoids making choices. Thus he does not live authentically. Following this statement of Goldberg, Stanley enters into a power struggle with the two strangers, in which both parties urge each other to sit down, and when Stanley sits on the edge of the table, he “steps over an invisible line that ushers in a brutal verbal inquisition” (Prentice 30). Goldberg and McCann charge him with a variety of crimes and ask him so many questions and direct so many accusations towards him that Stanley screams eventually. However, they are determined not to stop until they destroy him and create a new Stanley.

McCann: Who are you, Webber?

Goldberg: What makes you think you exist?

McCann: You’re dead.

Goldberg: You’re dead. You can’t live, you can’t think, you can’t love. You’re dead. You’re a plague gone bad. There’s no juice in you. You’re nothing but an odour! (*Birthday* 39)

Stanley, is being accused of tending to become an object, pre-determined, whose choices are not his. He does not possess the essence to take responsibility for his past and present actions. Therefore, his life is of no significance, has no weight, which is already known by Stanley himself. His inauthentic existence is what has drawn Goldberg and McCann to the house where he stays.

Joseph K.’s and Stanley’s existences are determined in relation to their feeling of guilt, which makes itself visible in their attempts to prove their innocence. Inauthentically, they refuse to consider themselves guilty, which is to claim that they are not what they are. According to Sartre, the authentic man transcends his past self in existing. Man both is and is not his past; that is, although his past is history and unchangeable, he is supposed to take responsibility for it since man’s past self and present self are internally related. Both characters inauthentically claim that they are innocent, refusing to take responsibility for their past actions.

Another form of inauthenticity shows itself in the form of fearing a future that is of the individual’s own making. Therefore, one rejects the idea that he must

choose his future. Similar to the relation between one's past self and present self, one's present and future selves are related internally. Unlike the individual's past, which cannot be altered, the future is free from the past self or from the external world, in that it is full of possibilities and potentialities. This provides man with the freedom of choice; however, one might lose touch with his present self pursuing his subjective possibilities, or he might not be aware that he has the ability to choose his future. The frightening nature of choice making brings inauthenticity and leads to the acceptance of an absurd fate eventually in K.'s and Stanley's cases.

K., in the course of his trial runs after many possibilities failing to make a decision. Although his future lies ahead of him, he, with a deterministic attitude, accepts the absurd fate cast on him. Concerned with his case too much, K. tries to form alliances with people who are one way or the other attached to the court, and thus moves further and further from his normal life, his job, his environment and his self until two men come to his lodging on the evening before his thirty-first birthday, exactly one year after his arrest. K. is dressed in black as if he expected his angels of death. At first, K. seems resolute to struggle against the two men; however, on seeing the sight of Fraulein Bürstner, which probably reminds him of how he sexually harassed her, and makes him feel ashamed, he surrenders. He seems to accept his guilt eventually since he gives up resistance. Nonetheless, his acceptance of guilt does not cause him to project himself to the future, full of possibilities; on the contrary, he is determined that taking action is useless as well as senseless. Hence, he surrenders himself to his fate, letting the others, the system, the society, the court or religion; whatever the authority is, determine his future. The two men take him to a district at the edge of the town, where K. is expected to take his own life, which is explicit in the way that the two men continuously hand a knife to each other across K., who has been laid down.

K. now perceived clearly that he was supposed to seize the knife himself...and plunge it into his own breast. But he didn't do so, he merely turned his head, which was still free to move, and gazed around him. He could not completely rise to the occasion, he could not relieve the officials of all their tasks; the responsibility for this last failure of his lay with him who had not left him the remnant of strength necessary for the deed. (Trial 285)

K. refuses to kill himself not because he has willingly decided not to do it but because he is simply too tired to commit it. It is his last chance to take control, to make a decision, to be authentic; however, he leaves the responsibility to the two men. He turns his eyes to a window at the top of a building where he sees a figure leaning forward. He asks himself; “Who was it? A friend? A good man? Someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or was it mankind? Was help at hand? Were there arguments in his favour that had been over-looked?” (Trial 286). K. once more, seeks outside help, failing to turn to his own self for salvation. The moment the two men stab K. in the heart, he can only say “Like a dog” disgracefully, realizing how unworthy his life has been. Although K. has a choice of committing suicide or running away from the men, he does nothing as he does not possess the awareness of an authentic man that the future is his; thus, he accepts his absurd fate and dies disgracefully. As Ronald Gray says “the continuing shame of K.’s death is removed from all earthly and human meaning, and by outliving him, it suggests an unchangeable, pure state of perfected degradation.” (Gray 125).

K. dies as a consequence of his inability to decide on what he should do with his future. Likewise, Stanley is incapable of making choices which will determine his future, he would rather the two men choose for him. In the end, he is faced with an absurd fate.

Stanley, who has been shaken and benumbed by the constant accusations of Goldberg and McCann, remains silent throughout the whole party whereas the others have drinks, dance and socialize. Although he has a choice, he does not make an attempt to run away. He even takes part in the game called the blind man’s buff, due to which he is blindfolded and humiliated by McCann, who breaks his glasses and makes him fall over. Stanley, in despair, strangles Meg and tries to rape Lulu during the blackout that occurs at some point in the party, which shows that he is incapable of projecting his anger to the people who terrorize him. As stated by Penelope Prentice, the thing which keeps Stanley from walking out on the party is his inertia which “results from his inability to imagine choices.” (Prentice 25). Like K., who refuses to take the knife and take his own life since he lacks the strength to do it, Stanley’s inactivity prevents him from making a choice concerning his future.

Thus, in the morning following the party night, Stanley, dressed in a black suit like K. on his dying day, comes down. He is stripped off his faculty of speech, like a newborn baby, who bears in himself an infinite number of potentialities.

McCann: You'll give orders.

Goldberg: You'll make decisions.

McCann: You'll be a magnate.

Goldberg: A statesman.

McCann: You'll own yachts. (*Birthday* 67)

The fact that Stanley has failed to attain authenticity, has paved the way for the creation of a new man, attuned to the system, the social norms and expectations. However, what Goldberg and McCann suggest is actually another form of inauthentic existence since an authentic individual takes self knowledge as a ground for having an effect on the values of the society. Nevertheless, as long as knowledge and values are imposed on a person, he no longer possesses an authentic thought shaped by his own choices.

Authenticity emerges from the necessity of the individual to be free. The authentic man "Recognizes his past for what it is...and assumes responsibility for it, while at the same time recognizing that his future is free and that at every moment he is called upon to transcend his past and to make himself anew, for the future, too, is *his*." (Olson 145). Neither Joseph K. nor Stanley Webber, manages to accept his past as his own or decide his future freely. They prefer to be inauthentic because the feeling of guilt in them is intolerable, which causes them to resort to denial. On the other hand, although their lives are at stake, neither one chooses to turn his back on the accusations and walk away. In the end, both characters accept an absurd fate, which is the result of their inauthenticity, which in return brings about their destruction.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this thesis the existential problems faced by Kafkaesque and Pinteresque characters, and their methods of dealing with these problems are analyzed. The problems faced in existence by these characters are divided into three parts, namely alienation, menace and facticity, while the responses to these issues come in the form of domination and inauthenticity.

In the works of both Kafka and Pinter, it is observed that the individuals experience alienation as a result of their fear of authentic existence, forcing the individual to make choices. Due to this existential anguish, the characters try to avoid acting as individuals by committing themselves to the system, in which every decision is already made for them. Hence, they lead themselves into a path which takes them away from both themselves and from the others. The more alienated they are, the less significant they become as individuals. Therefore, the quest for a meaningful existence fails for the characters of both Kafka and Pinter.

Even though man is a being possessing the faculty of free will, and thus can determine his future with his own choices, it is argued in the thesis that, the characters in the works of both writers share the same inability to decide freely as they are limited by their facticity which is categorized as the facticity of body, language, race and past that cannot be changed and thus restrain the individual from projecting himself into the future. Each of these facticities hinders the existential struggle of these characters by limiting their freedom since their facticities are not chosen but pre-determined. Through their facticity, they experience otherness, which turns them into mere objects in the other's perspective. Therefore, their trials to attain meaning and significance in life are sabotaged by facticity.

Menace is another problem that Kafkaesque and Pinteresque characters are faced with. They are subject to a terrifying force, the origin of which is ambiguous. This force is so powerful that although they fight it back, they are not able to overcome its destructive nature since they enter into a power struggle without having a firm, stable identity.

The characters of both writers attempt to overcome the problems discussed in the third chapter of the thesis, which are alienation, facticity and menace, by applying dominance over the others or resorting to inauthenticity. Domination is a strategy to feel secure by overpowering and reducing the other to the level of an object. In their choices of weapons to win the battle of domination, both writers' characters are alike in that they use the power assigned to them by their gender, or they reshape the reality for their own advantage, a reality where they rule, or sometimes they resort to verbal assaults as well as a destructive silence. These characters who have the illusion that they have guaranteed sitting on the upper side of the scales by subjugating the other, find themselves, contrary to their expectations, at the bottom. Therefore, it is argued in the thesis that dominating the other to overcome the feeling of failure, nothingness and meaninglessness is a vain attempt.

Existential values urge man to take responsibility for his actions and accept his choices and their results as his. However, attaining a self, an individuality is so difficult that the characters of both Kafka and Pinter become inauthentic as a response to their existential problems, denying any responsibility for their past deeds as well as their future which is filled with infinite possibilities. Although becoming inauthentic seems to be a solution to escape anguish for these characters, it is paradoxically the cause of their problems. The reason why they are alienated or menaced is due to the fact that they are inauthentic. Moreover, the fact that these characters cannot find a way to cope with their facticity stems from their inability to make peace with themselves, since they are programmed to believe that they are limited by their facticity, failing to recognize the choices before them.

In this thesis, it is argued and demonstrated that although Kafka was a novelist and Pinter a playwright, and though they lived in different periods, their

character portraits are similar since they all share the universal anxiety of man, having to exist in a world deprived of meaning and security.

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