

## CHAPTER - VII

### Conclusion

Kafka was a writer for whom writing was an existential necessity. The existential crisis in Franz Kafka has therefore been the cause of the rise of a wealth of Kafka literary canon. Although, existentialism as a style of philosophizing is generally misconstrued as a philosophy with painful and morbid associations, but it is existentialism which has prodded a great many writers to analyze the very condition of '*being*'. Now if existentialism starts with the premise that existence is prior to essence; then the idea of existence would preclude all freedom. The mystery of birth shows that there really is no freedom of choice with regard to man's existence. On the other hand, there is a greater freedom of choice with regard to our essence. This is why existence becomes paradoxical for Kafka because freedom becomes a highly ambiguous state. The theistic existentialists like Jean Paul Sartre derive consolation from the idea of God as a superior sort of artisan involved in the act of creation. Just as any manufacturer of a product has a concept in his mind before he produces the product; like wise for the individual, man is the realization of a certain concept in the divine intelligence. Now for the atheistic existentialists, if God does not exist, then man is what he conceives himself to be. This proposition gives tremendous importance to man as the creator of his own self and nature. The emphasis is also on 'subjectivity'; for now it is man who is to be responsible for his own existence.

For Kafka, God as an entity did not exist. If we presume that only God can give a meaning to the world, then the world was apparently meaningless for Kafka and even if God did exist for Kafka, there is not really any definite way to prove that the world

was made for man; just as whether K. in **The Castle** had been summoned by its authorities to act as the Land Surveyor or whether he pretends or imagines it, remains an open question in the novel throughout. According to the Jewish faith, God's message can reach to any one who is ready to open himself to Him. Unfortunately, Kafka lacked this Jewish faith. However, for many existentialists, the idea of God as not existing is profoundly disquieting. Even Sartre agreed that God should not be regarded as a useless hypothesis for it is God who provides value to an *a priori* existence. Thus for Sartre, existentialism is profoundly optimistic whose doctrine is the doctrine of action. For both Sartre and Kierkegaard freedom is synonymous with existence; our action implies freedom, and for the existentialists, freedom is not something to be proud of, but it is rather a postulate of action. It is already there as a condition of our existence. But in Kafka's works we have seen how his characters are reduced to a state of perpetual suspension and forever condemned to inaction. However, the existentialists may have the tendency to see world as meaningless but it is the quest for meaning that remains an essential part for Kafka. Thus existentialism has encouraged men to focus from a mere thinking entity to a meaningful '*being*'. Even literature is to be regarded as a mode of action and not one of contemplation. For this the existentialists have believed in the concept of the here and the now; so if man is to be given any meaning, then it has to be here, which is in this world and now, which is at this moment. Existentialism also deals with the whole man, which also includes unpleasant things like pain and suffering. Authentic living is acceptance of these issues as well rather than overlooking them or denying their existence. This existentialist notion of crisis is perhaps best expressed in the works of Franz Kafka, than in the actual philosophical treatises. Kafka's works are a reflection of the man as an existent faced with the idea of solitude, of dread, of subjectivity, of anguish, of

absurdity, of nothingness, and of death. But what redeems Kafka figures is their ability to face these limitations of '*being*' in the world.

A literary icon of both German and Austrian literature, Kafka is also a cosmopolitan writer whose works transcend geographical, historical and cultural limitations. Kafka rose above the narrowness of familial, cultural and provincial background. In spite of being acutely conscious of his Jewish identity, he found the claims of his Jewish background as rather suffocating. He once asked rhetorically what he had in common with the Jews when he didn't even have anything in common with himself. He advises the young Minze Eisner to escape the restrictiveness of her background: "the world, the spiritual world above all, is much bigger than the accursed triangle, Teplitz-Karlsbad-Prague." (LME, Nov-Dec, 1920) Thus we see how his works transcend the geographical limitations of place, and narrow nationalism giving place to internationalism. And when he finds it difficult to assimilate within the geographical terrain, he takes recourse to the eternal world of myths. Writing did serve as a therapeutic device to some extent for Kafka and so he is not confined to the paper but via the imagination of creativity, his works teem with images of the far-fetched worlds- Prague, Italy, Paris, Russia, Turkey, China, America; and his characters take various shapes like a dog, mouse, trapeze artist, bank-official, scholar et al. In all his works Kafka sees a great divide between Man and Institution, whether it is Joseph K. in **The Trial** seeking to understand the legal implications of the court or whether it is K. in **The Castle** trying to find a way to the impenetrable castle, or Karl Rossmann's struggle in a foreign land in **Amerika**. Though he transferred to his writings all his uncertainty and distrust he felt towards himself, we saw how writing soon became the source of his anguish. Kafka's notorious self-loathing is caused to a large extent by his dissatisfaction with writing. Many a times he felt an acute sense of

guilt by failing to write and by not writing well enough. Upon close analysis one finds the cause lying in the discrepancy Kafka finds between his knowledge of the world and his experience. Yet writing was his salvation, writing came before life. It freed him from his isolation to revel in the spiritual joy of writing. But try as he might, man is never to be regarded as a subject shut in on himself. The political, social, cultural and familial demands threaten the subject's isolation. Such was the case with Kafka who lived during a period of intense socio-cultural changes. His existential crisis was aggravated by his sense of inadequacy as a writer. Kafka felt acutely his inadequacy as a writer. Perhaps, it was because of his existential fear of failure as a writer is why most of his works are unfinished. Kafka was writing in an age that heralded a rise in urban centers, scientific advancement and new modes of communication. But these advancements also led to the rise of psychological instability and lack of individualism. All his characters are nameless; or possess truncated names; or their names are suggestive of their occupations: trapeze artist, hunger artist, the Chief Clerk, the emperor, the Messenger, the gatekeeper, even Poseidon who is mythically the God of the seas, the brother of the mighty Zeus in Kafka's world is a tormented soul. His letters are suggestive of the intense feelings crowding his memory as seen in one of his letters to Robert Klopstock: "Letters can cheer me up, move me, or arouse my admiration, but they used to mean much more to me, too much for me to see in them now an essential form of life. I have not been deceived by letters but I deceived myself through them; for years I warmed myself in the warmth they would produce when the whole lot got thrown on to the fire." (D, January 1922; BI: 369). It was because of his existential crisis that most of his works have the motif of self-destruction be it in **The Judgment**, **In the Penal Colony**, **The Hunger Artist**, **Josephine, the Singer or the Mouse Folk**, **The Burrow**.

We also notice a peculiar trait in Kafka with regard to the self's tenacity for recognition and the inaccessible other. The existential crisis arises from the distance that separates the self from the other because only from the self can meaning be had but there is difficulty in grasping the self. Unlike Nietzsche's Superman, who is strong enough to resist the curse of existence, Kafka's heroes are overpowered as helpless victims. Kafka had no faith in the Christian idea of God and Christ suffering for mankind. Rather he proposes ethical individualism where the impersonal divinity, the indestructible, lies at the centre of each individual. Suffering becomes a necessary mode to reach this indestructible, and Kafka accepts suffering as an essential part of his being: "Balzac carried a stick with the motto, 'I break every obstacle' - my motto would rather be, 'every obstacle breaks me' (B, 52). We also examined so far the clash between authority and individual as a perennial concern in Kafka, be it in the form of the Law, paternal sphere, the Institution or language. We noticed how Kafka's works proliferate with images of brutal fathers or father-figures, with the mother occupying a submissive role in the family structure. Personally, the threat of the father figure so tormented him that Kafka found any fruitful relationship in this world as impossible. Temperamentally, Kafka's intellectual agility and personal delicacy set him at loggerheads with his brutally healthy and assertive father. Kafka had an aversion for his body and the decisive factors appear to us to be the way in which he compared his body with his father's and the way in which Hermann Kafka reacted to his son's physique. These feelings of physical inferiority were made more serious by his father's overt rejection of his son. Kafka's anxiety about his father's domination is expressed in almost all his works in a physical metaphor. These are physical manifestations of an existential crisis brewing within Franz Kafka. He tries to escape his existential crisis by his attempt to achieve domestic serenity. Kafka knew that

marriage would fulfill his natural right as an adult, but he also knew that it was forbidden to him. The bliss of establishing a home was denied to him due to his existence as a writer. He knew that marriage was a human and moral obligation and that to exclude from this obligation was to exclude oneself from the human race. Thus his obligation to the higher order of writing prevented him from the happy realm of marriage which only aggravated his existential crisis. The psychologists have explained this threat of the father-figure as symptomatic of the oedipal complex, yet to understand Kafka as an existential figure one has to take into consideration also the struggle of the individual self to retain his authenticity in a world threatened of annihilation. Kafka's works are replete with images of such power conflicts in which he saw himself as constantly threatened by the demands of the external world. Kafka was acutely conscious of his physical self and his frail constitution which caused him a sense of lack as compared to his father's healthy figure. Also the court machinery represents the complexity of an age in which Kafka lived. It represents the political turmoil of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It could also stand for the fate of the Czechoslovakian Jews controlled by a repressive authority. Joseph K.'s dilemma can be understood in the light of Nietzsche's theory on the divide between the authority and man. In many ways, the strong emblems of authority have been able to weave myths of their superiority and govern over the rest, and in this way generate fear and awe which are not founded on actuality. The figures of authority use this moral code as a device to control and contain the vast majority like the castle authorities creating a myth of its strength and power; and consequently the weak suffer from a sense of guilt or 'bad conscience' as Nietzsche says in the **Genealogy of Morals**, where he explodes the notion of independent, self-sufficient individual. Such 'bad conscience' is experience by the individuals for internalizing these aggressive and bold drives

which would have helped him to surmount authority. The German word '*Schuld*' may mean either guilt or debt; both meanings conveying a sense of lack and we have examined this state of guilt as an existential condition. As in the Talmud and The Old Testament where God sits in judgment over Man; we see how Kafka's protagonists suffer from the existential plight of a man suffering the unexplained '*Schuld*' and whose existence is endangered by unseen forces. The court makes absolute claims upon the individual as clarified by the Priest whom Joseph K. meets in the cathedral. "The court makes no claims upon you. It receives you when you came and it relinquishes you when you go" (T, 244); suggesting the utter indifference on the part of authority wielding institutions. However, most of the protagonists seem to seek escape through exile like Karl in **Amerika** or Georg Bendemann's absent friend in **The Judgment**, or the ethnographic traveler **In The Penal Colony**. Like Karl in **Amerika**, K. in **The Castle** has also left his home to confront another world and K. is like the man from the country who attempts to penetrate the impenetrable; or is Kafka trying to force meaning into the slipping language through his exiled or displaced characters remains a paradoxical supposition. The Freudians reduce this hope in the indestructible betraying a yearning for a father but for Kafka hope is more secular and more individualistic, wherein man's faith is not to be sought in the religious impulses but in man's spirit of constant striving to look for the kingdom of God which is to be sought within us. The truth, the unattainable for Kafka is not to be sought in the outside world but in the obtrusiveness of the castle or the intricacy of the court but within truth lies hidden each man. Unfortunately, language becomes incapable of expressing this truth of '*Being*'; which is why Kafka uses strange even bizarre images and symbols to convey this truth. Kafka himself stood outside the law; he was the law himself even if this position meant harrowing torture. Kafka was aware of the

importance, nay necessity of suffering to realize the value of being human. Though not religious in the strict sense, he said if Christ suffered for mankind, then mankind must also be ready to suffer for Christ. It is through his writing that Kafka makes us aware of this fundamental truth. The existential silence exposing the problematic nature of language in communication has also been analyzed particularly by referring to Kierkegaard's **Fear and Trembling** and contextualizing Abraham's silence. The existential crisis in Kafka arising from the restraints of language has also been dealt with here because of the generalizing tendency of both narrative and language and so losing what is unique to the individual. Thus even language can be a source of authority, for the individual is forced to use the language of the world to demand his place in the world as seen in the short story **The Burrow** where burrowing becomes a metaphor for writing, also the animal fortifying himself against predatory animals and protecting himself against unknown enemy is expressed using the language of despair. This animal is prevented the joy of seeing the light of the day, revelation for him is forever deferred. Language is befooling in Kafka; language imprisons the self; just like the false confident opening of the text: "I HAVE COMPLETED the construction of my burrow and it seems to be successful. All that can be seen from outside is a big hole; that, however, really leads nowhere; if you take a few steps you strike against natural firm rock" (CS, 325). Language is 'holed' for Kafka as much of the biographical details from his life are only veiled references; and as Kafka realizes his inability to bury himself in his writings. The existential concern with language as an existential phenomenon has also been dealt here since all language is someone's language; and all language is addressed to someone. Thus existentialism studies language primarily in the context of being-with-others. In Martin Buber's **I and Thou**, he speaks of 'primary words like 'I', 'It', 'Thou', relating the speaker always to

the other person. The “-Thou’ language is spoken with the whole being and expresses the whole person, while “I-It’ language never does so. “Idle talk” (*Gerede*) is Heidegger’s expression for the kind of discourse that does not really communicate or disclose entities as they are. This ‘idle talk’ far from opening things closes them up. Such ‘idle talk’ is characteristic of the ‘they’ or the ‘crowd’ and it prevents any original and meaningful existence. Existentialism therefore proclaims that one should not be lost in the ‘they’; the public or herd mentality, which can only lead to ‘bad faith’. Man should rely only upon himself; he should look within himself for his authentic existence.

This brings us to deal with the philosophy of humanism, which too focuses on the primacy of the individual man. The philosophy of humanism is also concerned not with the idea of God per se but the ultimate faith in Man and his innate capability to solve his problems through the sheer use of reason. However, in Kafka’s works we realize that man is deprived of this innate ability to use this reason and thus man in consequence is doubly estranged not just from the outside world but from himself too. Reason, with its limitations, as a source of all knowledge becomes doubtful here. That is why humanism becomes an existential situation with a tragic overtone. If humanism places man at the centre then Kafka’s life is a search for a centre throughout. This sense of tragic humanism permeates through all his works, and this was greatly aggravated by the post-war mood of disillusionment. The Humanist tradition which placed immense faith upon man’s capability to improve his lot, and man being a reservoir of immense possibilities was thoroughly ruffled up after 1914. Humanism which is opposed to every kind of irrationalism or faith in external guidance does not hold any meaning for Kafka. All his works are imbued with an air of tragic humanism. Humanism seeks to prevent individuals from submerging in the

mass and yet at the same time seizing technology to improve the material conditions of living. For the Marxist Humanism, man is the historical product of flesh and blood; and man's humanity can only be realized in a capitalist society; and for the Christians man's humanity is only realized in his redemption or salvation. For the existentialists humanity is to be realized by man within himself. Existential humanity is to be sought and cultivated in the existent himself. It is again different from Marxism which being an ideology of Communism, we find in it a collective effort to control and master over things and men; or Christian humanism which seeks redemption in through grace. Thus existential humanism seems essentially tragic in nature in man's inability to move outside oneself. Heidegger calls it 'abandonment' or 'thrown ness; which is to say that man is thrown into the world outside. However, Heidegger admits that man may find himself to be thrown into the world; but man has the capability to transform the world by reaching out to others. In this manner authentic selfhood can be achieved by fusing the three temporalities of past, present and future which is the result of 'being-in-the-world.' Heidegger's work was not anthropological or anthropocentric; because its central concern was not man or human subjectivity but '*being*'. Here Heidegger gives Humanism a new and fundamental meaning- no longer man as such, but man in relation to '*being*'. Therein lay the dignity of man. Heidegger refused to take man or subjectivity as an origin, a centre or a foundation on which to build a philosophy but the destruction of humanity should not be misconstrued as inhumanity. Heidegger like Kafka might not have believed in the idea of 'God' or some particular creator but both never professed to be agnostics. Man's deep seated fear and craving for security leads him to turn towards God and it is this belief in God that man seeks comfort from the fear of abandonment. But for the existentialists this comfort does not hold to be true and man is thus forever condemned to this world. Most humanists

reject God's existence but at the same time they believe that there must be an 'uncaused cause' which must be responsible for everything that exists. Thus although the belief in God may be consoling or it may be regarded as a kind of wish fulfillment, yet it becomes important for man to feel at home in this universe; but Existentialists agree that man is not deprived of this consolation for there never was anything except a self-appointed authority. Thus the world does not reveal its meaning on its own and so it is man himself who must contribute to the meaning of his existence by his interpretation of reality.

The literature of realism should not only aim at the truthful reflection of reality, but also demonstrate both the abstract and concrete potentiality implying a description of plausible events and emotion which is the result of healthy interaction between man and his environment. But Kafka's protagonists are maladjusted creatures which explain why there is a constant negation of outward reality. The descriptive detail of his works deal with palpable characters but behind the realistic veneer lie the fantastic even nightmarish world whose function is to evoke angst. Thus there is an interdependent relation between the negation of reality and the dissolution of personality. Man is reduced to a sequence of unrelated fragments. He is as inexplicable to others as to himself. How the personality is severed by the destruction of this complex tissue of man's relationship with his environment can be understood by an existential analysis of Kafka's works. Another interesting aspect of the fantastic in Kafka's works is the use of hybridity : man-animal as in **The Metamorphoses, Investigations of a Dog, Josephine, The Country Singer and A Report to an Academy**; man and rock as in **Prometheus**; the living and the dead as in **The Hunter Grachhus**, or in the use of doubles like the two assistants( Arthur and Jeremiah )of K. in **The Castle**; or the rogue companions (Robinson and Delemarche)of Karl Rossmann in **Amerika**, or

the two intrusive warders ( Franz and Willem); or even the two bouncing parasitic balls in **Blumfeld., the Elderly Bachelor**. Such duplication is symptomatic of the split within Kafka's own psyche. Kafka's brilliant use of his imaginative fantasy is also revealed in the creation of such creatures like a cross between kitten and lamb; and a spool like unearthly creature Odradek in **The Cares of a Family Man**. Similarly, the half-kitten, half-lamb of **A Crossbreed** defies classification, it flees from cats and makes to attack lambs; and strangely it is not a cat in its inability to mew and in its hatred for rats; and neither can it be more of a lamb in its animosity for lambs. In its desire to communicate with its owner and the joy it displays in its understanding of their communication makes it more real and human. The transformations be it the human-animal or the animal-human; both these transformations are not perfect, they belong to the hybrid realm; neither human nor animal, neither freedom nor bondage. It is a purely existential condition.

In such a case, the dualism of realism and fantasy would play an important role in Kafka to present the dream- like contour behind the concreteness of things. It is the consequence of what the existentialists would call the anguish of the here and now. Man is reduced to nothing but a temporal being constricted by the restraints of time and space. Philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and Spinoza have all believed that man could escape through the anguish of here and now with the help of mind or intellect. This argument shows that all these thinkers tend to gloss over the duality of man, the observer and man, a part of the historical process. But Existentialists see no way in which this duality can be overcome. If man is seen as actively engaged in the historical process, he can sufficiently detach himself from his involvement to adopt a perspective on the whole of things. But even if he detaches himself to exist only as a spectator, he still fails to gain a vision on the whole of things because being a

spectator, he would still fail he could not be possibly be included in that vision. Therefore, there remains no longer a stable reality in the external world. What exist outside are only versions of reality which is again uncertain and inadequate. In Kafka angst as a dominant existential condition leads to the reduction and distortion of reality. But we have also analyzed how Kafka has given a bold vision of the 'real' unreality which lies behind, beneath, and beyond the frontiers of realism in other writers. This fracture between the real and the fantastic in **The Judgment** is a reminder of the fractured existential world. Like dreams, the surface of the text hides shadowy depths of meaning. There is a greater truth underlying the psychological one, of oppressor-father and victim-sons. It reflects the uncertainty of the world we live in. Thus what starts with prosaic realism ends with poetic fantasy. But Kafka does not aim to take his readers to marvelous heights of fantasy. Rather, his works jerk us out of our self-complacency to profound self-knowledge, where existence and consciousness dissolve. Kafka's existential crisis is conveyed by using descriptive realism as a precondition, but the structure and presentation making for an adequate image of the objective world depends on the writer's attitude towards reality as a whole. For Kafka, the world, being beset with anxiety, seeks refuge in the world of art, which makes the external world an equally incomprehensible terrifying place. Objective reality is subjectivized and distorted to help grasp the ultimate truth redeeming man. The subjectivizing of objective reality leads to angst. According to Kierkegaard, to undergo dread is necessary to appreciate fully the nature of existence; or else one is cut off from reality. However, the reality of existence is achieved at the cost of destroying one's faith. Reality is not static or quantifiable. Like Kant, Kierkegaard refused to believe that logic was the key to reality. Rather, Kierkegaard believed that truth lies in subjectivity and so it is only by turning inward that man

discovers his real self and discovers freedom. The concrete novelty of Kafka's works makes one aware of the transcendent reality and Kafka's images become cryptic symbols of the unfathomable transcendence. Franz Kafka's narrative pattern would make an interesting study because in the works of Franz Kafka we see a total absence of the legitimate act of *knowing* into *telling*. At the same time all human beings are readers who seek to reconcile what they read with what they see. Such interpretative contexts are dependent upon each other to make sense of the fragmentary into the whole; or in other words in which the texts come to life or is concretized. This concretization of the world buried within the sign of the text is a gradual but steady unfolding. This interaction of the three signified system – the presented world, the presentational process and reader- constitutes the 'structural theory of context' in proper fiction. Therefore any metastructural interpretation ought to be rooted in the interaction of these three signified system. But in Kafka, we see a continuous disjunction between the three signified systems – the presented word frequently has no spatial or temporal locus, the presentational process constantly shifting between different realms, and the reader is seldom a partner in contextualizing the meaning of the text. In other words, the existential crises in Franz Kafka results not just in the negation of inter- textuality and therefore the extraction of meaning in Kafka's works would involve a special kind of reader. This reader is discouraged from asking any question but accept the presented word as it is. It is as if God's act of creation cannot be understood in relation to anything else, but only as such. Thus what is present is the cold objectivity and the constricting impression of a single- view narrative; holding the reader a prisoner as in a night-mare. For Kafka existence is but a dream-like state expressed in his writings and this explains his dream-like quality of his works. Also Kafka found the real world sordid; the court in **The Trial** is housed in

the claustrophobic and crowded tenement; the inn houses in **The Castle** is nauseating with dirty beer puddles everywhere and rampant prostitution; and the picture of the foreign land in **Amerika** is disorienting. Nature descriptions in Kafka offer no freshness with an exception in the short story **Descriptions of a Struggle**. In Kafka's world there is so much anxiety that reality is forfeited. In the short story **Unhappiness** the exchange between the narrator and the ghost is conceived in normal way where terror is underplayed. **The Judgment** is a kind of a waking dream. Basically, Kafka's narratives are basically speculations using the imaginative language. His myths do not have a mythopoeic historical quality and they have a contemporary feel about it. Through the unfathomable the reality is brought closer to us. The movement of Kafka's narrative is also circular where the beginnings become the end and the ends from which now beginnings may arise; while the truth is safely ensconced in the centre. Therefore one needed to possess patience to explore the hidden truth.

Besides, novellas, much of Kafka's shorter narratives are in the form of parables and fables; possibly because contemporary German society during the time of Kafka and particularly after 1945 did not allow for free and open discussion of topical issues. A parable is a concise fictional narrative through which moral issues are worked out. Kafka regarded his works as 'prayers' which does suggest that although he was not fanatically religious; he did consider his writings as a sacred undertaking. His narrative pattern has biblical simplicity of language conveys a wealth of thought that is unique in itself. Also it has almost a fairy-tale like quality in its distant other worldly ephemeral quality through animals as protagonists. His dream narratives as they are called are because of their ability to churn out images, giving a feel of the exotic and the picturesque. But paradoxically, in Kafka the fairy-tale becomes anti-fairy tale; and dreams take the shape of nightmares. Kafka uses the device of

understatement; dramatic economy and much of what is concealed becomes more meaningful than what is apparent. Often Kafka's narrative pattern is called the symbolist narrative. Kafka manages to create an air of mystery in his narrative. In **The Castle** there is an aura surrounding the "higher-ups", the villagers gossiping and speculating on the true nature of the authority. Thus there are multiple interpretations of the same event; the same event is viewed from several perspectives. Unfortunately, what results is only a muddled vision. Kafka also uses a lot of animal symbolism derived from Jewish folklore; and as transformations were often regarded as punishments for transgression in the Jewish folklore from this angle Gregor Samsa's transformation can be seen as a punishment for transgressing the authority of his father. One of the common motifs of the Jewish folklore is the implication of the common mortals in crime as seen in Joseph K. implicated in *The Trial* and who willingly succumbs to the power of the law. From the very outset the narrative suggests that the trial would be a farce. The animal parables were composed mostly during the last phase of Kafka's life. What attracts our attention is the anthropomorphic treatment of these animals. These animals are not just simple narrators of events but also characters involved. These animals think and act as humans do, making us believe that they are not animals but human beings with masks of animals. The objectivity marking the earlier tales is distinctly missing with the tenses virtually shuttling between past and present, and like most of Kafka's stories these animal tales also do not have a rounding off of events or a definite closure. In Kafka's simple and lucid parables, meanings are to be deduced from concrete images and the meanings have to be literally excavated. In spite of having a bible like simplicity of the parables of Kafka, the varied meanings tussle to suggest only meaninglessness. Thus Kafka's narrative moves from being a purely realist narrative to a grotesque and fantastical,

even absurd resulting in the 'Kafkaesque' In **The Castle** the jerky movement of the narrative prose hints at the frustrated effort of K. in reaching the castle. The long winding sentences and convolutions in Kafka's narrative points to the difficult exhaustion due to the threat of the unknown. Yet one cannot ignore the tenacity of Kafka's protagonists in their effort to reach their goal; this explains much of the urgency in the narrative. Also the narrator shows a cold detachment as seen In **the Penal Colony** where the narrator displays complete indifference in explaining the cruel torture machine. Kafka was a careful observer of life and events; and this was the reason of his highly ingenuous narrative pattern. Max Brod while talking on his narrative pattern appreciates it for its 'matter-of-factness'; while Edwin Muir, one of his major translators calls it 'exquisitely just'; still others use epithets like 'absolute precision', 'complete honesty', 'scrupulous care', and 'scientific lucidity', for Kafka's narrative pattern. His narrative pattern is also known for its impression of clarity, purity and naturalness. Friedrich Beissner finds a 'uniqueness of meaning' in Kafka's narrative style. We saw how the narrator is submerged into the central character's point of view; thus constantly evading the fixity of any final meaning, not even by the narrator or the characters involved. In most of Kafka's fiction there is very little forward progression; and thus the static nature of narration only delays rather than postponing any finality. The readers are left in a state of suspense, straddling between the network of metaphors and denied the joy of finding any ultimate meaning. Likewise it is difficult, rather impossible to deduce any definite meaning out of his host of writings; his language being mercurial almost impenetrable like the castle. Both the maze of the castle or the intricacies of the court reflect the ramifications of the thought consciousness. Kafka is known for his simplicity of prose style, shorn off all artificial embellishments, uninfluenced by the affected nineteenth

century European style. Kafka's works are also not exactly allegorical although the conceptual framework to existential human situation is temptingly present, and his works as a commentary on his life as a marginalized writer, or his time with historical upheavals cannot be overlooked. Max Brod's tribute to the richness of Kafka's language is fittingly put in his biography on Kafka writes: "If the angels made jokes in heaven, it would be have to be in Franz Kafka's language. This language is fire, but it leaves no soot behind. It has the sublimity of endless space, and at the same time it palpitates with every palpitation of things created." (B, 132)

Thus writing did bring some relief but it did not bring freedom because he had to write about himself and relive the pain again and again. Soren Kierkegaard in his **The concept of Dread** regards anxiety as a vertigo of freedom, for freedom means possibility and to stand on the edge of possibility is rather like standing on the edge of a precipice. The human task is to accomplish the syntheses of body and soul, and this task is from the very beginning anxiety-ridden. Kierkegaard talks of the deceptiveness of all earthly things and the terror of total annihilation. According to Kierkegaard, every man who awakens to the realization of infinite demands made on him begins to undergo a trial. The French existentialist Martin Heidegger in **Being and Time** has reflected on death being an individual enterprise. So only the person who realizes that it is he alone who has to face death can truly experience his sense of individuality. Death is therefore non-relational because no one can die for me and also the impending nature of death denies any sense of closure. The view that the consciousness of death intensifies individual self awareness is found not only in Heidegger but also in other existentialists like Unamuno, Shestov and Gabriel Marcel. The preponderance of the issue death in Kafka makes him an existential writer. In his works we see a fine coalescence of Heidegger and Sartre. Death makes one aware of

his individuality but death can also remove all meaning from life. For all existentialists, death is the final proof of man's life as meaningless but not for Kafka because out of nothingness awakens a desperate longing for some positive and tangible achievement. The nourishment that the characters of Kafka crave for at the end could be the craving for spiritual appetite. However, death may be indefinite but it is certain, hence the threat of death. But because of its certainty, one must anticipate death as a part of life rather than trying to cover up. In this way death becomes a phenomenon giving totality to life. In Camus's **The Myth of Sisyphus** Sisyphus is condemned by the Gods to eternal torment, which is very similar to what Kafka felt about mankind that man is condemned rather thrown into this world, but Kafka's works reveal how man can still retain faith in the indestructible which gives meaning to life in spite of it all. Kafka wanted each man to be aware of oneself even if it meant going through the destruction of the self. Kafka feels the need to undergo self-destruction, the need to go through the fire of purgatory to release one's demons. Hence suffering becomes a necessity, like the suffering of Christ to redeem man. But here again, if Christ died for humanity, in Kafka's worldview, each man is responsible for himself. It is suffering that connects us with the world of higher reality. This explains the existential crisis in Franz Kafka. He professed himself to be an atheist at one time of the life and at the same time he lived his life with a kind of religious courage. This also explains why all his characters meet their end with a heroic grandeur.

However, Kafka's works also reflect his faith in the 'indestructible' present in man. There is a tendency to regard Kafka as an artistic freak and nihilist, but his tortured analyses of the self is an attempt to reach a spiritual meaning in life. Even though his works abound with a sense of man's bewildered struggle against metaphysical odds

and in spite of Nietzsche proclaiming God to be dead, but his faith in the 'indestructible' prevented him from collapsing under the weight of his existential crisis.

Thus the only viable solution for Kafka was to accept the given human nature; for the philosophy of humanism also required man to be human and not 'inhumane' or 'inhuman' for both are outside the human essence. The nineteenth century creed was belief in progress and as such humanism goes hand in hand with this creed. In spite of the great catastrophes taking place in the world, there was still the hope that the worst can bring about the best. This is best reflected in another early existentialist Nietzsche who wanted to fashion a superman, the noble barbarian combining in him the beauty and strength of an animal with great intellectual prowess which would enable him to conquer not only the world but also fate. But when the same visionary Nietzsche proclaimed God to be dead, he was announcing the loss of faith and things took a bitter turn with Darwin's idea of the ruthless life and death struggle. This nihilist approach was further developed with the idea of 'eternal recurrence'. In **Thus Spake Zarathustra** Nietzsche announces the discovery of a new idea of 'eternal recurrence', the belief that everything which has ever existed or happened must return again and again unchanged. Man instead of becoming a superman may deteriorate losing his humanity or may revert to some animal-like state denying any hope of progress, and forward development. What begins with belief in progress therefore culminates in despair and lack of faith. However, there seems to be great longing for some kind of faith and because there is no such faith the longing is experienced as all the more acute. For Kafka it was difficult to envisage any faith with so much of disintegration all around him. Even belief in transcendental reality is difficult on the face of totally indifferent scheme of the universe. It is Kierkegaard who makes a distinction between

knowledge and faith. Knowledge involves a conscious effort of thinking, while acts of faith requires acceptance of things which are beyond proof. The knowledge of death forces the existentialists to have faith upon transcendence. At the same time there is no knowledge that is absolute and comprehensive as well. The knowledge of our existence is also doubtful. Nietzsche's proclamation of God being dead together with the certainty of man's death makes us realize that Humanism is only a kind of a smoke-screen to evade the somber truth. Kafka's works are all specimens exposing the essential finitude of man. The Humanists are not unrealistic by envisioning a utopian world where all conflicts ceased to exist. There is no static perfection that mankind can hope to reach because man is not and never will be a complete product himself. However what they do believe is in Man's capacity to make himself by his close interaction with the environment and it is this confidence in man's creative power that gives meaning to human life. Kafka attempts to combine faith with knowledge. Kafka through a parable asserts how in reality we always win, but it is only in parables, or rather in the speculations of the mind that we fail. In Kafka there is also the realization of the self, and in all his stories, his characters in spite of the destruction of the self, they achieve a 'radiance', and enlightenment for which they have not hesitated to destroy the bodily self. The body is annihilated, but the true self, or Truth is realized. Joseph K. in **The Trial** never meets the judge who sentences him, K. in **The Castle** never penetrates the castle, and **Amerika** is open-ended. The only reality was the existence of the person involved. To be human is what becomes important for him no matter how difficult it was for him, no matter what it took. Only Milena knew it and puts it in one of her letters to Max Brod: "He possesses not the slightest refuge. For that reason he is exposed to all those things against which we are protected. He is like a naked man among the clothed" (B, 230). Thus if Kafka's works

are to be considered as literature of revelations, then Kafka reveals the necessity of sheer existence. In his aphorism No.50, he writes: "Man cannot live without a permanent trust in something indestructible within himself, though both that indestructible something and his own trust in it may remain permanently concealed from him." This aphorism means that man may not trust yet the absence of trust is trust all the same. In aphorism No. 70-71, Kafka writes: "The indestructible is one; it is every individual man, and at the same time it is common to all, and this is the reason for the unparalleled, inseparable union of mankind." Many a times we feel like questioning if there is really any sense of the indestructible, or is it only a parable of deliverance. All characters of Kafka die achieving a sense of redemption. Georg dies thinking of his family affectionately; the hunger artist dies in his attempt at self-discipline. Often Kafka's failure as a man is often equated with his failure as an artist, yet our analyses of his works reveal a sense of contentment in him. In Kafka's world, reality at many times may threaten into incoherence, yet what redeems Kafka is the fantastical world becoming more real than the real. Also there is a sudden efflorescence of things whereby the hidden truth is revealed. The quest for this truth is what provides dignity to man and not to objects. Also truth about myself must be understood in relation to others. My truth can be grasped only by my contact with the others. The others therefore become indispensable in my quest for truth. Therefore, existentialism becomes a positive doctrine, a doctrine of action as against a philosophy of mere contemplation. One takes the risk and jumps into the abyss; and then one has a positive experience. This enlightenment can never be had unless one has taken the risk to jump into the unknown. That is why for all existentialists, despair is the source and not the result. There is self-awareness at the end and good will arise out of evil. Thus there should be acceptance all through, acceptance even of the evil

and the morbid. The man and the indestructible are to be the same. Kafka accepts the absurd and man is resigned to accept the absurd, but out of this absurdity there is the firm belief of hope. In this way Kafka puts the split borne out of the cumulative calamity of the century together in his works. Although Kafka had strict instructions for Brod to destroy his works, but his works were not incinerated by Brod, who perhaps sensed its literary value. After the untimely death of Franz Kafka, Felice Bauer fled to the United States to escape Hitler where she died in 1960; her friend Grete Bloch was not so lucky. Grete fled to Italy but she perished in the Holocaust; Milena Jesenska died in a concentration camp in 1944 for her political activities; Dora Diamant fled Hitler and died in London in 1953. Max Brod fled to Palestine to escape the Nazis where he died in 1968; and Robert Klopstock died in New York in 1972. Kafka's two close school friends Paul Kisch and Oskar Pollak also met with the tragic fate of being a Jew in those dangerous times. Oskar Pollak perished in Auschwitz and Paul Kisch was killed in the First World War fighting for the Austrian army in 1915. Thus after his brief but eventful life, the Kafka legend still survives; films on Kafka and Kafka in popular literature testify to Kafka's universal appeal. It is not just his morbidity which must have attracted a whole generation of readers to Kafka; rather it is his jest for life because of which the Kafka legend still survives.