

CHAPTER-III

Authority and the Individual

The tremendous world I have in my head. But how to free myself and free it without being torn to pieces. And a thousand times rather be torn to pieces than retain it in me or bury it.

Franz Kafka, *Diaries*, June 21, 1913.

In almost all the works of Kafka, the clash between authority and individual is exhibited. Perhaps it could be the result of the same conflict that Kafka encountered with all forms of authority in his life, be it paternal authority, the institution of Law, religion, marriage, and even love, death and writing. Kafka saw a vast divide between the individual figures and the figures of authority and in this conflict the individual is constantly threatened. His writings were an attempt to move away from the 'paternal sphere' and institutions which restricted the fullest development of the existent. The story **Eleven Sons** by Kafka is a wishful picture of fatherhood, of founding a family although apparently he had said to Brod: 'The eleven sons are quite simply eleven stories I am working on this very moment.' Authority in Kafka is a tyrannical father or father-figures, a cruel torture machine, an insensitive trial, a labyrinthine castle, which are all symptoms of man's wretchedness. Never before has the father-son conflict been analyzed with such great sensitivity as Kafka has done. Kafka's **Letters to My father**, which actually was never presented to his father, written in November 1919, is a scathing self-analysis of his relationship with his father and his relationship with his mother too. These letters throw light on how the mother's unassertive nature disappointed him; and how it pained him to see the submissiveness of the mother before the brutal authority of the father. The mother figures in Kafka's works are either ineffectual as in **The Metamorphosis** or dead as in **The Judgment**. The

Judgment was written soon after he had met Felice Bauer on August 13, 1912. The work can be understood as a judgment on either the hero Georg Bendemann or Kafka himself. The doddering father, suddenly transforming into an image of strength, pronounces judgment on the son with a God-like authority wherein the son-artist's version is to be challenged by the father's story. This story hints at Kafka's own tormented, almost neurotic, relationship with his father Hermann Kafka, with Felice and most importantly with his writing. The son's attempt to 'cover-up' his father is suggestive of the son-artist covering up his guilt in not taking enough care of his father, or attempting to cover up his creativity through his decision to get married to Felice. In both **The Judgment** and **The Metamorphosis**, the son-artist is condemned to be outsiders from the familial-creativity circle. Max Brod finds the genesis of most stories dealing with the theme of father-son conflict, particularly **The Metamorphosis** in the following lines from Kafka's **Letters to my Father**:

While I put the whole blame on you as frankly as I mean it, you on the other hand insist you are 'over-clever' and 'over-sensitive' and want to declare me, too, free from any blame. Naturally you are only seemingly successful in the latter- which is all you want- and reading between the lines, despite all your fine words about being, and nature, and opposition, and helplessness, it appears that I am really the aggressor and everything you did was only in self-defense. So now by your dishonesty you have already achieved enough, for you have proved three things; firstly, that you are innocent; secondly, that I am guilty; and thirdly, that out of sheer greatness of heart you are prepared not only to forgive me, but, what is much more, and much less, even to go further and prove, and try and convince yourself, that I- contrary to the truth of course- am also innocent. That ought to be enough for you, but it isn't. You want to live on me altogether. I admit we fight each other, but there are two kinds of fight. There is the chivalrous fight,

where two independent opponents test their strength against each other, each stands on his own, loses for himself, wins for himself. And there is the fight of the Vermin, which not only bite, but at the same time suck the blood on which they live. They are really the professional soldier, and that is what you are. You cannot stand up to life, but in order to set yourself up in it comfortably, free from care, and without self-reproach, you prove that I robbed you of your capacity to stand up to life, and shoved it in my pocket.

(B, 17-18)

The threat of the father figure so tormented him that Kafka found any fruitful relationship in this world as impossible. 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. A study made by Hall and Lind of Kafka's dreams, life and literature shows that more males appeared in Kafka's dreams than females; and there were fewer aggressions (.62) in his dreams as against the norm (.80). From this we can say that Kafka was not essentially an aggressor, and Kafka feared aggression with males as against the females. A study made by Smith and Hall shows how our dreams are 'timeless unconscious', which means to say our fears and wishes of childhood continually are expressed in our dreams and these fears influence our adult behavior. Kafka was haunted throughout by the image of the brutal father, and the ineffectual mother as was a common sight in the Kafka household: "If I was to escape from you, I had to escape from the family as well, even from Mother. True, one could always get protection from her, but only in relation to you. She loved you too much and was too devoted and loyal to you to have been for long an independent spiritual force in the child's struggle. This was, incidentally, a correct instinct of the child, for with the

passing of the years Mother became even more closely allied you;.....she did more and more completely, emotionally rather than intellectually, blindly accept your judgments and your condemnations with regard to the children" (LMF, 59). In **The Metamorphosis**, the usurping son is hurled back to his secondary role. In the beginning of the story, we get an image of how Gregor Samsa is the sole breadwinner of the family. Gradually, the father regains his position of paternal authority and youthful vitality. The following textual quote hints of how Gregor is forced to take upon himself the role of the family provider:

If I didn't have to hold my hand because of my parents I'd have given notice long ago, I'd have gone to the chief and told him exactly what I think of him..... Well, there's still hope; once I've saved enough money to pay back my parents' debts to him-that should take another five or six years-I'll do it without fail. I'll cut myself completely loose then. For the moment, though, I'd better get up, since my train goes at five.

(CS, 90)

Gregor would only have been too relieved to give up this role reversal. He exclaims in exasperation: "The devil take it all!" (CS,90). If his father is an image of absolute command; his mother too fails to understand Gregor although she professes her love for him. It is only when his father finds his territory being threatened that he comes to stake his claim. Gregor's transformation into a vermin restores the confidence of his father and he begins to bully his son. Likewise the image of the Head Clerk too is one of terror. He comes to meet Gregor at his home, threatens to call a policeman and sack him. Confined to his room, Gregor is cut off from all human community. In contrast, the picture of a lady in fur adorning the wall in his room is suggestive of his deprived sexuality, the titillating picture is as if teasing and mocking his sterility. Even Grete,

the charwoman, substitutes Gregor's position by playing coquette to the Head Clerk and the gentlemen boarders to the utter neglect of Gregor, echoing the family's belief that it was impossible to live with a beast. Gregor spares his sister the disgust of his sight and he begins to see his death as atonement for his guilt. Ironically, like all Kafka's characters and like Kafka himself, the cause of the guilt is unknown. The treatment of the Samsa family towards the son betrays a bourgeois ethics according to which anything or anyone that is not of any use has to be got rid off. Strangely enough the metamorphosis brings a change also in his nature like his preference for stale food. However, Gregor's new found susceptibility for music is amazing because it is something that he could not apprehend as a human being.

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. It is not uncommon to see healthy father-figures in Kafka's works; and in **The Judgment** we notice how the old and doddering father is converted to an image of brutal strength at the cost of his son. Kafka wrote to his father: " I remember, for instance, how we often undressed in the same bathing hut. There was I, skinny, weakly, slight; you strong, tall, broad. Even inside the hut I felt a miserable specimen, and what's more, not only in your eyes but in the eyes of the whole world, for you were to me the measure of all things" (LMF, 19). Kafka had dedicated one of his books **The Country Doctor** to his father, and it hurt him to see that it only elicited a cold response: "Put it on the table by my bed." The father as the yardstick of perfectibility as against his own imperfect form continued to haunt him throughout his life; and it even prevented him from forming any healthy relationship with the woman he wished to marry. Kafka writes to Felice

on May 15, 1913, after meeting her family: "I felt so very small while they all stood around me like giants with such fatalistic expressions on their faces...." (LF, 286). What emerges from these highly sensitive lines is how emotional relationships become a site for power feat; and how Kafka was obsessed with his physical inferiority as against the corresponding images of strength of the others. It is not surprising that the image of body and bodily disfigurement was common in Kafka's dreams. Again in another of his letter to Felice he coins the phrase 'the terror of standing upright', where interpreting a dream of her he writes; "Had you not been lying on the ground among the animals, you would have been unable to see the sky and the stars and wouldn't have been set free. Perhaps you wouldn't have survived the terror of standing upright. I feel much the same; it is a mutual dream that you have dreamed for us both." (LF, 447) Here 'standing upright' signifies the power of man; but it also signifies the in this one is most exposed, visible and vulnerable. Kafka uses animal metaphors but we also notice that the animals that his protagonists transform into or the animal protagonists are normally harmless ones; weak as against the strong.

In the novel **Amerika** too, the insignificance of the individual as against the vast expanse of the American land is portrayed. America is a land of uninhibited prosperity but also a land where individuals are sacrificed at the altar of human and material progress. The economic motif runs through out the novel, and although this is one of the few happier works of Kafka, the theme of economic coercion and industrial exploitation of individuals gives out a sordid picture. Such an economic system can not lead to fulfilling lives but only generate global monotony. Klaus Wagenbach writes: "Kafka is the only bourgeois writer of his time who had such first-hand knowledge of industrial exploitation and its consequences" (Wagenbach, 1985,

104). Here too the clash between the figures of authority and individual is brought out, be it in the form of an economic system or father-like figures is imminent. Karl tries hard in this new land to adjust to the new economic system, but he is never accepted. It is a ruthless world where his apparent innocence becomes the cause of his 'guilt'. In Kafka's works, the guilt is suffered by the individuals and the cause of the guilt is never made clear. According to the philosophy of existentialism, man is condemned to suffer from guilt because of the disproportion between what he is and what he projects to be. In both **Amerika** and **The Trial**, guilt is a foregone conclusion. In **Amerika**, Karl is not guilty, but the text reveals how every act of Karl and Joseph K. is driven by their aim to come out of their guilt-conscience. Notice when Karl states: "It's impossible to defend oneself where there is no good-will" (A, 173) The text too proliferates with tyrannical father-figures, who are also images of persecution, be it his Uncle Jacob, or Mr. Pollunder, or the Head Porter Mr. Green. The first line tells us how Karl had been packed off by his parents to America because 'a servant girl had seduced him and got herself with child by him' (A, 13); his father having packed him off 'shamefully unprovided-for' to avoid alimony and or to save the family's name from scandal. However, the moment he in the ship leads to another fight for justice for the Stoker, who complains bitterly of the injustice inflicted upon him by the ship's engineer. There Karl coincidentally meets his Uncle Jacob, an emigrant who had worked hard to become a Senator. The matter is solved by Karl's initiative and as he senses a feeling of jubilant triumph as he fights for justice for the Stoker. Even then the desire to prove his mettle before his family is strong: "But Karl feeling himself strong and clear-headed than perhaps he had ever been at home. If only his father and mother could see him now, fighting for justice in a strange land before men of authority, and, though not yet triumphant, dauntlessly resolved to win

the final victory! Would they revise their opinion of him?"(A, 30). The family as the first institution that thwarts an individual is also supported by Otto Gross, a radical psychoanalyst. Kafka had personally known Otto whom had got introduced through Max Brod in 1917. Gross considered the family as the source of patriarchal authority which must be cast off to develop one's self. The scene of a happy family reunion does not last long, at Uncle Jacob's house, Karl is subject to a new world. His freedom is curbed as his days are packed with routine engagements of taking up piano classes, English lessons, riding lessons. Any idle indulgence is frowned upon by his self-made Uncle. When Karl is introduced to his Uncle's friend Mr. Pollunder, Karl is again tormented by their relationship. Upon his invitation by Mr. Pollunder and his daughter Clara, 'it seemed to Karl that in behaving like this Green was pointing his conviction that each of them, Karl on his part and Green on his, must fight for his own hand and that any obligatory social connection between them would be determined in time by the victory or destruction of one of them" (A, 67). Soon Karl is banished from his Uncle's house for disobeying his Uncle, and overstaying in Mr. Pollunder's house. When rejected by both Mr. Jacob and Mr. Pollunder, Karl takes the comfort of his family photograph, observing how his mother 'sunk into herself in a chair' while the father stood erect behind his mother with a clenched fist. He tries to catch his father's eyes from various angles and found, "But his father refused to come to life, no matter how much his expression was modified by shifting the candle into different positions' (A, 99). He now meets the two tramps Delemarche and Robinson; both are emigrants seeking out new roots, Delemarche being French and Robinson, an Irishman. The two tramps torment him and put him to trouble, he is able to free himself from their torments once he finds engagements as a lift-boy in Hotel Occidental. The Hotel Occidental's magnificent sheen hides the sordid condition of

the workers who serve it, the sickly workers due to overwork and the ruthless system where on slightest pretext one can lose one's job. Such is man's fate that even when he is free he makes the following comment: " 'Yes, I am free', said Karl, and nothing seemed more worthless than his freedom" (A, 124). The kindness of the Manageress is in sharp contrast to the men whom Karl meets. The hotel, again like the castle hierarchy is a hierarchical world, and Karl is engaged as the lowest and most easily replaceable position of the lift-boy. Like the vain Judges of **The Trial** or the vain castle officials of **The Castle**, the head porter of the hotel too is a vain man, who is offended for Karl not greeting him on passing his office and addressing him as 'Sir'. Karl falls prey to the persecuting nature of the head porter who dismisses him from service for the slightest offence; the appeals of the Manageress fall weak. In Kafka's world the father figures dominate the submissive mother figure as in actual life where Kafka's mother was docile before his authoritarian father.

The Trial is one of the most important works by Kafka where an individual's struggle against authority takes almost a violent turn because of its suddenness. In spite of the prevalence of rules and laws, Joseph K. on the morning of his thirtieth birthday is taken aback by his sudden arrest which initially Joseph K. had thought it to be a bad birthday joke. However, much of the assault is presented in an air of familiarity. Joseph K. is arrested in his bedroom and the warders who come to arrest him are of an accommodating nature. K.'s tryst with authority is one of perfect amicability for the trial lacks any sort of legal formality. The court room is housed in a shabby tenement and the proceedings take place on Sundays. The court has a 'foggy' atmosphere blinding judgment and an irrational charge is drawn against Joseph K.. The Court is also a house of indecency for the Law books contain indecent pictures and Joseph K. himself is drawn to a woman forgetting his own case for a while. The corruption of

the court is unmistakable and therefore the judgments pronounced by such a court is highly dubious. Joseph K. takes up several measures to face the charges against the court; engages a lawyer; and meets anyone who could be of slightest help to prove his innocence. However, what is disturbing is when Joseph K. himself occupies any power of authority; he himself takes on a violent role. His complaint against the warders who come to arrest him cause them to be mercilessly flogged but Joseph K. shows none of the genuine concern for them. He remains as indifferent to other's suffering as the court is to him. It is a fight of a bourgeois individual in the court's stifling environment, labyrinthine proceedings, crowded chambers, the shabby judges, Joseph K.'s case becomes more muddled rather than being clearer as he is pulled into the mire of legal intricacies. He is unable to understand the perverse logic of the court, reflective of his own legal delusions and self-oppression. The court is housed in a cramped and stuffy room. Joseph K. feels dizzy; question might arise as to how justice can be delivered in such a disorienting atmosphere. He seeks release by forming a network of informants; but he realizes the futility of all collective endeavors, and takes death alone. Often the trial can also be seen as a regressive novel. In contrast, the scene outside the court premise is much more relaxed like men relaxing by the window, the gramophone blaring, children playing and the women with their washing. K. finds the Court as a mechanism of power which is both attractive and repulsive; remember he calls the court an 'aimless institution.' (T, 171)

The all pervasive nature of the court is summed up in Titorelli's statement: 'You see, everything belongs to the court' (T, 167). Titorelli's studio is housed in the court premise; even the teasing girls belonged to the court. The Commercial Traveller Block was the client of Huld for several years, besides which he employed other five advocates. This novel too has a proliferation of domineering fathers or father-figures

admonishing the son on the lack of filial duty; where guilt is a foregone conclusion; and the son takes up the guilt of the father- figure or family. The son/artist becomes a kind of guilt-collector for the family, which ultimately takes his individuality away. Chapter six introduces Joseph K. in the scene, who has come into the scene to admonish him on the neglect of his filial duty and being a disgrace to the family: "Joseph, my dear Joseph, think of yourself, think of your relatives, think of your good name. you have been a credit to us until now, you can't become a family disgrace" (T, 105). Everyone who comes into contact with the court or the Law is reduced to a state of exhaustion, be it the frail Huld, or the Tradesman Block. But the subordinates working under Law have absolute faith in the Law. This blind investment of power upon the figures of authority creates an aura of mystique, making the divide wider: "We are humble subordinates who can scarcely find our way through a legal document and have nothing to do with your case except to stand guard over you for ten hours a day and draw our pay for it. That's all we are, but we're quite capable of grasping the fact that the high authorities we serve, before they would order such an arrest as this must be quite well informed about the reason for the arrest and the person of the prisoner. There can be no mistake about that. Our officials, so far as I know them, and I know only the lowest grades among them, never go hunting for crime in the populace, but, as the Law decrees, are drawn towards the guilty and must then send out our warders. That is the Law" (T, 12).

The trial saps his energy and in one of his futile recourse Joseph K. goes to discuss the legal implications of his case with the court Painter Titorelli. Titorelli's room is shrouded in darkness and emanating foul smell and Joseph K. upon entering it, may almost literally be said to be journeying towards death. Towards the end of the novel, Joseph K. is assigned by the bank with the task of accompanying an Italian colleague

to a cathedral. Joseph K. is curiously drawn to the altar-piece of a small side chapel which had a picture of an armored knight guarding the tomb of Christ. It is here that Joseph K. encounters a priest who tells him the parable of the man from the country. Perhaps no other section of Kafka's works narrates the conflict between authority and individual as beautifully as this parable 'Before the Law'. It is a story of a man from the country who is denied the entry to the Law by a burly gatekeeper until years pass away and the man from the country dies awaiting his turn only to die near the gate. The gatekeeper discourages the man by saying that there were more obstacles the man would encounter if he were to insist going inside and the man passively awaits his fate sitting on a stool provided by the gatekeeper. The individual's faithful resignation to the tales of the gatekeeper shows that the individual himself has to be blamed for his defeat, for believing in the gatekeeper's story the man makes no active effort on his part to enter the Law. It is not the Law itself which consummates the individual but the aura that man invests in all figures of authority that actually undoes him. After a year of his arrest, Joseph K. is summoned by two men with whom Joseph K. collaborates to his death. It is to be remembered till the end Joseph K. proclaims his innocence and therefore the question of his willful death remains an existential situation. Perhaps it is only by his death that Joseph K. can understand the meaning of life. Harry R. Garvin calls the trial as "a parable of man's grudging journey to moral awareness" (Garvin, 1977, 160). **The Trial** begins: "Someone must have been telling lies..." and with this statement an air of mystery envelops the narrative. Joseph K. is always in a state of suspension by the inscrutable authorities as he is taken up unexpectedly by the charge. He uses his common sense to make out of this unexpected occurrence: "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning" (T, 7). The

phrase 'without having done anything wrong' shows that Joseph K. is not guilty, yet Kafka creates an air of ambiguity by saying 'guilt is never to be doubted.' Who should the 'someone' be and why should this 'someone' work against Joseph K.; and each effort to unravel this mystery leads to further complications and he finds himself in a world where no logic or rationality works. His protests lead no further to solving his problem or clarifying his situation. The extreme intrusiveness of the authority upon individuals is seen in the manner in which the warders who come to arrest Joseph K. in his bedroom eat his breakfast and even confiscate his underwear. He is taken unawares, prompting a long interior monologue: "Who could these men be? What were they talking about? What authority could they represent? K. lived in a country with a legal constitution, there was universal peace, all the laws were in force; who dared seize him in his own dwelling? He had always been inclined to take things easily, to believe in the worst only when the worst happened, to take no care for the morrow even when the outlook was threatening. But that struck him as not being the right policy here, one could certainly regard the whole thing as a joke, a crude joke which his colleagues in the Bank had concocted for some unknown reason, perhaps because this was his thirtieth birthday, that was of course possible, perhaps he had only to laugh knowingly in these men's faces and they would laugh with him, perhaps they were merely porters from the street corner- they looked very like it- nevertheless his very first glance at the man Franz had decided him for the time being not to give away any advantage that he might possess over these people" (T, 10); but language here breaks down leading to a discontinuum of the familiar frame of reference and meaning. This leads to the missing of the actual point. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), the Viennese philosopher, analyzing the play of language and logic in Kafka has found the language surreal and deceptive. **The Trial** is really a dense text with

language packed with layers of meaning, codes and images, but there is difficulty of interpreting them due to the elusive nature of language. Kafka's experience of having worked in a Workers' Compensation firm might have provided him with the experience of the power that engulfs any bureaucratic structures. The court seems to be guided by 'higher powers' but the powers of this court is paradoxical. This existential crisis arises from being guilty and at the same time not being guilty tormenting the individuals. Kafka's own comment in one of his aphorism is worth mentioning: "We are guilty not only because we have eaten of the tree of knowledge but also because we have not yet eaten of the tree of life." Although Joseph K. is outwardly free to carry on his business of living as usual, and much of the trial is conducted only on Sundays and at night time. This is Kafka himself attending to his task of real living at night time through the creativity of writing. After the first interrogation held on a Sunday, Joseph K. could make out the nature of the Law that has overtaken him-'there can be no doubt that behind all the actions of this court of justice, that is to say in my case, behind my arrest and today's interrogation, there is a great organization at work. An organization which not only employs corrupt warders, stupid Inspectors, and Examining Magistrates of whom the best that can be said is that they recognize their own limitations, but also has at its disposal a judicial hierarchy of high, indeed of the highest rank, with an indispensable and numerous retinue of servants, clerks, police and other assistants, perhaps even hangmen, I do not shrink from that word. And the significance of this great organization, gentlemen? It consists in this, that innocent persons are accused of guilt, and senseless proceedings are put in motion against them, mostly without effect, it is true, as in my own case. But considering the senselessness of the whole, how is it possible for the higher ranks to prevent gross corruption in their agents? It is impossible. Even the highest judge in

this organization will have to admit corruption in this court" (T, 55). In **The Trial**, the nature of love is ambiguous, the law books are obscene, the law officials are corrupt, women are morally loose, the legal documents are lost, the tenement housing the court is sordid; and there is absolutely no hope of definite acquittal. The figures of authority are remote and invincible. If Joseph K. is entangled within Law, then the legal authorities also cower and hesitate to meet Joseph K. The impenetrability of law is exemplified by the inset parable 'Before the Law'; as Titorelli says that the court before which Joseph K. is tried is completely impenetrable by argument; just like the man from the country who never gains admittance. Joseph K. himself does not reach any satisfactory conclusion from the parable. K.'s guilt is in not knowing the Law, so his very crime results from being ignorant about the Law: 'I don't know this Law' (T, 13); and he only saw the Law as a big business deal. At one point, K. even decides to sack his lawyer and take the case upon him self. But the Law is actually only an endless hierarchy of corrupt officials, amongst whom the higher Judge are never visible; only the lower judges preside over the proceedings; the Examining Magistrate lacks 'dignified composure' as he is pictures sitting 'on a kitchen chair, with an old horse-rug doubled under him'(T, 120-121). The image of these corrupt and venal judges show how they are already engulfed by the Law. Thus the parable 'Before the Law' narrated by the Priest to Joseph K. contains the key to the understanding of the Law and to the novel a whole. The man from the country is 'before' the Law and not 'in' the Law; the man is prevented by the following words of the door-keeper: "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 door-keeper. From hall to hall, keepers stand at every door, one more powerful than the other. Even the third of these has an aspect that even I cannot bear to look at" (T, 235); while actually the doorkeeper is as

ignorant about the Law as the man from the country who is denied admittance to the Law. Joseph K.'s advocate Huld is old and frail yet he demands absolute trust of the clients. But Joseph K. has absolute no faith upon Huld who he believes conveys more despair than hope in his case. He now seeks mediation from the court-painter Titorelli. Although Titorelli is only a court painter, yet he offers more knowledge of the workings of the court than Huld himself, has knowledge of 'truth'. He is outside the grasp of Law yet he paints more authentic pictures of the intricate workings of the court, and perhaps this explains why he is more cheerful and gay than the grim looking court officials. Perhaps it is his detachment which makes him be the possessor of 'truth'. Titorelli's painting of the court and its judges is again not real; he showcases them as more than actually powerful. The judge's inspiring painting in a large robe was actually done sitting on a kitchen stool, when in fact, the judge was a tiny man. The court is self-obfuscating like the vain judges. Titorelli's painting shows the gap between the actual legal power and representational falsity. Thus the court may appear to be a supreme mechanism of power but in reality, its power is illusory. Joseph K. observes closely the painting which Titorelli claims to be the Goddess of Justice and the Goddess of Victory in one. The imposing figure has bandaged eyes and carrying scales, with a pair of wings attached to her heels, provoking Joseph K. to say: "not a very good combination, surely," said K., smiling. 'Justice must stand quite still, or else the scales will waver and a just verdict will become impossible' (T, 162); and therefore this strange painting looked more like a Goddess of the Hunt in full cry which is once again a picture of persecution. There can be no simple intellectual analyses of the parable of the doorkeeper and Joseph K. too is unable to pacify the priest with his interpretations. The question that baffles our mind at this juncture is whether Joseph K. is simply haunted by persecution complex

or is he only a whining neurotic, the question is indeed baffling. Taking cue from the parable of the man from the country Joseph K. could have walked out of the Law's clutches; but it is his existential fate that he dies exposed, even his cry of death is camouflaged by the howling of a dog. For ordinary people, not directly involved with the court like Joseph K.'s landlady, Frau Grubach, it gives her 'the feeling of something very learned' (T, 27); and how 'the court of law has a curious attraction for her' (T, 33). The court 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 in this respect all Kafka's protagonists suffer from '*Schuld*'. A.E.Dyson calls Joseph K. everyman face to face with the enigma of the universe. As Everyman, Joseph K. is on trial before a tribunal whose very rules and nature Joseph K. is unable to comprehend. As in the Talmud and The Old Testament where God sits in judgment over Man; here too Joseph K.'s plight is the existential plight of a man suffering the

unexplained '*Schuld*' and whose existence is endangered by unseen forces. A.E. Dyson further states that the attempt to centre all reality on 'self' has made of 'self' as labyrinthine. In contrast to the romantic notion of the glorification of the self, here there is the annihilation of the self where a man must die in order to live. Joseph K. is incapable of any positive action like the man from the country in the parable, his lawyer upon whom he had initially heaped his trust is mostly confined to his bed; and his commune with the Priest leaves him weary and exhausted so that the only positive action for Joseph K. seemed to plunge the dagger into his heart. K. dies not expecting God to overcome his guilt. Unlike Kafka, the theistic existentialists like Kierkegaard, thought it necessary to become conscious of one's sin to realize the presence of God. For the theistic existentialists, to exist is to realize man's sinful nature. But most existentialists like Kafka did not believe in the idea of a benevolent God; God is the image of an authoritarian figure which will try to curb the individual's freedom. Karl Barth considers God as inaccessible and passing terrifying judgments like the Kafkaesque figures of Authority. For Barth, it is preposterous for the finite Man to seek the infinite God. So we should happily accept and acknowledge the radical estrangement from God, but for Martin Buber, God is always available to us. Kierkegaard too saw a problem in communication, for him all communication with others is a kind of detour in the form of communication with God. Kierkegaard explains the emergence of the word 'God': "But what is this unknown against which the understanding in its paradoxical passion collides and which even disturbs man and his self-knowledge? It is the unknown. But it is not a human being, in so far as he knows man, or anything else that he knows. Therefore, let us call this unknown the God. It is only a name we give to it" (Kierkegaard, 1985, 39). Decision or choice brings the existent face to face with himself in a way that it stirs anxiety. In

Either/Or, Kierkegaard explores the nature of choice involving three cases of marriage, friendship and vocation. His observations are no doubt based upon his own failed relationship with Regina Olsen and his physical problem. To choose a particular vocation, is also to renounce a number of other possibilities. Thus the existent never escapes from the tension between possibility and facticity. If on the one hand, man is open with many possibilities; on the other hand man is again limited by many other factual situations. Facticity therefore becomes one way of describing finitude. In Kafka too, every individual's search for the ultimate truth only ends up with the realization of his own finitude. In Kafka, the individuals search for the unknown to overcome his finitude is often translated as the search for God, unfortunately what Joseph K. never meets the high judge who has sentenced him to trial and finally to death, or K. never gets to meet the owner of the castle Count West-west. Kafka did not believe divinity or God as something pure, radiant, as seen in Kafka's court housed in a sordid tenement, or the castle shrouded in fog and mist. All the encounters of K. with the castle superior Klamm is only fleeting or momentary in nature. The castle superior is called 'Klamm', his name suggestive of clamps, or claustrophobia is an authority wielder. Klamm and the other castle authorities are only seen in parts; one can only have a fleeting glimpse of them. It is their fragmented image as seen from the peephole that prevents the individuals from forming 'wholes' of them. Klamm appears different to different people; he is elusive like the nature of the law; but K. fights to get a clear picture of him and the castle as a whole because truth of his existence is based on this fight between his existence and the all-powerful castle officials. Although K. is never able to meet the elusive Klamm; yet he is tortured by his aura of presence. The letter K. receives, the telephone conversation that he overhears, and the two assistants who are assigned to him; all these make K.

believe in the reality of his appointment as the Land Surveyor of the village; yet K. constantly feels the need to move from the periphery to the centre, face-to-face with authority. The villagers think of K.'s contact with the castle as figments of his imagination: "You haven't once up till now come up into real contact with our authorities. All those contacts of yours have been illusory, but owing to your ignorance of the circumstances you take them to be real" (C, 73); but K. is not to be deterred; rather he boldly answers: "I don't want any act of favor from the Castle, but my rights" (C, 75). Thus K. is an isolated figure in the crowded village; he tries to overcome his isolation through his love for Frieda. The novel shows how Frieda attempts to penetrate authority through her own means not understanding that she will forever remain a hostage of Klamm. The Sortini episode is like a parallel to Kierkegaard's **Fear and Trembling**, where God requires Abraham to sacrifice his son; but it leads us to think if God finally refused to accept the sacrifice, could the same fate await Amalia had she succumbed blindly to the command of the castellan. However, only at the end K. realizes the futility of resistance. Institutions or representatives of authority are conspicuous structures erected only to signify man's progress but in Kafka they are only power mechanisms which assault man. The law courts are governed by the caprice of whimsical authorities, the laws are arbitrary and irrational. This great organization remains in a state of delicate equilibrium. On the one hand, Kafka thought his writing strictly personal in function; yet on the other hand, he thought of it as a form of transcendental communion with his fellow men. Thus God, for man, is an ill-defined idea. The tyrannical father condemning the son to death by drowning is the Freudian image and at the same time the God of Judgment rising in His wrath to destroy man's illusion of self-sufficiency in this world. Kafka did not believe in any personal God or in any such dogmatic belief associated with the

institution of religion. His piety defies categorization but which finds expression only through the language of art. The German writer Franz Blei, who was personally acquainted with Kafka speaks of him as 'the servant of a God not believed in.' According to Harold Bloom, there is no God: "There are plenty of demons masking as angels and as Gods; and there are enigmatic animals (and animal-like constructs), but God is always somewhere else, a long way off in the abyss, or else sleeping, or perhaps dead" (Bloom, 1995,481). Therefore the hope of anything transcendent can only be a mockery. The spiritual centre in Kafka is the indestructible and as Kafka has remarked in one of his aphorisms: "Man cannot live without a permanent trust in something indestructible in himself." 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 be it 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 village superintendent too is not keen to have him around: "You've been taken on as Land Surveyor, as you say, but, unfortunately, we have no need of a Land Surveyor. There wouldn't be the least use for one here.

The frontiers of our little state are marked out and all officially recorded. So what should we do with a Land Surveyor?"(C, 61). What is a matter of serious concern is only termed by the Village superintendent as a "trifling miscalculation.", which is bound to occur in any great bureaucratic organization. But still according to him everything in the village is engineered by the castle: " even you being summoned was carefully considered,' said the superintendent; it was only certain auxiliary circumstances that entered and confused the matter, I'll prove it to you from the official papers" (C, 64). Even Sordini, a castle official of efficiency is reduced to a subordinate position, perhaps because of overwork. Therefore there remains no doubt that the castle is an erroneous organization. K.'s long discussion with the superintendent makes him grasp the complicated nature of the control authorities: "But I fancy that two things must be distinguished here: firstly, what is transacted in the offices and can be construed again officially this way or that, and secondly, my own actual person, my myself, situated outside of the offices and threatened by their encroachments, which are so meaningless that I can't even yet believe in the seriousness of the danger" (C, 67). The castle is a chaotic place, the telephone calls may not be attended by the right person, and the line between the private and public affair is blurred. Everything about the castle is uncertain and ambivalent as the village superintendent tells K. : "Nobody keeps you here, but that surely doesn't amount to throwing you out" (C, 75).

The uniqueness of the individual for the existentialists is best brought out when Soren Kierkegaard chose for his epitaph the words 'that individual'. His whole life was an attempt to understand the individual in the scheme of the universe. The individual is secondary which is in sharp contrast to existentialism where the existence comes first including choice and action which are ontological proofs as formulated by Kant. Thus

any conceptual framework or philosophical system evades being comprehended. In many ways existentialism is to be understood against the background of metaphysical rationalism but "perhaps, we can relate existentialists as disappointed rationalists when they announce that reality cannot be comprehended within a conceptual system or that individual existence cannot be comprehended, they identify the role of a conceptual system with the notion of an all-embracing set of necessary truths derived by deduction from some axiomatic starting point" (Edwards, 1967, Vol.4). Thus there seemed to be no truth from which an understanding of reality could be comprehended. The universe as a total system presided by a creator or God went side by side with the concept of the irrational universe. Most existentialists accepted the limitations of Reason but however, with some exceptions like Jaspers who believed that reason needed to be understood in less restrictive ways. Also there is really no freedom for as Sartre clarifies that even in not choosing, it involves the choice of not choosing. Thus all actions imply choice; choice has no rational grounding; they are ubiquitous. Thus the question of why things are as they are and not otherwise are absurd, Heidegger calls this as 'fallenness'; the experience of which causes anxiety. Moments of truth are revealed only when an individual comes face to face with this void; when man recognizes his own finitude in the vastness of the universe as Heidegger believed; or as Jaspers has said when the fragility of our existence is brought home to us. In Kafka the divinity is not to be sought in the world outside, but deep within each individual. It is perhaps this truth that Kafka was trying to drive home through his writings.

It is truth which leads to the distortion of reality like Plato's symbol of man's pitiable ignorance seeing the real world as a play of shadows in **The Republic**. The castle symbolizes power and authority. It houses a hierarchy of officials actually leading to no where. On the face of it, it consists of a familiar world of Inns, barmaids, officials,

messengers, appointments and absurdity lurks at the heart of this familiarity. Erich Heller correlates K.'s problem with that of Kafka's: "Thus he knows two things at once, and both with equal assurance: that there is no God, and that there must be God. It is the perspective of the curse: the intellect dreaming its dream of absolute freedom, and the soul knowing of its terrible bondage" (Heller, 1959, 207). Nietzsche in his **The Will to Power** talks of the 'eternal recurrence'; that is, existence, without meaning or goal, but inescapably recurrent, without a final fall into nothingness; but such ideas is not revealed in Kafka's writings. Kafka's works show how man is crushed beneath the weight of this overbearing authority as there remains no scope of being better than he was. He remains what he was with all his limitedness. K. is nowhere near the castle and his understanding his predicament is no where near at the end than what he was at the beginning. Unlike Nietzsche's Superman, Kafka's heroes are knocked down by the figures of authority and what makes Kafka appear morbid is the acceptance of what he is. Joseph K. considers the various opinions offered on the parable to be only expressions of despair. The parable 'Before the Law' tells how everyone strives for the Law but few gain admittance inside it; and hence the onus is upon individuals to prove his existence meaningful. Institutional authorities only are only deterrents to reaching the higher truth. Those who believe in the validity of these deterrents are doomed to remain outsiders perpetually. For that matter, even the doorkeeper, is only a keeper of the Law, he too is bounded by the Law. The Priest makes this point clear to Joseph K.: "Now the man from the country is really free, he can go where he likes, it is only the Law that is closed to him, and access to the Law is forbidden to him only by one individual, the door-keeper. When he sits down on the stool by the side of the door and stays there for the rest of his life, he does it of his own free will; in the story there is no mention of any compulsion. But the door-keeper

is bound to his post by his very office, he does not dare strike out into the country, nor apparently may he go into the interior of the Law, even should he wish to. Besides, although he is in the service of the Law, his service is confined to this one entrance; that is to say, he serves only this man for whom alone the entrance is intended. On that ground he too is subject to the man" (T, 241). The parable highlights how the door was indeed meant only for him and shuts the door, preventing him to partake the radiance streaming from the door of the Law.

Most existentialists including Jean Paul Sartre consider God as a superior sort of artisan. 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. 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. Sartre clarifies in **Existentialism and Human Emotions**: "Indeed everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can't start making excuses for himself" (Sartre, 22). Thus for Sartre, existentialism is profoundly optimistic whose doctrine is the doctrine of action. But in Kafka's works we see that his characters are reduced to a state of perpetual suspension and forever condemned to inaction. In another of his brilliant short piece **In the Penal Colony** Kafka allows for a confrontation between an old fashioned military codes with his own liberal humanitarian attitude. Here the law is

never made clear both to the condemned and the on-lookers; rather the sentence is directly inscribed upon the body of the condemned. This particular convict would be inscribed: "HONOR THY SUPERIORS!" (CS, 144). Ironically the one who bestows justice arbitrarily has no place of burial after his death; the Old Commandment is refused burial in the Church, and hence he is befittingly buried in the tea-house, suggestive of the rootless and homeless intellectuals of Europe during the mid-nineteenth century. The bitter self-recriminations and self-inflicted wounds is the desire for freedom. Tuberculos gave him the freedom to evade marriage. But freedom from authorities in Kafka is not possible; law is all-pervasive just as nearly everything and everyone belongs to the Castle; or the extreme intrusive nature of the trial. In this respect, all existentialists have focused on the individual and the concept of freedom. Nikolai Berdyaev considers freedom as emanating from an irrational and primordial abyss, but in spite of which man is encouraged to seek freedom. The Sartrean doctrine of freedom implies essentially that man is always free in all situation; but at the same time freedom implies a lack; that we are condemned to be free. All existentialists agree that freedom does lead to self-negation; but it should be remembered that freedom leads to the manifestation of transcendence; considering that beyond the threshold of existence is the domain of freedom. Freedom is a struggle against facticity, as if man were impelled by some brute force to the state of freedom, and not due to man's willing effort. For Sartre, in freedom, the *pour-soi* (for-itself) transforms itself into the *en-soi* (in-itself). For Sartre freedom is always on the verge of disappearing, on the verge of being swallowed up by the in-itself. We are limited by the facticity of things, and that is why we are always in a state of guilt. To be limited is to depart from the absolute and the infinite. Therefore this separation is the cause of guilt but this is what gives existence an intensity and thereby its value.

The figures of authority in Kafka's works take over the individual's lives with an air of such familiarity into a world that is completely alien. Henry Sussman comments:

The paradoxes of the law belong not to the violations but to its very nature. The warders and their messages can only appear, to Joseph K. and the novel's readers alike, as ridiculous and absurd. Yet there is another sense, the transcendental's understanding of itself, in which everything the warders say is realistic and true. It is the nature of the artwork to sustain and arise from the tension. For this reason, the most striking illuminations of the law in the novel assume the form of anecdotes, parables, and portraits. The artwork is the medium, for Kafka as well as for Kant, through which the inscrutable workings of the transcendental upon the human environment make themselves intelligible.

(Sussman, 1993, 77)

Thus it becomes rather difficult to understand the interplay of meanings inherent in the structures of the language. In this clash between the unknown yet powerful court and Joseph K.'s insistence on his own innocence, the individual's innocence is never accepted by the Court, the court likes to function without any interference from the accused: "One must lie low, no matter how much it went against the grain. Must try to understand that this great organization remained, so to speak, in a state of delicate balance, and that if someone took it upon himself to alter the disposition of things around him, he ran the risk of losing his footing and falling to destruction, while the organization would simply right itself by some compensating reaction in another part of its machinery- since everything interlocked-and remained unchanged, unless, indeed, which was very probable, it became still more rigid, more vigilant, more severe, and more ruthless" (T, 134-135). Most of the protagonists seem to seek escape

through exile like Karl or Geor 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. K.'s information of the castle is confused like Joseph K.'s information about the nature of the trial. The sight of the castle at the distant arouses a train of thought about the nature of authority that has overtaken him; like the sudden arrest of K. K. is amazed at the castle officials who keep the villagers waiting at their whims, like Erlanger who summons people in the middle of the night, and even then no body objects to the inconvenience. The castle could symbolize the coldness of Kafka's own intellect; his attempt at trying to enter the muggy terrain of thought, and the difficulty of trying to convert that thought into writing. The castle officials are overworked; Klamm sleeps most of the time and so do the other Village Superintendents. In the beginning K. appeared to be a man intent on holding his right to self-determination unperturbed by disapproving comments like: 'we have no need of a land Surveyor' (C, 61), giving up the comfort of his home and hearth. The castle is forever shrouded in mist blurring his vision and there is very little hope since the time he entered the village if he could ever make up to the castle. Wilhelm Emrich enlightens:

Since he cannot, as a finite human being, survey the infinity of possibilities of existence, and since, on the other hand, he is compelled to make such a survey- if a true, valid, 'free' position is to be achieved- his own activity must to him appear as a nothingness; he cannot see it and evaluate it as actual land surveying, and, indeed, may not regard it as such at all. The 'land' that he surveys must remain hidden from him,

for it cannot be measurable land with definite boundaries. And his most urgent craving must be gain 'in person' a direct, 'free' glimpse of that most mysterious, never-attainable life potency incorporated in Klamm, and to deal with it face-to-face, in order to be able to attain to final clarity about the essence, meaning, and compass of his own existence.

(Emrich, 371-372)

K. wages a battle which saps his energy but in which freedom has to be maintained at any cost to retain his individuality. It is indeed a Herculean task for the entire village to suffer from the repression of the castle. The farmers in the village have tortured faces; Gerstacker, the wagoner looks 'visibly ill', Hans Burnswick looks upon K. as a 'teacher' and Freida considers K. as a kind of rescuer. Their averted faces are perhaps meant to avoid any direct confrontation with the all powerful castle authorities. The protean nature of Klamm is revealed in the manner in which every meeting with Klamm in person by K. is missed by a hair's breath. Also Klamm is described in fleeting terms, he is never described as a 'whole' person; nobody had claimed to have seen Klamm's private, personal side. Even when one presumes to have met Klamm, one does not know if it is really Klamm and not a look alike of Klamm that they have met. But he seems all-pervasive, the women ready to dedicate their life for him and men all in acquiesce. The landlady at the Bridge Inn swears by his shawl that he had gifted to her when in love years ago, and Frieda laments that there was no place in earth for the fulfillment of their love. But Klamm is locked within himself; like the sound of heavy clamping, he is incapable of any fruitful exchange of love with anyone. The women agree: "Klamm's a kind of tyrant over women, he orders first one and then another to come to him, puts up with none of them for long, and orders them to go just as he ordered them to come" (C, 185). These women swooning over

Klamm's tyrannical love are similar to K. who in spite of setbacks and disapprovals from all quarters still want to reintegrate in the village and settle down. Always dressed in the same 'black frock coat', very much reminiscent of the long dark coat of Joseph K. in **The Trial**, Klamm suggests the inevitability of death. Critics like Malcolm Pasley regard clothes as representatives of psycho-spiritual states, and really the forever brooding Klamm, dressed in black is a morbid view. The actual owner of the castle is called Count West-west, his name again indicating death, suggesting the hereafter and beyond. Although the Count West-west is conspicuously absent but his deputy Klamm rules the castle and the village down with absolute authority. Perhaps the person who enters the castle by force, by defiance, by fate, by chance, must only enter the castle at his risk of meeting the ultimate figure of authority, which is death. The castle is a wasteland covered in snow and mist; it is a picture of freezing death and solitude and it is therefore surprising that an outsider like K. should decide to settle down in such an uninviting place. Actually K. disturbs the atmosphere of the place for here was a place where people lived by the law of the castle without question. Anyone who dared deny the whim of the castle order would meet with the same fate as the ostracized Barnabas family because their daughter Amalia had refused to entertain the letter of Sortini, the castle official. Often the Sortini-Amalia episode is interpreted in terms of the God's unjust demand upon Abraham to sacrifice his son. Here too Amalia suffers for no fault of hers though her sight is said to have distracted Sortini from his official duties. In three years of that fateful day, Amalia's family is reduced to helplessness, her parents old and suffering, no work and rejection from every one. Amalia's silence confirmed her guilt and she became 'dull' and 'cold', a living proof of people who defied authority. No body knows what the guilt of the family Barnabas was; was it the simple refusal of entertaining the whim of a castle

official or something more grave offence, for they are not just made to suffer economic decline but they seemed to suffer from a spiritual wasteland. Or is it the defiance of God or the Scripter of life that was the cause of their downfall remains an enigmatic question. Amalia suffers from the guilt of being the cause of her family's problems, even though it was no fault of hers. Her silence more than her words are meaningful, suggesting the inadequacy of language in Kafka's worldview. On the other hand due to her proximity with Klamm, Frieda rises from being a stable-girl to the position of a chambermaid and then to a Barmaid at the Herrenhof. Frieda's beauty is complemented by her proximity to Klamm's power but Frieda is dissatisfied because of Klamm's indifference towards her. The landlady had complains that Klamm had only called her only three times and then called her no more and forgotten her altogether. Perhaps, this is why Frieda gets close to K.; although K. had thought of using Frieda as a way to Klamm. Such is the spell of Klamm that Frieda's once closeness to Klamm at one point of time makes her attractive to K. K. encounters the village secretary Burgle when he was looking for Erlanger who was looking after his case. Burgle works as a liaison between the village and the castle, someone who is supposed to know the workings of the castle. Burgel tells K. how the castle officials are forever in a state of tiredness and Burgel too could barely keep himself awake while talking to K.. As in **The Trial**, here also the castle secretaries meet their applicants at night and conduct their activates at night time, although Burgel chalks out certain deficiencies of transacting official business at night time in private chambers: " One tends involuntarily to judge things from a more private point of view at night, the allegations of the applicants take on more weight than is due to them, the judgment of the case becomes adulterated with quite irrelevant considerations of the rest of the applicants' situation, their sufferings and anxieties, the necessary barrier

between the applicants and the officials, and even though externally it may be impeccably maintained, weakens, and where otherwise, as is proper, only questions and answers are exchanged, what sometimes seems to take place is an odd, wholly unsuitable changing of places between the persons" (C, 246). In this way man finds the integration of his self with the world as difficult. Kafka in one of his aphorism writes; "The entire world is perhaps nothing but a motivation of man, who wishes to rest for a moment." It is the quest for rest which leads to unrest, an existential condition.

The Castle is in many respects an allegory like Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** which is the quest of the Christian to overcome set temptations, each victory leading closer to the goal. Unfortunately in Kafka one gets no more nearer to the goal than when one started the journey. The castle is remote, elevated and inscrutable, and the castle is joined to the village. The castle and the village are two different things; if the castle is the goal, the village is the way through which one can reach the goal. Unfortunately K. lacks the sensibility to mingle with the villagers; hence his plight is that neither can he mix with the village folk, nor with the castellans. K.'s desire for immediate face to face contact with Klamm is indirect conflict with what the Innkeeper's wife Gardana's presupposition that Klamm's only links to the village are like language, representational and referential. Klamm can be reached only through established rituals of protocols mediated by his representatives in the village. K.'s refusal to acknowledge the difference between the castle and the village involves his rejection of the mediations between them; and therefore breaking the protocol. That an elaborate medium of communication exists between the castle and the village exists is attested by the Mayor's description of the castle telephone system. The Mayor explains that what the villagers hear as a dial tone is actually the Castle's

communication with utmost incomprehensible velocity. K.'s skepticism regarding the medium of communication is borne out by a letter from Klamm in which he is praised for taking up the task of the land surveyor when actually, he is only serving as a school janitor. Even Gardana makes K. understand that the castle official Momus actually acts in Klamm's name. Gardana, also a former mistress of Klamm, has saved three tokens of their love, a photograph, a wrap and a night cap; her love for Klamm, whom she had met only three times, is now only reduced to a lasting burden of memory. Even his name had now become a burden, she can't bear to listen his name, she insists K. to refer Klamm as 'him'. What gives an overbearing presence of Klamm is his silence; he could deal with the most pressing issues of the village without actually breaking the silence. His silence is his remoteness; any person deeply influenced by the castle is influenced by its eerie silence. Such is Amalia's state too when the family is brought into the bad books of the castle, she becomes an image of silence. Olga describes her: "But Amalia not only suffers, she had the understanding to see her suffering clearly, we saw only the effects, but she knew the cause, we hoped for some small relief or other, she knew that everything was decided, we had to whisper, she had only to be silent. She stood face to face with the truth and went on living and endured her life then as now" (C, 197). The existential silence exposes the problematic nature of language in communication. In **Fear and Trembling**, Kierkegaard brings out powerfully how impossible it is for narrative and even for language ever to convey what the individual is going through as he faces the choices life puts before him. For both narrative and language generalize and so lose what is unique to the individual. Kierkegaard shows how Abraham's relationship with God is that one of absolute with another; there is no language to express the uniqueness of their relationship. It cannot be confined to the moral order or the universality of Law:

morality has to be 'teleologically suspended.' The text of the Genesis talks of Abraham's silence in the period between hearing God's command and the setting off for Mariah, his faith remaining untouched by doubt: "But he did not doubt, he did not look in anguish to the left and to the right' (Kierkegaard, 1983, 22); but as Abraham's resolution is never known because at the precise moment an angel intervenes. So it could suggest that Abraham knowing that God would not demand in actuality his son leads him to act in way reflecting blind obedience to God. Thus it is not God who is testing Abraham but Abraham who is testing the love of God. But ironically the remoteness and silence of the nature surrounds the castle with a superior mystique, but it is a power that forever leaves out the ordinary mortals. In Chapter eight, when K. makes a move towards the castle: " The castle, whose contours were already beginning to dissolve, lay silent as ever; never yet had K. seen there the slightest sign of life-perhaps it was quite impossible to recognize anything at that distance, and yet the eye demanded it and could not endure that stillness" (C, 97). The castle caused anxiety to anyone who came into its precincts. Kafka solves the problematic nature of language in communication by calling both the assistants of K. as 'Arthur'; and the way K. maltreats them by making them stand outside in the freezing cold. This image of exclusion runs throughout in Kafka's works; the son is excluded from the familial circle, the artist is excluded for the joy of living a normal life, likewise K. too is forever in a state of suspension, for he does not know till the last pages of the novel if at all he is the Land Surveyor of the village. This is similar to Barnabas's dilemma which is although he seems to be working for the castle, but whether the person he speaks to is Klamm or not is not clear to him. Even when K. is dismissed from his post as the janitor by the teacher, K. insists on remaining there and throws the notice. The entire episode becomes a power struggle and when K. throws the assistants out in

the cold, he refused to let them in, as 'it had the incidental effect of showing the teacher what it was to be strong enough not merely to give notice but to enforce it'(C, 131). Thus K. is contaminated by the castle; as seen if K. is given the chance to exercise his authority, he becomes Authority itself. And like all the other women who lose their beauty and vigor after being associated with the castle, Frieda too begins to lose her charm in her liaison with K. : " It was in the nearness of Klamm that had made her so irrationally seductive; that was the seduction which had drawn K. to her, and now she was withering in his arms" (C, 132). As Frieda realizes that her only value to K. being her nearness to Klamm at some point of time. In matters of love too, K. is a selfish player and he is rightly accused of betraying and exploiting Frieda and the other women of Herrenhof: "In your apparently solicitous inquiries about her I could see quite nakedly your simple preoccupation with your own affairs. You were betraying that woman even before you had won her"(C, 151). The first accusation that K. is charged on immediately setting his foot in the village by the son of a castellan Schwarzer was to respect the authority of the court. K. is ambivalent, he wants to a part of the village community, yet at the same time he knows that the ways of the castle won't suit him. It is essentially his individualistic nature which leads him to remark: "I like to be my own master." (C, 13); K.'s essential camaraderie and honest opinion is exposed when he tells the landlord, "for between you and me I'm not really powerful. And consequently I suppose I have no less respect for the powerful than you have, only I'm not so honest as you and am not always willing to acknowledge it" (C, 14). This air of defiance is strengthened in K. as he recalls his jubilant childhood memory of climbing aloft the graveyard wall after several failures. The landlady rebukes K. with derision by calling him an unwanted stranger corrupting Frieda: "You're not even capable of seeing Klamm as he really is, that's not merely an

exaggeration, for I myself am not capable of it either. Klamm is to talk to you, and yet Klamm doesn't talk even to people from the village, never yet has he spoken a word himself to anyone in the village. It was Frieda's great distinction, a distinction I'll be proud of to my dying day, that he used at least to call out her name, and that she could speak to him whenever she liked and was permitted the freedom of the peephole, but even to her he never talked" (C, 52). In a like manner, K. is convinced from the start that penetrating the castle in spite of these teething obstacles would not really be an impossible task. K. is adamant on meeting Klamm. But K. is not dissuaded by the landlady's arguments: "If I only succeed in holding my ground there's no need for him to speak to me at all, it will be sufficient for me to see what effect my words have on him, and if they have no effect or if he simply ignores them, I shall at any rate have the satisfaction of having spoken my mind freely to a great man" (C, 53). So K. knew that perhaps he would never be able to meet Klamm, which is again a forgone conclusion, but continues to wait for him in the cold snow. Even K. tells Barnabas that the messages he brings from the castle are of no importance in themselves, rather that they come from Klamm gives them value. It is therefore the individuals who invest the figures of authority with power. K. in fact has fixed his hopes are wrongly placed because Barnabas is not really a castle messenger. Without his castle uniform, he too is like K. whose appointment as the Land Surveyor is unclear. Barnabas is like the man for the country in the parable 'Before the Law', here too Barnabas is not really allowed to enter the castle, his entrance is forbidden by the frontier Chiefs who are only one of the several barriers preventing his meeting with the actual owner, the Count West West. The castle intermediary Momus too is a wrong kind of an official intermediary who is contaminated by the castle, he is said to falsify information. The official papers, many a time soiled by the food at the Herrenhof, even if they do not

reach have the approval of Klamm, such is the control of the castle. The novel, being incomplete, lacks a definite closure but there is no indication of getting to reintegrate in the castle; K. denied the fulfillment of meeting the authority. He sums up his situation to Olga in a very moving manner: " We have tried to get it by crying, by scratching, by tugging- just as a child tugs at the tablecloth, gaining nothing, but only bringing all the splendid things down on the floor and putting them out of its reach for ever" (C, 293). **The Castle** is the story of a man who spends all his strength trying to penetrate the castle and be accepted by the authorities but till the end it remains an elusive effort. Any questioning individual is seen as an outsider, he who is willfully cut off from the rest of his fellow community. The investigating dog in **Investigations of a Dog** should be given credit for at least not following the ways of the established laws of authority; he has a peculiar power of perception, although it is a different matter that he leads himself to false conclusions. The story beautifully portrays the existential crisis that rips the individual from the society. The visionary scene in this story is a recollection of Kafka's childhood, holding the mystery of art, or how Kafka was impressed by the performance of the Yiddish Theatre troupe. The investigations of a dog on the decline of canine culture and the origin of food has actually a very simple answer of their human masters throwing food from above; but the investigating dog puts in a lot of scientific and spiritual speculations regarding the origin of food; all the results of this investigation are illusory. Such is the shortsightedness of man who in his limited consciousness refuses to accept the truth but forms his own ideas. At the same time a simple artistry performed by a group of dogs is interpreted by this investigating dog as a mystical interpretation on the nature of dogdom and accuses the performing dogs as "violating the Law"(CS, 283). He interprets their sin of walking on their hind legs, which for him was against the

decency of dogdom , and he interprets their silence as emanating from ‘ a sense of shame’(CS, 283). The delusion of the investigating dog is the delusion that modern man suffers. There is a gap between knowledge and the means in which this knowledge is sought. From this Kafka comments on the willful solitariness of man. This work also reflects his interest in Zionism and the Jewish faith, particularly during the last phase of his life. The impulse to question remains the same but only the questions don't provoke any answers, only what remains is that knowledge is to be sought in the questioner himself. Thus knowledge is always relative, limited and historicized. Like the village schoolmaster's attempt to prove the existence of the giant mole in **The Village Schoolmaster or The Giant Mole** all these investigations only makes truth elusive. The artistic display of the aerial dogs, according to Wilhelm Emrich, have been identified with art and the artists in this world and their silence could be the silence of the artists, but silence being golden conveys more truth than where language an has failed. One can gain a greater understanding of existentialism crises by reading Kafka's works than from a whole lot of philosophic discourses. **Josephine, the singer, or the Mouse Folk** possesses more ‘power’ over the nation by virtue of her art; but the world fails to recognize the value of her art. Her singing is only squeaking for the other mice; but the text reveals how her power of singing redeems not just herself but her nation as a whole. The conflict of the artists with the world does not deter the real artists. The animal in **The Burrow** dreams of digging the perfect burrow, where burrowing being a metaphor for writing; in actuality it is the flight of the artists from the rigor of this world. Inside the burrow is a ‘new world’ with perfect peace and it is conducive for the artist to realizes his true self. In **Amerika** too, Karl finds fulfillment only in the last chapter where he joins ‘The Nature Theatre of Oklahoma’ where everyone's talent is welcome, a place for

everyone possessing some artistic talent. Karl gives away his name as 'Negro', a suggestion of primitiveness; a suggestion of primeval simplicity where man is free from the constraints and limitedness of the real world. Although this world of theatre looked so unreal even grotesque, with images of angels, devils, and other grotesque figures; Karl is seen enjoying every moment of their company. This world is indeed really liberating after Karl's series of encounter with various forms of authority, it is here that Karl finds for the first time a sense of acceptance.

Another scholarly investigator in **The Great Wall of China** is also set apart from other people. In this brilliant piece of analysis, Kafka is analyzing through he metaphor of the wall analyzing man's relationship with God, or the artist's relationship with his product of creation. The great wall is not continuous but has gaps, similar to the structural gaps between words in the sentence. The right meaning of the words and also a single determinant meaning can never be stamped by any one; just as in the parable 'An Imperial Message,' the message sent by the Emperor never reaches its destination; just as God's words are lost in the modern age.; " But you sit at your window when evening falls and dream it to yourself" (CS, 5). Even if the message reaches, there is a wide gap between the real message and the received message; just as in writing the meanings are lost the moment the author has undertaken to put it in pen and paper. In this respect, Kafka's works are reflections not just of the obscurity of this world but of language itself, like the nomads from the North in **An Old Manuscript** whose language is like the screeching of the Jackdaws, incomprehensible not only to others but amongst themselves too as the emperor silently watches himself, helpless in chasing away the nomads. The language of **The Trial** is also disorienting; the meaning of the English word 'trial' has a different

connotation from the German word '*Prozess*' which also suggests entanglement or a muddle. J.M.Berstein in **Practical Reason: Marxism and Modernism** writes:

Language, the theoretical modernists tell us, is constructed of difference; the relation between signifier and signified is mediated and constituted by the diacritical relations holding between signifier and signified. Language can only signify as a system or totality of relations between the continuum of thought; everything is defined by what it is not, by its relations to everything else. Thus every apparent signified is in fact only another signifier in the endless chain of signification. Representation is always second-hand, a halted moment in the play of language.

(Bernstein, 1984,233)

Thus representation is 'neither innocent' nor 'naively attainable' and hence conversion of thought to language is always a failure. There seems to be a conflict between the autonomy of language and mimeses. The familiar preoccupation of modernists with the self and the self in search of identity and self-fulfillment is also seen in Kafka. In all three novels of Kafka we see the central protagonists moving outside form the confines of the self to the world outside but such a search is only futile. All three novels therefore have a frustrating trajectory, a pattern followed by other great modern writers like Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, who trace the isolation of the self and the impossibility of recognition of the self in society. However, in another of his short story **Wedding Preparations in the Country**, we see the primacy of language; how language enables the individual to judge the value of things and to judge himself. 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: "One works so feverishly at the office that afterwards one is too tires even to enjoy one's holidays properly. But even all that work does not give one a claim to be treated lovingly by

everyone, on the contrary, one is alone, a total stranger and only an object of curiosity. And as long as you say 'one' instead of 'I', there's nothing in it and one can easily tell the story; but as soon as you admit to yourself that it is you yourself, you feel as though transfixed and are horrified" (CS, 53). In **The Burrow** too 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 existentialist is also concerned with language as an existential phenomenon. All language is someone's language; 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.

The existential crisis is experienced when one finds the individual both inside and outside the purview of the Law, forever in a state of suspension. **The Hunter Gracchus** reflects the difficulty of finding the final destination even after death. The dead hunter says: " My ship has no rudder, and it is driven by the wind that lows in the undermost regions of death" (CS, 230). The Hunter Gracchus knows the truth yet accuses the others of suppressing it, of forgetting it; knowledge being every where from the children to the chronicles of the historians. It is like the narrator of the short story **Description of a struggle** who wishes to force the acquaintance to come out with his story: " Tell me everything, from beginning to end. I won't listen to less, I warn you. But I am burning to hear the whole thing" (CS, 20). Yet it is the knowledge that cannot be communicated by words, it is only the understanding of true knowledge can universal love be attained. Wilhelm Emrich writes: " True is also the understanding of true human nature, the understanding of that which man actually is. In such complete, undisguised cognition, however, only love is possible, since this true human nature "cannot but be loved". Universal knowledge is universal love" (Emrich, 1984,52). The strange star- shaped spool Odradek in **The Cares of a Family Man** defies classification; it is neither an object nor is it a human being. Now since Odradek does not participate in life, it is deathless. The grotesque creature is an image of liberation like **Children on a Country Road**. This sense of liberation is missing from other characters of Kafka , be it Joseph K. of **The Trial**, K. of **The Castle**, their energies being sapped in their effort to be accepted by the inaccessible authority. Stories of transformations are replete in Kafka, human beings taking the shape of animals; also animals playing human roles and displaying human thought. Perhaps when man reaches the limits of being a slave to the figures of authority, these transformations are external evasive mechanism. In **Wedding Preparations in the**

Country, the tired Raban wishes to change into a bug and send his body on his journey to meet his bride; or Gregor in **The Metamorphosis** is perhaps his hesitancy in facing the world; in **A Report to an Academy** an ape succeeds in overcoming his apehood; or take the absurdity of the Jackals seeking release from the Arab through someone else in **Jackals and Arabs**.

Liberation or freedom is hard to come by in Kafka; perhaps it is only in man's acceptance of his guilt that man can commune with the truth or God. K. behaves as if he were guilty; he blames it to 'someone', he apologizes to his landlady and his fellow tenant, he feels guilty of bring disgrace to his family and even feels responsible for his advocate's sickness. He finds himself unable to seek solutions to his problem and he seeks much outside help, especially from women, first Fräulein Bürstner, then the Law-Court Attendant's wife, then Leni. Little does he realize that each man should seek the help only from himself, the onus is upon the himself. Seeking outside help is like the man from the country seeking help from the fleas that infest him in the course of waiting for gaining admittance inside the law. Thus the individual is always outside the Law; the irrationality of the Law is seen in the mingling of the private and the public sphere of a man's life. Even under arrest Joseph K. could still pursue his normal business of living, making him at one time to remark: "Then being arrested isn't so bad" (T, 21). If the gravity of law and its sentence is inscrutable to the individuals, it is because the first interrogation of Joseph K. takes place on a Sunday in a sordid tenement where the Examining Magistrates have no power to control the court proceedings, and confuses K. for a house-painter. Finally when he bravely puts up his case, Titorelli reminds him that it is very difficult to dislodge the court's conviction. The second interrogation is based on his own assumption on the following Sunday but finds the chamber empty. Like K. in **The Castle** who is some sort of a

rescuer; here too Joseph K., forgetting his own case turns into a rescuer of the wife of the Law-court Attendant from sexual exploitation. The law is ambiguous because proceedings of the court was not recorded, written defense was useless, law petitions were crammed with Latin, legal records and actual charge sheets were inaccessible to the accused; so that defense was totally at the mercy of the personal connections with the court officials. Thus the concept of justice was partial and subjective. In the case of Joseph K. the outcome of his case was also a foregone conclusion: "he must say that K. had very greatly damaged his case by his discourtesy to the Chief Clerk of the Court" (T, 135). Even the advocates were hopeless before the court who could only state that progress was made but the nature of the progress was not known. Therefore each meeting with his advocate to discuss his case would only end in promiscuity with his maid Leni. Kant in **The Critique of Pure Reason** writes how the relationship between the empirical and the transcendental world can be expressed only in a paradox. Thus it is paradoxical that K. reaches no more nearer to the castle than when he started. Joseph K. realizes the futility of his resistance and he calmly accepts his death. The natural scenery at the final hour with the moonlight streaming, the calm water body, the dense foliage, the neat flower-beds, the gravel paths, all maintain a harmony as K. walked with his executors in harmony. After courteous exchange, Joseph K. willingly succumbs to death, albeit noticing someone, evoking several unanswered questions: "Who was it? A friend? A good man? someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or were they all there? Was help at hand? Were there some arguments in his favor that had been overlooked? Of course there must be. Logic is doubtless, unshakable, but it cannot withstand a man who wants to go on living. Where was the Judge whom he had never seen? Where was the High Court, to which he had never penetrated?" (T, 250-251).

Joseph K. dies with the pain of remaining an outsider like K. in **The Castle**. One can ignore the fear of death by creating a distance with death by calling it a natural process or a mere episode in the vast life; through this one can also achieve spiritual freedom. Kierkegaard, in this respect, quotes Epicurus: 'Death is not to be feared: when it is, I am not, and when I am, it is not.' But personal experience tells us that the pain and fear accompanying death more than the actual occurrence of death can never really be ignored. Kierkegaard in his **The Sickness Unto Death** is speaking of despair because for him, life is a motion towards death. Wilhelm Anz in his essay "Kierkegaard on death and Dying" sheds light upon life being a movement towards inner death or 'non-being' because of which we are forever divided against ourselves. According to the Jewish faith, God's message can reach to any one who is ready to open himself to Him. Kafka lacked this Jewish faith; the Emperor is unable to reach his subjects. His image of the emperor here is a helpless glory unable to rescue his subjects or someone who is frail and weak as in the parable **An Imperial Message**. Similarly **The Problem of Laws** is a short story illuminating how faith has given only false comfort through out the history of mankind. There is no absolute Law and hence no salvation. The individual is rendered helpless as there is no escape from the law. In another short story **The Conscription of Troops** the girl is rejected by the law, yet the girl continues to suffer with the weight of 'shame'. It is the same 'shame' that the son figures normally suffer from in Kafka's fiction; in **The Judgment** even in dying the son retains a sense of 'shame' at the inconvenience that his death may cause to his father. Kafka himself is said to admit that the absent friend in the story was actually a link between the father and son. There is no escape from the figures of authority and law in any way and hence no hope of salvation. **Advocates** illustrates: "Within the law all is accusation, advocacy, and verdict; any interference by any individual here

would be a crime" (CS, 450). The law demands the sacrifice of the self to its altar as seen in **The Refusal** where the colonel, who is actually only a tax-collector, wields enormous power due to the unknown and mysterious Law of the land. He is a powerful figure of authority who discharges his functions through a large hierarchy of officials. It is the other people who invest him with such great power, and when people go with a petition he "As on all solemn occasions the colonel stood upright, holding in front of him two poles of bamboo in his outstretched hands. This is an ancient custom implying more or less that he supports the law, and the law supports him" (CS, 266). Thus true Law cannot be formulated, and truth therefore remains hidden. Kafka has expressed this existential crisis through a series of aphorisms which helps in getting a clearer view of the great divide between man and the institution. In one of his aphorism, he writes on the confusion caused by our divination: "He is thirsty, and cut off from a spring by a mere clump of trees. But he is divided against himself: one part overlooks the whole, sees that he is standing here and that the spring is just beside him; but another part notices nothing, and has at most a divination that the first part sees all. But as he notices nothing he cannot drink"; and on the impossibility of transcending this state: "You are the problem. No scholar to be found far and wide." Thus K. in **The Castle** gets no certainty of his appointment, or gets no clearer to his goal; yet he persists. There exists also a great divide between the individual and the society. K. is doomed to be an outsider replicating the fate of the racial isolation of the Jews. Gregor Samsa by turning into a vermin cuts off from human community, and his father now regains his vitality. Kafka's father exercised almost God-like authority over the sensitive Franz Kafka. Although he knew the comfort one gained from marriage, he could not muster enough strength to get married. He often read and quoted the Talmud: "A man without a wife is not a human

being" (D.126), but could not apply it to himself. The mood of the castle is also absolutely grim; there is a lot of speculations among the villagers about the nature of authority presiding from the castle. Although no one has seen them, the 'higher ups' only exist through hear say. It is this mysterious truth or figures of authority the both Joseph K. and K. seek to explore. The mysterious working of these institutions also echo the mysterious workings of heaven or God. And perhaps the questing individual represents Kafka seeking to overcome his bachelorhood, or the ordeals of an assimilated Jew. All his stories are commentaries on the relationship between God and Man. Kafka's moral problem arose not because he felt there was no God; but because he felt that there is no God but there must be God. Unlike Nietzsche's 'Superman', Kafka's characters are engulfed by this abyss. So there is an overwhelming sense of weariness pervading his work, as rightly pointed out in the fourth legend of Kafka's Prometheus: "...everyone grew weary of the meaningless affair. The Gods grew weary, the eagles grew weary, the wound closed wearily" (CS, 432).

The individuals are pulled more and more into the vortex of conflict and K. knows the workings of the bureaucratic hierarchy as fight against a formidable organization, yet he would gladly fight and perish, rather than meekly succumb to the dark powers. The Law is not to be doubted although many serious questions on the nature of the Law and the law-giver is ambiguous; and why the innocent is always sacrificed at the altar of Law. **In the Penal Colony**, the torture machine is upheld as a sacrosanct institution. The Law is never questioned in Kafka; it is an existential situation where individuals suffer due to an inexplicable logic. What appears as a kind of givenness for others like Erich Heller is something that Kafka tried to grapple all his life; to understand its meaning. Through something as useless as a star-shaped spool with

tattered threats like Odradek or the constantly jumping two celluloid balls exasperating the elderly Blumfeld, Kafka takes upon himself to seek answers to the existence and purpose of such incongruous objects. Kafka may also be expressing the anguish experienced as a German-speaking Jew and the guilt that he suffered due to his sin of being an outcaste all through. Erich Heller sheds light: "Sin and guilt more often than not appear to lie not in any *doing* but in *being*, in being a separate individual, or, to use Schopenhauer's terms, in the *principium individuationis* itself-an unprincipled *principium individuationis*, as it were, for it is only individual sons and not the individual fathers and friends, only the Gregor Samsas and not the parents, sisters, or lodgers, only the K.'s and not the other citizens in their towns or villages who are fatally affected by the principle's machinations" (Heller, 1974, 22).

He knew that marriage required the sacrifice of his writing because writing needed seclusion, as Kafka quotes a line from his favorite Chinese poem, 'Not the seclusion of a hermit but that of a dead man.' Kafka warned Felice against marriage with him, that as his wife she would have to lead a 'monastic life at the side of a man who is peevish, miserable, silent, discontented, and sickly', and who is 'chained to invisible literature by invisible chains' (**D**, August 22, 1913). Death as the great unknown was also explored by Kafka. Existentialists have interpreted the fear of death as the cause of anxiety, hence purges death of its morbid associations. Kafka remarked to Gustav Janouch, before leaving for the sanatorium: "Thus suffering becomes enchantment, and death- it is nothing but an element of sweet life itself." (**GJ**, 108) And again: "In the moment of death man probably surveys his whole life. For the first time-and for the last time" (**GJ**, 95). It is from an individual's attitude towards death that one can make an understanding of man's relation with the world. Joyce, Mann and Proust all regarded art as an answer to the pressure exerted by death. One cannot understand life

in isolation from death and that is what makes life so precious. Even Freud in his essay 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' says 'The goal of all life is death.' Thus knowledge of life is also the cognition of death. The philosopher and Sociologist Georg Simmel's (1858-1918) in his landmark essay "Metaphysics of Death" (1910) regards life and death as thesis and anti-thesis, each necessary to the other. Their synthesis, is what, he called 'reality' or unity which has to be lived and experienced. In his "Observations on Sin, Suffering, Hope, and the True Way", written between 1917-1918, Kafka writes: "a first sign of beginning cognition is the wish to die." Most of Kafka's works end with the death of the protagonist; and those that don't end with death, perhaps points to the impossibility of arriving at a certainty. The reality of the Law is not denied to the man from the country, but it is only denied to the man in his life time. One can find during Kafka's time, two concepts of time could be formulated; one was the Kantian philosophy of Law as enshrined in the legal code of the German Empire (1871); where punishment was accorded in accordance with the nature of the crime; and the Austrian legal code whereby the guilt was to be judged not only be the act but by the intention of the doer as well and the focus in more upon the criminal than upon the crime. The predatory nature of authorities stalking man is an existential situation. The country doctor too suffers from guilt in his authorial self neglecting his maid and thus when he sees the wound of his patient festering with maggots, the wound is perhaps also reflective nature of his guilt-ridden conscious. Kafka bore this guilt all his life; guilt of not being strong enough to resist his father's diktats, guilt of not being just to the woman whom he had promised marriage, guilt in not being attentive at work nor being able to write well enough. Kafka bore this guilt with 'silence'. The nature of authority is arbitrary; the father putting the son to an unjust death. Joseph K. dies never meeting the Judge that sentenced him to death

face to face nor does K. become successful in entering the castle, they suffer from spiritual anxiety but they do not die as neurotics, but as men who face disappointment, even death boldly. There is no flinching from death; they die as questers, dying in quest of truth, their real knowledge. In **The Judgment** we see the old bellowing father transforming into an image of strength. Max Brod reveals how Kafka had discussed with him how he would have wanted the Castle to end: "The presumed land-surveyor finds partial satisfaction at least. He doesn't relax in his struggle, but dies worn out by it. Round his death bed the community assembles and from the castle comes this decision: that K. has no claim to live in the village by right- yet taking certain auxiliary circumstances into account, it is permitted him to live and work there" (C, 1954, iv). It is ironical that it is in his dying moments that K. is finally given the right to settle in this village. Ironically, it is only after his death, that Kafka's literary talent has been exposed. Max Brod writes of Kafka: "O, all too conscientious friend! Your literary work itself was after all for you only the symbol of a life well-lived, but it was at the same time something much more too, it was the thing itself, it was your life, it was the right and proper use of the powers you were born with. It was that which you demanded of yourself and of all mankind: not to misuse the good powers one has been given, not to let them decay, but to make every use of them to fulfill the "Mandate", and in this way to enter the "Law", thrusting aside the wicked man at the gate who tries to keep one from entering it. It is difficult, all the same" (B, 96). The psychoanalysts claim that the concept of God is based on the man's awe for the father or father-figures. Man is inherently weak so he needs the protection of these father figures. The early Existentialist, Nietzsche tried to do it otherwise in his creation of the 'Superman', the 'blond beast', combining the strength and beauty of an animal with great intellectual prowess. This superman would be ruthless and would not

require "God" to protect him. Kierkegaard's three main ideas of existentialism is the concept of 'the absolute paradox', dread, the German 'angst'; the 'jump into the abyss'. The accident of birth is therefore the most painful phenomenon for the existentialists because man does not have control over the family, place, race, age into which he is born, man is just thrown into this world, the freedom of choice is actually arbitrary because there is no free will. This is very similar to what the predecessor of modern existentialism Blaise Pascal said: "I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me?" (*Pensées*, No.205). Kierkegaard cites the example of Job who knows that he is in the right against God, yet he must have faith in God for everything. His faith require him to make 'movement of faith, [I must] shut my eyes and plunge confidently into the absurd" (Kierkegaard, 1941, 44). Thus Kierkegaard's man makes a jump willingly into the abyss, it is why Abraham is willing to sacrifice his only son, enduring three long days of agony, with complete trust. Kierkegaard uses the phrase to describe Abraham's case as the 'teleological suspension of the ethical.' We shall jump, says Kierkegaard, 'into the open arms of God.' But in Kafka, unlike Kierkegaard, he had no such faith in external agency, man jumps but into nothingness. Man gain knowledge by this act of jumping. Now faith is different from knowledge because knowledge requires effort; but faith is a spontaneous feeling. In Kafka's world, man cannot have easy faith because of the insurmountable pressures that he finds himself engulfed with; yet what makes man worthy enough is his effort to gain knowledge by his bold jump. The sense of nothingness is felt so acutely that it awakens a desperate longing for some positive achievement. Therefore both Sartre and Heidegger demand for an 'authentic life'

which cannot be shattered by or terrifying figure of authority. For Heidegger, 'being there', that is being in the world is the only authentic act of living, where an individual follows his or her own freely chosen project. Karl Jaspers in his preface to **Philosophy** (1932) notes that it is only human being who raise this issue of being: "Awakening to myself, in my situation, I raised the question of being. Finding myself in the situation as an indeterminate possibility, I must *search for being* if I want to find my real self. But it is not till I fail in this search for intrinsic being that I begin to philosophize. This is what we call philosophizing on the ground of possible Existenz, and the method used is transcending" (Jaspers, 1932, 71). The statement echoes the opening lines of the first chapter of Heidegger's **Being and Time**: "We are ourselves the entities to be analyzed. The Being of any such entity is in each case mine. These entities in their Being, comport themselves towards their Being. As entities with such Being, they are delivered over to their own Being. Being is that which is an issue for every such entity" (Heidegger, 1962, 42). There is a disjunction between the world and the individual and the language is insufficient to communicate this gap. And for many other existentialists even death is the ultimate boundary situations. Heidegger is often criticized for glorifying death. He maintains that to understand *Dasein* as a whole we must understand it as "being-towards-death". Heidegger regards dying as a uniquely human phenomenon; even Rilke and Malraux have referred to death as a human phenomenon. Heidegger elaborates, death is the most private thing, death is the only thing which nobody can do for me. Man is the only creature who knows he has to die; thus man is certain of his death but uncertain about as to when death would occur. This constant threat of the possibility of death any moment is the source of anxiety. Wittgenstein wrote: "everything which we feel like saying can, a priori, only be nonsense. Nevertheless, we do run up against the limits of language"

(Wittgenstein, 1978, 80). Wittgenstein problematizes the concept of God by saying if the 'limits of my language mean the limits of my world', and 'God does not reveal himself in the world' (Wittgenstein, 1966, 5.6); then God appears not in the world but in our feeling and thinking about the world. Our idea of God depends on the construction and topology of our world. Wittgenstein tried to give the word 'God' logical and phenomenological grounding, and the transcendence of God lies in our ability to talk about the world. Miguel de Unamuno in his philosophical work **The Tragic Sense of Life** (1911-12) talks about the conflict that each man faces; the fact of death and the desire of man for immortality; and although reason is unequipped to provide a solution for this conflict, yet it is this conflict which kicks us to live. To be living in confrontation with death, the rush of adrenalin that one feels at the prospect of meeting death unawares is a human phenomenon. Though the precise moment of clinical death is uncertain, death is already present as a certain possibility, but death is clearly different from other human possibilities. As Heidegger puts it, death is 'the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all' (Heidegger, 1962, 207). Death is the last possibility of all, the final proof of all absurdity of both man and Universe. All existentialists insist on the need to face death as a reality. The consciousness of death releases human energies and enables man to break through the mundaneness of ordinary life. This is exactly what Nietzsche was trying to put in **Thus Spake Zarathustra** while explaining the concept of 'free death'. Unlike Kierkegaard, Sartre sees death in **Being and Nothingness** merely as an external limit or 'wall', which we may encounter at any time in pursuing our personal project, death is "an always possible nihilation of my possibles which is outside my possibilities" (Sartre, 1956, 533). Unamuno extols suffering as an inalienable part of life and the highest pitch of suffering, he calls anguish. It is in suffering which makes man at one with God. Thus

it is not that God does not offer his hand in support of us, but that God cannot offer his hand to us: "God, the consciousness of the Universe, is limited by the brute matter in which He lives, by the unconscious, from which He seeks to liberate Himself and to liberate us. God suffers in each and all of us....and we all suffer in Him. Religious anguish is but the Divine suffering, the feeling that God suffers in me and that I suffer in Him" (Miguel de Unamuno, 207). The beauty and simplicity of Josephine's singing which is wordless is a proof of it, that what is felt through the heart is the only real. The ordinary mouse folk are mesmerized by Josephine's piping although they do not understand the meaning of it. Gregor Samsa lured by the music played by his sister's violin seeks redemption through art. The hunger artist claims that his art is only based upon his personal weakness. Kafka identifies in **Letters to My Father**(page 90-91) the two kinds of truth; the first is represented by the tree of knowledge and the second represented by the tree of life; the truth of active principle and the truth of the static principle. The first truth is given scientifically, objectively; and the second to be grasped only intuitively. Therefore, it is the truth of life which requires a greater sensitiveness on the part of the individual; while the truth of knowledge is actually pragmatic and calculative. Knowledge divides the world into good and evil; and knowledge actually makes us divide the world into polar opposites. All of Kafka's character achieves 'radiance' after achieving knowledge be it the hunger artist or the explorer in the penal colony. Assigning the world into good and evil attributes actually makes the world static or timeless which lead us to be forever trapped like the hunter gracchus between the two worlds. Kafka experienced a similar torture in his vacillation between 'to love' and 'not to love'. The private father-son feud is also a conflict between authority and individual, art and artists. Like the hunger artist, Kafka must necessarily starve himself of any earthly nourishment. Although

Carl Jung in his essay "Literature and Psychology" published in 1933 dissociates any relationship between the artists and his personal. He draws a fine distinction between the man and the artist, the man objective and impersonal- even inhuman- but as an artist he is his work, and not even a human being. Kafka exemplifies a similar split between the man and the artist. Kafka once told his in his conversation to the seventeen year old Gustav Janouch: "My seriousness might act like poison on you. You are young." (GJ, 133) but at the same time he knew the transformative power of words/art; he writes "it is the ecstasy of raising the world into the pure, the true and the immutable." (D, September 25, 1917) The split between the conscious knowledge or intellect and the unconscious side of life which is the soul is found in **The Castle**. The entire novel is the struggle of the intellect to know the soul. K. wants to meet Klamm not knowing that although in the possession of Frieda, they are actually united. Barnabas is excited about the arrival of the new Land Surveyor, for he himself has been fighting for his appointment for the last three years. K. dies in **The Trial** without making any headway in his case. The deluding effect of art is made clear: "Art is a mirror, which goes 'fast', like a watch-sometimes." (GJ, 143). The image of the artist as doomed and solitary is also present in Thomas Mann, the writer whom Kafka admired, but Mann is a historical novelist analyzing the breakdown of European civilization; but Kafka records the breakdown of the self. Joyce Carol Oates speaks of Kafka's life long struggle to synthesize the tree of knowledge with the tree of life; to realize himself a Franz Kafka in life. Perhaps it was the fear of losing the means by which he defined the soul, as he hints in his diary entry of 1922: 'evil does not exist; once you have crossed the threshold, all is good. Once in another world, you must hold your tongue.' However, Shestov thinks that all sufferings of man is rooted in man's obsession with knowledge: " God forbade plucking the fruits of this tree not

out of fear that man would obtain more than what had been granted to him and not out of jealousy. The accused Serpent deceived Eve and blinds all of us to this day. The tree of knowledge does not increase our powers but, on the contrary, diminishes them. We must choose between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life” (Shestov, 1968,157). For Shestov, the fall of man is the result of excessive dependence on science and reason. For both Sartre and Kierkegaard freedom is synonymous with existence; our action implies freedom, and for the existentialists, freedom is not to be proud, but is rather a postulate of action. It is already there as a condition of our existence. But in Kafka freedom is highly ambiguous, it serves for his existential crisis. Jean Paul Sartre considers God as a superior sort of artisan. 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. 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. Sartre clarifies in **Existentialism and Human Emotions**: “Indeed everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can’t start making excuses for himself” (Sartre, 22). Thus for Sartre, existentialism is profoundly optimistic whose doctrine is the doctrine of action. But in Kafka’s works we see that his characters are reduced to a state of perpetual suspension and forever condemned to inaction.

Finally, if the existentialists see existence as an illness which must lead to death; thus death is the final proof that life is meaningless. For Kierkegaard, death is a challenge because the knowledge of its inevitability confronts us constantly with eternity and infinity, so that we are constantly forced to focus our attention upon the transcendental. Kafka wanted to reveal the false aura of authority that surrounds individual and all other fraudulent assertions of authority which press upon us. Kierkegaard speaks of transcending the empirical individuality. Limitations can become a positive value; for if life were not to be contingent, all things of the world would cease to hold any attraction. Our awareness of the beauty of this limitedness is the creative process of the artist. Sartre shows that transcendence and situatedness are interdependent. For Derrida, the idea of God is only a 'transcendental signified', it is no more than a symptom of a desire for a fixed stabilizing point outside language. Derrida's discussion on the 'silence' of Abraham, and why Abraham keeps his plans secret from Isaac would make an interesting observation. Derrida tells that Abraham communes with God, but can tell no one else what he is doing or why. Derrida is trying to grasp what Kierkegaard meant by subjectivity, and its need for secrecy and indirect communication. What he proposes is a dramatic translation of the language of God:

We should stop thinking about God or someone, over there, way up there, transcendent, capable, more than any satellite orbiting in space, of seeing into the most secret of the most interior places. It is perhaps necessary, if we are to follow the traditional Judeo-Christian-Islamic injunction, but also at the risk of turning it against that tradition, to think of God and of the name of God without such idolatrous stereotyping or representation.

(Derrida, 1995, 108)

Thus for Derrida, God is the power of interiority, of being-with-oneself, and of reaching to my inner self and hence capable of producing invisible sense. In Kafka the existential crisis arises because for him there is no secrecy, no interiority into which the self can indulge in. If Kierkegaard in **The Sickness Unto Death** argues that the self must be constituted in relation to God; then the role of self in Kafka is highly problematic. Kierkegaard in **The Sickness Unto Death** comments 'since everything is possible for God, then God is this- that all things are possible' (Kierkegaard, 1980, 40). God is then hope. Thus there is hope of the singular emerging out of the universal. Also one is so trapped in the ego that the language fails to transcend the individual to the general and the universal. The excessive use of rations and intellect fails to convey the real essence of the mind. While Joseph K. and K. try hard to achieve their goal through their intellect, we see how intellect fails to guide them in their endeavor and they are trapped in the smallness of their ego. What they look for stands not outside them but what already exists within them.