

Chapter I

Introduction

I don't want any act of favor from the Castle, but my rights (*The Castle* 318).

This study is an attempt to reveal the conflict between society and individual in Franz Kafka's *The Castle*. This study uncovers the very essence of the matter which causes the conflict between an individual and the society. It demonstrates how the intricacy of the power structure of the society blocks an individual who attempts to dismantle its status quo. It also presents the individual resistance which never fails to struggle for its complete freedom.

K. the protagonist of the novel makes countless endeavors to enter the Castle which has summoned him as a Land Surveyor. But K. is not permitted to do so. The officials there are not willing to allow him even an interview which the protagonist seeks desperately. The conflict prolongs the whole novel and no solution is to be found till the ending.

This introduction presents the links between different essays presented in this dissertation beginning with a short synopsis of the novel.

In *The Castle*, one of Kafka's last works, the setting is a village dominated by a Castle. Time seems to have stopped in this wintry landscape, and nearly all the scenes occur in the dark. K. arrives at the village claiming to be a land surveyor appointed by the castle authorities. His claim is rejected by the village officials, and the novel recounts K.'s efforts to gain recognition from an authority that is as elusive as Joseph K.'s court in Kafka's another novel *The Trial*. But K. is not a victim; he is an aggressor, challenging

both the petty, arrogant officials and the villagers who accept their authority. All of his stratagems fail.

K. moves to another inn where he becomes involved with Frieda, a barmaid who has the enviable position of being the mistress of Klamm, a mysterious official from the Castle who is always seen sleeping in a room behind a closed door. K. makes various vain attempts to gain admittance to the Castle or meet with a Castle official. K. receives favorable notes from the Castle messenger Barnabas, who befriends K. and takes him home to meet his unfortunate family who are shunned by the village because the youngest daughter, Amalia, once rudely refused the crude advances of a Castle official. K. finally learns that it was possible a Land Surveyor was once needed and he might have been summoned, but he is certainly not needed now. K. moves into the schoolhouse with Frieda and becomes a janitor for the school. K. makes several more vain attempts to meet with Castle officials. Frieda becomes upset about his hopeless search and strongly disapproves of his association with Barnabas' family because of Amalia. Finally, she leaves him when she discovers that he is simply using her.

K. gets so upset with his assistants he eventually dismisses them. While returning to the schoolhouse from the Barnabas family, he comes to know that Frieda has already left him and taken up with one of his former assistants. At the Inn, K. stumbles upon a Castle official who tells him many enlightening things, but K. falls asleep during the meeting. In the hallway, K. runs into Frieda and his former assistants and they run off together.

The authority intends that K. should die exhausted by his efforts. It simply plans to give him a permit to stay and nothing more than that.

The short synopsis above gives way to further study of the novel through as many angles as possible. Reading Kafka politically makes a good case for seeing him as a critical receptor and reflector of social forces, an observer of secular power, critique of historically real power structure and their discourses.

The novel explores the distorted world of the Castle explaining how the work is symbolic and not allegorical. It discovers the absence of contact between individual and the authority, outlining the hostility and evil nature of reality and an individual's effort to break through this and come into the light.

Apparently, the whole scenario of the novel looks senseless enough, but in its own way perfectly finished. The text can be read as a good humored self-indictment of a writer who puts artistic perfection above everything and could never completely convince himself that even his most accomplished work made sense.

However, Kafka's texts have provoked a wealth of interpretations. Max Brod, and Kafka's foremost English translators, Willa and Edwin Muir, viewed the novels as allegories of divine grace. Existentialists have seen Kafka's environment of guilt and despair and absurdity as the ground upon which to construct an authentic existence. Some have seen his neurotic involvement with his father as the heart of his work; others have emphasized the social criticism, the inhumanity of the powerful and their agents, the violence and barbarity that lurk beneath normal routine. Some of the critics of Kafka have seen an imaginative anticipation of totalitarianism in the random and faceless bureaucratic terror of the novel. There is evidence in both the works and the diaries for each of these interpretations, but Kafka's work as a whole transcends them all.

Accurately, Kafka has written his works as open parables whose final meanings can never be easily rounded off.

But Kafka's composition is also limited. Each of his works bears the marks of a man suffering in spirit and body, searching desperately, but always inwardly, for identity, meaning, security, self-worth, and a sense of purpose. Kafka himself looked upon his writings and the creative act it signified as a means of redemption. The lucidly described but inexplicable darkness of his works reveal Kafka's own frustrated personal struggles, but through his powerless characters and the strange incidents that befall them the author achieved a compelling symbolism that more broadly signifies the anxiety and alienation of the 20th-century world itself.

Biographers have long cited *The Castle* as Franz Kafka's most autobiographical work of fiction. This haunting story of a traveler and his endless, unavailing struggle through a maze of encounters with an enigmatic authority to gain admittance to a castle is essentially an individual's resistance against the specifics of power relation of the existing society.

The State, with its militarization and legislation, was absorbing the individual almost everywhere. Worship of the State was now taking the place of the worship of God after Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation of the "Death of God" (*The Gay Science* 167). In most countries the State was penetrating into the very intimate lives of its people; they were being told what to read and what to think. The State was spying upon its citizens, keeping a divine eye on them, taking over the function of the Church. It was the new religion. Man used to be a slave to the Church, but was now a slave of the State. Before it was the Church, and now it was the State that controlled his education; and

neither was concerned with the liberation of man. Franz Kafka as a sensitive intellectual and gifted writer certainly could not fail to picture the reality of the contemporary society where and when he lived.

As mentioned above, critics have looked upon Kafka's works from so many angles and have given their logics and arguments. The purpose of this study, however, is to look the novel, *The Castle* in the light of the age long conflict between individual and society. So the next chapter deals with this very conflict.

Socrates was the first rebellion against the tyranny of the society which wanted to prolong its status quo. This chapter draws an anthology of the conflict from the very beginning of the systematic human history. As cited above, the relationship of the individual and society has remained a subject matter of unlimited debate since time immemorial. Evidently, society exists for the individual, and not the other way round. Society subsists for the completion of mankind; it exists to give freedom to the individual so that he may have the opportunity to awaken the highest intelligence. This intelligence is not the mere cultivation of a technique or of knowledge; it is to be in touch with that creative reality which is not of the superficial mind. Intelligence is not a cumulative result, but freedom from progressive achievement and success. Intelligence is never static; it cannot be copied and standardized, and hence cannot be taught. Intelligence is to be discovered in freedom. An individual always strives against the society just for this freedom. Kafka's characters also strive for the same end.

The collective will and its action, which is society, does not offer this freedom to the individual; for society, not being organic, is ever static. It ever wants to maintain its status quo. Society is made up, put together for the convenience of man; it has no

independent mechanism of its own. Individuals may capture society, guide it, shape it, tyrannize over it, depending upon their psychological states; but society is not the master of man. It may influence him, but man always breaks it down. There is conflict between individual and society because an individual is in conflict within himself; and the conflict is between that which is static and that which is living. Society is the outward expression of the individual. The conflict between himself and society is the conflict within himself. This conflict, within and without, will ever exist until the highest intelligence is awakened.

Furthermore, the initiative chapter deals in detail the rebellious nature of Socrates, class struggle as depicted by Karl Marx, the will to power by Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault's concepts of power relation in particular.

This successive chapter III inspects the given text and the above mentioned theories together and examines which one is actually applicable to it. Doing so, the opinions of different critics will be analyzed thoroughly.

Chapter IV attempts to locate the threads and hints which indicate the conflict between individual and society with in the text boundaries. In the course, a discussion will be held to show how K., the major character of the novel attempts to reach the Castle to gain recognition, what sort of strategies he assumes and how the power structure of the society prevents him from his approach. At the same time, another radical revolting character of the novel, Amalia and her rebellion will also be cited.

This fifth and the last chapter of the dissertation will conclude the whole discussion and demonstrate in a nut shell how the conflict between individual and society is depicted in the novel and why it is nothing other than individual resistance against the

intricacies of power structure that prevails in society. It ultimately blocks the ways of an individual who attempts to dismantle its status quo.

Chapter II

Absurdity, Socialist Ideas and Individual Resistance

Kafka's writing is entangled in ...repressive discourses and is an attempt to control and counter them, albeit in parabolic and ironic fashion. Sander Gilman (qtd. in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 142).

Absurdity

The absurdity and the meaninglessness of life emerged in literature with the publication of Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus*. At the centre of Camus's thought is that human existence is absurd. Mankind has eyes for seeing but "...everything that can be seen is hidden from view...and one should be aware of living in an unending night. Camus maintains that such a situation in which the capacity of seeing is forever unsatisfied, is absurd" (*The Story of Philosophy* 84). It is the recent Polish writers who have subscribed to Camus's idea of seeing the protagonists of *The Castle* as "absurd heroes" (*Franz Kafka Parable and Paradox* 371). Camus reads *The Trial* and *The Castle* both as works of absurd fiction. The former one tells the story of Joseph K., who is accused, brought before court, and condemned, without ever finding out for what crime he has been charged. Having been condemned, his life returns to normal, but he struggles to find out what he has been charged with and to appeal the court's decision. The novel ends with Joseph K.'s execution, and no explanation is given. He is deprived of his due rights.

Everything seems natural to Joseph K. despite the fact that he inhabits a world with a peculiar logic that he accepts. This peculiar logic is due to Kafka's complex

symbolism, which he uses to link the ordinary world with the world of our spiritual ambitions and supernatural anxieties. In *The Trial* all the anxiety, ambiguity, and hope of spiritual life projected into the very concrete realities of a judicial system and bureaucracy. *The Trial* reads as absurd to the extent that it discusses the spiritual life in terms of concrete, everyday realities.

Camus elucidates that logic and ordinariness are important to tragedy and the absurd. The horror found in tragedy and the absurd come from seeing frightful consequences fall out as a part of a natural, logical order. The perverse logic of the absurd, and of Kafka's works, forces to recognize that what repels mankind also makes sense.

In *The Castle*, Kafka goes beyond the absurd world he describes in *The Trial* and tries to find an explanation or some sort of hope. *The Castle* tells the story of a character named K., who arrives in a town with a Castle where he is summoned as the Land Surveyor. However, K. finds that he is unable to communicate with the Castle, and the villagers refuse to believe that he has any authority. He asserts that the external world for him is an exile without remedy and he is "...deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land" (*The Myth of Sisyphus* 13).

He tries to become a part of the community, and enters into a relationship with a woman who has had some tie to the Castle. At the end of the story, he abandons this woman for the family that is the most outcast and least accepted by either the Castle or the villagers. Camus reads *The Castle* as a deification of the absurd, a kind of existential leap similar to Kierkegaard's. He states:

Consciousness and revolt, these rejections are the contrary of renunciation. Everything that is indomitable and passionate in a human heart quickens them, on the contrary, with its own life... The absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself. The absurd is his extreme tension, which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in that consciousness, and in that day-to-day revolt he gives proofs of his only truth, which is rebelliousness. Albert Camus "Absurd Freedom" 846

K.'s quest for recognition as a Land Surveyor is just the same as a rebellious attempt to prove his worth and thus find meaning.

Kafka is significant, Camus suggests, because he has given an eloquent voice to the nostalgia people feel for otherworldly hopes and tracks how our emotional response to the absurd leads us to run from life and leap into faith. Kafka deals with universal, religious themes, but for this very reason he is not an absurd writer, as the absurd deals only with the particular. While an absurd writer tries to distance otherworldly hopes from the realities of this life and show how man can find happiness in a life devoid of hope, Kafka tries to show how mankind can find otherworldly hope precisely in the realities of this life.

Camus says people hope to find some meaning either God or order or an explanation in the universe, and on the other hand, people are faced with a senseless multiplicity of things that do not organize themselves in any way that promises an answer.

One of Camus's favorite metaphors is that of the condemned man and he characterizes the human condition as a life- long death sentence without hope of appeal or reprieve. *The Trial* uses this very metaphor. Joseph K.'s quest throughout the novel is to find out who has condemned him and why. Kafka is playing on the same themes that Camus elaborates: Kafka tells the story of a man condemned to death in a senseless world, in which this man wants to find some kind of answer or meaning that will explain it all but that is met only with silence. Camus further approves of Kafka's use of everyday realities to express his spiritual anxieties.

The Castle also plays on similar themes. Here, the struggle to find meaning in one's life and a place in the universe is expressed through K.'s struggle to be accepted in his position of Land Surveyor. He feels that he has a right to this position even though it is constantly denied him just as people feel they ought to have a place in the universe and that life ought to make sense, even though this feeling is denied us. *The Castle* and *The Trial*, both narrate about men who are looking for answers in a world that gives them none.

Unlike *The Trial*, however, *The Castle* finds hope in this futility, and this hope is what makes Kafka an existentialist according to Camus. The existential leap is one of "philosophical suicide" of which Kierkegaard, Jaspers and others are guilty, according to Camus. The absurd is defined by a constant struggle between people's desire for unity and the meaningless void that they encounter. The existential leap tries to reconcile this struggle by embracing the void and finding unity in it. Camus wants to suggest that people are only being authentic so long as we continue to struggle.

Camus admires the clarity with which Kafka presents this fundamental contradiction that defines the human condition. He was "fascinated by the power of the absurd in Kafka's works" (Wolodymyr T. Zyla 3). However, Marxist reading of the novel is quite opposite. Marxist thinkers like Theodore Adorno and others explain *The Castle* as a proletarian novel.

Socialist Ideas

Recent investigations have focused on Kafka's interest in Socialist ideas and their application to the capitalist setting he provided for his novels. Moreover, nothing, for Marxist thinkers, like Gramsci, Lukács, Benjamin and Adorno is ever divorced from politics. *The Divine Comedy* and *Ulysses* become occasions for reflection on the limits and possibilities of socialism, while Kafka's *The Castle* evokes the definitive gap in power and privilege and is, at base, a proletarian novel. History, in general, represents one long sequence of horror and rebellion. Marxist critics emphasize if people want to take on art, literature, they have to treat them against the grain, that is, they have to eliminate all the concomitant privileges and project their own demands into them. This, needless to say, does not always make for the most nuanced critical analysis.

Many of the critics have accepted the fact that the way of Kafka's writings engage with the political themes of his time, though there is clearly still plenty of scope for different emphases and even disagreements within this paradigm. There was in the intense debate between Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin in the 1930s. Though, Brecht regarded Kafka as a great writer, he could not "'accept' him regarding him as a 'failure', an exemplar of the petty-bourgeois class 'caught under the wheels', whose writings were characterised by 'mystification' (qtd. in *The Cambridge Companion to*

Kafka 144). However, Benjamin reads Kafka's writing as combined with political, Jewish, and mythological perspectives. He notices the necessity "to formulate the practicable suggestions that can be extracted from his stories (Benjamin 110).

Theodore Adorno is perhaps the most influential critic on Kafka's radical credentials. He rejects the religious or existential reception of Kafka as a comfortable artifice "which knowingly dispenses with the very scandal on which his work is built." (qtd. in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 141).

According to Adorno, Kafka's works are woven in the material mechanism of society. Most of Kafka's writing, he examines, is a reaction to unrestricted power, power which is patriarchal and at the same time, socioeconomic. Adorno analyses the shabbiness of Kafka's work as an astute device. In *Notes on Kafka*, Adorno asserts:

The cryptogram of capitalism's highly polished, glittering late phase, which he excludes in order to define it all the more precisely in its negative, Kafka scrutinizes the smudges left behind in the deluxe edition of the book of life by the fingers of power. (Adorno 245)

Thus Adorno reads Kafka's texts knitted with social realities with smart craftsmanship. He sacks Max Brod's version of Kafka's religiosity and asserts, "Kafka's prose sides with the outcasts, the protest of his friend notwithstanding" (quot. in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 142). These days, Adorno's observation is substantially represented in the critical literature, and a secular focus on power as his enduring theme is now self-evident. So Adorno concludes that the insight "into economic tendencies was not so alien to Kafka as the hermetic method of his narrative techniques would lead us to assume" (qtd. in *Franz Kafka Parable and Paradox* 118).

Furthermore, the critic Heinz Politzer mentions that Kafka's classmate, Hugo Bergmann, remembers that at the age of sixteen, Kafka demonstrated his radical political convictions by displaying in his buttonhole a "red carnation, the traditional party flower of European socialists"(Heinz Politzer 118). But the critic himself is uncertain that whether this adolescent gesture was meant to convey Kafka's sympathy for socialism or his protest against home and school. Rather, he has clearly mentioned his "resistance against the social aspirations of his father and the sham civilization of his Prague's German Jewery" (Heinz Politzer 118). He never became a member of any party. His temperament was anarchic. He never mentioned his positive interest in social and political problems in his writings. Instead, he had an evil eye of a born critic and the desperate courage to utter his criticism even when it was most inappropriate to do so. In an occasion, seeing a group of workmen marching with flags and banners to a party meeting, Kafka said:

These people are self possessed, so self-confident, and in high spirits. They rule the streets, and therefore think they rule the world. In reality, they are mistaken. Behind them already are the secretaries, officials, professional politicians, all the modern sultans for whom they are preparing the way to power. (Heinz Politzer 119)

It reflects that Kafka was quite aware of the dangers socialism was to generate once it changed from an idea to reality.

Kafka was hardly positive about the Russian revolution. His contemplation was: "The wider the flood spreads, the shallower and dirtier becomes the water. The revolution evaporates, what remains is the mud of a new bureaucracy" (Heinz Politzer

120). Kafka's own world was governed by corrupt officials, deceived deceivers in the employ of an inaccessible central agency.

From the above analysis, a conclusion can be drawn that it is inappropriate to attribute socialist ideas in Kafka's writings. He was rather an individualist. As once he remarked about the revolution in Russia, "...like a flood of evil...Historical events no longer determined by the individual but by the masses. We are shoved, rushed, swept away. We are victimized by history"(qtd. in *Franz Kafka, Parable and Paradox* 120).

Certainly, Kafka was an individualist. He believed in the indomitable individual resisting in the intricacies of power relations. Greater number of critics has argued in this tendency of his writing with applicable logics.

Individual Resistance

Kafka's major tendency in writing is neither existentialist nor socialist. Rather, he simply pictures the individual resistance knitted in his meticulously drawn details of day-to-day life. It is not the case as Marxist critic assume. "The very notion that he is in any sense a political writer, let alone a writer offering a radical critique of social institutions and conditions, is still somewhat contentious in Kafka Scholarship" (Bill Dodd 131). Since, K. is still hopeful to achieve his goal and sees meaning of his attempts, the existential idea of meaninglessness also seems inadequate. Kafka's basic structural and thematic design reflects a labyrinth of power relation from top to bottom. The world Kafka presents seems to be as Hermann Pongs says, "an effective image of a world out of joint." (qtd. in *Franz Kafka Parable and Paradox* 231). For the first time K. attempts towards the Castle, he has contemplated the Castle from the main street of the village. But that road "did not lead to the Castle Hill; it only made toward it and then, as if

deliberately, turned aside; and though it did not lead away from the Castle, it led no nearer to either" (*The Castle* 282). Thus, in *The Castle* the maze has become the integral and constituent image.

At the same time, *The Castle* represents The Tower of Babel in that it stands for infinitely more than Kafka's literary output, namely, man's never-to-be fulfilled desire to take part in a dialogue with the "Other", whoever or whatever this "Other" may be. Above all, contemplating the threatening power which *The Castle* possesses and the endless attempts of the protagonist, one can easily conclude that, the intricacies of power relation in the society and the individual resistance against it is more convincing argument.

While Theodore Adorno assumes Kafka's writing as 'a reaction to unlimited power', another critic Elias Canetti regards Kafka as "the greatest expert on power" (qtd. in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 141-142).

Kafka is certainly not a revolutionary. He simply awakens in people the consciousness of their alienation; his work, in making it conscious, makes repression all the more intolerable, but he does not call us to battle nor draw any perspective. He raises the curtains on a drama, without seeing its solution. With all his might he hates the apparatus of repression (Beicken, 283-4).

K. is fearful that such a life, planned for him by the Castle, will be one of subjugation, effectively nullifying the threat he poses, in his own mind, at least, to the established order (*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka: The Case for a Political Reading* 139). So, he is restless, even while dreaming, he contemplates fighting with the officials of the tyrannical authority. *The Castle* contends that Kafka had two primary conflicting

premises: one is the subjective impossibility of human existence that forecloses all hope of meaning in individual action. The other is the ordered structure of human thought that assigns meaning to the smallest event. "His works are structured as provocations, invitations to see into the mechanism of power through the 'smudges', as Adorno says, which they leave behind on the surface of conventionalized reality" (*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 146).

To sum up, Kafka's declared dedication to writing as the presentation of his 'dreamlike inner life' should not prevent us from seeing the ways in which his imaginative fiction also engages critically with a historical, empirical social reality (*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 146). Sander Gilman and other notable critics also support this argument. Gilman suggests how Kafka's writing is "entangled in ...repressive discourses and is an attempt to control and counter them, albeit in parabolic and ironic fashion" (qtd. in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 142).

From the very initial days of his arrival, K. asserts his rights in negotiating terms: "I want no grace and favors from the Castle but my rights" (*The Castle* 318). Even K. has somehow an ambiguous nature. As a newcomer, K.'s claim of his right to be recognized as a Land Surveyor in the village is obviously his intention to make a negotiation with the authority. To demand recognition of a right implies that such recognition has certain value. Such discourse of rights which has held such sway in liberal, modernizing societies thus holds a "delicate balance between individual emancipation and institutional power" (*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 73).

While K. seeks accommodation with the existing power and finds allies in Barnabas and Olga, Amalia's rejection of the Castle bureaucracy is non-negotiable.

Amalia's "radicalism" (*The Cambridge Companion to Kafka* 73) clearly depicts the individual resistance to its optimum. So Kafka's *The Castle* is nothing other than the "critique of historically real power structure and their discourses" (146) as the critic Bill Dodd says in *The Cambridge Companion to Kafka*. The following chapter attempts to uncover more obvious threads of power relation within a society as depicted by Kafka himself in *The Castle*.

Chapter III

The Conflict between Individual and society

'Who would take the risk of throwing you out, Land Surveyor?' asked the Superintendent. 'The very uncertainty about your summons guarantees you the most courteous treatment, only you're too sensitive by all appearances. Nobody keeps you here, but that surely doesn't amount to throwing you out' (*The Castle* 317-18).

General Background

In any free society, the conflict between social conformity and individual liberty is permanent, irresolvable, and necessary. It is the individual, the essential factor in making a society. The conflict between the individual and the society surrounding him or her (parents, authority, the state) is one of the most basic and most common in many fictions from ancient to the present time. In Franz Kafka's *The Castle*, the conflict is amid the major character K. and the authority of the Castle, or in a larger perspective, between the individual and the power relation of the society.

The novel enacts the resolution of chaos into order. An order where love is fitted into acceptable boundaries and where individuals are locked into set roles within the society: wife, husband, state authority and the administrative body.

Most researchers emphasize the way people use social concepts to organize their social world and to constitute themselves and others in meaningful ways. In this research study, this is taken one step further through taking into account the way that such social constructions are animated and loaded with personal meaning and emotions that stem from specific psycho-biographies. The aim is to contribute to a more concrete and

historically situated understanding of subjectivities as ongoing processes interweaving both social demands and personal constructions, which always involve emotional meaning.

To achieve the aim, first of all, the scenario of conflict between society and individual from the very beginning of human civilization should be presented and analyzed thoroughly.

Socrates as a rebel

Socrates raised his ideas powerfully which were against the prevailing system of the then society. He tried to change social conformities using his balanced logic and rational power. He explained his disagreement with the ideas of people in authority. This way he went astray from socially accepted norms and values.

Socrates shared with his contemporaries the Sophists a concern for practical issues and particularly for education but he questioned the extravagant claims of some Sophists that they could teach virtues. It is evident that for Socrates, philosophy was not merely a set of doctrines as the Sophists or the contemporary society used to think but a way of life. Living in accordance with philosophical principles, Socrates had no time to earn a living for himself, unlike Sophist he refused to accept payment for his teaching. He denied the very notion that he was a teacher.

Though, Socrates was the most wise man of his time, he never boasted. He famously said, "One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing" (qtd. in *The Story of Philosophy* 6). He spent his whole life as a rebellious spirit against the prevailing norms and values of society. He finally gave his life for his principles when,

put on trial on charge of impiety and corrupting the youths of Athens but refused to renounce his way of life.

Socrates, In turning away from the natural inquiries of pre-Socratic philosophers and in challenging the claims of the Sophists to teach virtue, turned philosophy towards ethics. He demanded meticulous argumentation and tireless inspection of basic principles, and for the first time presented philosophy as a dialogue to be carried on in a social context, rather than as solitary investigation and reflection. Furthermore, he insisted on addressing immediate social problems. Daniel Graham quotes the Cynics saying, "...Socrates a rebel against convention" (*The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* 529). Sure enough, in the very dawn of human civilization, at the same time as the Socrates lived, the conflict between individual spirit and social status quo had commenced.

The conflict since Plato to Postmodernism

As Plato comes in the scenario, the conflict pumps up further ahead. He criticizes both the Sophists and conservative moralists for their views on ethics. They could only show that justice brings one non moral goods such as reputation and wealth, whereas they should demonstrate why justice is valuable for its own sake. Plato answers with the help of elaborate analogy between an ideal city state and the individual soul. The previous entity has three classes: the rulers, the soldiers and workers. In the ideal state as envisioned by Plato, virtue would be found in the proper functioning of the parts, and justice in everyone's fulfilling his own duties and not meddling in those of others.

In the same way, according to Plato's analogy, the individual soul is composed of three parts: the reason, the spirited part, and the desiring part. Almost the same division

is later mentioned by Sigmund Freud while he divides man's mind in three categories: id, ego and superego. Plato says when these three parts functions properly, the individual is virtuous, and when each part does its assigned function, the individual is just. When the reason is subordinate to another part, the conflict instigates between the society and the individual.

The concept has been thoroughly examined and modified by the succeeding thinkers and philosophers until the current era. Above all, Karl Marx, Frederic Nietzsche, and Michel Foucault and some existential philosophers' contemplations are worth mentioning.

Class Struggle

Karl Marx commenced *The Communist Manifesto* stating the history of all hitherto existing society as the history of class struggles. According to him, in “primitive communism” there may be a highly developed social division of labor and even social inequality, but no classes were there in a society. Division of labor and distribution of the product was determined by kinship relations. So there was no conflict between the society and the individual.

But this harmony is broken when Freeman and Slave, Lord and Serf, guild-master and journeyman or oppressor and oppressed appeared in the society. Marx says in *The Communist Manifesto*:

Oppressors and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or

in the common ruin of the contending classes. (*The Creation of Knowledge* 21)

He explained, in *Slave Society*, the productivity of labor is such that a slave-owning class is able to hold in bondage another class of slaves who are themselves the property of the slave-owners. The status of the main class of producers themselves as property is the characteristic of slave society; slaves are not citizens, have no rights and are not regarded in slave society as human beings at all.

Accordingly, in *Feudal Society* the Nobility expropriate a definite proportion of the product of the producing classes, such as the Serfs, according to a system of traditional obligations, which define the rights and responsibilities, most particularly in relation to the land, of all classes in feudal society. Although the peasantry own their own land, and are recognized as citizens with rights, they are not free to change their station in life which is determined by traditional systems based on kinship. The producers in feudal society *own* the product of their own labor, except labor given under a specific requirements determined by traditional obligations, such as having to work the Duke's estate every second Saturday, give one-tenth of their crop to the priest or fighting in the army when there's war or similar occasions.

In the present *bourgeois society* the producing class, the Proletariat, are free laborers in the sense that they are free from any compulsion on the part of any other person as to how, where and when they work. However, the means of production are the private property of the Bourgeoisie (or Capitalists), while the Proletariat (or Working-class) has nothing to sell but its own capacity to work (unlike the peasantry of feudal society who labor on their own land), and must sell their labor power to the capitalists in

order to live. The slave-owner was obliged to feed his slaves even when he had no work for them; the peasant always had his own land to work; but the proletariat is entirely free of these restraints, and if there is no work or if wages are too low, the workers must starve.

Modern bourgeois society, with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the lower class world whom he has called up by his spells.

Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed. And why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. The bourgeoisie wants to get over these crises in two fold ways. On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

Marx says:

The essential conditions for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage labor. Wage labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by the revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. (Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels 20)

Thus, the ultimate struggle between the classes or between one and the other group of people begins. According to Marx, It leads the society into a long turmoil until the proletariat wins.

In a future *Communist Society* private property in the means of production will be non-existent and will be used in common by the producing class, marking the dissolution of all classes. This is not, of course, to say that there would be no differences or conflicts or that there would be no division of labor – on the contrary. But the means and products of labor would not be private property, and consequently, the conflicts between different people and groups of people would not be antagonistic.

In all these social formations (and there are others, only the most classic forms are basically mentioned above) there are other classes apart from the two basic classes – the

Owners of the Means of Production, and the Producers. These other classes may be intermediate between the two basic classes or may be dependent upon one or the other.

Marx showed that all class struggle will be resolved in communism, which can be achieved only after a period of a dictatorship of the proletariat. The route of philosophical theory which put forth arguments in regard for the betterment of the common people radically altered by Karl Marx's contemporary thinker and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche presented the causes of conflict in a society and its outcomes in an interesting and thought provoking way. The major doctrine postulated by Nietzsche is the will to power.

The Will to Power

With the emergence of Friedrich Nietzsche in the late 19th century, the very direction of the wave of thinking revolutionized. Nietzsche named Karl Marx and other Socialists and Democrats as tarantulas and accused them of being resentful and revengeful, who condemn society from below, and whose criticism is nothing but suppressed envy. So, he refuses to be confounded with them.

Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas sprout with the historical announcement of the death of God. Nietzsche envisions superman as the replacement of the dead God and he proclaims the superman to be the optimum achievement of mankind. So superman is the hope of mankind to strive ahead. Consequently, Nietzsche discovers mankind's deep driving will to power as the device to reach the goal. He explains the will to power as the source of conflict between individual and society.

Unlike all others, Nietzsche sanctifies this conflict as just, essential and unavoidable. He agrees with Heraclites as the latter famously says 'war is the father of all

good things.' In praise of the continuous conflict waged by an individual against social status quo, Nietzsche further says that war is an admirable remedy for the people who are growing weak and comfortable and contemptible. War excites instincts which are rotten away in peace. Nietzsche says: "Man shall be trained for war and woman for the recreation of the warrior all else is folly." (*Thus Spake Zarathustra* ch 18)

Just as caged birds are blinded so that they sing more beautifully, a society blinds the individuals to make them more submissive and easy handling. But, Nietzsche thinks society does so in vain. It is evident that today's people hardly sing more beautifully than their grandfathers. Today's individuals are more rebellious than their ancestors. According to Nietzsche the rebellious spirit enacts vigorously because of the individual's deep driving desire for the will to power.

Nietzsche attempts to establish the will to power as the basic nature of living things. Nietzsche says: "Wherever I found a living thing, there found I the will to power; and even in the will of the servant found I the will to be master. That to the stronger, the weaker shall serve [...]" (*Thus Spake Zarathustra* 34). By the will to power, Nietzsche means that humans are always striving to impose their will upon others. Every action towards another individual seems generated from an intense desire to bring that person under one's power in one way or another. Whether a person is giving gifts claiming to be in love with someone, praising or harming someone, the psychological motive is the same: to enforce one's will over the other.

Nietzsche had to give a new faith to mankind to lift them up from the abyss of meaninglessness. He had to prove life worth living. So, he attempts to develop his major doctrines systematically in his latter works after *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Time and

again, he praises the ancient Greeks much for their ethical outlook, which stressed the development of excellence and nobility in contrast to what he saw as the gloomy Judeo-Christian obsession with sins and guilt. Nietzsche points out that they knew how to live. Their morality was based on healthy self-assertion, not self-abasement and the renunciation of the instinct to struggle and to win.

In this light, Nietzsche's doctrine, the will to power seems more meaningful and working as the primary cause of the conflict. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche contends that human beings and other beings in nature are essentially willing, but Nietzsche goes farther and suggests that we are will to power, driven by the desire to keep expanding our vitality and strength. According to Nietzsche, survival is secondary. He insists that vitality itself is the meaning of life, which should be the conclusion of philosophy, not its rejection, not resignation.

Nietzsche insists that philosophical thought should always be subordinate to our efforts to live well, never the other way around. Fundamentally, Nietzsche disagrees with Darwin. He transforms Darwinian struggle for existence into the struggle for power. According to Nietzsche, to speak the struggle for existence, that is, the passive and involuntary condition is to state the case inadequately. There is something more than this struggle; some other force must be operative. The will to power is this force, and the instinct of self-preservation is only one of the indirect and must frequent results thereof. As Nietzsche himself writes in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

He who shot the doctrine of "Will to existence" as truth certainly did not hit the truth: this will does not exist. For what does not exist cannot will;

but that which is in existence how could it still want to come into existence? Only where life is, there is also will: not will to life, but so I teach you- the will to power! The living creature values many things higher than life itself; yet out of this evaluation itself speaks- the will to power. (ch 34)

Humankind prefers to increase pain and tension to perform actions, which would allow him to feel power. Nietzsche disagrees with other thinkers who say that love and respect gives happiness to mankind. For Nietzsche, Power gives happiness and nothing else. The thinking that one has no power over the other is quite unbearable to mankind.

The critic Will Durant, in *The Story of Philosophy* quotes Nietzsche: "I felt for the first time that the strongest and highest will to life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a will to war, in a will to power, in a will to overpower" (406). The feeling of power is the greatest delight for mankind. Only the worn out and self-satisfied ones prefer to live a life of ordinary respectability. A strong individual accepts life as a combat zone where he can exercise power and where are the chances to overpower.

For Nietzsche, everything is will to power. He dismisses as quite groundless the psychological theory of hedonism, namely the theory that pursuits of pleasure and avoidance of pain are the basic motives of human behavior. In his view, pleasure and pain are associated phenomena in the striving after an increase of power. Pleasure can be described as the feeling of increased power, while pain results from a felt hindrance to the will to power. At the same time, pain often provides a stimulus to this will. For every

triumph presupposes an obstacle, a hindrance which it has to overcome. He says in *The Antichrist*, "What is happiness? The feeling that power increases, that resistance is overcome" (section 2). One may not accept it consciously but such feelings are the rare delights for a dynamic individual.

Obviously, by advocating such philosophy Nietzsche is rejecting the belief that sympathy was the proper and natural foundation for moral systems. This way Nietzsche abandons a sympathetic society to ensure vitality in life.

Rejecting the social instinct praised by Darwin and replacing social drive with egoism and individualism, Nietzsche developed the ethics of power. Nietzschean ethics of power are further developed with his strong belief that the strongest of the human species desire not only to survive but also to gain power over others. The best human instinct is the will to power in this ethical system. For example, Nietzsche when watching young boys play would observe each wanted to lead the group until a strong leader emerged from within this micro society of the children.

Nietzschean will to power is certainly the will to command and the will to rule. The whole mankind, according to Nietzsche, is divided in two basic types: masters and slaves, or the superior and the inferior race. Those who can command are the people of master category and those who obey others belong to the slave category. In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche asserts:

Whatever cannot obey itself is commanded [...] commanding is more difficult than obeying. And not only because the commander bears the

burden of all obeyed and because this burden really crushes him. An attempt and a risk seemed all commanding unto me: and whenever it commands the living thing risks itself thereby. (ch 34)

To command is to invite danger. If one is disobeyed, it crushes him bitterly. Still, Nietzsche insists that to live is to live dangerously.

The most important thing to be understood is that Nietzschean will to power is not only to command others but also to oneself. The following extract makes it evident: "Yea, even when it commands itself, then also must it atone for it's commanding. Of its own law must it become the judge and avenger and victim" (*Thus Spake Zarathustra* ch 34). To have control over oneself is equally delighting because it constructs ground for profound creativity.

Nietzsche himself lived a miserable life physically and mentally weak, helpless and loveless. So, he always hankered for power, love and respect. He could never experience these most blessed human delights. So, what he always lacked he strived to satisfy in himself by writing with all his might. Much of his philosophical doctrines are produced with very evident impression of his own life. As foiled in his search of love, he turned upon women with bitterness unworthy of a philosopher, and unnatural in a man. Missing parentage and losing friendship, Nietzsche never knew that the finest moments of life come through mutuality and solidarity rather than from domination and will to power. In his lifetime Nietzsche was driven to madness by the bland, dishonest complacency of his contemporaries who ignored him while honoring writers who seem like comic book figures today.

However, Nietzsche's radical doctrine inspired latter philosophers to generate broader and all encompassing ideas. While postmodernism ripened in 1970s and 80s, Michael Foucault gave another dimension to this trend.

Michel Foucault and Power relation

Michel Foucault's major critiques are not merely centered in power and its manifestation but also in techniques which produce truth that leads an individual to Subjection. Foucault's presentation of power's productive but dangerous nature and constitution of subjectivity through power relations. Here Foucault poles apart from his predecessors.

While developing this new idea of power, Foucault is more concerned with an interrogation of the material conditions which promote specific power relation. Foucault turns away from the repressive hypothesis of power. He rather emphasizes the productive and creative potential aspects of it. He states that power is a creative source for positive value. According to him, in society power is practiced by all, not only by the power holders. What he means is it is not hierarchical flowing from top to bottom and is not always used vertically to dominate the *other*.

In this light, it is evident that Foucault's power does not adhere to the repressive hypothesis that sees power functioning in the form of chain which localizes it in a few hands. Foucault says, power is not just the ruthless domination of the weak by the stronger. For Foucault, power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but

because it comes from everywhere. In *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. One), Foucault notes down about the all pervasive nature of power:

Power comes from below, that is there is no binary and all encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations and serving as a general matrix. No such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. (93-4)

In this way, Foucault turns the vertical and hierarchical notion of power i.e., the negative conception of it upside down. Foucault makes it clear that power is not simply a repressive force or a tool of conspiracy but as a complex of forces that produce what happens in a society. Power is not wielded by somebody because he himself is caught and empowered by certain discourses and practices that constitute power.

Foucault's major interest is in the application of power through techniques that are supported by knowledge. The common notion is that power marks an individual and imposes the law on him but in reality, it is knowledge that makes it possible. Power's attempt to subject an individual becomes successful only with the help of knowledge. To subject an individual means to compel someone else to be under control or dependent and to tie a conscience or self knowledge to his own identity. Thus the subject is always placed in a net like organization of power, knowledge and representation. Foucault draws a conclusion that the subject cannot but live in the network of power, knowledge and the techniques of power, all which produces and revolves around the subject.

The essential question appears that if all social contracts and governments are, as Foucault termed, 'fairy tales' designed to exercise power, why can't the 'subject' resist that power? Here Foucault does not say that the subject or the 'governed' have no rights. He says a subject can possess a critical attitude of not being governed thus. A subject can always raise question about the system he lives in. Foucault supports such a revolt of the subject. He says, possibly the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. What Foucault writes in his essay 'Subject and Power' depicts the same. Foucault notes down, "We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of political 'double kind' which is the simultaneous individualization and tantalization of modern power structure' (*Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84*, 336).

Although Foucault talks much about the resistance of the 'subject', he hardly says anything that indicates that the subject can be liberated from the kind of subjectivity they are 'bound' to live with. This is so because, Foucault says, the subject also tries to resist from a certain location in the power structure. They resist from within. So, they only try to alter the power relations by raising another discourse. The subjects due to already being component of the power structure cannot get rid of the subjectivity imposed on them but only try to alter prevailing power relations. The subject just attempts to develop a critical attitude as the will not to be governed.

Foucault argues, the productive power limits an individual and subjects him to certain conditions, however, the subject can resist his position and conditions that are set for him by the prevailing power relations. But according to Foucault, the liberation of human being is not possible because the claims arising from the resistance are also the

products of another discourse and can never be ‘disinterested’ and ‘objective.’ Hence, Foucault affirms:

we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms, it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘makes’ it ‘conceals’. In fact power produces, it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth.” (*Discipline and Punish* 194)

The best thing for an individual, thus, is to possess a critical attitude, a ‘will’ not being governed because Foucault announces that resistance is futile. Foucault’s apparently dismissal of the concept of resistance is unacceptable conclusion for many people and certainly for critical theorists. The more Foucault denounces the futility of resistance, the more resistance his works generate.

With the observation mentioned above, a conclusion can be drawn that Foucault rightly generates the relational power plays within a society. Now, it has become clear that power is not always hierarchical from top to bottom as Karl Marx thought, nor it is only a matter of individual quest. Instead, power is relational in a society. Individuals are equally powerful in their own stand as society apparently seems because they always create resistance and challenge its status quo.

Chapter IV

The Concept of Conflict in *The Castle*

Your eyes – don't laugh at me, Fraulein Frieda – speak to me far more of conquests still to come than of conquests past. But the opposition one meets in the world is great, and becomes greater the higher one aims, and it's no disgrace to accept the help of a man who's fighting his way up too, even though he's a small and uninfluential man (The Castle 297).

K. as an Indomitable Individual

Franz Kafka's novel *The Castle* pictures the turbulent scenario of the society after the First World War. The conflict between individual and society begins from the very beginning of the novel. The major character K. is an indomitable individual. As he arrives in the village in the dark evening, he comes to know that the people of the village are entirely dominated by the Castle. He enters in a hotel named Bridge Inn. The people there stare at him as if he was just descended from some unknown space. Somehow, the landlord lets him sleep in a corner of the inn. But a young man introducing himself as the son of the castellan awakens him shortly after he has fallen asleep. He seeks permission to stay either in the village or at the Castle. He says, "The village belongs to the Castle and whoever lives here or passes the night here...nobody may do that without the count's permission" (*The Castle* 276). K. tells him that he was summoned to the Castle as a Land Surveyor. The young man calls up the Castle and asks a man named Fritz if this is so. At first the voice says no, but then he makes inquiries and calls back saying that yes, it is

true. K. then goes to sleep. Thus K. for the first time successfully avoids the ruthless authority who wanted to expel him from the very beginning of his arrival.

The struggle of an individual to find his place in the society is expressed through K.'s struggle to be accepted in his position of Land Surveyor. He feels that he has a right to this position even though it is constantly denied him just as everyone feels that he ought to have a place in the universe and that life ought to make sense, even though this feeling is denied. In *The Castle* it is thoroughly elaborated the thesis about men who are looking for his place in a society that gives them none.

The next day he goes out to explore the village and walks in the direction of the Castle. He goes along the main road and down a side street, but doesn't succeed in getting there. As he stands there looking towards the Castle, a teacher with his students comes out of the school and K. asks him a few questions about the Castle and the Count, but gets no straight answers. The people of the village seem to be uncannily under the spell of the Castle. They hardly utter a single word against the Castle despite the obvious despotism of the Castle.

After the arrival of his supposed assistants Arthur and Jeremiah, K. and the assistants talk about the Castle, and he learns that permission is needed to enter it. The assistants call to ask if K. will be allowed inside, and get the answer, "Never" (*The Castle* 288). But K. hardly loses his confidence. He says, very well and hangs the receiver up. K. just begins to plan somehow differently. Immediately afterward, a messenger from the Castle, Barnabas, shows up and gives K. a letter from Klamm, a Castle official. The letter says that he has indeed been accepted as a land surveyor and should report to the Superintendent, who will tell him his duties and basically be his boss.

Before meeting the Superintendent of the village, K happens to go in Herrnhof Inn where the officials of the Castle stay. There he meets a barmaid named Frieda. As K knows that she is one of the mistresses of Klamm, he attempts to impress her in his favor. To his great surprise, she actually falls in love with him with in no time. They also make love on the floor of the inn in the night when they are alone. Suddenly, in the middle of the intercourse, Klamm calls her. She says to K that she would never go back to Klamm. K. actually wants her to go back to Klamm as he thinks that if and only if she continues to belong to Klamm then only it would be helpful for him to enter the Castle or get valuable information about the Castle. That's why he wants her to go back to Klamm but can not bring himself to speak so. As Frieda replies saying she was with the Land Surveyor, Klamm was silenced but K. started up. He thought that what he could expect from Frieda after she has betrayed everything.

In this way, K. takes every step, even sexual intercourse to support his motive. He has to gain the recognition from the Castle as a Land Surveyor, so he successfully seduces the mistress of one of the official of the Castle. But what happens as a consequence is more than he wants.

K. wants to leave to see the Superintendent to find out what is going on with his job, but the landlady demands he stay, so they can talk about Frieda. She seems to be anxious about Frieda. Outwardly, the landlady is concerned about the future of Frieda who is under her guardianship. But actually, her intention is to create obstacle and prevent K. from meeting the Superintendent. It is disclosed latter that the landlady was once one of the mistresses of Klamm and still seems to be working for him somehow or

other. The official interest is never permit K. in the village as a Land Surveyor which he duly deserves.

K. the unconquerable individual, hardly lets himself to be the pray of the society. He struggles against the ill intention of the people connected to the Castle. By the way, in this present circumstance, K. declares his intention to marry her. Thus he avoids the obstacle created by the landlady on the way his meeting the Superintendent of the village. K. says he must speak to Klamm about Frieda, which Frieda and the landlady say is impossible. They say Klamm will never speak to K. The landlady says that K. doesn't understand the Castle or how things are in the village. Klamm never even speaks to the villagers, much less a stranger like K. Besides, now Klamm has lost all interest in Frieda. K. argues, saying that they don't know that for sure, and he insists on trying to talk to Klamm. The landlady tells him again that he doesn't know what he's doing and what he does do he does wrongly. She says that without her kindness, K. would be out on the street. On the other hand, K. hardly seems to be impressed listening the ways of the village. He is determined to wage war against the domination of the Castle.

Now, K. goes to meet the Superintendent of the village and inquires about his job. But the Superintendent tells him that the truth is, there is no need for a land surveyor, and that the Castle decree summoning one was first put out years ago. The Superintendent insisted, in a letter, that one was not needed, but that file was lost, and so the case became mired in the Castle bureaucracy, bouncing between two different departments and keeping the official Sordini very busy. And this is only the smallest case. As K. reads out Klamm, Castle official's letter which says that he has indeed been accepted as a Land Surveyor and should report to the Superintendent, he says :

You have been taken on as Land Surveyor, as you say, but, unfortunately, we have no need of a Land Surveyor. There would not be the least use for one here. The Frontiers of our little state are marked out and all officially recorded. So what would we do with the Land Surveyor? (*The Castle* 309)

The Superintendent even says that the case of K. was one of the "pettiest little affairs" (*The Castle* 309). After the Superintendent gets through the letter K. shows him from Klamm confirming his hiring as the land surveyor, he just says that the signature is valid, but the contents don't mean much, just that Klamm, if need be, will look after K. personally. K. insists it's more than that after all, the night he arrived; an official called Fritz confirmed his hiring. The Superintendent says that K. can't always be sure; people up there may be having their own personal jokes. Besides, could he be sure that he was actually talking to an official and not some lowly secretary? K. is confused but resumes putting forth his arguments even more forcefully.

The Superintendent says, "You are very strict, but multiply your strictness a thousand times and it would still be nothing compared with the strictness which the authority imposes on itself" (*The Castle* 312). K. gets much confused for the time being by the Superintendent's arrogant remarks and says that whether the conclusion of all this is that everything is very uncertain and insoluble, including the possibility of his being thrown out. Immediately the Superintendent remarks that nobody would take the risk of throwing him out. According to him, the very uncertainty about K.'s summons guarantees him the most courteous treatment. Further ahead, the Superintendent says that K. was too sensitive by all appearances: "Nobody keeps you here, but that surely does

not amount to throwing you out... If a decision should be come to, or if it should be necessary first to interrogate you again, I'll send for you..."(*The Castle* 318). Thus the Superintendent concludes his statements. Obviously the resolute character K. gets infuriated by such cutting remarks. He asserts, "No, absolutely, I don't want any act of favor from the Castle, but my right." (*The Castle* 318) The conflict between different officials of the village and the character K. goes on and on in the similar and sometime more vigorous manner. Both parties are stubborn on their own intentions. They say one thing and mean another and the conflict endlessly goes on.

As K. returns to the Bridge Inn, the landlady Gardena tells her story. Her story is: when she was a young girl, over twenty years ago, Klamm sent for her and made her his mistress. Three times he called her, but never a fourth. She is still very sensitive about Klamm, insisting that K. not say bad things about him. This brings up again K.'s desire to speak with Klamm, and he finally gets Gardena to promise to try to make inquiries, but she insists he not do anything himself. He refuses and goes away. It shows that Gardena who appears to be still in connection with the officials, attempts her best to impress K. and prevent him from meeting Klamm. K. frankly says, "All that is not enough to influence me. My decision is made and I would try to carry it out even if an unfavorable answer were to come." (*The Castle* 319) Thus he declares his fixed intentions and assures her that he would never waver.

K enters in Frieda's room and meets the teacher who says that K. was very impolite to the Superintendent, who just made a deposition concerning the meeting with K. to him. Nevertheless, the Superintendent was willing, since there was no need for a land surveyor, to give him a job as the school janitor, which the teacher thinks is just as

unnecessary. K. rejects this contemptuously, and the teacher leaves, but then Frieda comes up, very upset, and tells K. that Gardena is throwing him out, since she is humiliated by having said too much during their conversation, and getting nothing but rude rebuffs in return. Frieda tells K. that he must accept the job, which would at least let them live in the schoolhouse. K. finally agrees. This time the villagers including his own fiancée successfully convince him for a post not only unsuitable and degrading to K. but hindering him to attain his righteous post.

K. arrives at the Herrenhof and goes to the room where he saw Klamm, but the door is locked and the peephole has been blocked. Frieda's successor as barmaid, Pepi, comes up. From Pepi, he comes to know that Klamm is about to leave and his sleigh is already waiting for him out in the courtyard. K. immediately runs out and finds the sleigh sitting there, with nobody but the coachman there. K. sits and waits. Klamm does not come, instead some strange man, comes and complain about K.'s being there. K. says he's waiting for someone, but the man says he'll miss him anyway. Even the strange man declares him the impossibility of his meeting Klamm. It looks like, the Castle has spread its spies all over the village and they frequently endeavor to frustrate K. Anyway, K. continues waiting out in the courtyard alone. He hardly lets things be as it feels like. So, the conflict goes on.

In another occasion as K. returns to the bar again, there he finds Klamm's village secretary Momus who needs some information from K. to fill out a deposition, but K. refuses to be interrogated. Momus says that this is his only way to reach Klamm, even though it is unlikely he will even read the deposition, but K. refuses all the more. Gardena insists that K. submit, but K. wants to know if answering the questions will give

him an opportunity to see Klamm. Naturally no, but the landlady insists that being interrogated by a secretary of Klamm's is practically an honor, that it has Klamm's spirit and his approval, and basically that refusing him would be refusing Klamm. Despite her every attempts K. refuses to be interrogated. So, the landlady accuses him saying:

"He is always like that. Falsifies the information one gives him, and then maintains that he receives false information. I have told him from the first and I will tell him again today that he has not the faintest prospect of being received by Klamm... That is all I have said, and whoever maintains the contrary twists my words maliciously." (*The Castle* 340)

K. calmly listens these high sounding and threatening words of the landlady. But he is unimpressed and leaves.

Another letter comes from Klamm. Incredibly, it says that Klamm is happy with the work K. has done as land surveyor, and also with the assistants' work, and that he should continue his good work. K. is very upset; obviously Klamm has no idea what is going on. Barnabas says he will deliver K.'s message, and also the other earlier one. This astonishes K.; he thought that Klamm's work took precedence over everything else, but Barnabas says that Klamm is usually in no mood to listen to him and he doesn't like to go there. Finally K. tells Barnabas he must deliver this message tomorrow; that he wants a personal meeting with Klamm. K. is much anxious. He can not make head or tail about what is going on. Still, he thinks, having Frieda as his fiancée, his ways to the Castle would be easier.

As they stay in the school, K. accepting the post of Janitor, somehow troublesome situation occurs among K.'s family and the school teachers. The teacher tells K. that he's

fired, but K. insists that the Superintendent gave him the post and only he can fire him. The teacher is unsatisfied and tells him to get out, to no avail. K. has to struggle everywhere in every circumstance. Still, he is not upset.

Kafka used to say: "Man cannot live without a permanent trust in something indestructible in himself, though both the indestructible element and the trust may remain permanently hidden from him. One of the ways in which this hiddenness can express itself is through faith in a personal god" (qtd. in *Proceedings of the Comparative Literature Symposium* 13). The indomitable character K. also has similar faith in something indestructible. So he endures every hardship that occurs in his way ahead.

Some sort of misunderstanding and conflict begins even among K. and Frieda as the former dismisses the always troublesome and intruding assistants. Basically, Frieda fears that the reason K. is interested in her too is because he is using her to get to Klamm. Her only worth to him is that she was Klamm's mistress. He might be able to use her as a bargaining chip with Klamm, for instance, treating her as property, not as a person. And if he decides that Klamm doesn't matter to him anymore, she will become simply a burden to him, since he can't use her for anything.

K. wants to know if this is Frieda or the landlady's opinion; mostly it's the landlady's, and she strongly doubts it after her experiences with K. The arguments proceed further. K. gets angry since Frieda seems to be always in favor of the exasperating assistants who had troubled K. to the optimum. Ultimately, in the heat of arguments Frieda says the assistants to the messengers of Klamm. K gets "extremely astonished" (*The Castle* 354) by such remarks. Still, it seems natural enough to him at the same time. Frieda says, "Even if they are, still they are silly boys..." Knowing

somehow that K.'s so called 'assistants' as the messenger or in other word, spies in the service of Klamm, Frieda still shows extreme sympathy towards them.

K. declares that he dismissed the assistants simply because they only aroused a "vague suspicion" (*The Castle* 354). He thinks, there is no choice for him. Kafka then says:

He must husband all his strength, trouble about nothing else, food, shelter, the village authorities, not even about Frieda... All that sort of thing could be put up with, it belonged to the ordinary continual petty annoyances of life, it was nothing compared with what K. was striving for, and he had not come here simply to lead an honored and comfortable life. (*The Castle* 361)

K. always goes after the job he really wants the most. He hardly tells everyone he knows about what he is looking for. He seems not much troubled by rejection. So the guiding principle of his life is he has to attain his right which he deserves and to attain it is his meat and drink. On the other hand, the society is forever troubled by the intrusion of any strangers and wants to avoid or set them aside so that they may not be able to create any trouble to keep its status quo in tact. So the conflict between the two parties prolongs endlessly.

Amalia as a rebellious individual

Another individual in the novel who wants to wage war against the society if it rejects to give respect and rights due to her is Amalia. It happens that once in a Fire Brigade festival, a certain Castle official named Sortini is attracted by this beautifully dressed lady Amalia. The next morning a messenger showed up at her window with a

message from Sortini, summoning Amalia to the Herrenhof in a rather obscene manner. Amalia's response is to tear up the letter and thrust the pieces in the messenger's face.

At this time, Amalia "only felt anger, fear she did know, neither for herself nor for others." (*The Castle* 383) This refusal is unforgivable in the eyes of the village. While listening this incident, K. says, "So that is what the officials are like." (*The Castle* 383) Olga continues her story. Everyone was curious about what had happened, and soon people are abandoning them, taking back their shoes, their father used to make and fix shoes, and finally the chief of the Fire Brigade comes and tells the father that he is dismissed from his job. Amalia, although she is the youngest, seemed to be the most mature; understanding what had happened and determined to go through it without tears and with her head held high.

The family waited for the Castle to make some complaint against them, but nothing happened. This didn't stop them from constantly discussing it and trying to figure out ways to get out of it. Amalia wouldn't have anything to do with it, though, so the rest of the family is reduced to whispering around the table fruitlessly. They ended up having to move from their comfortable house to this tiny cottage. The villagers had completely detested them; everything that they said and did was held in total contempt, as if their very existence was intolerable. Not only the villagers, Olga herself seems to be horrified in the same manner. Olga says, "...It is Sotini that horrifies me, the possibility of such an abuse of power" (*The Castle* 383). They just cut off all of their relations with the family.

Olga further reports another official's brutality:

"Klamm is notorious for his rudness, he can apparently sit dumb for hours and then suddenly bring out something so brutal that it makes one shiver...Klamm is 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. (*The Castle* 385)

Olga told that her father wanted to ask the Castle for forgiveness, but when he managed to speak to the people there, they said, nobody had accused him of any wrongdoing, so there was nothing to apologize for. He took to bribing the officials, but the only result was to spend the little money the family had left. Crazy by the thought of restoring Amalia's honor, he got another idea, to sit next to the road leading to the Castle and make his plea to Castle officials who pass by him in their carriages. However, this plan was doomed from the start, since hardly anybody would stop to listen to him. But he continued waiting in his spot by the road for months, eventually damaged his health and grew weak. The mother joined him there for a while, and she too became ill. The strain on the father drove him insane. Both parents became too ill to leave the house, and Amalia takes care of them.

Although she is the youngest, she has some unknown inner power in her. As she rejected Sortini's advances, she never sought for any excuse. She and her family are outcasts in the village. Still, she never complains about her fate. She wants to be broken and perish rather than bend her head on the feet of the rude officials. She is very proud and strong.

It is only Olga and the rest of the family who are in trouble. Olga is still expecting their complete ruin. For she knows, "For the Castle gentlemen everything is possible... We all knew no definite punishment would be visited on us. We were only shunned"

(*The Castle* 390, 91). Her nature is quite different than Amalia's. She is worried because being a villager; her family was no longer accepted by the society as one. Reporting the condition of her family, she says, "It was harvest time...nobody would take us on as workers, so that for the first time we were condemned to go nearly idle. We sat all together with the windows shut in the heats of July and August. Nothing happened. No invitations, no news, no callers, nothing." (*The Castle* 391) In such circumstance, Amalia's family is deserted by the society just because Amalia, an innocent girl refused an disrespectful invitation by one of the Castle officials.

The conflict seems to be prolonged as there is no sign of Amalia's being apologetic over what she had done.

Power Relation

K. is somehow baffled by the long and twisted tale of Olga. At last he say, "You have all been playing with me." (*The Castle* 403) But Olga and Amalia still want him to learn the ways of the village. As he returns from Amalia's house, he finds Jeremiah in the street who says that after K.'s mistreatment of them, Arthur went to the Castle to file a complaint against him, and Jeremiah and Frieda are moving to the Herrenhof together. So Frieda has abandoned K. Then Barnabas rushes up to K. with the news that he couldn't present K.'s request to Klamm since he kept ignoring him, but that he met

Erlanger, another official, who wants to see K. in his room at the Herrenhof. Jeremiah takes off and K. catches up with him. Both of them go at the Herrenhof.

There he waits outside to be called, and there are quite a few people standing around waiting for Erlanger. K. is the first called, along with Gerstäcker, though, and goes inside to the corridor where the officials have their rooms. However, Erlanger is asleep and he'll have to wait for him to wake up.

K. goes back and tries to find Erlanger's door, and enters a room to see if he's in there. But it turns out to be another official's room, Bürgel, who stops K. from leaving. After some small talk, he tells K. in an unrelentingly verbose and highly legalistic speech that it is possible to get your case taken care of if, instead of waiting for it to be done through the official channels, which could take forever, you could accidentally wander into the room of another official who is able to help you, and he won't be able to say no. In this way, this official also attempts to divert K's attention from his straight way. But K. is too tired to pay any attention to this speech, nodding off and failing to see what importance this could have for him. Finally, when it is about 5 a.m., Bürgel dismisses K.

K. runs into Erlanger in the hall, who is just about to leave and tells him to get Frieda back to her job as barmaid as soon as possible, since they didn't want to offend, or even potentially offend, Klamm's sensibilities by having her gone too long. He leaves and K. watches the spectacle of the officials waking up. In amazement K. contemplates the uncanny ways of the officials. He saw nobody raising any objection to Erlanger's summoning his clients in the middle of the night. As he questions about it the villagers there say, "...They should be only too thankful to Erlanger" (*The Castle* 411).

Unlike the villagers K. is quite a different sort of individual. He rightly knows what he deserves and relentlessly tussles to attain it. Even in dream, he fights against the officials. He tries to get through the labyrinthine Castle bureaucracy to find out what really is the case behind his summons, but in the week the novel takes place, he is unable to accomplish his end. Still K. appears to try extremely hard to get to the Castle, trying every possible way he can think of to reach it, just as a reader tries his best to interpret the meaning of the texts he reads. Interpretation is ultimately almost impossibility, and so a reader will wait some more; he will wait for another chance to interpret, for another chance to find the "true" meaning. Similarly, K. never gets tired of waiting and attempting this way or the other. He waits for a call from the Castle. When that does not get him to the Castle itself, as it is already illustrated, he uses Frieda and others to get to Klamm. His attempts and the actual results of his attempts do not matter nearly as much as the endeavor itself. What is of utmost importance is that he must struggle and the conflict goes on, this is the only way a society runs.

To sum up the discussion in a nut shell, there are very clear cut symptoms that obviously indicate the actual thread of the novel. As previously mentioned, the novel deals with the theme of conflict between individual and society. K. as an individual demands its rights which the society denies. Apparently, only the society seems to be powerful and the individual utterly helpless being. But actually the case is not so. Power exists in a relation. The seemingly helpless individual is also powerful. In certain occasion, it is the individual who dismantles the status quo of the society and rearranges it according to his desire.

The village Superintendent on one occasion says that he can not take the risk of throwing the Land Surveyor out. He asserts: "Nobody keeps you here, but that surely doesn't amount to throwing you out' (*The Castle* 317-18). The Superintendent's argument indicates that though the officials are still denying K.'s rights, they are still afraid of K.'s power. An almost similar remark of the Bridge Inn landlady intends the same. She says: "I can't abide him (K.), but I can't let him alone, either, one simply can't control oneself when one sees a child that can hardly walk trying to go too far for it, one simply has to interfere" (*The Castle* 413). Landlady and the superintendent are both the people somehow associated with the Castle. They recognize the power of an individual even though apparently he seems helpless and lonely.

So power is relational in a society and individual resistance is also equally influential component in the intricacies of power relation.

Chapter V

Conclusion

I can't abide him, but I can't let him alone, either, one simply can't control oneself when one sees a child that can hardly walk trying to go too far for it; one simply has to interfere (*The Castle* 413).

The Castle is about alienation, bureaucracy, and power relation. At the same time, it is the seemingly endless frustrations of man's attempts to stand against the system. K., the protagonist of the novel, prefers to continue resistance against the much complex power relation of the existing society and die in the village. He demands his rights and abhors any sign of grace or favors shown by the Castle. In this light, the power relation of the society is obvious.

The individual never fails to make fierce attempts to dismantle the existing power structure of the society. The individual wants to break the status quo of the society and gain the ultimate freedom which he deserves. The society on the other hand blocks all the ways of such an intruder as long as possible. Neither party leaves the field, and go to surrender. Sometime the society prevails and destructs the intruding individual and the other time the individual conquers and reorganizes the society. But it does not end the conflict. It goes on and on. The individual may not remain the same; the society may not remain the same. However, the conflict goes on the same.

The conflict had begun with Socrates. It still prevails in one form or the other. The same conflict is depicted in *The Castle* by the Franz Kafka, the immortal craftsman of the literary world. Despite countless frustration, K. attempts to gain recognition from

the Castle as a Land Surveyor. But not only have the officials, almost the whole villagers deliberately wanted to avoid him. Still, K. resumes his struggle.

Two third of the novel presents this very struggle. And the remaining part is occupied by another character, Amalia's revolts against the rudeness of the officials. Amalia's revolt is even more radical in comparison with the protagonist K. Though the nature of conflict of these two characters is somehow different, the similarities prevail over dissimilarities. Both of them are the victims of the tyranny of the power holders and both of them are revolting against the existing power structure of the society. Amalia is severely tormented by the abuse of power by a certain official and K. is deprived the post he deserves duly and is compelled to wander here and there homeless and jobless.

Another thing to be understood is though the power holders are cruel enough to the extent one can imagine; they can not avoid the intruders. The village superintendent somehow manages a job for K. in the local school and says he nobody can take the risk of ousting him. The landlady also says in one occasion that she can neither abide him nor can let him alone just like child. On the other hand, Amalia is living her life with her boldness. K. and Amalia also hold some hidden power of which the officials or the society is cautious. It proves that power is relational.

The obvious thread throughout *The Castle* is bureaucracy. The extreme degree is nearly comical and the village residence justifications of it are amazing. Olga expresses the "heroic" actions of Amalia, but appears to understanding of the community's acceptance of status quo when it comes to the solicitations by the officials. Hence it is no surprise that many feel that the work is a direct result of the political situation of the early 20th century.

To sum up in a nut shell, the principal characteristics of authoritarianism noted in Kafka's *The Castle* are basically of two fold. One is arbitrariness. Decisions imposed from above without any moral, rational, or human justification while often making inordinate and absurd demands upon the victim. The other is injustice. Blame is wrongly considered to be self-evident with no need for proof, and punishment is totally disproportionate to the "mistake" (non-existent or trivial). For instance, Barnabas family is deserted even by their own fellow villagers. Neither their guilt was approved nor could they request a pardon. Despite the apparent injustice and tyranny of the society, the individual attempt is equally significant. K.'s endless and untiring attempts have made the officials restless. They can neither allow him the post of the Land Surveyor nor can avoid him easily. Ultimately it is the individual resistance that dismantles the status quo or shatters the existing power structure of the society. So the society is equally cautious about individual attempts. This is the game of power relation in each and every society.

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