

Alienation, Bureaucracy and Self Identity in the Best Known Works of Franz Kafka

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Abstract : The absurdity which Kafka portrays in his nightmarish stories was, to him, the quintessence of the whole human condition. The utter incompatibility of the "divine law" and the human law, and Kafka's inability to solve the discrepancy are the roots of the sense of estrangement from which his protagonists suffer. No matter how hard Kafka's heroes strive to come to terms with the universe, they are hopelessly caught, not only in a mechanism of their own contriving, but also in a network of accidents and incidents, the least of which may lead to the gravest consequences. Absurdity results in estrangement, and to the extent that Kafka deals with this basic calamity, he deals with an eminently existentialist theme. Kafka's protagonists are lonely because they are caught midway between a notion of good and evil, whose scope they cannot determine and whose contradiction they cannot resolve. Deprived of any common reference and impaled upon their own limited vision of "the law," they cease to be heard, much less understood, by the world around them. They are isolated to the point where meaningful communication fails them. When the typical Kafka hero, confronted with a question as to his identity, cannot give a clear-cut answer, Kafka does more than indicate difficulties of verbal expression: he says that his hero stands between two worlds between a vanished one to which he once belonged and a present world to which he does not belong. This is consistent with Kafka's world, which consists not of clearly delineated opposites, but of an endless series of possibilities. These are never more than temporary expressions, never quite conveying what they really ought to convey hence the temporary, fragmentary quality of Kafka's stories.

Keywords: Nightmarish, Quintessence, Divine law, Contradiction, Fragmentary

I. INTRODUCTION

Born in Prague in 1883, Franz Kafka is today considered the most important prose writer of the so-called Prague Circle, a loosely knit group of German-Jewish writers who contributed to the culturally fertile soil of Prague during the 1880s until after World War I. He was a German-language novelist and short story writer, widely regarded as one of the major figures of 20th-century literature. His work, which fuses elements of realism and the fantastic, typically features isolated protagonists faced by bizarre or surrealistic predicaments and incomprehensible social-bureaucratic powers, and has been interpreted as exploring themes of alienation, existential anxiety, guilt, and absurdity. His best known works include "Die Verwandlung" ("The Metamorphosis"), *Der Process (The Trial)*, and *Das Schloss (The Castle)*. The term *Kafkaesque* has entered the English language to describe situations like those in his writing.

In short, Kafka shared the fate of much of Western Jewry people who were largely emancipated from their specifically Jewish ways and yet not fully assimilated into the culture of the countries where they lived. Although Kafka became extremely interested in Jewish culture after meeting a troupe of Jewish actors in 1911, and although he began to study Hebrew shortly after that, it was not until late in his life that he became deeply interested in his heritage. His close relationship with Dora Dymant, his steady and understanding companion of his last years, contributed considerably toward this development. But even if Kafka had not been Jewish, it is hard to see how his artistic and religious sensitivity could have remained untouched by the ancient Jewish traditions of Prague which reached back to the city's tenth-century origin.

Closely connected with the quasi-religious quality of Marxist interpretations of Kafka's stories are the countless philosophical and religious attempts at deciphering the make-up of his world. They range from sophisticated theological argumentation all the way to pure speculation. Although Kafka's religious nature is a subject complex and controversial enough to warrant separate mention, the critics arguing along these lines are also incapable, as are their sociological and psychological colleagues, of considering Kafka simply as an artist. What they all have in common is the belief that Kafka's "real meaning" lies beyond his parables and symbols, and can therefore be better expressed in ways he himself avoided for one reason or another. The presumptuousness of this particular approach lies in the belief that the artist depends on the philosopher for a translation of his ambiguous modes of expression into logical, abstract terms. All this is not to dispute Kafka's

philosophical-religious cast of mind and his preoccupation with the ultimate questions of human existence. It is just that he lived, thought, and wrote in images and not in "coded" conceptual structures. Kafka himself thought of his stories merely as *points of crystallization* of his problems: Bendemann, Samsa, Gracchus, the hunger artist, the country doctor, Josef K., and K. of "*The Castle*" all these men are close intellectual and artistic relatives of Kafka, yet it will not do to reduce his deliberately open-ended images to a collection of data.

Interpretations are always a touch matter and in Kafka's case, perhaps more so than in others. The reason for this is that his works are 1) essentially outcries against the inexplicable laws that govern our lives; 2) portrayals of the human drama running its course on several loosely interwoven levels, thus imparting a universal quality to his work; and 3) very much imbued with his high degree of sensitivity, which responded differently to similar situations at different times. Particularly this last aspect suggests in cohesion and paradox to the mind which insists on prodding Kafka's stories to their oftentimes irrational core. Kafka's pictures stand, as Max Brod never tired of pointing out, not merely for themselves but also for something beyond themselves.

Kafka's stories should not tempt us to analyze them along the lines of fantasy versus reality. An unchangeable and alienated world unfolds before us, a world governed by its own laws and developing its own logic. This world is our world and yet it is not. Its pictures and symbols are taken from our world of phenomena, but they also appear to belong somewhere else. We sense that we encounter people we know and situations we have lived through in our own everyday lives, and yet these people and situations appear somehow estranged. They are real and physical, and yet they are also grotesque and abstract. They use a sober language devoid of luster in order to assure meaningful communication among each other, and yet they fail, passing one another like boats in an impenetrable fog. Yet even this fog, the realm of the surreal (super-real), has something convincing about it. We therefore have the exciting feeling that Kafka's people say things of preeminent significance but that it is, at the same time, impossible for us to comprehend.

Finally, the reader seems to be left with two choices of how to "read" Kafka. One is to see Kafka's world as full of parables and symbols, magnified and fantastically distorted (and therefore infinitely more real), a world confronting us with a dream vision of our own condition. The other choice is to forego any claim of even trying to understand his world and to expose oneself to its atmosphere of haunting anxiety, visionary bizarreness, and occasionally faint promises of hope.

II. CONTEXT

THE METAMORPHOSIS

The Metamorphosis is a novella written by Franz Kafka which was originally first published in 1915. It is considered to be one of his best known works. The Metamorphosis deals with an absurd, or wildly irrational, event, which in itself suggests that the story operates in a random, chaotic universe.

Alienation

Alienation is the primary theme in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis." Indeed, much of early twentieth-century literature takes as its basic premises that man is alienated from his fellow humans and forced to work in dehumanizing jobs.

Before his metamorphosis, Gregor is alienated from his job, his humanity, his family, and even his body, as we see from the fact that he barely notices his transformation. Perhaps the greatest consequence of Gregor's metamorphosis is the psychological distance it creates between Gregor and those around him. Gregor's change makes him literally and emotionally separate from his family members indeed, from humanity in general and he even refers to it as his "imprisonment." After his transformation he stays almost exclusively in his room with his door closed and has almost no contact with other people. At most, Grete spends a few minutes in the room with him, and during this time Gregor always hides under the couch and has no interaction with her. Furthermore, he is unable to speak, and consequently he has no way of communicating with other people. Lastly, Gregor's metamorphosis literally separates him from the human race as it makes him no longer human. Essentially he has become totally isolated from everyone around him, including those people he cares for like Grete and his mother.

But as we learn over the course of the story, this feeling of estrangement actually preceded his transformation. Shortly after waking and discovering that he has become a bug, for example, Gregor reflects on his life as a traveling salesman, noting how superficial and transitory his relationships have become as a result of his constant traveling. Later, Gregor recalls how his initial pride at being able to support his family faded once his parents began to expect that support, and how he felt emotionally distant from them as a result. There is also no mention in the story of any close friends or intimate relationships outside his family. In fact, the alienation caused by Gregor's metamorphosis can be viewed as an extension of the alienation he already felt as a person. Even his consideration for his family seems to be something alien to him, as he barely notices it when he loses this consideration at the end. Therefore "The Metamorphosis" then, is a powerful indictment of the alienation brought on by the modern social order.

Bureaucracy

Kafka's stories are known for their exploration of the nightmare of bureaucracy and the dehumanizing effects of modern life all of those things we think of when we use the term "Kafkaesque."

The office manager makes a brief appearance in the beginning of the story. He's really only in the story so that we can hear some of the rumors about Gregor's misbehavior and his possible misuse of office funds. The office manager Gregor's boss is distrustful and overbearing, he insinuates that Gregor has been doing a poor job at work. He flees in terror upon seeing Gregor. The office manager also implies while checking on Gregor that Gregor's boss suspects him of stealing money from the firm. Then, shortly after Gregor awakes at the beginning of Part 2, he overhears the father explaining the family's financial situation in detail to the mother and Grete. Later, the father and Grete both take jobs to make up for the loss of Gregor's income, and the family even takes in a few borders as a means of bringing in extra money, which results in an argument about money after the borders discover Gregor.

Self Identity

Another key theme in "*The Metamorphosis*" is **personal identity**. When he wakes up to find himself changed, Gregor is so out of touch with his body that he barely notices his physical transformation. After Gregor is locked in his room all alone, he tries to re-build the identity he sacrificed by living only for others and ignoring his own wants and needs. Even after his transformation, Gregor finds that he is still serving his family by going out of his way not to inconvenience them. Gregor blinds himself to the resentment he holds towards his family. It is in the last chapter that Gregor is finally able to separate himself from his family when he finally convinces himself of the truth. His family is neglecting him. His search for identity seems to be a hapless journey, mostly because he never had an identity of his own in the first place. In the end of the story, he finds his humanity when he hears his sister playing violin and is reminded about his love for his family. It is this love, combined with his newfound freedom that allows Gregor to gain an identity of his own.

At a young age, Gregor finds that he is responsible for the support of his family and cannot for the life of him see a way out of his predicament. He is forced to forgo a love relationship wherein he could find intimacy with another human and perhaps father children to alleviate his lonely life. Night after night he travels from one lonely hotel room to another selling textile. When he is at home, he locks himself into his bedroom, a habit he says he developed while traveling but readers can see this as his need to alienate himself even more from his oppressive ever-needy family. His room has three doors, with a family member outside each urging him to get up and go to work so they can continue to live a lavish lifestyle. In addition, Gregor works for a boss who keeps track of his every move, going so far as to send his clerk to Gregor's home when he fails for one day to show up for work.

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Gregor's solution to his dilemma is to metamorphose into a gigantic insect. However, this alienates him from his family even more. They shun him, will not look upon him and in time come to abuse him and keep him in filth. When he moves toward them the evening of Grete's concert, it becomes clear that they want him dead and he obliges by alienating himself from them permanently he dies alone, only to be tossed out by the cleaning lady the following day. Gregor is overburdened by guilt. Indeed, guilt kills him. After he awakes one morning to find he has been transformed into a gigantic insect, Gregor shows little concern for himself. Instead, he agonizes about what will happen to his family now that he cannot get up to go to work. In addition, he is concerned about his boss will react. Despite having sacrificed his life for his family, he expects nothing in return and feels guilty that Grete is now forced to bring him food. His guilt about his appearance forces him under the couch so she won't have to endure looking at him. He feels guilt that now his father will have to get a job instead of sitting around all day reading newspapers in his night gown. He also feels guilt that his mother has to sew to make money, and guilt that Grete has to work in a shop. Guilt, guilt, guilt-it is Gregor's primary emotion. In the end, when he is rejected by Grete for interfering during her concert, Gregor's guilt forces him back into his filthy room to die alone so his family can get on with their lives.

THE TRIAL

The Trial is a novel written by Franz Kafka from 1914 to 1915 and published in 1925. One of his best-known works, it tells the story of a man arrested and prosecuted by a remote, inaccessible authority, with the nature of his crime revealed neither to him nor to the reader. Heavily influenced by Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Kafka even went so far as to call Dostoyevsky a blood relative. Like Kafka's other novels, *The Trial* was never completed, although it does include a chapter which brings the story to an end.

Alienation

Corresponding to Kafka's vision of an all-encompassing but indifferent society in *The Trial* is the individual's intense feelings of isolation, alienation, and anxiety. The court stands in for a society that insists on conformity at all costs, and the individual is guilty simply for being an individual. The whole idea of a defense in this context is paradoxical. The purpose of a defense is to give the individual an opportunity to defend his innocence, but to defend his innocence is to assert himself. And to assert himself, to defend himself and his actions vocally, is by nature criminal in a society that just wants the individual to shut up and blend in. As the novel shows through its depiction of the main character and other defendants, the court infiltrates all aspects of a defendant's life. The experience of a trial leads to an all-pervasive self-consciousness on the part of the defendant accompanied by feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and paranoia.

Joseph K. finds himself on trial for committing a crime without being informed of what that crime is. He is found guilty and sentenced to execution. The thematic foundation here is that everyone is born guilty by virtue of the concept of Original Sin and everyone is sentenced to die. That there is no real clear understanding of exactly why everyone should be guilty of the sins of Adam and Eve by anyone at any time underscores the ignorance of Josef of the charges against him.

Joseph K. doesn't even get the dignity of a full last name. Anyone who has ever tried to battle with any bureaucratic organization that caused trouble by getting them confused with someone else can appreciate the horror of "The Trial" to a certain degree. The real tragedy of the story is not so much that Joseph is doomed to execution, but that well before the verdict he already become submissive to the machine defined by its very absurdism; the mere fact that he submits to jumping through such ridiculous hoops makes his battle against it seem as pointless as the system itself.

Bureaucracy

Joseph K. is also a bureaucrat and he is fully at home in the world of financial number crunching. Outside that world, however, his understanding and ability to communicate breaks down. He literally has trouble communicating with the client speaking in an Italian dialect with which he is unfamiliar. On a more figurative level, he fails to understand the meaning communicated by Titorelli's painting. The entire novel is a metaphor for the trouble that people get themselves into because their understanding of consequences is misdirected by a failure of communication.

Kafka's *The Trial* is often read as a critique totalitarianism, a form of government power that is characterized by total government control of every aspect of daily life (hence totalitarianism), as well as a state authority that is not accountable to individual citizens and can pretty much do whatever it wants, regardless of what the law says (also known as authoritarianism). Kafka's story about an individual persecuted by the dizzying machinations of an unjust power has been read as an allegory for such modern totalitarian governments as Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union. In fact, Kafka's allegory has been so effective that the term "kafkaesque" has entered our general vocabulary as a word that applies to a state controlled by an authority beyond the reach of the law, dominated by an immense and labyrinthine bureaucracy, and saturated by a general state of paranoia where neighbors inform on each other to the government and random acts of violence are perpetrated against ordinary citizens.

Self Identity

The theme is based on the protagonist's inability to reach his own self. K.'s arrest and his attempts to execute himself from an aging, totalitarian bureaucratic system. This is at the conscious surface level. Kafka is also the social chronicler very much like Dickens, commenting in monotonous detail on the Czech legal system - which is symbolic of any organization that is governmental even in democratic countries. The story is also crowded with Dickensian characters, each with his own identity, but who fall into the system whether they like it or not. A hierarchy of characters, starting from the judge and leading to an isolated painter, is neatly arranged.

The court's summons is symbolic of a call of a higher spiritual existence. The protagonist resists submitting to this force. Instead he holds on to laws in conscious life. The 'Trial' also deals with totalitarian politics and the illogical beurocracy, which is evident in modern living. It is evident in professions, visa litigators and seemingly democratic organization. In keeping with the Judaic tradition the book is a commentary on the system. It is not a reflection of the Judiciary. It concerns Kafka's yearning for truth, to create something universal and the urge to live in a world, overpowered by destiny and human contradiction. There are these two opposing trends one of human and the other of fate. The theme skillfully avoids the everyday ordinary happenings and incidents of a regular novel. It concerns unusual guilt, where the guilt is not specified. The reader and the protagonist, K. are caught in the trial. There is almost an amnesia or forgetfulness which forgets to greet his cousin on her birthday. The trial seems to afford a lot of hope of freedom, but in reality there is none for the accused. He is sentenced to live an accused victim's life. This is the metaphysical aspect of Judaism, which the novel deliberates. The protagonist tries to free himself from his guilt, though he does not know what the guilt is. There is no joy in the act of living. The theme is pessimistic.

The maze of courts with the characters abounding in it caricatures a bureaucratic. It is a satire on the modern state with its administration, agencies and services. It also concerns the poverty of the officials who resort to bribery. There are sexual themes in the affairs of the judges and of K. himself. The parables, the usher, the painter and the lawyer are figures of a metaphysical religious imagination. In a strange way it also delineates the fallen man in Judeo Christian philosophy, who has the freedom to be a culprit. That would be Kafka's masterly stroke. K., except for a brief friendship with Hasterer, prefers his own company. In the matter of his trial, "he didn't want to enlist anyone's aid and thus initiate them in the matter even distantly." To do so would be to initiate another person into himself. This is an act he cannot even do in the form of a petition. This is as it should be since the trial is his own, it is his guilt, and no matter what he does or where he goes, that is where the inquiry will be located: "he is certainly being treated with strange carelessness." As much as K. desires it, he is not alone. Everyone who knows him also knows about his trial. From his point of view, the entire universe finds him guilty, from the casual observer to the men who kill him like a dog.

THE CASTLE

"**The Castle**", written by Franz Kafka in 1922, falls into the category of the most significant and enigmatic philosophical novel of the Twentieth century. In it, the writer raises an important theological problem of the path of the human being towards God. Containing literary traits of both modernism and existentialism, "The Castle" is, to the large extent, a metaphorical and even mythical work. The realities of life are present only so far: the artistic space of the novel is limited to The Village and The Castle overlooking it, the artistic time changes irrationally. Dark and at times surreal, "The Castle" is often understood to be about alienation, unresponsive bureaucracy, the frustration of trying to conduct business with non-transparent, seemingly arbitrary controlling systems, and the futile pursuit of an unobtainable goal.

Alienation

K.'s struggles to obtain recognition become more desperate. He consults his superior, the village superintendent, who rummages futilely through a mass of documents, denies that K.'s letter has any official standing and suggests that the whole confusion may be due to administrative errors. Even the telephone call proves nothing for there is no central exchange at the castle. Anybody may answer a ring.

Until his position can be officially regularized, K. is offered a post as the janitor of the village schools. Frieda refuses and urges him to accept because of no salary. After many circumstances also K., still on his dignity, refuses to answer questions. When an attempt is made to dismiss him from the school, K., refuses to leave. When he, in turn, tries to get rid of his useless assistants, he meets with no better luck. Meanwhile Frieda quarrels with him, saying he is merely using her for his own ends.

K.'s struggle to get to the Castle should be read as a kind of frustrated pilgrimage, an attempt to enter a realm of being that transcends his own. If he could penetrate the secrets of the castle, he would achieve the lucid vision which would clarify the meaning of his existence. As it is the difficulties which K., meets are a statement of man's actual condition, his inability to achieve his own salvation. The realms of absolute cannot be entered from below. Kafka's originality lies in his choice of a metaphor to represent this situation. The village represents society well enough, but society as it must appear to a man like K., who is so obsessed by his quest for spiritual absolutes that he no longer has any feeling for the rest of mankind. In any event, the village is the closest that K. ever gets to his goal, for he dies, like Moses, insight of but forever outside of the Promised Land. It must be said that Kafka left this intriguing work unfinished.

Bureaucracy

The obvious thread throughout *The Castle* is bureaucracy. The extreme degree is nearly comical and the village residents' justifications of it are amazing. Hence it is no surprise that many feel that the work is a

direct result of the political situation of the era in which it was written, which was shot through with anti-Semitism, remnants of the Habsburg bureaucracy, etc.

But even in these analyses, the veiled references to more sensitive issues are pointed out. For instance, the treatment of the Barnabas family, with their requirement to first prove guilt before they could request a pardon from it and the way their fellow villagers desert them have been pointed out as a direct reference to the anti-Semitic climate at the time. In a review of the novel found in *The Guardian*, William Burrows disputes the claim that "The Castle" deals with bureaucracy, claiming that this view trivializes Kafka's literary and artistic vision, while being "reductive". He claims, on the other hand, that the book is about solitude, pain, and the desire for companionship.

Self Identity

The protagonist known as K. arriving late one cold, snow-bound day at a settlement that resembles a medieval fiefdom and which consists of a central "Castle" inhabited by a secretive society of apathetic and insensitive aristocratic officials and their servants that apparently spend their time administering the affairs of the surrounding village. In this vivid instantiation of a darkly comic, Kafkaesque world K's ostensible goal is to get into the Castle and meet with a senior official known as Klamm. However his dogged attempts to reach his self-imposed goal are continually thwarted and frustrated, the metaphorical device of walking through deep snow used by Kafka is particularly apt. Kafka paints a haunting picture of a world of uncertainty and ambiguity where there are no firm facts with which to ground oneself with, all knowledge is socially constructed. Throughout the narrative K. is met with distrust, mockery and at times, outright hostility. K is treated like a child by the peasantry because he doesn't have the good sense to accept his lot in life. The illogical assumptions of the village folk which K. meets are based largely on conjecture and an irrational reverence for the authorities residing in the Castle and when K. challenges the prevailing beliefs of the peasantry he is enervated by a futile dialogue which progresses nowhere. Each new acquaintance K. makes in the village only seems to frustrate him rather than inspire him. The sand continually shifts under K's feet, ultimately nothing can be achieved in such a world, that the novel was never finished only serves to reinforce it. K. is trapped in a social maze ultimately he finds himself back where he started betrayed by the fiancée he initially won and with the same undetermined social status, the only difference being is that he has been rendered utterly exhausted both mentally and emotionally, by his experiences.

Works by Kafka can always be interpreted in a number of ways. One way to interpret "The Castle" is to see it as a representation of social norms. The protagonist, Joseph K. attempts to be a part of those social norms. The main theme of the story is mankind's constant struggle to belong somewhere. In this particular instance, Joseph K is not accepted or rejected. He exists in a state of limbo, a kind of in between where his belonging is always pending. This idea is closely tied with the idea of "liminality", where an individual's identity is neither fully one nor fully the other, but an empty in between states.

III. CONCLUSION

In the novella **The Metamorphosis** I suggest that in a sense, Gregor is the archetype of many of Kafka's male characters: he is a man reluctant to act, fearful of possible mishaps, rather prone to exaggerated contemplation, and given to juvenile, surrogate dealings with sex. For example, he uses his whole body to anxiously guard the magazine clipping of a lady in a fur cape; this is a good illustration of his pitiful preoccupation with sex. Though it would be unfair to blame him for procrastinating, for not getting out of bed on the first morning of his metamorphosis, we have every reason to assume that he has procrastinated long before this especially in regard to a decision about his unbearable situation at work. Gregor has also put off sending his sister to the conservatory, although he promised to do so. He craves love and understanding, but his prolonged inactivity gradually leads him to feel ever more indifferent about everything. It is through all his failures to act, then, rather than from specific irresponsible actions he commits, that Gregor is guilty. The guilt exact is that of agonizing loneliness.

I also suggest that Because of the failure of the father's business and the debts that resulted, money is a chief concern for the Samsa family, and consequently it appears as a frequent topic in Gregor's thoughts and in the conversations of the family members. Gregor's chief concern after discovering he's become an insect is that he'll lose his job, which we quickly learn he took solely as a means of earning money for his family.

I suggest that **The Trial** must be read on several levels, and does not yield its full meaning at once. There is really only one character in "The Trial." The protagonist, Joseph K., whose struggle makes up the entire story and who is "on stage" at all the times. Most of the other actors are nameless and almost faceless, and may simply be projections of certain aspects of K.'s own unconscious. The most sharply defined characters are loosely be constructed.

I suggest that **The Castle** is *Franz Kafka's* most humanistic work, virtually the only one in which the protagonist forms continuous, close relationships and the tone of *The Castle* is serious, but not sinister as in *The*

Trial. It might seem that both works are expressing the same idea of individual state and how miss giving in either can lead to tragic consequences, but *The Castle* goes further.

In *The Castle*, Kafka paints the individual as a wretch longing for power. His shameless ambition, though it may not be realized, leading him to use and discard, even those, that cares for him (as Frieda did and was). He shows with the skill of a master writer, just how much one can rationalize their naked selfishness also. The similarity with *The Trial* is stylistic only. There is a supportive, docile woman in both, subservient characters also: the assistants in *The Castle* and the jailers in *The Trial*. The mayor in *The Castle* is strikingly similar to Ks' attorney in *The Trial*. Yet, the stories diverge in their themes. Both have surreal settings that invoke images of secret underground worlds, but present two different perspectives on the individual and his social world. Both novels express pessimistic views of human relationships. Yet, Kafka creates unforgettable drama in the process. The almost fairy tale world of each novel made me want to actually visit such fantasized places, if only in daydream. These novels have a melancholy tone, but deep, thoughtful prose. The protagonist, *K*, in each novel carries an extraordinary mental soliloquy that almost surely gives the reader great food for thought. The lack of plot resolution is disconcerting, yet this is a hallmark of Kafka's style. With the growing complexity and labyrinth course of the plot in each story, I suspect Kafka dismissed the idea of resolving each story into one precise denouement.

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