CHAPTER III

SOCIOCULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES OF FRANZ KAFKA’S FICTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the definition of sociocultural linguistics given by Wikipedia “Sociocultural linguistics is a term used to encompass a broad range of theories and methods for the study of language in its sociocultural context. Its growing use is a response to the increasingly narrow association of the term sociolinguistics with specific types of research involving the quantitative analysis of linguistic features and their correlation to sociological variables. The term as it is currently used not only clarifies this distinction, but highlights an awareness of the necessity for interdisciplinary approaches to language, culture and society.”

Additionally sociocultural linguistics is the study of how language and society interact with one another. Such fields of interest include language and gender, language and race, language in society, etc. One must study the structure of language such as morphology, phonology, syntax, phonetics as well as how these features coincide with various cultural aspects.

The scope of sociocultural linguistics, as described by researchers such as Kira Hall and Mary Bucholtz, is potentially vast, though often includes work drawing from disciplines such as sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology,
discourse analysis, and sociology of language, as well as certain streams of social psychology, folklore studies, media studies, social and literary theory, and the philosophy of language.

Sociocultural linguists, especially in the United States, take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and the social and cultural functions of language use. Although generative and cognitive linguistics have been dominant in the United States since the mid-twentieth century, American linguists have periodically proposed to bring their studies closer to other fields of social inquiry. For example, in 1929, Edward Sapir urged linguists to move beyond diachronic and formal analyses for their own sake and to "become aware of what their science may mean for the interpretation of human conduct in general" (1929:207).

It is peculiarly important that linguists, who are often accused, and accused justly, of failure to look beyond the pretty patterns of their subject matter, should become aware of what their science may mean for the interpretation of human conduct in general. Whether they like it or not, they must become increasingly concerned with the many anthropological, sociological, and psychological problems which invade the field of language. (Sapir 1929:214)

According to the history, forty years later, Dell Hymes (1964) lamented that the socially integrated linguistics Sapir had called for was disappearing. Hymes and others worried that new formal approaches, as well as the push for linguistics as an autonomous field, threatened to once again isolate linguists. At
the same time, though, the growth of ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics
offered a venue for the socially engaged linguistics Sapir had called for four
decades earlier.

After four more decades, just as Hymes (1964) worried that linguistics
had been bleached of its association with the study of human interaction in the
wake of formalist studies, scholars noted that sociolinguistics in turn had
narrowed to denote only specific types of study. Sociocultural linguistics is thus
"the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language,
culture, and society" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 5).

According to International Encyclopedia of Linguistics defined the term
that:

“Sociolinguistic, as the name indicates, deals with language as a
social phenomenon. Social life depends on language, so the scope
of the discipline is potentially very wide. It encompasses large-
scale issues concerning the relations between language and social,
cultural, and historical factors, as well as the fine details of the
language behavior of individuals and social groups in specific
interactions and in various social contexts.”

Additionally register and style. The term “style” is used both in the
linguistic analysis of literature (stylistics). “Cultures are organisms, and world-
history is their collective biography” – said Oswald Spengler. Language is
culture-preserving as well as culture-transmitting. That was why, Descartes said,
“Thanks to language, Man become Man.” In this statement, Descartes has used
the term man to refer to all human beings (men, women and children). There are
well–known statements like “The proper study of mankind is Man” said Pope, “The child is father of the man” said Wordsworth, “Man is the measure of all things” said Pythagoras, etc. that reflect the generic term; this aspect of culture has been preserved and transmitted to future generations. Though there are other forms that preserve culture, such as music, painting, etc., language is the most common and dynamic form in which culture is preserved and transmitted.

Additionally culture has been defined as the sum of transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thoughts characteristic of a community of population. These characteristics are all transmitted by language; they are not inherited through the genes. An English baby taken away from the parents shortly after birth and raised in a tribal society would be, except for certain physiological features, the same as all other children born and brought up in that society.

Linguistically culture and language are so tightly related that they may be regarded as parts of the same thing. No case is known of either a language or a culture existing without the other. Obviously, no language can survive in isolation and no civilization can be built up without language. Cultural changes tend to occur along with changes in language; the two proceed reinforcing each other.

For an example, Indo-Aryan dialects changed over the years into different languages like Gujarajti, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali and Assamese, etc., the cultural patterns got differentiated. Emanating from one common source, Aryan culture, there are today markedly different cultures like Gujarajti culture,
Marathi culture, etc. Even within one speech community, there are cultural variations—in terms of region, class, caste, profession, etc.

Ethnocentricity, or the belief in the superiority of one’s own ethnic group, is manifested in the use of language; ethnocentrism is actually maintained through language by creating myth. Every culture has the process of myth creation through language.

Some scholars have defined culture as socially acquired knowledge: “…a society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members… Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge in a most general sense of the term.” (Goodenough, 1957).

If culture is knowledge in a broad sense, one can ask whether it is socially acquired knowledge. Hudson (1980) makes the following distinction:

I. Cultural knowledge—which is acquired from people.
II. Shared non-cultural knowledge—which is shared by all human beings but not learned from others.
III. Non-shared, non-cultural knowledge—which is unique to the individual.

In this schema, sense parts of language belong to cultural knowledge; some parts like dimensions, directions, etc. are not learned from other human beings; some are highly individualistic.

It can be said that knowledge, culture, and language are interrelated on a number of dimensions. In sociolinguistics, we must try to study the following:
firstly how languages and cultures differ from one another, secondly do they differ arbitrarily and unrestrictively from one another? and lastly are there any universals in thought and culture that are reflected in language?. This is the age old debate about relativists and universalists.

According to Socio-linguistics, Language and Culture and Language Varieties, language is a social-cultural-geographical phenomenon. There is a deep relationship between language, culture and society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. When we study a language, we have to study its dialects, sociolects, idiolects, etc.

That is why we should keep in mind the geographical and cultural area in which this language is spoken, the culture and the society in which it is used, the speakers who use it, the listeners for whom it is used, and the purpose for which it is used, besides the linguistic components that compose it. Only then can our study of a language be complete and comprehensive. So we must look at language not only from within but also from without; we should study language from the points of view of both form and functions in culture. Socio-linguistics is the study of speech functions according to the speaker, the hearer, their relationship and contact, the context and the situation, the topic of discourse, the purpose of discourse, and the form of discourse. It studies the causes and consequences of linguistic behavior in human societies; it is concerned with the function of language, and studies language from without. Thus, we see a unique bond between language and culture. For Saussure: “There is an absolute relation between language and culture”. 
Language with its different varieties is the subject matter of socio-linguistics. Socio-linguistics studies the varied linguistic realizations of socio-cultural meanings which in a sense are both familiar and unfamiliar and the occurrence of everyday social interactions which are nevertheless relative to particular cultures, societies, social groups, speech communities, languages, dialects, varieties, styles. That is why language variation generally forms a part of socio-linguistic study. Language can vary, not only from one individual to the next, but also from one sub-section of speech-community (family, village, town, region) to another. People of different age, sex, social classes, occupations, or cultural groups in the same community will show variations in their speech. Thus language varies in geographical and social space. According to socio-linguists, a language is code. Every individual have some idiosyncratic linguistic features in his or her use of language. These personal linguistic features are known as Idiolect. David crystal defines Idiolect as:

“Idiolect refers to Linguistic system of an individual—one’s personal dialect”

In fact, human beings are not static. Their thinking, choice, and behavior vary according to need and situation. As they adapt their behavior according to the situation, they adapt their language. This adaptation of language according to situation, context and purpose forms a language variety that is called ‘Register’. Unlike register, Dialect is a variety of language which has its peculiar vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Register is social while dialect is geographical variation. David Crystal asserts that:
“Register is a variety of language defined according to its use in a social situation”

According to “Sociolinguistics - A Study of Language and Society”, language is a social-cultural-geographical phenomenon. There is a deep relationship between language and society. It is in society that man acquires and uses language. When we study a language which is an abstraction of abstractions, a system of systems, we have to study its further abstractions such as dialects, sociolects, idiolects, etc. That is why we have to keep in mind the geographical area in which this language is spoken, the culture and the society in which it is used, the speakers who use it, the listeners for whom it is used, and the purpose for which it is used, besides the linguistic components that compose it. Only then can our study of a language be complete and comprehensive.

So we must look at language not only from within but also from without; we should study language from the points of view of both form and functions. Socio-linguistics is the study of speech functions according to the speaker, the hearer, their relationship and contact, the context and the situation, the topic of discourse, the purpose of discourse, and the form of discourse. An informal definition of socio-linguistics suggested by a linguist is that it is the study of: ‘Who can say what how, using what means, to whom and why.” It studies the causes and consequences of linguistic behavior in human societies; it is concerned with the function of language, and studies language from without.

Socio-linguistics is a fascinating, interesting and challenging field of linguistics’ study. It studies the ways in which language interacts with society. It
is the study of the way in which the structure of a language changes in response to its different social functions, and the definition of what these functions are. ‘Society, here is to cover a spectrum of phenomena to do with race, nationality, more restricted regional, social and political groups, and the interactions of individuals within groups. Different labels have sometimes been suggested to cover various parts of this spectrum. Ethnolinguistics is sometimes distinguished from the rest, referring to the linguistic correlates and problems of ethnic groups—illustrated at a practical level by the linguistic consequences of immigration; there is a language side to race relations. The term Anthropological Linguistics is sometimes distinguished from ‘sociological linguistics’, depending on one’s particular views as to the validity or otherwise of a distinction between anthropology and sociology in the first place (for example, the former studying primitive cultures, the latter studying more ‘advanced’ political units; but this distinction is not maintained by many others). ‘Stylistics’ is another label which is sometimes distinguished, referring to the study of the distinctive linguistic characteristics of smaller social groupings. But more usually, stylistics refers to the study of the literary expression of a community using language. Socio linguistics gradually merges into ethno-linguistics, anthropological linguistics, stylistics and the subject-matter of psychology.

Broadly speaking, however, the study of language as part of culture and society has now commonly been accepted as Sociolinguistics. But there are also some other expressions which have been used at one time or another, including ‘the sociology of language’, ‘social linguistics’, ‘institutional linguistics’, 
anotherological linguistics’, ‘linguistic anthropology’, ‘ethnolinguistics’, the ‘ethnography of communication’, etc.

The kinds of problems which are faced by the sociolinguist are: the problems of communities which develop a standard language, and the reactions of minority groups to this (as in Belgium, India, Pakistan or Wales); the problems of people who have to be educated to linguistic level where they can cope with the demands of a variety of social situations; the problems of communication which exist between nations or groups using a different language, which affects their ‘world-view’ (for example the problem of popularizing Russian among the nations which are friendly to Russia); the problems caused by linguistic change in response to social factors; the problems caused or solved by bilingualism or multilingualism. By this however, we do not mean that socio-linguistics can or does solve all such problems as stated above. Yet it can identify precisely what the problems are and provide information about the particular manifestation of a problem in a given area, so that possible solutions can thereby be found out or expedited. Furthermore, problems related to interference, code-switching or dialect-switching can be successfully handled by socio-linguistics. But the success of socio-linguistics ultimately depends upon ‘pure linguistics’.

The scope of socio-linguistics, therefore, is the interaction of language and various sociologically definable variables such as social class, specific social situation, status and roles of speakers/hearers, etc. As J.B. Pride says, socio-linguistics is not simply ‘amalgam of linguistics and sociology (or indeed of
linguistics and any other of the social sciences). It incorporates, in principle at least, every aspect of the structure and use of language that relates to its social and cultural functions. Hence there seems no real conflict between the socio-linguistics and the psycho-linguistic approach to language. Both these views should be reconciled ultimately. Linguists like John Lyons and cognitive psychologists like Campbell and Wales advocate the necessity of widening the notion of competence to take account of a great deal of what might be called the ‘social context’ of speech.

According to language variation, language with its different varieties is the subject matter of socio-linguistics. Socio-linguistics studies the varied linguistic realizations of socio-cultural meanings which in a sense are both familiar and unfamiliar and the occurrence of everyday social interactions which are nevertheless relative to particular cultures, societies, social groups, speech communities, languages, dialects, varieties, styles. That is why language variation generally forms a part of socio-linguistic study.

Language can vary, not only from one individual to the next, but also from one sub-section of speech-community (family, village, town, region) to another. People of different age, sex, social classes, occupations, or cultural groups in the same community will show variations in their speech. Thus language varies in geographical and social space. Variability in a social dimension is called sociolectical. According to socio-linguists, a language is code. There exist varieties within the code. And the factors that cause language variation can be summarized in the following manner: nature of participants,
their relationship such as socio-economic, sexual occupational etc., number of participants such as two face to face, one addressing a huge audience, etc., role of participants such as student, teacher, father, mother, son etc. function of speech event such as persuasion, request for information ritual, verbal etc., nature of medium such as speech, writing, scripted speech, speech reinforced by gesture, etc., genes of discourse such as scientific, experiment, sport, art religion, etc. and physical setting such as noisy, quiet, public, private, family, formal, familiar, unfamiliar, etc. Hence it can be said that sociolinguistics is important to the study of style in FK’s fiction.

According to language Varieties, language varies from region to region, class to class, profession to profession, person to person, and even situation to situation.

Socio-linguistics tends to describe these variations in language with reference to their relationship with society. It shows that the relationship between language variation and society is rather a systematic relationship. It manifests that there are four major social factors involve in this variation: socio-economic status, age, gender, and ethnic background of the user or users of language. Due to all these four factors language differs on four levels as follows: firstly phonological level, secondly lexical level thirdly syntax level and fourthly discourse level.

In other words, variation within a language with reference to its use or user can be defined in terms of ‘difference of linguistic items’. R. A. Hudson in his Sociolinguistics manifests opined:
“What makes a language variety different from another is linguistic items that it includes, so we may define a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution”

Therefore to describe language varieties, on one side there are linguistic items and on the other there is social distribution. Let’s take two different social classes for example: middle class and working class. Language of working class is different from that of middle class. The choice of vocabulary of one class is quite different from the other. Middle class uses more adjective, adverbs and impersonal pronouns. Whereas working class uses active and simple words and here is lesser use of adjective, adverbs and impersonal pronouns. Lower class speech is more direct with simple grammatical construction in contrast with middle class speech. In these manners can appear in the FK’s fiction.

3.2 REFERENCES TO THE BEHAVIOR OF CHARACTERS /EXPLANATORY TECHNIQUE USED BY THE AUTHOR WITH REFERENCE TO THE BEHAVIOR OF THE INTERLOCUTORS

FK, in his works, presents the life of the society in which he himself is the member and hence through his characters depicts the role of the influencing society and its current social norms. The extrinsic factors that are the settings and its environment form the stimulus to the attitudes and the speech of the characters.

Therefore the socio-cultural structure of the society is reflected in the works of FK. According to Nils Erik Enkvist (1964) says:
“Style is concerned with frequencies of linguistic items in a given context and thus with contextual probabilities.”

Hence several contextual factors intervene to transform the nature, function and quality of the language and this chapter portrays the social and cultural aspects of the society that have their role in the linguistic study of the language. The correlation between the context and the characters is clearly brought out through the language use of the characters. In this regard R.N.Srivastava and R.S.Gupta say:

“Language is not merely instrumental; it is a powerful symbol of identity, a tool of cultural transformation and an important factor in social relationship, in short, an all-embracing phenomenon of a man’s social and personal existence.”

FK contemplates the varieties of human nature in his characters with the blend of pathos, sarcasm, humor, derogatory use etc. These features are backed by their culture and the society hence to figure out the socio-psychological elements. FK by the use of his inimitable explanatory technique provides his readers an accurate perception of his characters.

3.2.1 PATHOS

Pathos is one of the characteristic aspects where the agony and the sufferings of the characters due to the personal relationships that are contributed by the society are discussed. The characters come to a tragic down fall of the
state of nothingness. Therefore stylistically the pathos in the fiction of FK is expressed linguistically.

FK shows his readers that the effects of alienation are not subtle. In TM, Gregor may have played a part, there is a difference when you chose it for yourself and when you are forced into it. Gregor might have spent time doing things alone, but he still talked to others, and had plans for his future. It was not the fact that he changed that put a halt to these plans, but others reactions to him. Those few times he stepped in to the world he was forced back out. His inability to communicate kept a barrier up between him and them. This barrier could have been breached had someone been willing to try, but each character in this story stayed back never attempting communication.

➤ “Gregor’s eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky – one could hear raindrops beating on the window gutter-made him quite melancholy.” (TM 61)

➤ The serious injury done to Gregor, which disabled him for more than a month – the apple went on sticking in his body as a visible reminder, since no one ventured to remove it – seemed to have made even his father recollect that Gregor was a member of the family, despite his present unfortunate and repulsive shape, and ought not to be treated as an enemy, that, on the contrary, family duty required the suppression of disgust and the exercise of patience nothing but patience. (TM 97)

Martin Greenburg explains it that: “The fact that his voice has altered so that the others can no longer understand what he says, but he can understand
them as well as ever, perfectly expresses the pathos of one who is condemned to stand on the outside looking in.” Pathos in the fictions of FK is one of his characteristic features stylistically.

### 3.2.2 SARCASM

Sarcasm is the ironical part of the literary text. It is one of literary techniques used by the authors. It can be seen as the activity of giving contradictory statement of what an author means. Moreover it is a way of revealing out the intensity of feelings in the form of statements, remarks or incidents according to the personal relationship or the events happening due to the societal influence. In FK’s fictions show the irony through the story as one of his styles.

There are different kinds of irony, which are portrayed in most literary writings. Verbal irony is when someone states one thing in order to mean the exact opposite. Situational Irony is when something occurs that would not normally be expected when both the reader and the characters do not expect. Cosmic irony is described when absurd things occur along with dark humor. Situational Irony is when the reader has information which the characters do not. For example, part one of TM begins with situational irony when "Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from easy dreams and found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect." In TM, FK used irony from start to finish. The story begins with an ironic twist as the reader is thrust into a climax of a dreaded life made real by a horrible dream that is not at all a dream when a poor little
protagonist, Gregor awakes to the harsh reality that he is no longer a young man with hopes and dreams but instead a bug just waiting to be squashed. Sarcasm is expressed to the fiction of FK.

Irony is a literary device where the literal truth brings direct discordance with a perceived truth. Then irony can be used verbally as in a nightmare not but a dream but real, and it can be used situational as in a young protagonist who finds himself the caretaker of his mother and father or cosmically as when a protagonist wakes up to find that a cruel twist of fate has turned him into some sort of giant beetle. The situational irony runs rampant in TM as Gregors slow and steady demise as a beetle parallels his father’s resurgence as patriarch and rise to power while his little sister Grete transforms from a little girl into a blossoming young woman full of sexual power and shedding of innocence.

According to Mark A. Seaver, In TM, Kafka uses irony flavored with contradiction to further point out just how far the people involved have fallen out of touch with reality According to Roy Pascal (as cited in Mark A. Seaver), author of Kafka's Narrators: A Study of His Stories and Sketches, "There is a good deal of humor in these early stories, as in the novels and later stories, but it is often ambiguous and can be overlooked" (Pascal 40). The humor that Pascal refers to is not the usual vaudeville, slap- stick so common in today's society. "Kafka never laughed so much as he did with (Felix) Weltsch, and it was Weltsch who first stressed the role of humor in Kafka's work - gallows humor spiked with desperation, but liberating for them both (Pawel, 131). Kafka was a
man who was more subtle than most and preferred his humor in a more deliberate vein. Irony was a flavor that seemed to work better for Kafka. By taking a look at some of Kafka’s works we can see this irony more clearly.

The story of TM ends with Gregors dutifully death leaving a refreshed father with his continually doubtful wife as both watch their young daughter become an animalistic woman of sexual desire. A story that began with Gregors innocence long since lost to the harsh reality of the responsibilities of life paralleled by Grettas youthful innocence that would shed its own skin as the story transformed and in the end there is no one that is innocent and no one to blame. TM is a story of irony from start to finish. It begins with the climax, which is ironic, for most stories could not hold the reader’s attention if they had done that. This is one of the more sarcastic expressions used by Kafka because of the outrageous idea, this short story displays Kafka’s issues as almost comical. Irony is a very important aspect of this novella. It can be said irony is one of his styles of FK.

3.2.2.1 SARCASM IN DISCOURSE

FK uses sarcasm in discourse subsequently in order to draw the attention of the readers towards the controversial issues yet that cannot be stated directly by the characters because of their sociocultural situation as follows:

In AHA, according to a critic, FK uses full of symbolism which illustrates the irony in the situation. One of symbolism examples occurring at the end of the story is the panther. According to the story, The hunger artist had
been fasting for many days in his cage, so long that the management stopped counting. He was lifeless, barely moving, and lying down in the “dirty straw”. When the hunger artist finally passed away, the attendants buried him and in his place put a “young panther”. This panther represented everything the hunger artist was not: lively, young, and most importantly, well-fed. His “noble body, furnished almost to the bursting point with all that it needed, seemed to carry freedom around with it too...”.

It is extremely ironic scene that even though the panther was kept in a cage, just as the hunger artist was, he was narrated as being free, noble, and well-fed. The panther is eating as much as he wants, and he exudes power and grace, which in extent comes from the fact that he is eating whatever and whenever he wants. This royal quality attracts crowds that the hunger artist could never attract, possibly because instead of weakness and mortality, the panther represents power and vitality. The cage did not seem to hinder the panther because for the hunger artist, the cage served as a huge barrier between him and the outside world. The cage served to be a major symbol as well, symbolizing the disconnecting between the hunger artist and the outside world. It is a kind of sarcasm in discourse that FK portrayed in his fiction.

3.2.2.2 SARCASM IN CHARACTERS

In his fictions, FK does not only discloses sarcasm through the discourse of the characters but also he disclose via his narrator makes a mocking remark in the attitude to the characters such as in TM, K represents FK’s idea about his personal feeling. This brought out the inner thought of FK that portrays via K.
According to a critic, Both K and Kafka find just about everyone they meet to be inferior, and a majority of the time suggest down right stupidity. This is a major aspect of both personalities. However this is not necessarily something Kafka added to this novel consciously. Because of similarities in personality, the reader can begin to question whether Kafka believes his character K to be arrogant, or whether Kafka was simply creating a character he finds to be normal. The character of K is also very sarcastic, which is expressed mostly in the manner the novel is written. Kafka’s sarcasm is apparent in all of his writings; however it is expressed a great deal within the character of K in this specific one. It can be said that FK uses sarcasm as a technique as well as his direct experience thus it becomes his own style.

According to a critic, In AHA, for example, the cage serves as a symbol of many things throughout the story, most noticeably irony, but the cage is also a symbol of animalism in the artist and a symbol of security through change. Irony is a tool used by FK in the plot of the story, which yields a resolution that is the opposite, or at least very different than what was expected from the characters. The protagonist of the Kafka story is an ironic character because he feels the strongest when he fasts, and becomes nauseous when he eats food, whereas most people feel nauseous when they do not eat food. This is quite autobiographical, because Kafka suffered from tuberculosis and his weight would often fluctuate between 100-140 pounds. The dialogue is also rather ironic. The artist will make a statement, one that the people would not think of as ironic, and when they reply to him, they say what he does not want to hear. "I always wanted you to
admire my fasting," said the hunger artist. "We do admire it," said the overseer, affably. "But you shouldn't admire it, "said the hunger artist." It is one of his fictions portraying the sarcasm in character.

### 3.2.3 HUMOR

Humor is one of important characteristics in the fiction of FK. He used it to convey his message to tell his readers. Humor is the mental activity that apprehends and delights in the ludicrous and mirthful. Humor in the fiction of FK is incisively expressed through the characters in their conversation. FK brings out the humor in his fiction to bring out ease in the different situations.

According to Roy Pascal (as cited in Mark A. Seaver), “author of Kafka's Narrators: A Study of His Stories and Sketches, "There is a good deal of humor in these early stories, as in the novels and later stories, but it is often ambiguous and can be overlooked" (Pascal,p. 40). The humor that Pascal refers to is not the usual vaudeville, slap- stick so common in today's society.”

According to Mark A. Seaver, during one conversation Kafka responded to Januoch's declaration that the wall of laughter is a "defence against what comes from outside" (Janouch,p. 33). Kafka replies "Is it indeed? Every defence is a retreat, a withdrawal. A blow at the outside world is always a blow at oneself. For that reason every concrete wall is only an illusion, which sooner or later crumbles away. For Inner and Outer belong to each other. Divided, they become two bewildering aspects of a mystery which we endure but can never solve".
According to one of Kafka's fellow writers, (as cited in Mark A. Seaver), who first met Kafka at the age of 16, only four years before Kafka's death from tuberculosis. Gustav Janouch had been very impressed by Kafka's work The Metamorphosis and was somewhat taken aback at their first meeting. The two became friends in spite of the almost twenty year difference in their ages. "Franz Kafka and I laughed long and loud together, that is to say, if one could describe Franz Kafka's laughter as loud" (Janouch, p. 33).

FK’s humor often takes the form of the gratuitously specific detail, as when Gregor Samsa recalls his love life. Kafka also has some knock about humor, as in Karl’s misadventures in AC. However, Humor in German denotes neither comedy nor wit, but a resigned acceptance of life’s imperfections. In all these cases, humor comes from the reluctance of the main character to admit something alien into his life. A related type of humor comes from a change of perspective.

FK saw humor not only as a defense against the pain and anguish he felt inflicted upon him by the outside world, but also against the pain he rained upon himself. This was a man who chose words carefully and used humor sparingly. But when Kafka used humor, as shown here, he used it to further emphasize the horror of what was going on in his worlds according to Mark A. Seaver. Through his humor, Kafka has introduced a new tone into literature, like a new mixture of colors or a new musical note. Hence FK used humor as one of his styles.
3.3 DEROGATORY USE

FK, in his fictions, uses derogatory words in order to express his characters’ feeling. These expressions reveal out the agitation and the confliction in the minds of the interlocutors based on different contexts. As seen in TM, his father drives Gregor back:

➤ Pitilessly Gregor’s father drove him back, hissing and crying “Shoo!” like a savage. (TM 77)

3.4 HISTORICAL ANGUISH

In The Metamorphosis, Franz Kafka wanted to represent the absurdity of the condition of human life, the sense of alienation of human existence, the controversial antagonism between father and son, and as a consequence, the unfulfilled desire to escape from this absurd and entrapped existence.

Already from the first lines of the short story, the reader becomes aware of the grotesque absurd reality which is experienced by the protagonist, Gregor Samsa:

"AS Gregor Samsa awoke one morning out of restless dreams, he found himself in bed, transformed into a gargantuan pest. He lay on his hard, armored back and saw, as he raised his head a little, his domed, brown belly, divided into arched segments"

It is immediately possible to understand the dream-like and absurd quality of the situation, in which an ordinary man finds himself turned into a horrible
insect. By creating this unusual Metamorphosis which intermingles with ordinary life and people, Kafka aimed at representing the absurdity of the human existence, but also a deep sense of alienation. Gregor Samsa feels detached and alienated from his life, his job and his family and the result is the refusal to be like the other ones. Unfortunately instead of finding a positive way out, he turns into a repulsive useless enormous bug.

The process of alienation creates monsters, this is what Kafka seems to suggest, and there is no possible solution but death. As a matter of fact the short-story ends with Gregor's death, thrown away by the family, who after his transformation was unable to accept him and understand the reasons of his anguish and sufferings. In this sense The Metamorphosis also represents a further development of the father and son conflict theme, as it was described in Kafka's Letter to his Father. Gregor's father, in fact, appears as the most heartless and insensitive among the family members, responsible of his son's destruction. His total lack of pity contributes to crate the vision of a grotesque, absurd, inhuman world. Realizing the absurdity and the alienation, Kafka's heroes - as Gregor - may fell a urgent desire to escape, to change completely their status, to be removed by their sense of paralysis; Kafka' s pessimism, however, does not provide a happy and successful solution; the theme of escapist shows the only possibility in death or in absurd waiting which brings to nothing.

So the point in Kafka's short story is the allegorical and absurd representation of his pessimistic vision of life. The short story is highly
symbolic. The variety of thematic approaches - all linked to the theme of the absurd - creates a pattern of references which exemplify the idea of human life as experienced by the author. The representation of the dream-like, surreal and grotesque dimension of everyday life strengthens the idea of a nightmarish humanity. As the famous painting by E. Munch, The Scream, Gregor Samsa’s eternal but silent scream (symbolized by his transformation and his inability to speak) are the allegory of the impossibility of communicating among human beings and of the useless efforts of those who try to fight against this condition.

More and more, Kafka's writing began to deal with Angst (anxiety, anguish), probably because of the sustained anxiety induced by his domineering father and by the problem of whether or not to break away from his bachelorhood existence. Toward the end of "The judgment," and in "In the Penal Colony," as well as in The Trial and The Castle, the father figure assumes the mysterious qualities of an ineffable god. Suffering, punishment, judgment, trial — all these are manifestations of Kafka's rigorous, ethical mind. The philosophy of Franz Brentano, to which he was exposed at the university, intensified his interest in these themes.

The essence of this philosophy is that since emotions and concepts cannot sufficiently explain moral action, personal judgment alone must determine it; thorough self-analysis is the only prerequisite for such a total autonomy of personal judgment, a view which Kafka came to exercise almost to the point of self-destruction.
3.5 REFERENCE TO SCIENCE

Kafka first encountered Darwin's work when he was a high school student, and he never shook the powerful impression that Darwin made upon him. Yet, even if Kafka remained a lifelong supporter of the theory of evolution, The Metamorphosis challenges the main premises of Darwinism. It challenges Darwinism, most obviously, because Gregor's sudden physical change violates all natural law. But the story runs contrary to Darwinism also because Gregor's transformation into a beetle reverses the assumed path of evolutionary change. It is important here to appreciate that in the late nineteenth century, the theory of evolution had become a source of optimism about the general path of progress: Many held the optimistic belief that species, including Homo Sapiens, almost inevitably evolved toward higher and more perfect forms. We are all familiar with this type of image depicting human evolution as a neat and tidy linear development toward higher and more perfect forms, and culminating in Homo Sapiens. It must be said here by way of disclaimer that Darwin himself had a much more complicated view of perfectibility and purpose in evolutionary processes; what I am speaking of is the more popular version of Darwinism which developed in the later nineteenth century.

It was Friedrich Nietzsche, again, who suggested that in the absence of God, science had become the new faith of the nineteenth century. Kafka extends Nietzsche's proposition in TM by implying the following question: what if our organic life, our biological existence, is just as arbitrary as our moral being? What if there is no necessity or purpose in organic life? What if evolution were
to reverse itself, or if there were no pattern at all? Instead of reassuring us about the orderliness and stability of the natural world, Gregor Samsa seems to be drifting aimlessly in the fluid of an evolutionary life force. Of course, we may assume that Kafka did not believe in the literal possibility of Samsa's transformation. This is, after all, a work of imagination, a kind of thought experiment: but by using this extreme image of evolutionary backsliding, Kafka challenged his era's optimistic faith in progress. And, he still challenges us to think more deeply about the relationship between the animal and the human in ourselves.

Biology plays still another role in TM, with which I would like to conclude. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, biology was considered the key to understanding differences between human groups. Human differences were considered to be in the blood; the difference between, for example, Christians and Jews was no longer measured by religious belief, but by alleged physical "racial" differences.

Guided by such biological ideas, scientists tried to classify the different races according to evolutionary schemes. This image of the so-called "dark races" is a typical example of such efforts, displaying the diverse "races" like specimens, including the figure of the Jew in the center of the picture. Likewise, Social Darwinists debated which races were fit for the struggle for survival and which were not, which races contributed to progress and which did not. Biological rhetoric also transformed the nature of anti-Semitism. European anti-Semites of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries no longer criticized
the Jews because they repudiated Christ, but because they were assumed to be a tainted race, a source of corruption and biological degeneration. This image from the 1890s is a typical piece of anti-Semitic pseudo-science, in which the "healthy" Aryan body is compared to the "weak" Jewish body. Jews themselves were not immune to these anti-Semitic images.

After all, Zionists, the champions of Jewish nationalism, criticized the unhealthy Jews of the cities, and they advocated a return to the land and the creation of so-called "muscular Jews." Kafka himself apparently internalized elements of the anti-Semitic rhetoric about the Jew's body. With his long, lanky frame and weak muscles, Kafka suffered from what we might call a poor "body image." His diaries and letters are full of self-criticism about his body: sometimes it is the object of humor, sometimes of loathing.

### 3.6 USE OF REALISTIC EVENTS

This stylistic study tries to illustrate how FK blended the socio-cultural elements in his fictions. FK uses realistic events to contribute his characters. The deliberate exhibition of realistic events in an effective manner acts reality in FK’s fictions.

In FK’s fiction, he fuses the reality and blends the realistic places in his course of the progress of the story. An important one is Russian illustration that appears in the fiction as:

- He had just finished a letter to an old friend of his who was now living abroad, had put it into its envelope in a slow and dreamy fashion, and with his elbows propped on the writing table was
gazing out of the window at the river, the bridge, and the hills on
the farther bank with their tender green. He was thinking about his
friend, who had actually run away to Russia some years before,
being dissatisfied with his prospects at home. Now he was carrying
on a business in St. Petersburg, which had flourished to begin with
but had long been going downhill, as he always complained on his
increasingly rare visits. (JM 48)

➢ It was more than three years since his last visit, and for this he
offered the lame excuse that the political situation in Russia was
too uncertain, which apparently would not permit even the briefest
absence of a small businessman while it allowed hundreds of
thousands of Russians to travel peacefully abroad. (JM 49)

St Petersburg as seen in JM has been regarded as ‘Peter’s city’ and hence
as initiating the pattern of Christian allusions in the story. In Russian illustration,
FK implies the political situation is unsecured following the abortive 1950
revolution. Hence the fiction of FK reveals the realistic situation in Russia in his
lifetime. According to upper information it can be said that to present the
realistic places in FK’s fictions is his typical style.

➢ He had never driven through the streets of New York in the
evening, but though the pavements and roadways were thronged
with traffic changing its direction every minutes, as if caught up in
a whirlwind and roaring like some strange element quite
unconnected with humanity, Karl, as he strained his attention to
catch Mr Pollunder’s words, had no eye for anything but Mr
Pollunder’s dark waistcoat, which was peacefully spanned by a
gold chain. (AC 54)

➢ ‘Please forgive me,’ he said, ‘for not having introduced myself
before. My name is Karl Rossmann.’
‘You’re a German, aren’t you?’
‘Yes,’ said Karl, ‘I haven’t been long in America.’
‘Where do you come from?’
‘From Prague, in Bohemia,’ said Karl. (AC 118)
‘Just think of that!’ cried the Manageress in English with a strong German inflection, almost flinging her hands in the air. ‘Then we’re compatriots, for my name is Grete Mitzelbach and I come from Vienna. And I know Prague quite well; I worked for half a year in the “Golden Goose” in Wenceslaus Square. Only think of that!’
‘When was that?’ asked Karl.
‘Many, many years ago now.’
‘The old “Golden Goose”,’ said Karl, ‘was pulled down two years ago.’
‘Well, well,’ said the Manageress, quite absorbed in her thoughts of past days. (AC 118)

FK, in his fiction fuses the reality and hence blends the realistic places in his course of the progress of the story. Subsequently the places such as Russia and America are included. He gives us the description of the real places. According to the above information, it can be deduced that revealing the reality in his fiction is a typical style of FK.

➢ ‘I shan’t be able to bear this life here. If you want to keep me we have to emigrate, anywhere, to the South of France, to Spain’ ‘I can’t emigrate,’ said K., ‘I came here in order to stay here. I shall stay here.’ (TC 123)

➢ As Karl Rossmann, a poor boy of sixteen who had been packed off to America by his parents because a servant girl had seduced him and got herself with child by him, stood on the liner slowly
entering the harbor of New York, a sudden burst of sunshine seemed to illumine the Statue of Liberty, so that he saw it in a new light, although he had sighted it long before. (AC 12)

- They now came to rising country, and when they stopped here and there they could see on looking back the panorama of New York and its harbor, extending more and more spaciously below them. The bridge connecting New York with Brooklyn hung delicately over the East River, and if one half-shut one’s eyes it seemed to tremble. It appeared to be quite bare of traffic, and beneath it stretched a smooth empty tongue of water. Both the huge cities seemed to stand there empty and purposeless. (AC 101)

3.7 WORLD WAR

World war is one of the factors effect to the fictions of FK. The phenomenon of handling history with a rational mind and emphasizing politically is well concerned with FK’s persuasive portraits of the world war. This persuasion is mainly based on the author’s biographical influence. Therefore, the presentation of the world war is a recurrent theme. FK criticizing the war brings out the pitying contempt of the war through his characters.

3.7.1 WORLD WAR 1

During most of Franz Kafka’s lifetime, Bohemia was part of the Czech crown lands ruled by the Hapsburg Monarchy. The majority of Bohemia spoke Czech, but German was the language spoken by royalty and the elite ruling class. Many urban Jewish families spoke German in the household, and this was true for the Kafkas, though their servants and country relatives often opted for
the more commonly spoken Czech. Franz Kafka’s German education evidences his father’s desire for upward mobility, thought his family’s knowledge and use of Czech saved them from being completely aligned with Austrian occupiers. Comprised of a combination of languages, peoples and identities, Prague was a city in cultural and political conflict during most of Kafka’s lifetime. Kafka was a Jew living in a Catholic country who spoke three different languages: German, Czech and French. As a result, his cultural heritage is varied. It is also important to note that during the period when Kafka was writing his most famous works, The Metamorphosis was published in 1914, Europe was on the brink of its First World War. Kafka lived during a time of industrialization, witnessing the popularization of automobiles, airplanes, and mechanized weapons as well as the de-personalization of production. It was an era when many of the hopes and ideals of past generations were overshadowed by the harsh realities of everyday life in an exploited society threatened by large-scale war.

According to historical background, the years 1880–1914 (1914 marked the outbreak of World War I) were significant in terms of the changes taking place in the arts in Europe. Traditional artistic forms and structures in literature, painting, poetry, music, and the theatre were undergoing innovative, and in some cases, revolutionary change. Romanticism and naturalism in the fields of painting, music, and literature and realism in the theatre spawned other artistic movements: impressionism and cubism in painting, the atonal system in music, dadaism in poetry and art, and expressionism and absurdism in the theatre. Composers like Debussy, Stravinsky, and Schönberg, writers like James Joyce,
Alfred Jarry, and Apollinaire, and painters like Henri Rousseau and Piet Mondrian were experimenting with conventional artistic forms and creating newer, more abstract and symbolic works of art. It was into this vital period of dramatic change in the arts that Franz Kafka was born.

In 1883, the year of Kafka’s birth, modern Czechoslovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For Kafka, a Jew who wrote his stories and novels in German, living in Prague forced him into a certain kind of social and cultural isolation. He was not an observant, Orthodox Jew and was therefore estranged from his own people. And since he considered himself a German in language and culture, he was alienated from the Czech people, who comprised the majority of people living in the country. This sense of cultural and societal estrangement was keenly felt by Kafka and it influenced his thought and outlook and contributed to his artistic expression as a writer.

At the age of 28, Kafka wrote in a letter, “I am separated from all things by a hollow space, and I do not even reach to its boundaries.” Prague—with its old, crooked streets and ancient, medieval buildings, with its diverse population of Czechs, Germans, Rumanians, and Jews—fed Kafka’s imagination from his birth to his death. It was into that “hollow space” that he placed his tormented, alienated characters. The theme of the artist as an “outsider,” cut off from everyday reality to create his own transcendent reality, is seen in German literature from Goethe’s Tasso to Thomas Mann’s Tonio Kröger. Kafka’s own fiction continues in this tradition, but whereas Mann gives us a reality that is recognizable and familiar to us, Kafka’s world is more opaque, symbolic, and
dream-like in quality, often defying interpretation itself. Like the hero K. of the novels The Trial and The Castle, we find ourselves struggling to gain a foothold in vastly unfamiliar territory that is both treacherous and terrifying to negotiate. According to Hermann Hesse, a German writer and contemporary of Kafka, he called Kafka “The uncrowned King of German prose.” Kafka’s prose style shares the simplicity, clarity, and logic of other German writers, namely, the brothers Grimm and E.T.A. Hofmann. But Kafka’s art, with its emphasis on symbol and on the juxtaposition of the real and the fantastic, the rational and the irrational, the ordinary and the extraordinary is unmistakably modern in its sensibility, themes, and vision of the future.

3.8 RECOGNITION OF GERMAN

Franz Kafka was a quiet, introverted child with a passion for readings. He performed well in gymnasium, especially in the arts. However, in the Letter to His Father he expressed feeling of apathy, discontent and anxiety during his school years in language that echoes descriptions of alienated ‘little man’ characters of his stories:

“I was about as interested in school- and not only in school but in my surroundings all together, at this decisive age-as a larcenous bank clerk would be in the petty routine of his job while trembling with fear of being found out” (Pawel p. 51)

Despite Kafka’s sour memories of school, he received a solid education in the German language and culture. Indeed, his first German teacher, Ferdinand
Deml, was a specialist in fairy and folk tales, and in an 1896 report he provides insight into the German view of their role in education. He remarks:

“whoever absorbs the language and spirit of the fairy tale is forever armed against any perversion in thought and writing” (Pawel p. 74)

Kafka expressed a lifelong love of fairytales in diary entries and letters (Bridgwater p. 73-75). His enjoyment of fairytales was probably inspired much earlier by governesses of his early childhood, and later in his writing.

3.9 HIERARCHICAL BEHAVIOR

The Castle is a novel, but its setting, form, and content call to mind medieval romance and quest-narratives. The village sits on Castle land, and the Castle governs the village as in feudal times (although the extent of its power in the village is an open question). The setting is otherwise ambiguous; while there are references to Count Westwest and a Castellan, the main representatives of the Castle are characterized as "officials," as with a modern government bureaucracy. The medieval elements of the novel evoke a world in which hierarchy and authority are taken for granted, as indeed the authority of the Castle is assumed by all the villagers with the possible exception of Amalia. Although he sometimes questions the justice of its actions, K. also takes the authority of the Castle for granted. Moreover, he is deeply attached to the village and obsessed with the Castle, suggesting that the novel is nostalgic for a world in which divine hierarchy structures human relations.
The hermeneutic problem posed by the Castle is in the last analysis an ethical problem. The Castle incarnates, above all, difference: a system of social differences that are justified as "divine." In ancient/medieval times, the hierarchical difference between a castle and its village served to prevent conflict between the classes. The authority of a castle, the ruling class, enabled it to enforce the discipline of law upon the village. Furthermore, the more famous leaders of the aristocracy served as external mediators, cult figures with whom the villagers could enter into an imaginative devotional relationship. All these relationships are presented in parodic form in Kafka's novel. The officials' ignorance, incompetence, and gross sensuality satirize the so-called nobility of a ruling class, whether political or priestly. Nevertheless, the village appears to function more or less in a traditional manner, at least until K. arrives, who introduces a wild card into the game. He questions the Castle's "divinity" and enters into rivalry with the officials. By doing so, he threatens to erode the differences that hold village life together, as the Bridge Inn landlady well recognizes.

The novel also incorporates mimetic rivalry formally, through the unexpected introduction of competing perspectives, the inset narratives of the Bridge Inn landlady, Olga, Jeremiah, Pepi, and others. Kafka's novel, therefore, through its form, creates a sense of crisis that is a key to its uncanny power. A comparison with tragedy is instructive: the formal structure of ancient tragedy noted by Aristotle functions to justify the "fated" end of the protagonist. While tragedy allows us to identify with the perspective of the victim, the catharsis of
the ending requires that we finally accept the necessity of his death, which restabilizes and reaffirms social hierarchy. The Castle departs from this schematic model in several important ways. First of all, the novel questions the authority of the Castle, the divine hierarchy. Second, there is no normative perspective by which one could identify K. as the cause of the crisis and punish or expel him. Third, the novel never reaches any definitive narrative climax or resolution. In these ways, The Castle undermines the value of hierarchy formally as well as in terms of content.