CHAPTER – III

THE ENIGMA OF THE CASTLE

*The Castle* (1922) is Franz Kafka’s greatest and most complex work. It is quite plausible to believe that *The Castle* “… represents the most ambitious effort on Kafka’s part to gather together all the important aspects of his vision of the world into one coherent fable”.¹ It is no more an exaggeration to designate it as a modern epic in prose. One can easily become convinced of its epical dimension when one explores the marvelous complexity of its meaning, a reality which seems to have left every critic of Kafka helpless. *The Castle* with its anonymous locale, dramatic opening, a nameless character uprooted from temporal context, and with its unfinished ending, has caught the imagination of every important critic from Europe to America and elsewhere. This strong fascination for this novel seems to be a continuous process which is a mark of its greatness.

*The Castle* has a dramatic opening, a quintessence of Kafka: “it was late in the evening when K arrived. The village was deep in snow. The Castle hill was hidden, veiled in mist and darkness, nor was there even a glimmer of light to show that a Castle was there. On the wooden bridge leading from the main road to the village K stood for a long time gazing into the illusory emptiness above him.”² K in his thirties, a stranger, arrives late in the evening in a snow-covered village ruled by the Castle. He seems to be quite exhausted because of his long journey. To
pass the night he seeks shelter in an inn called the Bridge Inn. The landlord of the inn could not provide him a room but gave him a bag of straw in the parlour. No sooner had K slept than a young man called Schwarzer, son of a Castlellan, awakens him informing him in an authoritative tone that this village belongs to the Castle and nobody can stay here without the Count’s permission. K is quite upset; and as an alien asks Schwarzer: “what village is this I have wandered into? Is there a Castle here?” (9).

K has an argument with Schwarzer, and on latter’s insistence that nobody can stay in the village without permission from the Castle he becomes ready to go and seek the Count’s permission. Schwarzer tells him that it is impossible to get permission from the Count in the middle of the night. K is embarrassed “then why did you awaken me?” (10). K’s reaction is quite rational, but it enrages the young official who takes it as a challenge to the Count’s authority. “I insist on respect for Count’s authority! I woke you up to inform you that you must quit the Count’s territory at once” (10).

K finds himself in a baffling situation. Everybody in the inn - the landlord, the landlady, and even the peasants – gazes at him with suspicion as to his purpose and identity. K claims that he is a Land Surveyor whom the Count is expecting, and that his assistants are supposed to come the next day with the apparatus. To confirm K’s claim Schwarzer quickly telephones to one of the under-Castellans called Fritz,
asking him to inquire in the central Bureau whether a Land Surveyor is expected. After sometime Fritz informs Schwarzer that there was not a trace of a land surveyor. Then again he says that it was a mistake; it means that K has been recognised by the Castle as land surveyor. K realises that the Castle has established a hierarchical mode of governance. There are a lot of officials who perform their respective task assigned to them by the Count. They come to the inn in the village and listen to people’s grievances whose life is miserable. The villagers have a kind of mystical faith in the authority of the Castle. They have accepted it as something given. Unlike other people in the village K is very assertive. He tells the landlord “I’m not one of your timid people, and can give a piece of my mind even to a Count, but of course, it’s much better to have everything settled up without any trouble” (13).

K sees his relationship with the Castle as that of an employer and employee. He thinks that since the Castle has appointed him as a Land Surveyor hence the matters related to his settlements, work, and salary, should be settled. He thinks that the Castle should keep up his end of the bargain. Since K has a claim to be an appointee of the Castle and demands his rights, it sets off a dramatic conflict between him and the Castle. Hence K gets into desperate struggle to meet the Count, probably the highest authority in the Castle which rules over the village. K is a very perceptive observer. Everything about the village seems to him mysterious. It generates in him a sense of alienation and isolation. But there is a moment when “...images of home flit through K’s mind... when
he embarks on his first approach to the Castle”. He is reminded of his native village and of his childhood experiences.

Isolation of the individual is a dominant theme in Kafka. K makes every possible attempt to make contact with people. In the hope that they might help him to get access to the Castle. But everybody in the village, from the school teacher to the peasants, is suspicious and unfriendly towards him. It further increases his loneliness making him an outsider. There are many incidents in the novel which suggest Kafka’s preoccupation with human existence as perpetual isolation. K’s encounter with the family of a peasant, in whose cottage he strays, reveals his condition as a stranger. This incident not only enforces K’s isolation, but, it also shows the miserable general condition of life under the Castle where everything looks bleak. For example, inside the cottage K finds an old man, who had let him in, a woman washing clothes and some children. The woman is very angry at the old man for bringing K in. K quickly claims that he is a Land Surveyor. What catches K’s attention in the house is the woman, reclining in a high arm-chair in the corner of the house, breast-feeding an infant. She looks tired, lifeless and isolated. K approaches her, and on being asked she tells him that she is a girl from the Castle. Everybody looks upon K with suspicion as he is a stranger, and also because he is physically different from everybody, he is taller and physically stronger than the other people in the village. Suddenly K was pushed out of the door. In the light of such incidents one can say that Kafka in *The Castle* has described the historical condition of the jews in the word as homeless and outsider.
The story of the Castle is interspersed with suspense and surprise. It not only holds the interest of the reader but gives the hero some hope that the Castle is within his reach. Since K has a definite goal, that is, to meet his master, he is very pragmatic to use every means to achieve his aim. Kafka constantly focuses on his hero’s futile struggle to get connection with a reality of which the latter has no idea. The more he strives to reach his target the more faraway he happens to be, a situation which seems both comic and absurd. In the face of utter ignorance K’s life seems to be a series of deceptions. He is deceived at every cut. Kafka seems to draw a deterministic line which K can never cross. That is why his assistants called Arthur and Jeremiah insists on their inability to lead him to the Castle. Even the coachman called Gerstacker, who volunteers to take K in his sledge to the Castle, refuses to take him to the Castle and brings him to the inn.

In Kafka surprise is deprived of pleasure. In traditional narrative the writer used to throw surprising incident with lightening effect. But in Kafka it has been divested of delight. It simply exposes the tragic side of man who does not know how things affect him, a denial of human knowledge. For instance, K’s meeting with his assistants Arthur and Jeremiah is no less surprising who claim to be his old assistants. But K is surprised that they are without any apparatus, and do not know how to survey land. Moreover, K asks them to bring a sledge to take him to the Castle they categorically deny any possibility for a stranger to get into the Castle without permission. But the problem for K is that he does not
know where to get permission. This is what irritates and frustrates him. K is not only denied meeting with the Castle, his claim to be a Land Surveyor is refuted by one of the Castle officials called Oswald. K is surprised by the absurdity and ambiguity of the whole situation. In Kafka communication with the authority is never without ambiguity (as has been pointed out in chapter IV). As Oswald refuses to recognise his claim, K is baffled. It suddenly casts a doubt about his identity. “Then who am I? asks K” (27). K seems to be trapped in a world of which he is totally ignorant. That is why whatever happens to him seems to be bewildering.

Fusion of reality and fantasy, rationality and irrationality, anticipation and surprise, is one of the hallmarks of Kafka’s art of narration. Before K becomes completely frustrated the Castle throws another card to keep K’s hope floating. K sees his relationship with the Castle in rational terms, but in the absence of any logical correspondence with the Castle everything turns out to be irrational and absurd. Therefore, the Castle seems to be wary of letting K fall into hopelessness. Barnabas, the messenger, is a source of hope and consolation for K. As he hands over a letter to K from the Castle, he becomes happy to have got a messenger at least to communicate with his master. The contents of the letter simply reveal the gap between K and the Castle:

My dear sir, As you know, you have been engaged for the Count’s service. Your immediate superior is the superintendent of the village, who will give you all particulars about your work and the terms of your employment, and to whom you are responsible. I myself,
however, will try not to lose sight of you. Barnabas, the bearer of this letter, will report himself to you from time to time to learn your wishes and communicate them to me (28).

K is able to see certain ambiguities and inconsistencies in the letter. In part it treats him as a free man whose independence has been recognised. On the other hand, it takes him as a minor employee. He is informed that he has been recognised, yet he still does not know the terms of his employment and the nature of the work to be done. He even does not know the name of his master. Barnabas tells him that his master’s name is Klamm.

He stakes his hope on everybody who claims to have association with the Castle, be it Barnabas or his frivolous and annoying assistants. But he is gradually disillusioned as nobody seems to be capable of taking him to the Castle, yet he continues his struggle that one day he might succeed in his mission. That is why he ropes in the bar girl Frieda, Klamm’s mistress, when he meets her in the Inn called Herrenhof which was exclusively meant for the gentlemen from the Castle who come there to perform their official duties. She seems to be unhappy with her life. Hence she suddenly takes a shine to K, and offers him shelter in the bar. She regards K as a liberating force who may take her away from Klamm. On the other hand K wants to use her as a tool in his attempt to get access to the Castle.

By taking side with K Frieda seems to have acted impulsively. She has broken her relationship with Klamm and has lost her status in the
Herrenhof inn. “She envisages a love-relationship which would be based on mutual trust, on the tacit understanding that both would actualise their potentialities for the sake of the happiness of the other”. But the irony is that K wants to use her as a puppet. Therefore, the landlady called Gardana, Klamm’s ex-mistress, is furious. She regards K as a rebel who has taken Frieda away from Klamm.

Since K regards his relationship with Klamm as that of the master and servant he wants to obtain Klamm’s permission in order to marry Frieda. But both Frieda and the landlady insist that it is impossible to meet Klamm. The landlady is notably hostile to K who is an odd man out in every sense:

You are not from the Castle, you are not from the village, you aren’t anything. Or rather, unfortunately, you are something, a stranger, a man who isn’t wanted and is in everybody’s way, a man who is always causing trouble, a man who takes up the maid’s room, a man whose intentions are obscure, a man who has ruined our dear little Frieda and whom we must unfortunately accept as her husband (52).

The landlady is very suspicious of K and regards him as a recalcitrant who has violated the authority by dissociating Frieda from the Castle. Unlike Frieda the landlady who has fallen from the grace of the Castle, as Klamm’s ex-mistress, sorely seeks Castle’s association.

K’s meeting with the village Superintendent constitutes one of the most interesting incidents of the novel. It reads like a satirical allegorisation of bureaucracy. Since K is told that his only supervisor is
the village superintendent, K reads Klamm’s letter to him. To K’s surprise he says that “we have no need of a land surveyor. There wouldn’t be the least use for one here. The frontiers of our little state are marked out and are officially recorded. So what should we do with a land surveyor?” (61). To aggravate the matter for K he further tells that long ago there was an order from one of the departments of the Castle that a land surveyor was needed but it could not materialise. The ailing Superintendent asks his wife called Mizzi to find out the letter in the cabinet. She rummages in the heap of the official papers with the help of a candle for a long time but no document concerning the land surveyor is found. The superintendent goes into the history of that letter. The way he explains working of the offices seems to be a satire or “burlesques of bureaucracy”. The superintendent interrupts his narrative and asks: does the story bore you. For K the lost letter has an existential significance hence his response is “it only amuses me, said K; because it gives me an insight into the ludicrous bungling which in certain circumstances may decide the life of a human being” (65).

In the eye of K Klamm’s letter is of great significance, but the village Superintendent takes it as a private letter hence he does not give it official significance. He also tells K that communication through telephone is unreliable. That is, it is impossible to make any connection with the Castle. He makes everything suddenly so unintelligible that the whole situation seems to be a practical joke, a joke which is crueller than comic. He realises that he is totally misunderstood by the Superintendent
who seems to be incapable to understand the seriousness of his case and the uncertainty of his existence. K is as anguished for this misunderstanding by the Superintendent as Joseph K of the Trial before the priest:

‘Oh, superintendent, said K; now again you’re taking far too simple a view of the case. I’ll enumerate for your benefit a few of the things that keep me here; the sacrifice I made on leaving my home, the long and difficult journey, the well-grounded hopes I built on my engagement here, my complete lack of means, the impossibility after this of finding some other suitable job at home, and at last but not least my fiancée, who lives here (75).

K faces an existential crisis. He seems to be a migrant worker in search of job and accommodation. He is a man in search of the means of life. Since he thinks that the Castle has employed him as land surveyor he demands his rights. The inhabitants of the village who have unquestioningly accepted the superiority of the Castle perceive K as a dangerous man. One can give a religious interpretation to K’s dilemma. The Castle can be taken as divine power. In man God relationship man has no right and he can get grace only through submission to the will of God. Since K demands rights this wisdom of total submission to God never dawns on him hence he suffers.

Unlike the inhabitants of the village K seems to question the moral ambiguity of the Castle. Though their condition is pathetic, yet they do not want to come out of it. For instance, the landlady seems to be pining away in the memory of those moments she enjoyed with Klamm. She lets
K to have a glimpse of her past, and also to know the cause behind her present pathetic condition. Twenty years ago she was Klamm’s mistress. She was summoned by Klamm only three times then never. She is still nostalgic about that “honour”. She shows K a portrait, a wrap, and a nightcap which she has preserved as Keepsakes, as signs of the glorious moments she spent with Klamm. In the memory of those moments she seems to be languishing. The woman in Lasemann’s house, and Frieda, and the landlady called Gardana all are Klamm’s ex-mistresses and all of them look sad and unhappy.

As one explores K’s life it seems to have fallen into a gradual regression. Kafka reveals the marginalisation of the individual in a way that seem ludicrous. Nothing seems to be more incongruous than the offer of the post of the school Janitor to K from the Superintendent. K perceives the offer as a “Joke”. He regards the provisional offer humiliating; but Frieda who desperately seeks security persuades him to accept the offer as it would provide them at least a lodging. K unwillingly accepts the ironic offer.

As has already been noted that every communication between K and the Castle is ambiguous and arbitrary. The Castle is totally indifferent to K’s plight. There seems to be an unbridgeable gap between them, nevertheless, the Castle keeps on providing K with tantalising clue. It gives K hope, but it is very soon checkmated as it denies the very possibility of knowledge on which the hope can be founded. By negating
the possibility of knowledge Kafka makes the life of his hero terribly uncertain. That is what Klamm’s second letter to K, brought by Barnabas reveals:

To the land surveyor at the Bridge inn. The surveying work which you have carried out thus far has been appreciated by me. The work of the assistants, too, deserves praise. You know how to keep them at their jobs. Do not slaken in your efforts! Carry your work on to a fortunate conclusion. Any interruption will displease me. For the rest be easy in your mind, the question of salary will presently be decided. I shall not forget you (115-116).

The content of the letter embarrasses K as he has not done anything yet since his arrival in the village. He thinks that there is some misunderstanding between him and Klamm; because he has done nothing so far and his two assistants are just worthless burden. He is equally unhappy with Barnabas who has not yet delivered his last message to the Castle. K gives another message:

The land surveyor begs the Director to grant him a personal interview; he accepts in advance any conditions which may be attached to the permission to do this. He is driven to make this request because until now every intermediary has completely failed; in proof of this he advances the fact that till now he has not carried out any surveying at all… (118-119).

K’s life in the school is devoid of comfort of privacy. He is so annoyed with the noisy and unruly behaviour of his assistants that he beats them which saddens Frieda as she sees in them glance of Klamm. She finds life in the school unbearably tough. Hence she complains to K “I won’t be able to stand this life here. If you want me to keep with you,
we’ll have to go away somewhere or rather, to the south of France, or to Spain. ‘I can’t go away, replied K’. I came here to stay. I’ll stay here” (132).

Though everybody is suspicious in the village of K’s identity, nevertheless, there are some individuals who look up to him with hope such as the twelve years old boy Hans Brunswick of class fourth who offers help to K. He is the son of the sad woman, who was feeding an infant, whom K had seen in Lasemann’s house. His father Brunswick is a cobbler whereas his mother is Klamm’s exmistress. The boy identifies himself with K. He regards him as a librating force and desires to become like him in the future.

It is important to explore K’s relationship with the Barnabas. The story of the Barnabas’s family, told by Olga, constitutes the subplot of the novel. Olga does not want to keep K in the dark; so that K should not pin so much hope on Barnabas to whom the Castle is as inaccessible as to anybody else. It disillusions K because he believes that as a messenger Barnabas enjoys special privilege in the Castle. When Olga reveals the whole secrets it becomes doubtful whether he is a messenger or not. Barnabas has become a boy errand merely to remain attached to the Castle. He has no access to Klamm. He merely keeps on waiting in one of the bureaus of the Castle. The whole service is exhausting. K becomes conscious that there are people struggling under a situation which is similar to that of his own.
Olga narrates the story of Amelia with a sense of guilt and repentance. She reveals the secret of Amalia’s action which determined the fate of the family. It was on third July at a celebration given by the Fire Brigade, the Castle too had participated in it, and provided a new fire-engine. In that celebration the family, the Castle officials and attendants took part. A very retiring and unknown Castle official called Sortini fell in love with Amalia, and sent a letter asking her to come to the Herrenhof Inn. Amalia felt offended with this immoral proposal and tore the letter in the face of the messenger without any fear of the authority. And the decisive thing was that she did not go to the inn. It proved to be a “curse” on the family. The family fell from the favour of the Castle. K thinks that Olga is showing undue reverence for authority, but she presses upon him the point that it cannot be done otherwise with the Castle.

Olga tells K that Amalia’s action proved fatal for the family. It should be noted that there is no direct verdict or action from the Castle, yet the family feels punished and marginalised. Olga tells K that everybody in the village shuns and despises the family even Frieda and Pepi. The family feels totally isolated, the father loses his service in the Fire Brigade, hence the family fell in poverty. There is a deep sense of alienation in the family. They feel cut off from the mainstream of society. Alienation, isolation and sense of guilt are fundamental themes in Kafka’s novels and short stories.

Gradually a sense of guilt grips the family and it starts seeking pardon without any accusations from the Castle. Olga becomes a
prostitute for the Castle’s servants, Barnabas becomes an unrecognised messenger, and the old father starts making senseless petition in order to seek forgiveness. He waits in one of the many ways leading to the Castle in a bid to catch any Castle official’s attention. Thus the father loses his health under the burden of poverty and ignominy. Olga reveals that the two letters which Barnabas, the youngest member of the family, brought to you were given by a clerk. The family regards the letters as signs of “grace”. She emphasises that “… our fate has become in a certain sense dependent on you” (215). The story of the Barnabas also reflects the predicament of K; both are sailing in the same boat.

One can see that though K makes every effort to meet his master, and settle his account but in vain. He seems to be an isolated and alienated entity. Everything about the Castle, the hierarchical bureaucracy and mysterious behaviour of its officials, is incomprehensible to K. Life seems to him a “misunderstanding”, a “joke”. What K realises is that he does not know anything about the Castle, yet he does not lose his hope despite the fact that Frieda also deserts him and goes back to her previous position in Herrenhof. He remains an outsider in every sense of the word. By exposing the futility of his hero’s struggle Kafka seems to trivialises the very idea of meaning in human life.

K seems to have been lost in a maze of the Herrenhof. He is so tired and disappointed that he can hardly face interrogations by Burgel and Erlanger. Overpowered by sleep and exhaustion he collapses in the passage, tired to death reduced to a nonentity. The Castle, like Kakfa’s
other novel *America*, seems to be unfinished. But it should not be regarded structural deficiency, because in Kafka ending is always interminable. The dramatic opening of Kafka’s novels takes the reader directly to the crisis in which the hero is trapped and the interminable ending suggests that there is no exit. This determinism symbolically reveals Kafka’s peculiar perception of human life. If in *The Trial* Joseph K’s case can not go beyond the lower Court; and in *The Castle* K’s claim cannot be recognised, then the story can be prolonged to ad infinitum. Kafka’s friend and literary executor Max Brod believes that the ending which Kafka thought was that K under certain circumstances is granted temporary permission by the Castle to stay and work in the village.

Like *The Trial*, *The Castle* is a complex novel; it can be interpreted in different ways. But many critics have given Kafka’s works a religious interpretation. Max Brod believes that Kafka deals with man-God relationship in this novel. Man with his finite reason cannot understand the infinite will of God which demands total submission. Interestingly he compares Sortini’s immoral proposal to Amalia with the incomprehensible demand of God from Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Seen from rational perspective it seems an immoral and absurd demand. The only way to get divine grace is to submit to the will of God. By rejecting Sortini’s proposal Amalia has defied Castle’s authority, hence she pays the price. She drags the whole family into total ostracism.

Max Brod also suggests a jewish interpretation of *The Castle*. In K one can perceive the predicament of the Jews. K’s struggle to get
recognition is a symbolic representation of the problem of the Jews to get assimilated in an alien world where he faces exclusion from all sides. Hence he remains an outsider, an outcast and an isolated being. “It is the special feeling of a Jew who would like to take root in foreign surroundings, who tries with all the powers of his soul to get nearer to the strangers, to become one of them entirely – but who does not succeed in thus assimilating himself”.  

Kafka’s biographers and critics believe that many personal experiences of Kafka have influenced his writings particularly his unsuccessful relationships with women like Felice, Milena Jesenka and Grete Bloch with whom Kafka exchanged letters which, Canetti believes, can unravel different aspects of the author’s life and art. “I found these letters more gripping and absorbing than any literary work I have read for years past”. If Canetti thinks that *The Trial* is an expression of the author’s failed relationship with Felice, Max Brad has discovered the same theme in *The Castle*. Brod believes that in *the Castle* Milena is represented as a caricatured figure of Frieda. Frieda unites herself with K, lives with him despite his pecuniary problem and uncertain life. Although she promises to live with K forever, yet she is unable to distance herself from the Castle and forget her association with Klamm. Klamm, Brod observes is “… an exaggerated and demonized image of Milena’s legal husband, from whom she could not completely break away emotionally”. Thus their dream for a happy future comes to an abrupt end. K demands Frieda’s fidelity only to himself, whereas she still identifies herself with
anybody connected with the Castle such as the assistants. Brod suggests that the equation between biography and the novel can be extended further. In the novel K presents himself as a “swindler” who claims to have been employed by the Castle. Milena’s friends who advised her against her connection with Kafka are represented by the landlady who warns Frieda against going with K. The landlady is a symbol of one of the “Fates”. Moreover “The curious jealousy and contempt of Frieda for Olga in the novel may be seen as a counterpart to the attitude taken by Milena toward J.W.; to whom Kafka was engaged at the time”.9

Brod’s theological interpretation of Kafka has shaped the opinion of many later critics (as has been noted in chapter II). Consequently The Trial and The Castle have “…. become for the cultists of Kafka something like sacred writings…”10 For instance, Edwin Muir believes that if The Trial deals with the divine law The Castle deals with the divine grace.11 Muir regards The Castle as a religious allegory and compares it with Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress. But the progress of the hero in The Castle will always remain in question. In Banyan the hero called Christian sets out on his journey in search of salvation. He shuns every temptation in order to achieve his goal. On the other hand K of The Castle is doomed to fail as he insists on his rights and does not submit to the authority of the Castle. Though Muir perceives some analogy between Bunyan and Kafka he cautions that the theological interpretation of the novel on allegorical line cannot go beyond a certain limit. “The goal and the road indubitably exist, and the necessity to find them is urgent”.12 But
unlike the hero in Bunyan the hero in Kafka is struggling in uncertainty. According to Muir Kafka allegorises the universal problem of modern man in an age of religious scepticism. He appreciates the magical quality of Kafka who is able to see a universal paradox in a particular instance. “… It is one of the quite ordinary doors through which he can enter the universal situation”. The hero in *The Castle* gazes at the figure he does not know. When he is moving towards it, it keeps on receding from him. Therefore, the hero seems to be tormented by a question which challenges all human reasoning. In *The Castle* the hero wants to enter the Castle while in *The Trial* the hero wants to get out of the Court but of no avail. “The frustration of the hero is an intrinsic part of Kafka’s theme, and it is caused by what in theological language is known as the irreconcilability of the divine and the human law…”.

It has been a very dominant perception that Kafka’s works reflect the spiritual problem of man, his confusion, anguish and frustration, which Kafka describes in a way that perplexes the reader. In the works of Kafka the reader is never sure of meaning because in the words of Robertson “Kafka introduces us to a strange and enigmatic world which does not conform to normal conceptions of logic, time and space: all normal relationships are strangely different and yet strangely familiar; the world of reality passes skillfully into the world of the irrational”. *The Castle* is an enigmatic story with conspicuous religious overtones. This is one of the most convincing reasons why many critics find it difficult to read the novel without a metaphysical context. They equate the
inaccessibility of the Castle with that of the God. And in the struggle of K to reach the Castle they see the spiritual paradox of man. “At the top of the great divine ladder dwells absolute Being, invisible Being, inaccessible, incomprehensible, ineffable, unpredictable, which here has taken the slightly frivolous name of count west-west, the lord of our and his sunset”.

The idea is that God is not only inaccessible but beyond human comprehension. Though K meets many people but the final authority always remains elusive. Hence K appears as an absolute stranger. Citati follows the similar thesis of eternal incommensurability between man and God as expounded by Brod. He also tries to show the ambivalent attitude of the God towards man, who claims to be close yet remains remote. Ultimately K’s hope to achieve the divine grace remains belied. At last “He is worn out tension, insomania, and fatigue; Frieda has deserted him; Olga has robbed him of every hope as regards access to the Castle….”

The great irony is that whatever partial recognition K gets is announced at a time when he is at his death bed.

Citati has made some pertinent remarks regarding the Barnabas family whose fate is ironically linked with the arrival of K in the village. After Amalia’s, blunt rejection of Sartini’s seductive letter the family becomes an outcast. It lost favour with the Castle and the villagers. Amalia remains indifferent to the Castle and leads a life of despair. “She does not want to be reconciled with the Castle: she does not accept any contacts with it – prayers, paradons, implorations for grace’ the service of messengers. She lives closed in her despair… knowing and loving only
Amalia remains indifferent to the Castle, whereas her sister Olga “accepts the radical ambiguity of the sacred….. she repeats the gesture of Christ. Like Christ, who went on the cross to take on the sins of men, Olga is a substitute victim”. That’s, Olga’s attempt to get reconciled with the Castle, to humiliate herself in order to win the favour of the Castle, and to remove the guilt from the conscience of the family, is a kind of sacrifice.

It has been pointed out by some critics that the fate of K and of the Barnabas family is interdependent. Their aim is to reach the Castle. K’s die-hard obsession with the Castle makes him desperate to meet his master Klamm. But all his efforts come to an ironic end. He enters the village under the Castle with a claim of being a land surveyor appointed by the Castle, but his life in the village is on gradual decline. He seems to be a man totally erased from time and place and finds his very existence and identity at stake. “… under the impact of events, he becomes more clinging and desperate, and he comes to ask what he is about and whether he is about anything at all”. The irony of K’s fate becomes conspicuous when from a land surveyor he becomes a school Janitor. Moreover, he is neither categorically recognised by the Castle nor accepted by the villagers.

In a hopeless struggle the only source for solace for K is Barnabas the messenger. Barnabas (in German means “consolation”) is a source of hope for K. As Olga tells K that Barnabas is not a recognised messenger
of the Castle, yet he regards every order from the Castle as a special favour. “Thus Barnas finds himself in essentially the same predicament as K and yet what seems to be an ordeal for the Land Surveyor is at the same time the fulfillment of the most tender hopes of the messenger and his family. K’s arrival appears to them as the turning point after three years of misery”. The irony is that K is dependent on Barnabas and realises his importance as a medium to communicate with the Castle. On the other hand, Barnabas’s family finds in K a chance to retrieve their lost glory for which they are still nostalgic and melancholic. The desperation to get the grace of the Castle is so strong that Olga intermingles with the subordinates of the Castle in the Herrenhof. Her promiscuity with the servants of the Castle is not intended to further her personal ends; rather “she sacrifices herself to atone for Amalia”.

After Amalia’s refusal of Sortini’s proposal the consciousness of the whole family went through radical metamorphosis. Though there is no verdict from the Castle against the rebellious act of Amalia, the family feels cut off from the mainstream of society, in a virtual ghetto, reeling under crushing financial crisis and suffering under the overwhelming sense of guilt. In this context it is quite clear why Barnabas becomes a messenger and why Olga embraces philandering Castle officials as Politzer remarks: “…. Barnabas felt called upon to serve the Castle as a messenger; he wanted to atone for the insult inflicted upon Sortini’s errand boy. By the same token Olga attempted to expiate Amalia’s refusal of Sortini’s embrace by becoming the prostitute of the Castle’s
subordinates”. For the critics with religious orientation Amalia’s impulsive act amounts to a moral crime because in man God relationship man has no right to say no. As Kuna emphasises that in Kafka the attempts by the protagonists “... In their most arrogant mood, to force the authorities to yield, is the worst human crime Kafka could imagine. A crime much worse than that, if indeed it could be called a crime, is committed by Amalia”. But Politzer, on the other hand, has put to question the religious interpretation of Amalia’s story. He regards her as a heroic figure, not as a passive sufferer, who challenges the authority of the Castle. Hence she is an important character, an antithesis of K. Amalia attracts reader’s attention only because Kafka “granted his heroine what he denied his heroes: the ability to survive, and even transcend despair”. Amalia adopts a nonconformist attitude towards the Castle and accepts the consequences. It is this individualistic quality which K conspicuously lacks. Politzer sees Amalia as a symbol of “existential solitude”. Through her heroic personality Kafka indirectly offers his hero to solve his personal dilemma. But K remains blind to the option open before him. Politzer departs from Brod’s interpretation of Amalia’s episode as a parallel to the story of Abraham’s sacrifice of his son Isaac. He views that the episode is just to take the hero out of the maze in which he has fallen. Amalia:

…demonstrates the possibility of living in this village, neither by right, nor by sufferance, but independent of the Castle… Olga inadvertently has shown K a way to survive the Castle, if not to conquer it. This way would also have led him out of the labyrinth. But he remains blind to the door which opens before him.
In whatever way one tries to approach Kafka’s magnum opus *The Castle* the problem of K seems to be insoluble. In K Kafka has created an image of man who has become a symbol of different types of human predicaments. But a large body of Kafka literature, as has been noted, focuses on Kafka’s oeuvre in religious context. For instance, Daniel Rops believes that *The Castle* deals with the two dominant themes in Kafka. First the theme of metaphysical justice, as in *The Trial*, which remains incomprehensible to man. K in *The Castle* keeps on waiting for the judgment from the authority and more noticeably Sortini-Amalia episode indicates that “Kafka, following Kierkegaard, admitted the complete incompatibility of this suprahuman justice with human morality”.28 Daniel-Rops notes that the second important theme in Kafka is the frustration of the hero in the face of an inaccessible authority. K makes every effort to make contact with the Castle but the Castle remains out of his reach. “… it is the uncertainty of the futility of all effort that makes Kafka’s view of man’s position so depressing”.29 Symbolically Kafka explores the “intolerable condition” of man in the world.30

In most of the religious and existential interpretations K seems to be a pathetic figure, a passive victim. But there are critics who view K as a liar who makes false claim to be a land surveyor appointed by the Castle. Therefore, his claim needs careful examination. That is, K’s claim should not be taken at its face value. “An examination of *The Castle* indicates that there is little evidence to support K’s claim either that he is a land surveyor or that he was hired by the Castle. And there is a good bit
of evidence to the contrary”. If K’s struggle to get accepted by the Castle is symbolic of man’s search for salvation then to question the hero’s credentials amounts to undermining the very validity of the right of man to salvation. Steinberg makes subtle textual analysis in order to reverse the theological interpretation of the novel. Of his many textual evidences, contrary to K’s claim, is that K does not know where he is. It means his visit is not purposeful. Moreover, his claim is never accepted as his interview with the village superintendent confirms. It means that K’s claim is false. If it is so, then it is not so that he is in search of a salvation which he cannot achieve:

He seeks a salvation which he has not been promised, which he has not earned, and to which he has no reason to feel he has a right. If this is Kafka’s picture of man’s journey through life or of his relation to God, it is even more bitter than critics in the past have led us to believe. Not only will Man not achieve salvation. He is presumptuous in even seeking it.

Walter Sokel, one another prominent critic of Kafka, believes that K is an imposter whose claim to be an appointee of the Castle is a “colossal fraud”. K makes the reader believe that he is unfairly treated by the Castle. The perception that The Castle is a satire on bureaucracy, or a picture of totalitarian state, or an allegory of man-God relationship, is a product of critics being misled by K’s false claim. Sokel emphasises that a close analysis of the novel reveals that K has no document to prove his claim; even his assistants never appear and the ones given by the Castle do not know anything about surveying. In the absence of any proof of his identity and appointment he seems to be involved in a game with
the Castle. Since he makes false claim, the Castle responds with equally false and unreal appointment. Klamm’s letter shows him to have been accepted, but he is not given any land to survey. Even his assistants are quite irrelevant. Hence in a revengeful move K takes away Frieda, Klamm’s mistress. Sokel suggests that the uncertain, rootless, and isolated existence of the hero can also be read as problem of Jewish community in the west. “Kafka related this peculiar predicament to the fate of the westernized Jew in Europe who, already uprooted and cut off from his ancestral traditions, is not yet permitted to enter fully and truly the life of his hosts”.  

There are critics who have made a paradigm shift in their approach to Castle. For example, Olafson whose perception of The Castle is secular. Olafson regards K as a heroic figure fighting against an unjust and tyrannical authority. The Castle as an inscrutable power has reduced the consciousness of the villagers into moral decadence. Hence they follow the dictates of the Castle unquestioningly. Challenging Max Brod and Edwin Muir’s theological approach to The Castle, Olafson observes that one can solve K’s paradox only by looking through human morality and rationality not by suspending it. “One can, for example, resolve the conflict in such a way that any non-human purposive order becomes irrelevant except in so far as it squares with some human ideal”.

Unlike other critics, discussed above, Olafson believes that the central issue in the novel does not lie between K and the Castle but between K and the villagers. It is through K’s relationship with the
villagers that his relationship with the Castle can be understood. Olafson believes that K accepts the legitimate authority of the Castle. He regards the Castle his employer but by not fulfilling the conditions of the appointment the Castle has violated the moral law. Therefore, K’s reaction is aimed at making the arbitrary authority of the Castle “…. Subject to moral rules and its acts cannot be justified automatically by virtue of the fact that they are acts of the Castle”. Olafson perceives K as a rebel, a revolutionary who holds the Castle morally accountable for violating the norms of the contract. Since he insists on his rights, the villagers are very suspicious of him. They see him as a threat to the authority of the Castle and also to their own normal life. They have lost the consciousness to question the morally corrupt administration of the Castle. Hence they regard K as a challenger:

K’s attitude amounts to a kind of moral aggression against the villagers and he is, by his very presence and his unconscionably simple-minded demands, challenges the moral structure of village life. What it the villagers are afraid of? They are afraid of moral freedom.

So K as a rebel is not altogether unsuccessful in making his presence felt in the village. There are some individuals who look upon him as a liberating force. For example, Frieda pins her hope on him in search of a new life away from the Herrenhof though her hope is belied. According to Olafson K is a symbol of moral courage while the inhabitants of the village are victim of moral pusillanimity. It is because of his moral stance that he sides with Barnabas’s family and they find a
new hope in him. Similarly the boy called Hans who meets K in the school identifies himself with him. These people who have fallen from the favour of the Castle look hopefully to K. “Surely it is indicative of K’s intention that these people who are at odds with the village and look hopefully to K are among the few genuinely sympathetic characters in the novel. To conclude that it is K and the tiny minority who ‘side’ with him that must learn to emulate the moral docility of the villagers would be a perverse misreading of these intentions”. Olafson with a secular approach in a radical move, reverses the role of K into a hero who fights for right and justice, and that of the Castle into a villain who makes every possible attempt to demoralise him.

It can be argued that Kafka is neither concerned with the metaphysical world nor with the social world rather his tussle lies with his own self. From this point of view a religious reading of Franz Kafka is a blatant misreading, unsupported by the text. What we have in Kafka is an expression of the author’s neurotic relationship with his father. As Kafka’s writings are symbolic, complex and allusive they can be interpreted at many levels. “His symbols and meaning are interconnected. They possess a fluid significance, on many levels, some contradictory. The problem of the individual vs. authority is also the problem of the son vs. father and the conscious vs. the unconscious”.

Neider’s approach is psychoanalytic. He believes that the complex web of symbols in The Castle can be analysed at four levels: they reveal
the unconscious of the author, they also reveal the state of the consciousness, they also uncover the problem of Oedipus complex, and there are some names of symbolic significance in the novel. In *The Castle* Kafka has deployed mythical symbol and symbolic action. For instance, Neider observes that a castle like a fortress is a female symbol for mother. A count like a king is a symbol of father. In Freudian psychoanalysis the son cannot have the mother incestuously because of the fear of the father. So K cannot enter the Castle because of the Count whose permission is necessary. Similarly Neider observes that land is a symbol of mother. A land surveyor is one who measures mother. The process of measurement has incestuous implications. K’s surveying apparatus, like the telephone, is a phallic symbol. Since K’s apparatus never arrives it means he is impotent.

Neider also notes some symbolic action in the novel. For instance, K takes out brandy from Klamm’s sledge which is a defiant act. Sledge is a female symbol. K opens the sledge and slips in and feels warm. Thus he enters into the forbidden area. As he tastes the brandy he feels ecstatic. This act symbolises a threat to the authority of the father. Neider believes that Kafka has used elements of depth psychology. “*The Castle* is a tale of the quest for the unconscious by someone who has reached the preconscious”. The village like the preconscious stands for morality whereas the Castle represents unconscious which stands for ‘irrational’ or ‘infantile’. The landlady in the Bridge inn is a symbol of ‘censor’ between the conscious and preconscious. The landlady does not want K
to enter the village. K’s failure to enter the Castle is a symbol of his ‘oedipus fixation’. By having intercourse with Frieda K “feels guilty toward Klamm ... He is an Oedipus, Frieda a Jocasta”. Similarly the critic makes a long list of names of the characters which have symbolic significance in Freudian psychology.

Under the sway of Neider’s elaborate psychoanalytical interpretation of Kafka, Hall and Lind have adopted a quantitative and analytical approach to understand the problem of the hero in the light of the author’s personal life and dreams. “Whether consciously or unconsciously, Kafka projected into the writing of The Castle conceptions of his parents. Life and literature merge at this point. The theme of the masculinized woman in the dreams is represented in The Castle by the female authorities who are as hostile to K as the male authorities are”.

It is difficult to challenge the sincerity of these psychoanalytic critics and their thorough study of Kafka, nevertheless, it is very difficult to judge how far Kafka was hampered by his personal life. It is an undeniable fact that personal and historical determinants shape the response of an author but a great author is one who transcends these limits. Since Kafka was a member of a minority religion, living in Central Europe, many critics have traced the determinants of Judaism on him. For instance, Kuna believes that Kafka was influenced by Marcionism. But Kafka used Marcionism with a difference. Though Marcionism promised
salvation and freedom but Kafka seems to be very sceptical of salvation and freedom. In a way it challenges Brod’s perception of Kafka. “There is no evidence in The Castle, or in most of his other works, that Kafka intimates the existence of a supernatural order that human being could rely upon”.  

Kuna believes that The Castle is full of images of death. For example, the man who confronts K, when he arrives in the village, is called ‘Schwarzer, a name which is an Austrian expression signifying “death”. Similarly Sortini the seducer of Amalia is also a “death-figure”. Even the invisible Klamm hardly shows any sign of life. Thus K’s quest to reach the Castle is symbolic of modern man’s struggle in a dead world. The critic observes that there are many characters in the novel who seem to be dead in life. These images negate the assumption that the novel is about man’s salvation. The world of The Castle is a world of death without any trace of life and hope. Therefore, “In having come to the Castle K has put himself in his own coffin…”.

Kafka has a very ironic view of religion. He seems to suggest that religion and rituals are just a means for man to keep himself in illusion as the fundamental existential problems are insoluable. This is a recurrent theme in Kafka. In his short story Investigations of a Dog he seems to negate the very idea of knowledge. Hence the eternal failure of man in the face of God. In fact, Kafka’s biographer Janouch notes Kafka saying: “God can only be comprehended personally. Each man has his own life
and his own God. His protector and judge. Priests and rituals are only crutches for the crippled life of the soul.”  

The idea is that man is essentially an isolated being.

Along with religions and psychoanalytic there has been a very strong tradition of existentialist approach to Kafka since Albert Camus. Camus believes that Kafka depicts a Godless world, and in an attempt to explain the dilemma of K he compares him with Sisyphus. He shows great fascination for the myth of Sisyphus. Camus believes that Sisyphus is an absurd hero whose wretched existential condition, like that of the K of *The Castle*, can help in the understanding of the existential problem of the modern man. In the futile labour of K to reach to the Castle one can see the striking similarity between K and Sisyphus except that the former is not under any punishment. K and Sisyphus share a common fate as they are involved in “… an ineffectual repetition of a sterile condition”. Hence there is no freedom in the traditional sense of the word. K like Sisyphus is involved in a tiresome labour in a universe devoid of any, what he calls, “supernatural consolation”.

Like Camus, Erich Heller, a prominent German critic, has made some important remarks about Kafka. He systematically explodes religious and allegorical approaches of Brad and Muir and psychoanalytical approach of Neider. *The Castle* is neither concerned with a metaphysical paradox nor with the author’s personal problem rather “*The Castle* … is a terminus of soul and mind, *a non plus ultra* of
existence”. Heller thinks that it is a misinterpretation to read *The Castle* as an allegory. There is nothing in the novel which alludes to any transcendental world. Though there are some allegorical features they hardly support religious reading. The world of *The Castle* “… is an excruciatingly familiar world, but reproduced by a creative intelligence which is endowed with the knowledge that it is a world damned forever”.

Heller severely denounces Neider’s psychoanalytical approach to Kafka as mechanical and incapable of unraveling the immense wealth of meaning. He strongly believes that *The Castle* is not an allegory but a symbolic novel, and goes on to draw a distinction between symbol and allegory:

The symbol is what it represents; the allegory represents what, in itself, it is not. The terms of reference of an allegory are abstractions; a symbol refers to something specific and concrete…. an allegory must always be rationally transtable; whether a symbol is translatable or not depends on the fundamental agreement of society on the question of what kind of experience…. it regards as significant…. the validity of symbols depends not on rational operations, but on complex experiences in which thought and feeling merge in the act of spiritual comprehension…. An allegory, being the imaginary representation of something abstract, is, as it were, doubly unreal; whereas the symbol, is being what it represents, possesses a double reality.

Heller’s central contention is that Kafka’s writing poses problem before the reader because of the disintegration of the western civilisation and the predominance of positivistic mode of perception. The idea is
that in the absence of a common faith the West has lost the symbolic mode of perception. Heller affirms that there are some images and names of the character in *The Castle* which possess allegorical connotations but they do not allude to any transcendental entity or transcendental certainty. Rather, in *The Castle* there is an air of indecency and obscurity. The officials of the Castle are totally indifferent to good, devoid of any divine virtue like love and mercy. Their very presence inspires not awe but fear and revulsion. Alluding to Brod’s interpretation of Amalia’s episode Heller underlines a grotesque mistake. Given the indecent and immoral world of *The Castle* the comparison between Sortini’s proposal to Amalia with God’s demand from Abraham to sacrifice his son is an inability “…to distinguish between burning of sulphur and the radiance of Heaven”.57

If Camus resorts to the myth of Sisyphus to explain the incomprehensible predicament of K, Heller refers to the legend of Prometheus.58 The romantics viewed Prometheus as a benefactor of humanity, as a heroic figure. But Heller thinks that the legend symbolises meaninglessness and boredom. Hence it can be applied to the unheroic struggle of K of *The Castle*.

Kafka’s delineation of a rootless, alienated and isolated individual struggling in a nightmarish world without any freedom has became an enigma for critics. Every critic tries to explain the loneliness and delusion of K only to come to the point whence he had started. Similarly at the level of text some read it as an allegory, some as symbolic story and some find something mystical about the inaccessibility of the Castle authority
and loneliness of K.\textsuperscript{59} By engaging the hero in an inconsequential and meaningless struggle in which “K runs on and on in pursuit of his goal only to find that he has been running in place all the time, and the story ends where it began, with the difference that K not only becomes tired but tired to death”.\textsuperscript{60} It is a negation of progress, knowledge and freedom which are a dominant theme in Kafka. In \textit{The Castle} Kafka has presented a very disturbing, disconcerting and provocative image. Along with religious, psychological, and biographical approaches there are historical approaches which constitute different aspects of Kafka studies. All these critical attempts are aimed at rationalising the dilemma of K, the individual whose existence is the primary focus of the novel. Historical studies of Kafka suggest that he was very much involved in the contemporary historical, political and religious movements. In an important paper on Kafkas, commitment to Zionist cause Robertson writes:

There can, I think, be no doubt that by 1916 Kafka had developed powerful Zionist sympathies, though his attitude to the movement was unorthodox and individualistic one, and he took no part in political activity on behalf of the Zionist cause. However, Zionism struck him as valuable because it could make possible a Jewish national community which would preserve the values of the Eastern European Jews and repudiate those of western Jews.\textsuperscript{61}

Robertson believes that in the realm of politics though Kafka maintained his individual independence, nevertheless he had sympathy with Zionist ideology and with different Jewish cultural movements. It
led Kafka to conceive of “the writer as spiritual leader” with social responsibility to mankind. He has tried to explore Kafka’s indebtedness to different religious and cultural traditions in writing The Castle. In this context Robertson refers to both textual and historical details. For example, K’s occupation as a land surveyor is a pun on two identical Hebrew words with “messianic” connotation, and Kafka was well acquainted with different messianic episodes mentioned in Jewish history. “K resembles the would be Messiahs of history, not only in the pun implicit in his profession, but four of his salient characteristics”.

One of the first characteristics which shows K as a messianic figure is the nature of his profession. Robertson observes that all Messiahs have been imposters as their credentials have always been questioned by the existing powers. Therefore, it is appropriate that K’s claim is challenged by the Castle authority. Hence the ambiguity between K’s role as land surveyor or as Messiah. Similarly the second messianic feature of K’s personality is that he is a man of aggression and strong ambition. His profession involves measurement and correction. It symbolises that he is a threat to the existing order. To challenge and subvert the existing authority has been an integral mission of Messiahs. The Messianic figures have always been seen with suspicion notwithstanding the redemptive nature of their mission. But simultaneously there are people who identify with them. In The Castle there are people who look up to K as a symbol of hope.
As it is obvious from the discussion in this chapter that Kafka is a complex phenomenon and his *The Castle* is one of the most enigmatic novels written in the twentieth century. It has kept every critical opinion about itself quite suspended. Religious, psychological, existential, Marxist and historical, all these critical approaches have tried to respond to the mystery of *The Castle* in their own ways, yet its inscrutability and the bizarre condition of its hero remains the same. Therefore it is inexorably necessary to interpret Kafka differently (see chapter IV). A classic writer always holds possibility of meaning with changing temporal circumstances.
Notes and References


2. Franz Kafka, *The Castle* trans. Willa and Edwin Muir with additional material trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (1930; Great Britain: Minerva, 1992) 9. All the subsequent references to this text are indicated in this chapter by the page numbers only.


4. Kuna 156.

5. Austin Warren, Franz Kafka, in Donald Gray’s collection 125.


8. Brod 220.


10. Edmund Wilson, A Dissenting Opinion on Kafka, in Donald Gray’s Collection 92.
11. Both Max Brod and Edwin Muir, Kafka’s representative critics, regard *The Trial* and *The Castle* as complementary with identical hero. Since their approach to Kafka is religious, they think that both the novels deal with the universal problem inherent in man-God relationship.


17. Citati 277.


22. Politzer 49.

23. Politzer 50.

24. Kuna 174.

25. Politzer 52.


27. Politzer 55-56. All metaphysical and existential interpretations of K’s dilemma seem to be deterministic. He appears as a passive victim.


32. Steinberg 31.

33. Walter Sokel, K as Imposter: His Quest for Meaning, in Peter F. Numeyer’s Collection 32.

34. Sokel 35.
35. Frederick A. Olafson, Kafka and the Primacy of the Ethical, in Peter F. Numeyer’s collection 85.

36. Olafson 88.

37. Olafson 89.

38. Olafson 93-94.

39. Charles Neider, *Kafka: His mind and Art* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1949) 123. (Neider believes that Kafka was influenced by psychoanalytic movement and was interested in the mythological, anthropological, and artistic ramifications of its discoveries. Moreover, both Freud and Kafka shared similar religious, cultural, and social experiences).

40. The term mythical symbol Neider applies to those dream symbols which psychoanalysts have classified as archetypical and phylogenetic.

41. Neider 129.

42. Neider 140.

43. For nomenclatural symbols, see Neider 148-159.


45. Franz Kuna, *Kafka: Literature as Corrective Punishment*. Marcionism is a creed which fascinated Prague intellectuals during
the early decades of the twentieth century. It put to question the idea of God as arrogant and despotic – as given in the old testament – in an attempt to create freedom for man.

46. Kuna 138.

47. Kuna 169.


49. Sisyphus in Greek mythology, as described by Homer and other poets, was accused of certain levity with regards to gods, and was punished to ceaseless rolling a stone to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would roll down on its own weight. Then again Sisyphus had to take the stone to the summit in a futile and hopeless labour. (For further details on this myth see Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, (1955;London;Penguin Books, 1992).


51. Camus 123.


53. Heller 161.
54. Heller holds a very low image of psychological approach to literature “Psychology can contribute as much to the explanation of a work of art as ornithological anatomy to the fathoming of a nightingale’s song” 162.

55. Heller 164-165.

56. This is what T.S. Eliot calls in the context of English literature ‘dissociation of sensibility, a phenomenon which emerged in the late seventeenth century Europe, causing conflict between thought and feeling, intellect and emotion.

57. Heller 164.

58. In Greek mythology there are several legends regarding Prometheus. According to one legend Prometheus stole fire by a trick and sent it to mankind. Another legend relates to the vengeance of Zeus on Prometheus. Zeus had Prometheus chained to a pillar with vulture tearing his liver all day. Symbolically this myth suggests a non-heroic life, a life of boredom. (For further details on this myth see Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (1955; London: Penguin Books, 1992) 143-145.


62. Ritchie Robertson, *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 222. One of the important cultural phenomena which played formative role in the life of Kafka, Robertson notes, was Yiddish theatre which held great fascination for him.