

Review Article

# Social Influence and Anxiety of Modern Society on Man in the Selected Novels of Franz Kafka: A Study

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**Abstract** - This paper focussed on the influence of society on man and how it leads to anxiety. Kafka's protagonists are Gregor, Josef K, and Mr. Klamm, taken for this study to compare their anxiety to modern-day people's anxiety. As Kafka prophesizes through his deep-suffering characters, suggestions are made to throw anxiety naturally in this post-modern era. The clinical diagnosis reports analyse the social influence to compare the modern struggles people face and Kafka's protagonists. Everything will be the same; the anxiety of man is always alarming the upcoming disaster, it may be family or society. Maybe Kafka is the mouthpiece of society and the forthcoming war society. So, throughout his characters, it is proven that lack of care and attention to self and others and voluntarily giving up one's rights are man's weaknesses and the first cause of the disaster. Thus, the study fully concentrates on today's generation through Kafka's protagonists. Various clinical diagnoses are compared, and solutions are analysed in this study.

**Keywords** - Depression, Anxiety, Society, Influence, Self-care, Love, Modern man.

## 1. Introduction

Franz Kafka, a German-speaking bohemian, novelist, and modernist writer, focuses on modernity, alienation, existentialism, realism, and fantastic and is one of the major figures of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Kafka's works greatly influence how society treats man or an individual under its categorised phenomena. Kafka is a jew; by his writings, Jewishness reflects, and terms also frame his posthumous writings. Kafkaesque and kafkatrip are the terms coined after his demise, and still experiencing these terms in the modern world and upcoming [9]. For this research, Kafka's works are skimmed on the protagonist's perception; where they are heavily victimised under social law, they influence them to burden. Especially the three protagonists are especially taken for study in the novels *The Metamorphosis*, *The Castle*, and *The Trial*. Through them, the study directs to practically apply society's influence on modern men and the trauma they undergo. The author presents psychological horror in the characters where society crushes them much towards death. Society, in the sense that it may be an individual, family, group of people, or some set of practices, also influences a human to victimise at last until he wishes for death. This is how Kafka characterises society, what he tastes and envisions the modern man should be.

Social influence would be good enough until it does not hang on someone's neck. If it is influenced in a good manner, of course, it gratifies one's life. Thus, the study focuses on the psychology and societal influence of the protagonists on the real modern, upcoming, or present world. Kafka injects everything from the barriers to how it will change the man to the end of his work. Through his fictional characters Josef K, Gregor Samsa,



and K, the land surveyor exhibits the real sense of Kafkaesque, and unquestionable confusion leads to severe trauma or death.

## 2. Common Issues in the Selected Works

Most probably, the query of the main characters is raised and not answered by anyone fully, and it is an important and notable issue that leads to psychological trauma. They feel the influence of society easily. The sudden changes impact the protagonist and create horror in the next few minutes. In *The Trial*, Josef K is charged by the police and arrested for an uninformed case of what wrong he has done. It is unquestionable for Josef K what is happening and going to happen. The police also do not follow the bureaucratic rules to arrest someone. It creates panic and an inability to question or react to what will happen further.

In *The Metamorphosis*, though the author makes the fictional transformation of Gregor, it is a key to reflect his heaviness on bearing a family and troubled with dreams. This troubled dream changes a man into a vermin, and a lot of queries Gregor raises are unable to be heard and questioned. So everything he had in his mind bears what he undergoes. In *The Castle*, K lands as a land surveyor but works as a school janitor. Changes in his position may cause the question of what he had to do. Whether he wants to live simply earning in any position or what he determined to come. This dilemma is formed as a question, whereas the mysterious society influences him to do what it orders rather than his wishes. The characters' suffering is unworthy and absurd in all three works by society. It creates pressure on them and is unquestionable and unanswered in mysterious society till the end. So mysterious is meant to be something unknown or unable to understand clearly. Kafka's protagonist is always alienated from society and seems mysterious to others in their presence and absence.

The common things seen in the works are alienation, depression, and fear of society; when the protagonists enter into certain incurable conditions like stress on bureaucracy, family, society, individual, and neighbour, that is how they treat them in their distress condition. Though the protagonists accept their identity when the situations stress them to be, society wants them to change their life or character when they are true to their souls. They cannot handle this stress condition, and the following consequences spoil their life. The bureaucracy is meant to be a fantasy where the characters are just living for unknown purposes.

Their living is considered as a fantasy and fun by hitting them unpurposely. K, the land surveyor, also experiences the brutal mind of bureaucracy, making their precious life unworthy and subject to severe wounds. Street-level bureaucracy's role is to handle the people and matters that remain out of place in today's cleaned social structure by first classifying them as abnormal, perverse, diseased, or dirty, then putting them in different relevant institutions [10]. So far, these traumatic experiences by characters make an important note that still unsolved fears and depression exist in an individual life at every moment that cannot even be understood; sometimes, it can be seen as agony and speechless.

Like the selected protagonists of the study, who experienced fear of alienation from society, many are still walking on the same path in today's world. Yes, this is true in our eyes; we see the same fear and depression in young minds. The influence of society starts it. When someone leaves in our family, like a spouse or homemate, obviously we feel depressed and question how the living would be there after their demise. Likewise, so many unquestionable and unanswered fears are still experienced today that Kafka poured on his protagonists long ago. It is precisely prophesised by Kafka in that it is very tough to accept and analyse by litererians of the 1930s. But now, it is appreciable and wished by every literary personality to acknowledge the truth of what Kafka foretold about modern society. The characters taken for study are young people, not much older, whether Gregor or Josef K, K, the land surveyor, and Kafka.

Yli-Lantta [4] records the frightening experiences of young people when they mingle in society. In this research, Finnish participants under the age of 25, nearly 75 persons, filled out a questionnaire containing four sections to describe social fears. The second section is where the fear originated and the situations they keep fearing; the third section proceeds with any incident or thing that made fear and its impact and experiences when it has undergone, and the fourth section says what helped them to overcome fear. These questions pulled

out their fear and anxiety torture silently and unknowingly, sometimes in the form of anything they experienced. Fear starts very young in formal situations, society, authorities, peers and groups, crowds and public places, dyadic and close relationships, employers, socially more respected groups, criticised by strangers, and general situations.

Especially when fear occupies close relationships and colleagues, it worsens the survival mentality. The ill-treatment in public places often affects young individuals when they are not cared for or listened to by peers. A difficult situation, feeling tired and depressed, death, job loss, end of loved relationships, and other traumatic experiences make fear stronger and lead to anxiety. This is what we can see in the above research done by Yli-Lantta.

Sometimes, the fear may turn into a phobia and anxiety disorder. Gitanjali Natarajan et al. [5] made a clinical diagnosis for a 34-year-old married male who suffers from a social anxiety disorder. Fear of blushing in social encounters, facial expressions, body odours, and intestinal noises. These things made him inferior, though he had several talents to propose. His foremost fear is that these symptoms and discomfort may affect or spread all around him if he is present amid them. He believes this social anxiety disorder may affect others, so he avoids social parties and official gatherings. He is an anxious, avoidant personality who finally stops going to the office, which is his main source of income, and he has a severe anxiety disorder and psychotic delusions. His own soul treats this disorder as offensive and not fit for anything finally. The clinical diagnosis reports of this male that his belief of social anxiety disorder is poison and may affect more people, and this discomfort is offensive. This is how the person stresses his own. Finally, it was treated with some medications, sessions, and long rest.

These two reports talk about the social anxiety and depression undergone by young adults to show how anxiety in society affects an individual in all possible ways. Kafka is one step broader to these reports in analysing the real-life anxiety and alienation complications that are always burdensome to the protagonist and himself. His protagonists get into an unknown trap but are known by authorities, situations, or anything. Of course, they do not know the origin, reason, and cause of the problems that actually transform their minds into high stress. Gregor accepts his transformation just because he loves his family much; Mr. K walks to reach his destined place, that castle, till the end for his love of work and other worldly pleasures. Josef K blindly believes that someday he will be released from the charges put on him by the police because he waited for a chance to prove his side. Till the end, the expectations are not fulfilled. Alienation, existentialism, depression, and anxiety are only experienced and have never been erased by anyone.

Even Kafka shows the highest form of anxiety that has not happened, which may occur when doomsday strikes humankind as a thief. Unnecessarily, people will fight, and their love for others will drop out. So heavy distress and anxiety may be on the mind, and no one can deliver until the appointed one happens. It is unthinkable, but every soul believes it in the world. This is the exact phenomenon we are experiencing in the post-modern era, where war and rumours of war are rising heavily. Kafka's point of view is different from the world's one. Kafka's period is a world war period; he may have experienced the pre-traumatic war experiences and may have prophesied by his intuition about the essential love between each and everyone in the society. Family is the primary place to learn all sorts of good things that construct the future. He deeply suggested loving one another and caring for all. Because he loses his mom's love for the authoritarian father and the valuable time he wishes to spend with his family, yes, this is what will be the answer to social anxiety. Maybe this is Kafka's intention to say how to live a stress-free life in the midst of anxious and difficult situations.

### 3. Suggestions to Overcome Anxiety Naturally

- Loving one another and living with family like mother, father, brothers and sisters, well-wishers, neighbours, etc., is the primary solution to cut off the root of anxiety.
- If a man can conquer the whole world and lose his own soul, what will be his gain? Self-spiritual care is imminent, and it will help to lose anxiety.

- Most probably, in any kind of difficult situation, one must think about past lovable things that are needed for an hour to eradicate the stress; sometimes, it affects someone like a sharp-edged knife.
- The above reports were mentioned earlier, and people suffered from unusual inferior situations that held them tightly. They are loyal to their family and society, but society ill-treats them with disgusting behaviour to survive. People can survive for bad and good, too, but there is a responsibility to account for any critical cause; it may be a psychological disorder or physical, emotional, or mental disorder.
- Kafka wants society to be calm and understand one another in difficult situations, not fearing and blaming others for any cause. Accepting faults immediately will help to cure one's soul of anxiety and psychological disorders. Society chained one another firmly for some cause to stand as one. If someone fails to stand when others stand for good, it will affect everyone drastically.
- Here, the protagonists are not supported and cared for by their loved ones; unintentionally, they suffer, feel too bad to live, and even try suicide themselves. Modern society influences man on several absurd questions to give away rational thinking. It wholly disturbs the generation if we have not treated anxiety and love one another. Let not a bad idea on a man rule over him at any cause.
- The lack of spiritual consciousness is itself causing this disorder. One can find meaning in life by being spiritual and one with god; another may not find meaning in worldly things by highly believing in pleasures. Yes, true pleasures are always pleasing to do well to self and others.
- Soul care is essential to shape one's mind to prepare for the day. Of course, the beginning of the day will be given to the almighty, who is the source of our soul. All may deny it, but this is the truth that the source is needed to overcome any obstacles until eternity is reached. Spending time to listen to our soul is essential.
- The death of the soul is the death of society because a living soul is always guilty and suffers when wrong or sin is about to happen. Be a living soul to get in contact with a spiritual source. Kafka's characters also need this, so they cannot overcome the false, and life becomes absurd.

#### 4. Conclusion

These are the suggestions from the above reports, and Kafka also speaks about the protagonist's agony in these novels. The agony can be solved when society walks by law framed. Hope the post-modern era may have chances to get rid of social influences. So far, we have seen about an individual's agony; yes, the individual's welfare is societal, too. That is why an individual's welfare is taken for this study. The study comparing clinical diagnostic reports examines the one-person pain in modern society in the shadow of the comparative study. Focusing on one's pain and social influence may also be considered a case study.

All can experience an individual's voice on pain, but one man's idea for the welfare of society is not accepted until everyone's thought becomes one. Kafka's expectancy to live a good life is that every need should be satisfied by sharing it with another. Yes, when concerned about others' needs, there must be a voice to go ahead with societal problems. Josef K may suffer a lot, but if anyone stands for his truth, the fault will be revised, and he will get rid of the assault. For all characters taken for the study, treating for good is the same way. Kafka was influenced by many things in life, like Jewish culture, jobs, etc., so rather than influence, he needs to analyse what to do and what needs at present.

Kafka is a prophet of modern times whose characters circle in a hopeless diameter, and society also falls on the same line in the post-modern era after seeing two world wars. On the brim of death, kafka saw hope and freedom as a promised land to Moses in the bible, which is unbelievable. In between, genocide, mass killing, hopelessness, etc., are the hardest times. It can be overcome only by tasting the loneliness without questioning the past, present, and future. Likewise, now there are perilous times when no hope can be found and brutally attacked by this society in the name of influencing oneself. If society's influence for good reason is most welcomed, but things are counterpart [7].

If we treat these characters well, they will be released from their unintentional and wrongly proposed faults and assault by society. There will be redemption in society. No one is influenced by society or anyone. When

one leaves their wish to someone, it is good to create a good society, but it is not so easy to bear one another. However, it is possible to bear one another in loving each other and love family and self. The great disaster is waiting; if still there is an ill-treatable mind and criticising, it may be himself or others.

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