



RESISTANCE AGAINST THE HEGEMONIC OPPRESSION: ANALYZING KAFKA'S *THE TRIAL* THROUGH THE LENS OF BIO-POLITICAL EXISTENTIALISM

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Abstract

In modern literature, the relationship between power structures and individual existence has been a central concern in understanding how authority shapes human life. This research examines *The Trial* by Franz Kafka through the lens of **Bio-political Existentialism**, investigating how the novel represents resistance against hegemonic systems that regulate and discipline human life. The narrative centers on Josef K., a bank official who is suddenly arrested and prosecuted by a mysterious judicial authority. He becomes trapped in a complex and irrational bureaucratic structure that governs individuals through invisible rules, surveillance, and institutional power. From a biopolitical perspective, the novel reveals how modern systems of authority extend their control over individuals not only through laws and institutions but also by shaping their behavior, identity, and sense of self. Josef K.'s gradual psychological transformation demonstrates how power operates subtly by producing fear, confusion, and internalized submission. At the same time, the novel reflects existential concerns regarding freedom, responsibility, and the individual's search for meaning within an incomprehensible world. Kafka portrays the judicial system as an abstract yet pervasive force that embodies the mechanisms of hegemonic domination, leaving individuals alienated and powerless. This study argues that *The Trial* symbolically represents the tension between institutional authority and human autonomy. By combining insights from biopolitical theory and existential philosophy, this research demonstrates how Kafka's work critiques modern forms of governance that regulate life itself, while simultaneously highlighting the individual's persistent, though often futile, attempt to resist systemic oppression and reclaim personal agency.

Keywords: *Alienation, Bio-political Existentialism, Bureaucratic Power, Hegemonic Oppression, Kafka Studies, Modern Authority, Resistance.*

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Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) explores the theme of psychological and political issues. Through the protagonist Joseph K., Kafka examines the effect of guilt and powerlessness. On his 30th birthday, Joseph is arrested by two unknown police officers. He is not told of the nature of his crime or the authority under which he was arrested. Through this novel, Kafka reveals how the internal struggle can prevent one from discovering the truth. He also shows how our attempts to uncover the truth can lead to more confusion and despair. Kafka's novel *The Trial* (1925) examines the human psyche. Joseph reflects the feeling of helplessness and confusion that many people feel when confronted with a system that seems arbitrary and beyond their control, his attempts to find some kind of truth and justice.

Kafka offers readers a powerful psychological reading of *The Trial* that speaks to the struggles with understanding ourselves and our worlds. Kafka's language and style are very clear and plain. He uses simple words and sentences to describe things that are completely illogical and terrifying. It creates a strange and unsettling feeling. It is like someone is calmly describing a nightmare. Kafka's novel *The Trial* (1925) makes it clear that it is a world of arbitrary rules and regulations that are enforced without explanation and reason. In the end, Joseph is unable to uncover the truth of his situation. The battle for truth in *The Trial* serves as a metaphor for trying to make sense of an unjust world.

Through the protagonist, Kafka examines the effect of guilt and powerlessness. Through the protagonist, Kafka examines the power of truth. He is arrested for an unknown crime and embarks on a journey to discover the truth behind his arrest. Along the way, he encounters a variety of characters, from lawyers to court officials, who represent different aspects of his psyche, from his fear and deep desire. Through these characters, Kafka reveals how the internal struggle can prevent us from discovering the truth. He also shows how our attempts to uncover the truth can lead to more confusion and despair. Kafka's novel *The Trial* examines the psychological condition of humans. By exploring this theme through Joseph's journey, Kafka offers readers a powerful psychological reading of *The Trial* that speaks to the struggles with understanding ourselves and our worlds. Kafka's language and style are very clear and plain. He uses simple words and sentences to describe things that are completely illogical and terrifying. It creates a strange and unsettling feeling. *The Trial* is a powerful and unsettling exploration of helplessness in the face of impersonal power, the absurdity of modern bureaucracy.

1.1. Problem Statement

In society, laws and systems are made to keep order and provide justice, but sometimes these systems become so complicated and unclear that instead of protecting people, they create fear and helplessness. Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* shows this problem through the story of Josef K., an ordinary man who is suddenly arrested without being told his crime. From that moment, he is forced to deal with a strange and secretive

court system that gives him no answers and no chance to defend himself properly. This reflects the larger problem of how powerful authorities can control people's lives without fairness or explanation. In such a society, individuals lose their freedom and dignity because they cannot fight against a system that is too strong and unclear. Kafka highlights the deep feeling of alienation, where people feel cut off not only from justice but also from hope and meaning in life. The novel shows that the real problem is not just one man's struggle but the way society itself becomes oppressive when laws lose their humanity. *The Trial*, therefore, raises important questions about justice, power, and the individual's place in a world ruled by systems beyond understanding.

1.2. Research Questions

1. How do individuals resist hegemonic control exercised by the state, and in what ways are the characters portrayed as victims of Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA)?
2. How does Josef K.'s struggle symbolize the condition of ordinary individuals confronting powerful and impersonal systems?
3. How are characters shown to be trapped in an existential dilemma as a result of dehumanized treatment and institutional oppression?

1.3. Research significance

Kafka wrote *The Trial* (1925) during a time of war, political tension, and strong bureaucratic control. People felt powerless and confused under the systems. Similarly, the novel shows how people were lost and helpless in front of powerful systems. Kafka highlights fear, injustice, and the struggle of ordinary people against unfair bureaucracy. Previous research on Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* shows that scholars have studied the novel from many angles. Some focus on the cruel legal system, saying it reflects the problems of modern bureaucracy and state power; some focus on philosophy, especially existentialism. The novel explores human fear and guilt. Some scholars also talk about psychology, saying Josef K.'s arrest without any reason shows inner guilt. *The Trial* (1925) has been studied a lot for its ideas about law, justice, and bureaucracy, but some parts are still not fully explained. One gap is the emotional and mental effects of living with constant fear and uncertainty. Another gap is how power and authority shape people's daily lives and relationships outside the courtroom. Also, most readers see the novel as a political or social critique, but there is less focus on Josef K.'s personal struggles and inner conflicts, which could help us understand him better. *The Trial* is helpful for future research because it shows how fear, power, and authority shape people's lives. It also highlights the emotional and mental struggles of individuals in an unfair system. Its ideas can be linked to today's problems of justice and society.

2. Literature Review

Franz, & Mitchell (1998) explore the main ideas from *The Trial* through a translated

version by Mitchell. It focuses on Josef K., a man suddenly arrested without reason, showing how he is trapped in a system that makes no sense. Kafka's story creates a strange world where laws are unclear, and justice is impossible. The article helps readers feel the same fear and helplessness as Josef K. The translation keeps Kafka's serious tone and confusion. It shows how ordinary people become victims of power they cannot understand. The story warns about losing personal freedom in modern life. It also shows how people can be punished even when they do not know what they have done wrong. This article reminds readers that *The Trial* is not only about one man's struggle but about everyone who feels powerless under big systems like law, politics, or bureaucracy. It presents the world as cold, unfair, and full of mystery, just like modern society (Kafka & Breon 1998).

Alguzo (2022) reads *The Trial* (1925) as a warning about political control and oppressive rule. The article explores Kafka's story in modern societies where governments control people through fear and endless laws. Josef K.'s arrest without reason represents how people lose their freedom in such systems. The writer says Kafka's world is like a dystopia, a place where people have no rights or truth. The court in the novel symbolizes a cruel government that always judges but never explains. Alguzo shows how Kafka uses cold, unclear language to create feelings of hopelessness. The article argues that Kafka's story is still relevant today because it warns us about how easily justice can turn into injustice when authority is abused. It reminds readers that laws should serve people, not control them. Overall, *The Trial* becomes a warning about what happens when power replaces humanity and rules become more important than truth (Neela, 2022).

Orkusa (2021) gives a simple overview of different ways *The Trial* (1925) can be understood. The article shows that Kafka's story is about guilt, fear, and the search for meaning. Josef K. is arrested without knowing why, which shows how powerless people are in modern society. The writer connects the novel to existential ideas, explaining that it reflects human loneliness and the struggle to understand life. Orkusa also looks at the story from a psychological and social point of view, showing how the system represents inner guilt and outside control. The article explores that Kafka's use of unclear settings and faceless judges makes readers feel trapped, just like Josef K. Orkusa concludes that *The Trial* shows the human fight against meaningless power. The story warns people about losing individuality and freedom. It also makes readers think about how society treats people unfairly and how justice can become cruel and cold (Ayila, 2021).

Azizmohammadi, Fatemeh Kohzadi ,Hamedreza and Makki, Seyed Abolfazl (2012) show the general study of *The Trial* (1925), focusing on its main ideas and symbols. The authors say Kafka's novel shows the fear and confusion of modern life. Josef K. becomes a symbol of all people who face unfair systems. The article explores how Kafka uses strange and dream-like scenes to express real human emotions. It connects the novel to existentialism, showing how Josef K. tries to find purpose and justice but only meets

silence. The authors explore that the unclear world in *The Trial* represents the modern human condition, lost, guilty, and helpless. The paper also discusses how Kafka's writing style builds a feeling of anxiety and mystery. The writers conclude that *The Trial* is not only about law but also about life itself. It shows how people struggle to make sense of their existence in a world where logic and justice no longer make sense (Azizmohammadi, Kohzadi, Hamedreza & Abolfazl, 2012).

Morales-Maciel (2023) studies how Adorno used psychoanalysis to understand Kafka's works. The article explores how Adorno saw *The Trial* as a story about how society damages the human mind. Josef K. is shown as a man broken by invisible authority. The article explores Kafka's writing turns fear, guilt, and anxiety into art. Morales-Maciel connects the story to psychology, saying that the endless court process represents mental pressure and the loss of individuality. The writer explains that Kafka's use of emotion makes his writing more powerful than just social criticism; it also shows deep human pain. The paper concludes that *The Trial* is both a psychological and artistic masterpiece. It helps readers see how systems and laws affect not only people's actions but also their inner peace. Morales-Maciel praises Kafka for turning human suffering into something that helps us understand ourselves and the modern world better (Maciel, 2023)

Corngold Stanley (2002) explains Adorno's views about Kafka's writing, especially *The Trial* (1925). The article shows that Kafka's stories show how modern life has become cruel and controlled by empty systems. Corngold agrees with Adorno that *The Trial* is a mirror of a world where justice no longer exists. Josef K.'s situation shows how people are trapped in systems that have no moral sense. The article also explores Kafka's writing style, which is cold and formal, just like the bureaucratic world he describes. This style makes readers feel the same helplessness as Josef K. Corngold explains that the story is both sad and darkly funny because of its absurd situations. The article concludes that Kafka's work remains powerful because it shows how modern society has replaced human feelings with meaningless rules. *The Trial* becomes a warning about losing compassion and freedom in a world run by systems instead of people (Stanley, 2002).

Teubner Gunthur (2013) studies *The Trial* (1925) through legal theory. He explores how Kafka shows how law becomes meaningless when it forgets about justice. The article explains that the legal system in *The Trial* keeps repeating itself without purpose. Josef K. becomes a victim of a process that never ends and never explains itself. Teubner says this is how modern legal systems often work: they follow rules without thinking about right or wrong. The article connects the novel to real-world law, suggesting that Kafka understood the moral weakness behind many institutions. The court in the novel becomes a symbol of a society that follows procedures but has no humanity. Teubner concludes that *The Trial* is a warning about what happens when law loses its moral soul. It teaches readers that rules alone cannot bring justice unless compassion and understanding are also part of the system

(Gunthur, 2013).

Glen (2007) studies how Kafka questions the meaning of law in *The Trial* (1925). The article explores how Kafka shows law as both powerful and empty. Josef K. never learns what his crime is, showing that justice can be based on illusion. Glen connects this to the idea of “reification,” meaning that humans treat laws as objects instead of ideas. This makes people obey the system blindly. The article also uses deconstruction theory to show that law in Kafka’s world has no stable meaning. The story’s endless trial proves that the legal system is full of contradictions. Glen says Kafka’s message is that people should not worship law without understanding its moral side. The novel becomes a warning against losing humanity under cold, mechanical rules. Glen concludes that Kafka’s *The Trial* is both a social and philosophical study of how people become prisoners of their own institutions (Pettigrove, 2007).

Moradi (2024) explores *The Trial* along with Kafka’s other works to explore the link between law and morality. The article says Kafka uses his stories to question the ethics of justice. In *The Trial*, Josef K. faces a court that has no compassion. Moradi explains that Kafka shows what happens when law loses its moral foundation. The writer connects the novel to ethics, saying that justice should always include empathy and fairness. Kafka’s characters face punishment without understanding why, which shows the failure of moral responsibility. The article also looks at symbols like the priest and the executioner to show how religion and law mix in the story. Moradi concludes that *The Trial* teaches readers that justice without humanity becomes cruelty. Kafka’s work forces us to think about our own moral choices and the danger of systems that forget compassion and truth (Ahad, 2024).

Braidotti (2010) explores how modern society controls life and death through politics, technology, and science. She explains that in today’s world, people are not only governed by laws but also by systems that manage their health, bodies, and even death. This idea is called “*bio-politics*.” Braidotti argues that modern life often treats humans like biological machines, to be kept healthy and productive. She believes that society’s focus on health and control has changed how we think about living and dying. The article also discusses how people are losing their personal connection with nature and death because everything is managed by science or institutions. Braidotti encourages readers to rethink what it means to live a meaningful life and to accept death as a natural part of existence, not something to be feared or overly controlled. She ends by suggesting that true freedom comes from understanding life and death together rather than separating them. Overall, this article shows how power, technology, and human existence are deeply connected in the modern world (Braidotti, 2010).

2.1.Theoretical Framework

Bio-political existentialism is a modern theory that combines two essential ideas, bio- politics and existentialism. It studies how power, life, and human existence are

connected. The main focus of this theory is to understand how systems of authority, such as governments or laws, control people's lives and how this control affects their feelings, identity, and freedom. It shows that power is not only about politics or rules but also about how life itself is managed. It also explores how individuals feel trapped, anxious, or meaningless when they live under such control. In short, bio-political existentialism studies both the external power systems that rule over life and the inner emotional struggles that humans face because of them.

Bio-politics is a theory developed by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. It means the "politics of life." Foucault explained that in modern societies, power is not only about making laws or punishing people. It also controls human life in many hidden ways through institutions, health systems, education, and social norms. Governments decide what kind of life is valuable, who gets protection, and who doesn't. This control over life and death is called bio-power. Later thinkers like Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito expanded this idea. Agamben introduced the term "bare life", which means a life stripped of rights and meaning. In this way, bio-politics shows how modern power goes deep into the body and the private life of every person.

Existentialism is a philosophy that focuses on the meaning of human life and the choices individuals make. It became popular in the 20th century through thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Soren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Existentialism teaches that life does not come with a fixed purpose; each person must create their own meaning through freedom and responsibility. It also talks about the feelings of anxiety, alienation, and absurdity that people experience when they realize life is uncertain and full of limits. This philosophy is about facing those limits and making choices even when the world seems meaningless. It helps us understand human emotions such as guilt, fear, and loneliness.

When we connect bio-politics and existentialism, we get a theory that looks at both power and existence together. Bio-political existentialism shows how systems of power, like law or government, not only control people's actions but also affect their thoughts, emotions, and sense of identity. It studies how human beings experience anxiety, guilt, and loss of control when their freedom is limited by authority. The combination of these two theories allows us to understand both the external and internal struggles of human life. It shows that power systems can make people feel meaningless or hopeless, and at the same time, individuals continue to search for purpose and freedom within those limits.

The roots of bio-political existentialism come from different philosophers. Michel Foucault first developed the idea of bio-politics, explaining how power controls human life. Giorgio Agamben extended Foucault's work by talking about *bare life* and the *state of exception*, where the law can remove a person's rights completely. Roberto Esposito added ideas of community and immunity, showing how society decides who to protect and

who to exclude. From the existentialist side, Jean-Paul Sartre talked about freedom and responsibility, Heidegger explored anxiety and existence, and Kierkegaard focused on despair and faith. These thinkers together helped form the base of bio-political existentialism, where power and existence are seen as deeply connected. Many modern scholars in philosophy, political science, and literature have used this theory or related ideas. Researchers studying modern politics, war, or human rights often discuss how power controls human life. For example, Agamben's book *Homo Sacer* uses bio-political ideas to show how governments can strip people of rights, making them "bare life." Esposito's "Bios: Bio-politics and Philosophy" explores how politics and life are tied together. In literature studies, many scholars use these ideas to analyze characters who face control, fear, and loss of identity. During recent crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, some writers used bio-political existentialism to explain how people felt trapped between survival and freedom.

Bio-political existentialism overlaps with many other theories that deal with human life and power. It connects with critical theory, which studies how society and institutions control people. It also links with phenomenology, which focuses on human experience and perception. Psychoanalysis overlaps because both deal with fear, guilt, and the human mind under pressure. Post-humanism and political theology also shares some similarities, as they deal with the value of human life and moral questions about power and control. These overlaps make bio-political existentialism a flexible and rich theory that can be applied in different fields like politics, sociology, and literature. This theory includes several important aspects. It studies the difference between a meaningful life and bare life, where a person's rights are taken away. It looks at how power controls existence, deciding who is free and who is not. It focuses on freedom within limits, where people believe they are free but are actually controlled by invisible systems. The theory also explores alienation and anxiety, feelings that come when people lose connection with themselves and others. Another aspect is mortality, or the awareness of death, which reminds humans of their limits. Finally, it discusses how individuals form their identity under pressure and how they resist or accept control.

The application of bio-political existentialism to literature or society, one can find that people often live under systems that quietly control their lives. The theory helps one see how rules, laws, and institutions shape human identity and emotion. It also shows how fear, guilt, and confusion come from living under invisible authority. In literature, characters often lose freedom and feel powerless, representing real human experiences. This theory helps to explain both the outer power that dominates life and the inner psychological suffering it causes. It reveals how power systems can make people feel meaningless while still forcing them to survive. Bio-political existentialism is very useful for studying Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. The novel perfectly shows how an individual is controlled by an unfair

and confusing legal system. The main character, Josef K., is accused without knowing his crime. The court represents a bio-political system that controls his life but hides its rules. He loses freedom and identity, showing how power can reduce a human being to “bare life.” The existential part appears in Josef K.’s emotions, his fear, guilt, and confusion. He constantly searches for meaning in a world that refuses to explain itself. By using this theory, we understand how Kafka connects political control with human suffering.

3. Analysis and Discussion

Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* explores the struggle of ordinary people like Josef K. trapped in a confusing and unfair system. In this chapter, we examine how the court and its officials are not just parts of the story but symbols of real-life power that controls people’s lives in invisible ways. Using bio-political existentialism, the discussion shows how Josef K.’s fear, guilt, and helplessness are not just personal feelings, but they reflect how humans respond when their freedom and dignity are taken away. By connecting Kafka’s story with the ideas of thinkers like Foucault and Agamben, this chapter shows how the novel captures both the outside pressures of authority and the inner emotional struggle of trying to make sense of a world that often seems meaningless. It highlights the human side of the story, showing how power can shape not only our lives but also our minds and hearts.

“Certainly,” said K., and he began to feel relaxed now that, at last, he stood in front of someone with some sense, someone with whom he would be able to talk about his situation. “Certainly I’m surprised,” (Kafka, 1925, p.09). It is evident from this quote that K. experiences a rare moment of relief and agency, as he finally encounters a person who seems rational and receptive. In the context of hegemonic state control, this moment highlights the alienation K feels under bureaucratic authority; the state’s Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) has made him feel powerless and isolated. Bio-Political Existentialism emphasizes that humans navigate systems of control that regulate life itself. K’s relief stems from the temporary recognition of his individuality and ability to communicate an act of subtle resistance against the depersonalizing effects of the state. By seeking understanding, he asserts his existential agency within a repressive social structure.

“K. was going to give him a reply but had no time to do so, as hardly had the man spoken than a general muttering arose all over the right-hand side of the hall.” (Kafka, 1925, p.33). This moment reflects the immediacy of social and bureaucratic pressure. K is interrupted before he can articulate himself, symbolizing how hegemonic structures (RSA) prevent individuals from exercising autonomy or speaking truth. The “general muttering” represents social surveillance and communal enforcement of state norms, an embodiment of Foucault’s notion of the panoptic gaze in bio-political control. K’s inability to respond signifies how ordinary citizens are constrained within systemic mechanisms, yet the tension created by his hesitation hints at a latent existential resistance, as he internally

negotiates his freedom against societal surveillance.

“But these glances were heavy for K., and he rushed alongside the wall back into his own room.” (Kafka, 1925, p.72). The oppressive stares symbolize the panoptic power of the state and society, wherein K is constantly monitored and judged. His act of retreating along the wall illustrates both fear of domination and a subtle assertion of control; he navigates the space cautiously to avoid the gaze, a metaphorical act of resisting complete submission. In terms of Bio-Political Existentialism, K’s awareness of his vulnerability under surveillance demonstrates the tension between existential freedom and bio-political regulation. Even as a victim of the system, his conscious avoidance shows that resistance can exist in small, strategic acts of self-preservation.

If, as was very likely, he could find no time to do it in the office, he would have to do it at home at night. If the nights weren’t enough, he would have to take a holiday. Above all, he could not stop to half way that was nonsense not only in business but always and everywhere (Kafka, 1925, p.113).

This passage highlights the internalization of state and bureaucratic discipline, where K’s life is dictated by external rules and schedules. The constant self-monitoring reflects bio- political control, where time, labor, and life itself are regulated by systemic expectations. K’s anxiety about “taking a holiday” signifies his inability to assert existential freedom; he is a subject molded by the pressures of the state apparatus. Yet, the very awareness of this pressure is critical; in existential terms, K’s conscious negotiation with imposed obligations represents a form of intellectual resistance against absolute subjugation, as he weighs autonomy against enforced norms.

“I wanted to tell you that I am withdrawing my representation from you with immediate effect.” (Kafka, 1925, p.164). This is a direct act of resistance against hierarchical or hegemonic control. The speaker severs a formal obligation, asserting personal agency in defiance of institutional or social expectations. From the perspective of RSA, this withdrawal challenges the power structures that typically compel obedience. Through a Bio-Political Existential lens, the action demonstrates that freedom is enacted by conscious choice, even in a system designed to constrain it. By reclaiming responsibility for their decision, the character resists total subjection and demonstrates that existential authenticity persists, even under pervasive structures of control.

“All these things were going through his mind as he left the room with hardly a polite word.” (Kafka, 1925, p.71). This quotation directly supports the objective by showing how Josef K. *feels* under the pressure of a powerful system. He feels confused, anxious, and mentally overloaded, yet powerless to express these emotions. Leaving the room without a polite word reflects his inner frustration and emotional defeat, not arrogance. Through this feeling of silent distress, Josef K. represents ordinary people who are psychologically crushed by authoritative systems that ignore their voices and leave

them feeling helpless and insignificant. “So he just sank back against the arm of the chair.” (Kafka, 1925, p.115). This moment shows Josef K.’s complete emotional and physical collapse under the weight of authority. He feels drained, helpless, and unable to resist, as if the system has sapped all his energy. His body mirrors his inner state of confusion and despair. As a symbol of ordinary people, he represents how individuals facing powerful, incomprehensible systems gradually lose their agency, becoming passive and submissive not by choice, but because constant pressure and intimidation wear them down.

“He is the lowest of the lowest examining judges.” (Kafka, 1925, p.149). This moment emphasizes Josef K.’s recognition of the deep unfairness within the system. He feels a mix of anger, disillusionment, and helplessness as he sees authority figures acting without justice or integrity. As a symbol of ordinary people, his experience reflects how individuals are at the mercy of powerful systems that are arbitrary and corrupt, showing how such systems crush confidence, create anxiety, and force people into a state of powerless submission. It illustrates the constant tension between personal morality and institutional oppression that ordinary people must endure. “He did not dare to turn down most of these jobs, because turning the jobs down would have been an acknowledgement of them.” (Kafka, 1925, p.176). This shows that Josef K. feels trapped and afraid of the system. He has to accept tasks he doesn’t want because refusing would mean admitting the system’s power over him. As a symbol of ordinary people, this shows how normal people are forced to follow rules and orders by powerful systems, even when they don’t agree, and how fear and pressure take away their freedom to choose.

“I’m the chief clerk in a bank and there are people waiting for me.” (Kafka, 1925, p.196). This shows that Josef K. is trying to keep his normal life and do his job, even though the system is pressuring him. He feels stressed and torn between his work and the demands of authority. This reflects how ordinary people struggle to manage everyday life while being controlled or overwhelmed by powerful systems. “They were significantly bigger than him, especially the second man, who frequently slapped him on the shoulder.” (Kafka, 1925, p.03). This shows that Josef K. feels physically and psychologically powerless in front of the men. Their size and the way they slap him make him feel small, intimidated, and treated like less than human. Relating to the objective, this highlights how he is trapped in an existential dilemma: he struggles to find meaning, control, or dignity in a system that dehumanizes him, showing the helplessness and confusion ordinary people face when treated as objects rather than human beings.

“The further he went the more difficult it must become.” (Kafka, 1925, p.60). This shows that Josef K. feels increasingly trapped and anxious as he moves deeper into the situation. Each step forward seems to bring more confusion, obstacles, and pressure, making it harder for him to understand or control what is happening. Relating to the objective, this reflects how ordinary people can become overwhelmed by powerful

systems, facing growing challenges and uncertainty that make them feel stuck in a situation they cannot escape or fully comprehend. “He said it might well do, as it was probably against him.” (Kafka, 1925, p.82). This shows that Josef K. feels cautious and uneasy, realizing that even things that seem ordinary or neutral could be used against him. He is aware that the system constantly works to his disadvantage, making him suspicious and anxious. Relating to the objective, this illustrates how ordinary people feel trapped in oppressive systems, always under threat, and forced to navigate a world where they have little control and their actions can be judged unfairly.

“It was essential that K. take a hand in it himself.” (Kafka, 1925, p.111). This shows that Josef K. feels a sense of responsibility and pressure to act, even though the situation is confusing and overwhelming. He realizes he cannot rely on others and must face the system on his own. Relating to the objective, this illustrates how ordinary people are forced to confront powerful, impersonal systems themselves, highlighting their struggle to maintain agency and control in situations that are dehumanizing and beyond their understanding. “It's only very rare that you see any progress in these proceedings at all.” (Kafka, 1925, p.157). This shows that Josef K. feels frustrated and hopeless because the system moves very slowly, giving little sense of progress or resolution. He realizes that no matter how much effort he puts in, change is rare and uncertain. Relating to the objective, this reflects how ordinary people are trapped in bureaucratic or powerful systems, facing endless delays and obstacles that drain their energy, create anxiety, and make them feel powerless and stuck.

In *The Trial*, Kafka shows a frightening world where power controls human life in a quiet but strong way. Josef K.'s sudden arrest without any clear reason shows how a system can control people without using direct violence. As K. moves through offices, courts, and dark hallways, his struggle is not only legal but also personal. He begins to question his freedom, identity, and purpose in life. The court does not treat him as a real human being but as a case to be handled, which shows how bio-political power reduces human life to rules and procedures. This situation creates an existential crisis for K., where he feels helpless and confused. Through Josef K.'s suffering, Kafka explains how such systems slowly take away human dignity and make individuals accept guilt and loss of meaning.

4. Conclusion

This research concludes that *The Trial* clearly shows how bio-political power controls human life through hidden systems, rules, and institutions. Through the character of Josef K., Kafka reveals how individuals are turned into powerless subjects who are constantly watched, judged, and managed. The study also highlights how this control creates an existential crisis, as Josef K. struggles with fear, guilt, and loss of identity in a world that offers no clear meaning or justice. Instead of physical punishment, the system

controls the mind, making individuals accept authority and blame themselves. Overall, this research proves that Kafka's novel presents a strong connection between *bio-politics* and existentialism, showing how modern systems destroy human freedom, dignity, and purpose while giving the false impression of order and law.

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