



Decoding Oedipal Revolt in Kafka's Story "The Judgment" through Barthesian Five Codes: Structuralist Analysis

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Abstract

In this study, Frantz Kafka's short story "The Judgment" (1913) has been examined through Roland Barthes' five codes of interpretation, i. e., hermeneutic, proairetic, symbolic, semantic, and cultural. "The Judgment" enfolds Pandora's box of numerous puzzling psychological and cultural enigmas intriguing the reader about Oedipal revolt as to why a bed-ridden father condemns his only devoted son, a business tycoon, to capital punishment which the son embraces straight away. The Barthesian paradigm of textual analysis established in his 1970 book *S/Z* is envisaged here to help unravel the stylistic import Kafka invests in "The Judgment" besting it with certain riddles that are the hallmark of its inexplicable dreamlike storyline. The hermeneutic code marshals the reader's thoughts on the questions of the story's genre, title, plot, denotative, connotative, and cultural meaning. The proairetic code engages the action and reaction series using five plot elements of the exposition, complication, conflict, falling action, and resolution. Hence, it also furthers the sense of suspense, enigmatic appeal, and the prediction of denouement, goading the reader's judgment to advance answers to the fundamental questions arising out of context. The symbolic code shows the major themes that are a given of literary devices of binary opposition, such as the themes of Oedipal revolt and correspondence versus opposition. While the key theme of authority versus submission embedded in the father-son relationship leading to the justification of the illogical judgment in the story comes out as per semantic code. Moreover, the cultural code aims to interpret the cultural idioms, values, mindsets, and traditions that are featured in the tale. This paper aims to offer logical responses to the questions it raises in a bid to make the story intelligible for the reading public.

Keywords: Barthesian Five Codes, Oedipal Revolt, Authority Versus Submission, Patriarchal Judgment, Fatalistic Suicide, Kafkaesque

Introduction

A short story is one of the earliest forms of orature to preserve history, cultural values, and worldly wisdom from generation to generation. Its history is as old as that of mankind. It is defined as a brief fictional prose narrative dramatizing a few characters in a single plot to defuse a single main idea along with other bordering themes using a single setting. According to Edgar Allen Poe, being short and to the point, a short story arrests the reader's interest from the beginning to the end to create a single unified effect on him/her in a single sitting (Lawrence, 1917). Furthermore, short stories tell us deep truths about human nature. (Boyd, 2006)

The short story "The Judgment" (Das Urteil), also known as "The Verdict," was penned by Franz Kafka (1883-1924), a Jewish writer, in a single sitting in German in 1912 and it was translated into English by Willa and Edwin Muir (Fitz, 2016). Kafka's writings are a cocktail of the religious, psychological, and literary bent of mind. "The Judgment" fabricates a Jewish father and son relationship where the father suspects his sons' everyday affairs of life leading to the father's pronouncement culminating in his son's hypnotic suicide. All of Kafka's works, autobiographical though, show, in one or the other way, Kafka's literary ideals of life at war with his father's views of material success and social advancements to higher ranks. Owing to Kafka's resultant physical and psychological melancholy, Kafka strongly shares with his maternal ancestor's spiritual, intellectual, and rabbinical (Jewish) studies. Being a guilt-ridden son failing to fulfill his father's expectations, Kafka seems to be obsessed with the studies of rabbinical Judaism's patriarchal judgment at work in the law of the rebellious son that, in a biblical passage, states: "If a man has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the public place of his community. They shall say to the elders of his town, 'This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.'" Thereupon the men of his town shall stone him to death. Thus, you will sweep out evil from your midst: all Israel will hear and be afraid" (Bellefontaine, 1979). This law seems to be an offshoot of the 4th commandment that orders to honour the parents. Kafka applies this law to forge the main skeleton in "The Judgment".

"The Judgment" as a modern short story also lays bare the deeply hidden unconscious urges pertaining to the psychological belief of Oedipal revolt explored by Sigmund Freud to relate the truth about dark human behaviour. The Oedipal revolt comes out to be the crime committed by the apparently devoted son towards his father, which is condemned at the hands of patriarchal judgment. To present this consciously unknown plot of unconscious impulses, Kafka employs a likewise literary technique mixing the real and the unreal, famous after his name, Kafkaesque. The narrative follows the stream of consciousness technique blending impressionism and expressionism through bleak descriptions of the father's room and his oxymoronic childish, wise, dependent, independent, naive, and shrewd action and reaction series to present a nightmarish situation of leading the son to commit a hypnotic suicide. This article attempts to demystify the how of these theories. To decode the coded secrets at play in the text, Roland Barthes' model of five codes –hermeneutic, proairetic, semantic, symbolic, and cultural – presented in his book *S/Z* (1974), serves as the theoretical backbone of this article. These codes cooperate to provide answers to the mysteries, misunderstandings, illogical connections, and ambiguous events that can be discovered on the text's surface level. These codes, serving as a method of interpretation, have been used to explain the subject, storyline, characters, and cultural ideas woven into the story. The goal of the current article aims to employ the Barthesian paradigm of five codes to investigate the mysteries of "The Judgment," engaging the reader in the interpretive process.

Literature Review

Many scholars have used the Barthesian codes to decode cultural works and make the reader an active participant in the creative process. Bina Shah's short story "The Optimist" dissects the issue of cultural struggle between the Pakistani-British girl Raheela and the Pakistani boy Adnan by using the structure of Barthes' codes at work with enigmas, suspense, implications, binary symbols, and cultural references. The plot raises a lot of intriguing issues about the title's veracity, the events produce suspicious circumstances around Raheela's marriage to Adnan, the mannerisms of patriarchal Adnan and feminized Raheela form the binary antagonism, and references to Pakistani and Western traits build up the cultural fabric (Malik et al., 2014).

Similarly, the Barthesian interpretation of Qaisra Shahraz's short story "A Pair of Jeans" reveals a culturally hybrid Mariam's engagement break-up comprising an action and reaction series that raises queries leading to the embedded tension. The conflict here seems to be the Pakistani and American cultural clash which has been shown between her first persona wearing jeans with a short vest and the second persona wearing a shalwar kameez before her prospective in-laws. This difference between reality and appearance leads to the engagement break up (Zaib & Mashori, 2014). In contrast, "The Escape" by Qaisra Shahraz centers on the enigmatic aspects of the alienation of the senior citizen Pakistani-British character Sami, who never feels at home in either country. Instead, he finds comfort in a packed old house of like-minded individuals. The Barthesian codes provide insight into the story's theme, characters, and plot, with a focus on how cultural puzzles are solved (Zaib & Mashori, 2021). Concurrently, the poem "Wedding in the Flood" by Taufiq Rafat enfolds its literal, symbolic, and Pakistani cultural enigmas to come up with its otherwise incomprehensible meaning. The queries popped up by hermeneutic code about the genre, title, storyline, themes, and cultural idioms are resolved in the rest of the codes as to be the genre of tragedy, rural wedding practices in the rainy season, multinarrative technique of unraveling the cultural psyches leading to disastrous end, patriarchal codes of values regarding happy marriages, dowry, professional selfishness, and expectation versus reality of marriage prospects. (Rasheed et al., 2022)

Theoretical Framework

Roland Barthes, a French structuralist who lived from 1915 to 1980, examines a literary text for its interpretation not in a vacuum but as a component of a larger framework (Berry, 2002). Its significance is ingrained in the literary and cultural background, not in the text itself. According to Barthes, all writing is built around five interconnected codes (Barthes, 1981) as an archetypal narrative framework that weaves the text's shards into a magnificent tapestry (Barthes, 1974). As Barthes describes this method as the interpretation of the meaning from the writer's authoritarian perspective, Barthes' evaluation fails to take the writer's personality or ideology into consideration. Nonetheless, he asserts that the reader interprets the text using various signifiers for a single signified disregarding the idolatry of this conventional technique (Barthes, 1974). In this way, Barthes' five codes aid the reader in deciphering the text. The following is a succinct description of these five interconnected codes.

Hermeneutic Code

The enigmatic code is another name for the hermeneutic code since it shoots questions about the content, such as what the title refers to (Scholes & Scholes, 1974), what caused it, why, and so on, in order to engage the reader in the act of reading for comprehension. The questions arise as a result of events in the story that are not made explicit. These enigmatic circumstances aggravate the reader's eagerness to solve the secrets and riddles present in the book.

Proairetic Code

The narrative code (Eagleton, 1996) or code of action (Hawkes, 2003) are other names for the proairetic code. As this code considers the elements of the plot of the narrative, which include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, it can gradually reveal a succession of actions and reactions. Every component advances the action, heightening the tension of what will happen next and the reader's power to foresee what's to come next throughout the story. The narrative's suspicious and tense features push the reader to wonder and speculate about possible outcomes for various scenarios. By building expectations, the reader participates in the text's resolution of the tension.

Symbolic Code

The antithetic code is the name given to the symbolic code (Barthes, 1974). It is similar to semantic code, but it transcends its borders in aid to determine the topic of the tale. For its meaning, it alludes to the text's binary antithesis. Binaries make it easier to comprehend reality by comparing two entities. Understanding the meaning of one thing requires the understanding of the other entity which includes the attributes that the first object lacks. Hence, the absence creates the meaning. The difference in these literary aspects also highlights the themes of the present in the work. (Berry, 2002)

Semantic Code

In the context of text comprehension, the semantic code alludes to such literary elements of the text that impart connotative or suggestive meaning. Characterization, setting, and locations in a narrative can all serve as pointers to the theme and aid in its progression. Each story has symbolic people, places, and things that contribute to the text's overall significance. (Eagleton, 1996). The semantic code is renowned as the code of themes (Berry, 2002).

Cultural Code

The cultural code is also known as the "referential code" (Barthes, 1974). As objects don't have significance on their own, it aids the reader in understanding the textual meaning in light of the common context. Due to similar cultural experiences and general knowledge, the reader is able to understand the author's intent (Hawkes, 2003). Mythologies, catchphrases, parables, and other culturally relevant components are examples to understand the function of this code. (Felluga, 2011)

Discussion

Kafka's short story "The Judgment" is set in a metropolitan of Germany unrolling the contradictory psychological narratives of a father and a son leading the father as a judge to inflict capital punishment upon the son as a culprit. This nightmarish story opens a Pandora's box of inexplicable situations rendered in the storyline, but only to be resolved by Barthes' theory of five codes in this section.

Hermeneutic Code

Instigating doubts about unexplained events in the reader's imagination and laying the groundwork for mysteries and suspense, hermeneutic code piques the reader's interest in the explanation of the story (Scholes & Scholes, 1974). The title of "The Judgement" raises questions about its genre and theme. Since it is a 'judgment', it must engage a sober tone relating the characteristics of some crime, institutional investigation, the discovery of the criminal, and a trial process leading to his/her punishment. Correspondingly, the story might belong to the literary tradition of crime stories. Does the criminal commit it on intention or compulsion? Is the recognition of the criminal right or wrong? Is the crime really a crime or not? Is the justice served in the story justified or not? Is the title of the story justified or not? Such a bundle of questions storms the reader's brain by thinking about the title. The storyline perplexes the reader into incomprehension with the situation which takes unexpected turns in a few moments. How can a father be so cruel to his only son? On what grounds an aging father can penalize his only breadwinner with death? Is the negligence of small household affairs in order to flourish a family business a crime? Does a guilty son not deserve forgiveness? Is getting busy in a productive activity to escape the personal and permanent grief over a family member's death a crime? Who is going to look after the father and the business after his death? Why does the father not change his decision when the son's last words show his love for the father? Why does the son not defend himself? Does the son feel guilty? Is he so obedient to

carry out the evil push by his father's illogical accusations? Why does he accept the punishment blindly? Does he commit a fatalistic suicide to punish his father? Considering the title, what is the crime (like murder or theft, etc.)? Where is the institution to investigate the crime and carries out the trial? Is it institutional justice or patriarchal justice? What type of acceptance of this punishment is it? Do these accusations demand such a punishment? Is the judgment justified? Is it really a crime story? Is it a fantasy? Is it a horror story? Is it realism? Is it surrealism? The reader is arrested into a blind labyrinth of right and wrong. The hermeneutic code bombards the reader with unending and inexplicable questions encountered on the surface level of the story. The rest of the codes attempt to clarify all these questions with valid answers.

Proairetic Code

The five plot aspects of exposition, complexity, climax, falling action, and resolution (Eagleton, 1996) are carried out by the action, reaction, tension, and suspense that are at motion in the plot (Hawkes, 2003) in the proairetic code. These elements draw the reader in and set the stage for the story's perplexity, mysteries, and suspense. A creative process begins when the reader begins to speculate about what may happen next. This action and reaction series in "The Judgment" is discussed as under.

Exposition

In "The Judgment," the exposition — or background information — occurs on two different levels. i.e., the disclosure of the characters' personalities and the story's earlier events. The two narrators' internal psychological states are examined. At the outset, we are given a window into the internal mindset of Georg, a young and successful merchant, while he has finished writing a letter to his childhood friend. His monologue manifests him as a confused character since his feelings present a mixture of satisfaction, sadness, heartbrokenness, confusion, and uncertainty at the same time. We get to know about his friend who fled to St. Petersburg, Russia to better his business prospects three years ago. After initial progress in bettering his economic condition there, he suffers continuous failures to date. He also fails in maintaining social acquaintances with his fellow countrymen. His skin has turned yellow and he has decided to remain a lifetime bachelor owing to his hopeless economic prospects. In contrast, we get to know that Georg has made considerable success at his business securing an enviable fortune. Moreover, he also has been got engaged to be married to a girl Frieda Brandenfeld from a rich family. Georg envelops the letter and starts thinking about whether he should post the letter to him or not. He goes on to reflect on what he should do for him. Should he invite him back to his home country and rely on his friend's favor? Not only the return might be impossible for him owing to current Russian circumstances but also his return will not guarantee a successful future. If he still fails to secure a better fortune here, he will be estranged again. If he comes back, he would be made a laughing stock by other fellow countrymen in his home country too. His efforts in Russia will be mocked. He would be eyed as a failure and a child to follow his friend's advice. Then, he thinks it will not be appropriate to send him, a distant acquaintance, the news about Georg's successful life. It will humiliate him either way.

Georg goes on to reflect that he has informed his friend of Georg's mother's death two years ago of which he also got his reply showing dry concern. He also told him that he went well on business with his father after his mother's death and was making a great deal of success. He thinks that his father becomes less aggressive and active in business after his mother's death. He hindered George's success in business in his mother's time due to his autocratic decisions about everything. In two years, Georg's success led to doubling the staff and making the profit five times greater than before while his friend's failure in business kept him from informing his friend to keep him from cursing his own fate.

He kept him informed about trivial things and told him about the event of the engagement of an ordinary girl to an ordinary man concealing the real identity of the couple to be. George also tells Frieda about his friend, who insists on inviting him to his wedding, but George does not want to disturb him because he is still a bachelor and may get depressed. If he gets to know about it from someone else, it will be better. In today's morning letter, on the other hand, Georg informs him of his engagement and that Frieda will also invite him through a letter. He invites him to attend his wedding as a perfect reason to come back but if still he cannot come due to uncertain Russian circumstances, he may not come.

The exposition tells us about the wavering, faltering, and confused nature of George who has been the victim of to be or not to be for a long time only to keep his friend from going into depression. Georg seems to be a very kind, considerate, and good human being.

Complication

Complication or rising action refers to the sequence of actions that set up the conflict in the narrative. Georg's internal conflict appears to be the announcement of his business success and engagement, but Georg's intention to break the news to his friend falters through and through the narrative. Georg happens to visit his father's room, which he has neglected for months since there was no need to. His father was still active in the business. They used to share their meals and discuss business affairs on daily basis, but now his father's room was quite dark. His father became frail among reminiscent of Georg's mother and newspaper. They meet warmly. George asks him to open the window and let the light brighten the room to which he declines gently. Georg lets him know that he is going to post that letter to his friend in Russia. Georg tells him that he was going to share the news of his engagement with him, which he has been avoiding earlier for Georg's concern about his friend only. The father asks if Georg has changed his mind now. Georg replies that he has been thinking now that his friend would be happy for Georg if he is Georg's real friend. Here, the reader expects encouragement from the father to the son to accomplish his task.

Contrarily, the father says to Georg that he must not compile this story now. He says that the time has come to discuss the things which have not been right after his mother's death. There have been many things the father has been unaware of and he is getting old and losing his memory. Mother's death hit him harder than Georg. So, Georg must not deceive him anymore with the story of an absent friend. Father's strange behaviour creates suspense in the story about Georg, whether he has really been a fraud or not. However, Georg asks his father to take a rest and to remember his childhood friend whom the father did not like at first, but got on well afterward. Georg asks him to take a rest for he cannot do well in the business without his father. Georg says that he would close his business if Georg ignores his father due to business. Georg takes him to Georg's bedroom and promises to take care of him from now on after being sorry for neglect. As Kafka relates: "He covered himself up and even drew the blankets farther than usual over his shoulders." (Fitz, 2016, p. 61) The father asks him twice "Am I well covered up?" (Fitz, 2016, p. 61) Georg assures him of his being well-covered up. The Complication prepares the reader to expect that father has been forgetting things due to old age and Georg is a good and caring son.

Climax

The character's fates change dramatically at the climax. Suddenly, the father throws up the blanket and stands erect on the bed showing his strength. He says that he still has strength enough to subdue Georg who has been deceiving his friend. The father knows his friend well. He

accuses Georg of locking up himself in his office and writing lying letters for his friends. He has been shrinking from hard work at business too. His father set up all the success in business for him. The father knew everything and he has been waiting for Georg to come to him and amend his ways. Father has been telling the truth about George to his friend in Russia. He has been ignoring the memory of his deceased mother. Moreover, he has been having illicit relations with Frieda. These accusations prepare the reader for an unexpected ending.

Falling Action

As a direct result of the climax, the falling action occurs. Georg sticks in the corner of the room with a great fear of his father's authoritative assertions. Father, based on these accusations, sentences him to death by drowning. As Kafka says: "I sentence you now to death by drowning!" (Fitz, 2016, p. 63)

Resolution

The resolution resolves the conflict. Georg blindly goes to the bridge and drowns himself without uttering a word. The Proairetic code unfolds the plot of the story solving many literal riddles that arose in the hermeneutic code. There is neither any documented crime nor its institutional investigation. Rather, patriarchal authority is at play to accuse the son of ignoring parents, friends, and business, lying in daily affairs, inventing stories to justify his careless attitude, and having an extramarital relationship. Patriarchal justice is served in the story instead of institutional justice.

The Symbolic Code

Symbolic code interprets the theme of the story playing upon binary opposites embedded in the text. Kafka has subtly employed the surface good intentions of Georg in direct contrast to his deep psyche in "The Judgment" to bring out the theme of oedipal revolt and correspondence versus opposition. Sigmund Freud thought that, in line with the tale of King Oedipus, sons at a certain age felt hatred for their father and love and affection for their mother. Puberty typically causes a shift in this parent-child connection, and the so-called fear of castration eventually causes sons to identify more with the father. Some boys can never get past the previous developmental period. The adult son's hate of his father and libidinous obsession with his mother causes him to feel guilty and influences how he interacts with women (Freud & Strachey, 1978). Kafka seems to draw upon this psychological aspect of male development to diffuse the major theme in this story of the oedipal revolt against the father by drawing a parallel between the latent and manifest content of the text. The narrative flips between Georg's conscious thoughts and his unconscious desires and ambitions. In the father's words, he is both "innocent kid" (Fitz, 2016, p. 63) – referring to Georg's conscious self-perception as manifest content – and a "devilish human being" (Fitz, 2016, p. 63) – referring to Georg's unconscious goals as the latent content.

The text of "The Judgment" is not only realistic, but also psychic proving Georg guilty of the Oedipal revolt. The manifested content of Georg as the realistic text also has a deep root in his psychological landscape as a psychic text. Georg manifests that he is a very kind, concerned, caring, devoted, and considerate son. Georg feels guilty for ignoring his father by getting involved in the business. He promises his father to take good care of him, consult the doctor, and arrange his room, food, clothing, and cleaning from now on. Georg carries his father to Georg's room, put him on Georg's bed, and takes care of him like a good son. However, the latent content is quite contrary to this good portrait of Georg since it proves him of being guilty of oedipal revolt. His manifesting actions to show concern for his father actually are symbolic of his

latent intentions to kill and replace his father. According to Freud, a person's use of references to some event in his speech speak of his latent desires. Georg makes his father memorize a priest, Father Georgy Gapon, encouraging a mob to spread violence during the "Russian Revolution" and the friend's account of this revolt. It refers to the "Bloody Sunday" massacre that occurred in St. Petersburg in January 1905. This historical uprising against Tsar Nicholas II cloaked a need for improved working conditions in pretended religious justification. There appears to be a connection between the "Sunday" on which this narrative takes place with the aforementioned Sunday. Similarly, the names Georgy and Georg are close in spelling. Reference to this rebellion actually opens up Georg's Oedipal revolt against his father's authority comparing the social revolution to the Oedipal uprising on a familial level. Equivalently, Georg's actions symbolize his intention to kill his father as he tries to cover the father up with a blanket referring to the act of burying him in the ground. Kafka shows Georg's desire to kill his father as "Georg wishes his father would collapse, crash down on the bed. He fails the father's test of his solicitude" (Fitz, 2016, p. 62).

Equally, the success Georg has made in business is due to all the projects his father has set for him. Georg has been a work-shirking son. He would lock himself up in the office and make himself busy inventing lying stories to cover up his failures and indecisiveness. Using his mother's death, he tries to replace his father by showing a professional disposition of "seeming busy, doing nothing" to win the title of the business tycoon as Kafka relates: "Georg has had great success, especially since the death of his mother" (Fitz, 2016, p. 57). His actions of exchanging room with father and carrying the father to lay him in Georg's bed symbolize that Georg treats the father like a kid and Georg the father, reversing the roles. In a similar fashion, George's engagement with Frieda is an attempt to replace his father on sexual grounds by having a woman, a condition also enjoyed by his father once. Thus, Georg engages himself in the Oedipal revolt by attempting to emulate his father in terms of rank, power, social standing, economic success, and marital status.

Another theme that binary opposition draws out in this text through the play of manifest and latent content is correspondence versus opposition informing the friendship between Georg and his friend. George manifests himself to be a considerate friend. He keeps himself from disclosing the news of his success in business and his engagement to a wealthy woman to his unsuccessful bachelor friend so that the friend may not feel bad for his own fate. Georg employs Freudian slip¹ (Freud, 1900) while writing to his friend about the engagement of an "unimportant girl" (Fitz, 2016, p. 58) to an "unimportant man" (Fitz, 2016, p. 58). Freud asserts that the repeated words which are pretended as unnecessary provide a link to the deep-rooted psyche of a person. Literally, Georg says that he does not want to hurt his friend by disclosing this news to him though he has been telling him this news in many letters using the aforementioned adjectives which means directly their opposite. Both of them are important, hence, wealthy and the mention of engagement is quite clear. The breaking of this news shows that he actually has been tormenting his friend by using these words again and again without direct reference to Georg's life. The difference between Georg's saying and his action here suggests that he is actually opposed to his friend, which he otherwise reveals as correspondence on good terms.

Semantic Code

¹ A Freudian slip, also known as parapraxis in psychoanalysis, is an error in speech, memory, or physical action that happens as a result of the interference of an unconscious suppressed wish or internal frame of thought. While verbal blunders are the traditional example, psychoanalytic theory also accepts errors in reading, hearing, typing, momentary forgetfulness, and misplacing and loss of items.

The connotative meaning of the text is deciphered in semantic code (Eagleton, 1996). The actions of Georg and his father have a symbolic significance to delineate the theme of authority versus submission. The father sentences the judgment and the son carries it out. Kafka states in "Letter to My Father": "But for me as a child your every word was a command from heaven" (562). Georg carried out his father's instructions and committed a fatalistic suicide as directed. Fatalistic suicide typically happens when a person is subject to strict rules from the authorities and lacks any sense of autonomy losing his/her sense of self (Karthika, n.d.). George accepts his father's authority so quickly and loses his dominating individuality as a negative outcome of the Oedipal complex. The social standards and society form his self-critical conscience (superego) which forces him to accept all the allegations his father has labeled against him only because he has committed them. The following explanation bears this theme. The dark room of Georg's father on a sunny morning, the closed window, the poor condition of the room, dirty under wares, old newspaper, uncared food, and defective vision all are reminiscent of Georg's negligence of his father that symbolizes his father's internal gloom. He has become lonely, alienated, and depressed in the grief of his deceased wife whose memory is symbolically hung upon the wall. A long time he waited silently for Georg to amend his ways also added to his miserable condition. All the actions of Georg prove him to be a good son. Georg's father has made the actual business success which Georg credits to himself only. He is bringing Frieda home after marriage to replace his mother. George promises his father to take care of him. Georg carries the father in his arms and lays him in Georg's bed. He covers him up with a blanket. All these actions symbolize that Georg is taking the position of his father and placing his father in Georg's position.

However, the father denies this role reversal. As we see the father "threw the blankets off with a strength that sent them all flying in a moment and sprang erect in bed." (Fitz, 2016, p. 61) The father decides to show Georg that Georg is very selfish as the father says to Georg: "You wanted to cover me up, I know, my young sprig, but I'm far from being covered up yet." (Fitz, 2016, p. 61) The father relates that the time has come to discuss things that he has been ignoring. That Georg has been inventing only stories to cover his failures. Father has been in contact with that friend and he knows more about him than Georg. Georg has been deceiving his friend. All the progress Georg has made in business was due to the deals the father has been preparing for Georg. Georg has been ignoring the death of his mother and making an illicit relationship with Frieda. The father has been waiting when he will mend his ways and come to him to tell the truth and not anymore invented lies to cover up situations. Georg cannot have any more lies because now the father says that he is aging and does not have eyes to look through Georg's plans anymore. The father discloses to Georg: "You've always been a leg-puller and you haven't even shrunk from pulling my leg." (Fitz, 2016, p. 62) Georg's cry to this "So you've been lying in wait for me!" (Fitz, 2016, p. 62) bears a confession to his guilt that all these allegations are true.

The father is still stronger than Georg, a fact to which Georg also gives thought as he says: "My father is still a giant of a man," (Fitz, 2016, p. 61). The father has got pockets to mark his name in the business market. He has the power to snatch away Frieda from Georg. The Father also says to Georg: "I am still much the stronger of us two." (Fitz, 2016, p. 62) The father proves Georg guilty of all the aforementioned allegations. On the basis of them, he orders Georg: "And therefore take note: I sentence you now to death by drowning!" (Fitz, 2016, p. 63). Being felt guilty of all these accusations, Georg has no choice but to carry out the orders following his superego or critical conscience. He commits fatalistic suicide by drowning himself in the river while showing his ambivalent relation to his father as he says: "Dear parents, I have always loved you, all the same," (Fitz, 2016, p. 63). Father's accusations and Georg's acceptance and

execution of order testify to the presence of the theme of authority versus submission at play in the text.

Cultural Code

Cultural context lends meaning inherent in the text that makes upon cultural tradition. The illogical judgment observed in the story has deep psychological roots in the religious, familial, and social culture Franz Kafka grew up. He was a third-generation Jew in Germany. He belongs to a Jewish family that entertains the idea of patriarchal judgment to maintain the right code of conduct in a familial, social, cultural, and religious atmosphere. Any violation of the predetermined order, in rabbinic Judaism, can result in patriarchal judgment to have control over the generation that went astray. The fathers have been given the religious right to discipline their sons through severe admonishments carried out through words at first. The sons can be beaten severely to be degraded if they do not submit to verbal threats. If the rebellious attitudes on the part of the sons still continue, the law permits the fathers to extend the punishment to the death penalty.

In patriarchal judgment, the father acts as the sole authoritative figure who can banish his son or sentence him to death if he violates his footsteps in preaching and practicing Judaism (Steinberg, 1962). Death by drowning is considered to be the lightest form to bear the agony of death. Hermann Kafka, Franz Kafka's father, was a second-generation Jew in Germany. He struggled a lot to get a better prospect in a foreign land. After the Jews were given equal civil rights in Germany, he succeeded in moving from a country to the city with a tiresome struggle. His journey from a paddler to a running businessman culminated in his higher social standing due to the economic prosperity he secured. He would attend every event to get acquainted with middle-class engaging in Jewish activities. He wanted his sons to be thankful for city life, its facilities, opportunities, and economic success. He wanted his inheritors to follow in his footsteps as hardworking businessmen. However, Kafka felt that times have changed now. There is neither any need to run after hard work for economic stability nor to attend high-class gatherings to secure middle-class values as a hallmark of Judaism (Hezser, 2001). Kafka felt unsatisfied with his father's assimilated version of Judaism. Kafka called himself "disinherited" in the pursuit of his father's ideals. He was living with a family from which he wanted to elope (Corngold, 2009). Being an introvert, Kafka's only obsession was to write artistically as a sole refuge following orthodox Judaism. Family bonding distracted him from pursuing his literary passion, a prayer to him. He failed to conform to his father's religious and cultural traditions of material and social advancements. As a result, there had always been a conflict in the father-son relationship. The storyline of judgment actually draws a parallel upon this autobiographical element of Kafka's strained relationship with his father who had been as unpredictable for Kafka as the father for Georg in the story. Poor Georg Bendemann atones for the sins Kafka has committed.

Moreover, Kafka's writing style is a mixture of nightmarish and humdrum situations of daily life. The adjective Kafkaesque makes this technique keeping the text a realistic and psychic one. The simple rational action of Georg of covering his father addresses his unconscious desire to replace his father's authority in business and family. He explores the concerns of guilt, sin, law, justice, blind authority, hypnotic push, and suicidal tendencies using this technique to satisfy his unconscious impulses.

Conclusion

To conclude the whole discussion, we can say that the unintelligible storyline of Franz Kafka's short story "The Judgment" has been investigated in this paper to come up with a logical sense of its title, plot, the genre, themes, and the cultural context through the step-by-step method of Barthes' theory of five codes. At first, the hermeneutic code raises questions about the significance of the title, genre, literal meaning, symbolic meaning, and major themes of the story. In the second step, the proairetic code solves the literal riddles of the story edifying patriarchal justice by the father, which was the punishment of Georg's careless attitude towards his life, which has surfaced in the climax of the story through the dialogues of the father. However, Georg's monologue in the exposition and complication proves to be Georg's everyday deception of other characters in which he tries to invent false stories and proofs to prove himself as a good, hard-working, kind, and caring man. In the third step, symbolic code brings out two themes of the story the Oedipal revolt and correspondence versus opposition falsifying the good image of Georg as a good son and friend by using the binaries of manifest and latent content. All the manifest actions of Georg that show care and concern for father and friend prove to be an opposition to both of them. Fourthly, the semantic code delves into the connotative meaning to trace down the theme of authority versus submission. Georg feels guilty of the charges leveled against him by his father and his superego compels him to execute the sentence. In the last step, the cultural code deciphers the patriarchal judgment as embedded in the rabbinic Jewish ideology. Franz Kafka's revolt against his father's tradition begets the patriarchal judgment upon Georg Bendemann by his father to sentence him to death by drowning. Moreover, the Kafkaesque technique the mixture of realistic and psychic text explores his unconscious motifs of replacing his father with the rational act of covering the father with a blanket to avoid the cold.

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