

Name:

Instructors' Name:

Course:

Date:

How Franz Kafka in *The Trial* Uses Diction Better than Madox Ford in *The Good Soldier* to

Show the Importance of Law

The Trial by Franz Kafka highlights the story of a bank financial officer who was arrested and prosecuted by a remote court without a clear clarification of the offense he had committed. The financial officer is called Josef K., and he faces a trial that confuses him throughout his life. Two men who are hired to kill him ultimately murder him at the quarry where he had directed them. *The Good Soldier* by Madox Ford talks about tragedy of Edward Ashburnham who is a soldier. Edward gets involved into several sexual relationships in the course. Finally, he commits suicide as he faces a lot of controversies concerning numerous romantic relationships. Kafka uses diction in different ways, hence, presenting a better view of the importance of law. Kafka uses diction formally, informally, colloquially, and uses slang to emphasize the importance of law compared to Ford who does not utilize these qualities adequately. The effective use of diction by Kafka boosts a clear and appropriate illustration of the importance of law.

This paper explicates the manner in which Kafka in *The Trial* uses diction better than Ford in *The Good Soldier* to show the importance of law.

Firstly, Kafka effectively utilizes diction in formal situations to show the importance of law better than Ford does. Kafka chooses appropriate words to emphasize the importance of law in formal situations such as the one involving the arrest of Josef K. by the two agents. He

chooses correct formal words that indicate how the law would always take its course against any individual suspected to have committed a particular offense. For example, Kafka asserts, “someone must have slandered on Joseph K., for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong he was arrested” (Kafka 20). Kafka utilizes this statement to indicate the importance of law in reaching out to individuals as soon as they are suspected or reported to the relevant institutions. The arrest and prosecution of Josef K. without a clear understanding of the offense involves formal utilization of diction to illustrate the importance of law in dealing with all suspects without any compromise. For example, through the statement, “it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary” (Kafka 33), Kafka presents a formal view of the importance of law to apply to the entire society without compromise. On the other hand, Ford does not utilize a high level of formality in formal situations as Kafka does. Ford, through the narrator John Dowell, does not uphold effective formal diction even in situations that are necessary, hence, not bringing out the clear importance of the law. For example, in the case where Dowell discovers that his dead wife had an affair with Edward, the good soldier, he only says, “that is the saddest story I have ever had” (Ford 37). This does not bring out a clear understanding of the importance of the law in dealing with individuals who have gone beyond a particular bound. In line with this assertion, it is clear that Dowell does not adhere to a formal diction in the presentation of the matter. Therefore, Kafka utilizes diction better than Ford, especially in situations that call for a high level of formality.

Secondly, Kafka uses diction to illustrate the nature of law in the informal situations better than Ford. Notably, both of these books have numerous informal situations where individuals speak to each other in the informal settings. Josef K. meets his uncle who had come with a lawyer who would assist him in the case. During the briefing, Leni, who was the

attorney's mistress, seduces Josef K. and he immediately gives in. His uncle is disappointed in K's act and asserts, "Your lack of respect has hurt your case" (Kafka 102). This statement in the informal conversation between Josef and his uncle indicates that the law plays an instrumental role in eliminating any form of disrespect in society. In the course of informal conversations between Josef and Titorelli, who was the court's painter, Kafka brings out clear importance of the law in society through the assertions made by Titorelli. For example, Titorelli tells Josef, "as far as I am concerned, no defendant has ever been acquitted in this court" (Kafka 339). This informal conversation sets the course for understanding that law is important because it ensures ultimate prosecution of any suspected individuals. He accurately brings out the view that law is important because it eliminates all the suspects from society through prosecution. Ford does not effectively utilize diction in informal situations to bring out the clear importance of law. There is no sense of chronology in the informal situations that Ford utilizes, hence, making it difficult for him to utilize diction effectively to bring out the importance of the law. For example, Dowel's friendship with Edward is informal, and there is no assertion of the law's importance even after it is discovered that Edward had a love affair with Florence, Dowel's wife. Dowel only asserts, "I was a fool in coming to realize that Florence and Edward had a sexual relationship for over nine years" (Ford 78). It does not bring out the clear importance of law in this context. People are not able to draw the importance of law from this informal assertion because it has not been brought in a clear and understandable manner.

Thirdly, Kafka utilizes diction better than Ford to show the importance of law because he uses both long and short statements relating to the matter effectively. The exploitation of both short and long statements brings out a clear and accurate importance of law from the book. For instance, when Josef is arrested he asserts in a short statement, "I will like to make use of what I

know” (Kafka 107). In saying this, he is directly referring to the law that is established. He also tries to question the offenses that had led to his arrest but still does not understand. Kafka also uses diction in a long statement, hence, effectively bringing out the importance of law. For example, Josef asserts, “I see, these books are probably law books and it is an essential part of justice dispensed here that you should be condemned not only in innocence but also in ignorance” (Kafka 140). The utilization of this long statement helps him utilize diction better than Ford in the presentation of the importance of law. Ford relies on the narration of the story by a single individual who does not effectively bring out the importance of law. Dowell dwells on telling more about relationships between different individuals in the novel without bringing out the clear importance of law. For example, he asserts, “My wife has been in a sexual relationship with Edward for about nine years, and all this happened under his nose” (Ford 80). The use of a single narrator in the novel limits its presentation of the importance of law.

Lastly, Kafka uses diction better to show the importance of law because of the specificity in which he refers to particular situations compared to Ford. Kafka is better because he uses specific words to refer to different situations within the entire novel. For example, he uses terms such as ‘the judge’, ‘the attorney’, and even ‘police officer’ to refer to particular individuals in the law system. This is vital in bringing out the importance of law as promoting calm and order within society. For instance, Kafka asserts, “at least it puzzled him looking at it from the policeman’s point of view, that they had led him to a room where he had ten different ways of killing himself” (Kafka 277). This effective use of specific words such as police in the respective situations makes it easier for him to present the importance of law. On the other hand, Ford utilizes a narrator and does not effectively refer to the different criminal situations in the novel. For instance, Ford asserts, “Nancy’s father could be abusing her” (Ford 197). Notably, this does

not bring out the specific reference to the law. This does not bring out the clear importance of law in society.

In conclusion, Kafka uses diction in different ways, hence, presenting a better view of the importance of law. Kafka uses diction both formally and informally in an effective manner in order to bring out the clear importance of law compared to Ford who does not utilize these qualities adequately. More so, Kafka uses diction by incorporating both long and short sentences, thus, illustrating the importance of law unlike Ford who relies on a narrator that puts more emphasis on short personal statements and does not bring out the importance of law effectively. Lastly, Kafka uses diction better because of his specific nature in reference to different situations. For example, he refers to judge and even lawyers. The narrator in Ford's novel does not exhibit the specific nature when referring to different situations, therefore, making it hard to draw the importance of law. The effective use of diction by Kafka boosts a clear and appropriate illustration of the importance of law.

Works Cited

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