Marketing in a Kafkaesque Context

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Markets

- Neoliberal Subjectivity
  - Entrepreneurial
  - Active
  - Prudential
  - Orderly
  - Different: Cast aside to be disciplined
Weberian and Kafkaesque Worlds
Kafka’s World

- The Metamorphosis
  - Gregor Samsa’s alienation
    - “what a grueling profession I picked”
  - Weak, enfeebled
  - Boss exerts his will
  - Social world falls apart
    - Ex-convicts
Kafka’s World

- **The Trial**
  - Joseph K.
  - Under-trial

  - “Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., (for without having done anything wrong, he was arrested one fine morning).”
    > Kafka, 1999, 7
  - “Certainly I am surprised, but I’m by no means very surprised...when one has lived for thirty years in this world and has to fight one’s way through it...one becomes hardened to surprises”
    > Kafka, 1999, 11
Kafka’s World

- In The Penal Colony
  - Cruel execution device
    - Carves the sentence before execution
    - Officer sets the machine on himself to carve ‘Be just’ but it malfunctions
    - Complex and dysfunctional
Kafka’s World

- Particularism
- Chaos
- Contested Goals
- Abuse
- Fear
Symbolic Capital

- Prestige
- Legitimacy
- Capitalize into other forms
  - Economic capital
  - Cultural capital
    - Bourdieu 1977; 1984
Methods

- Kolkata over a period of 7 Months
- Case study of Kolkata Facilities Management (KFM)
- Owner and 6 Employees
- 6 Client Firms (Owners/Managers)
- Visited Presidency Jail
Kafkaesque World: Abuse

Unable to handle the pressure, she committed suicide. After that, after the post-mortem, where we had taken her for it. What my partners did was from a computer of my restaurant, they used it to print a note that said that she was forced to commit suicide because of the torture that I subjected her to. Alright? They went to my father-in-law and told him...they’re basically from the village, but at that time they were not coherent...its not that they were stupid, but then given the situation, they thought they’re my friends and partners...so they went and asked him to sign in a place, claiming that unless he did so they wouldn’t be able to get her body. That is basically what happened...I mean if you want to talk to my father-in-law I can definitely arrange for it because he still comes to our house, and we have a good relationship...so, he doesn’t know anything, he just signed it. After some time, I got arrested. The Police came and arrested me...so, I stayed for four months, during which they tried me.

– Badal, KFM Manager
Kafkaesque World: Contested Goals and Cheating

- I had something…just one document, the partnership deed…*the partnership deed*, is given to the three partners – three Xeroxes, and the original remains in the restaurant. That’s all that I had…I didn’t carry any other papers home…I hadn’t imagined that it would ever come to this…and that they would ever tell me that I had no rights over my own restaurant.
  - Badal, Manager KFM
Kafkaesque World: Chaos

- In 2003, I collected some money through loans and started a business with a BPO. We had to scan their documents, convert them to MS Word and upload them on the internet. So, these companies that we worked for were all frauds and because of them I fell in a debt of about 0.4 Million INR (7000 USD). Hence, in order to pay off all my debts, I starting engaging in petty crime. I was cheated and that created the context for his crime.
  – Santosh, KFM Worker
Kafkaesque World: Dysfunctional and Corrupt

- They put the kidnapping charge on both of us. Even though my friend told them from the very beginning that I was not involved. He gave a proper statement and everything that I wasn’t involved, and that he had taken my phone and had been using it. But the police had their pocket witnesses who confirmed that I was involved with him the entire time and they framed me into the crime.
  - Santosh, KFM
Kafkaesque World: Disempowered Individual

Police asked for 0.1-0.15 million INR (around 2500 USD). My father said there was no point in giving them the money. All of it would get over, once the trial got over. Hence, my father did not negotiate with them. He believed that if I wasn’t involved, why should we bribe them. Then, in November 2008, we were declared convicts. After that my father fell severely ill. He got bed-ridden. Even now he cannot walk, stays at home all the time. We stay in a rented apartment. Then we appealed to the High Court. Then after appealing to the High Court, in 2013 I got a bail.

– Santosh, KFM Worker
Kafkaesque World: Fear

- Yes I faced it. In the initial stage first one year I never used to stay in my house because there were constant police raids, I was staying in a rented house in a different place.
- I: What were they asking for.
- Nigel: Nothing, they never believed that I will be reformed, change myself and lead a normal, proper life.
  – Nigel
Kafkaesque World: Loss of Self

- I thought that after coming out…you know… the world was now much ahead. And I’m like…you know the nine years is like fifteen-twenty years behind. So I have to cope up. Okay, I didn’t have any ID proof, I didn’t have any identity proof…the first ID proof I made was a driving license, which I could you know…bribe and get it done. So, I had people there, so I got a driving license, then. And you know then slowly, PAN card, and this and that and everything. Then I made all my ID’s…then learning the computers, making my ID’s – these were my first targets.
  – Nigel
Kafkaesque World: Alienation

- No one is going to point at my positive thing. That’s why I don’t tell anything to anyone. I live alone, cook alone and even eat alone. Work according to the time. Neither I am attached to anyone nor do I have a friend. Just some hi and hello is all that I do.
  
  – Mohsin, a KFM Worker
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- Facebook
- Website
- CV
- Popular media
- Shared narratives with clients
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- I went to another company which does a lot of work…I wont name the company, but it has a lot of construction, it has a lot of schools and then it has hospitals…I went to that company. I knew the director, the managing director of the company, so I went to him and said you have so many employees working, give me one job. He knew me, some fifteen twenty years back also he knew me. So he said, you don’t have to work, once a month you come and whatever salary you’ll say – that I’ll give you. I didn’t accept it. I wanted to work.

- Nigel
These people you know, they can work, they can physically work and since they don’t have the education they give the physical labor and the best place where I can work is cleaning, that is how I targeted this place, in the beginning when I went to offices for interviews they used to tell me, no! No! No! You were a prisoner how can we take you, and then I thought the best thing to do is you know if I clean a toilet there will be no problem I do not have to work with them.

– Nigel
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- I never wanted people to do favors to me and at the same time what struck me was what about those who live in prison and are uneducated or little educated? What would they do when they are released? It is then, that I decided to form a company -Kolkata Facilities Management. It’s not only me, but many like me who can find a way where they can live in the society with their heads held high.

– Nigel
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- Most of the boys and girls were uneducated, illiterate to be precise – they are all uneducated, all of them come from humble backgrounds, and I don’t mind even though this is being recorded – but it is they who are languishing. People who have connections and are rich get away.

  - Alokanda Roy
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- Improve the quality of daily life of all people we serve. Prove to the society, that we are also a part of society and we are given the opportunity we will never let you down.

» Mission Statement
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

Anyway, the thing is that I trusted them and if you trust somebody, who has never been trusted, sometimes you realize the value of things when you lose it, so when they had lost that love, self-respect and when they got it back then they realized the worth of it and they never want to lose it again.

- Alokananda Roy
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- Ex-Bandit and a large Jewelry Store
  - I saw Nigel once and I immediately knew that I could trust him. I knew he would not cheat on me... These ex-convicts are more honest than people outside. I have been cheated so many times by my employees.
    - Radhika, Store Owner/Client
Showcasing the Kafkaesque World

- After seeing his movie, we started reading about him, searched all the news available and before that I had a very vague idea. The main thing is the heroine of Mukhtodhara is my classmate. So, I know her very well. She told me that this film is coming, so I must go and watch that. That is why I went there in the first place, otherwise probably I’d have seen later on, or maybe missed it as well. I’m not very fond of movies. So that is how I came and met Nigel personally after the show and after meeting him, we started reading about him, we started inquiring what is there and what isn’t.
  
  – Runa, Stock Brokerage
Discussion and Conclusions

- Kafkaesque Context
  - Chaos
  - Violations
  - Fear
  - Alienation
  - Particularism
Discussion and Conclusions

- Markets and Kafkaesque Context
  - Struggle for symbolic capital
  - Novel codes of symbolic capital
    - Showcasing Kafkaesque world