

## EXISTENTIALISM THEMES IN KAFKA'S NOVEL “METAMORPHOSIS”

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**Abstract:** *Kafka's writing is characterized by its unique exploration of absurdism, alienation, and existentialism. His narrative style had a profound impact on modern literature, paving the way for later writers such as Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, and Gabriel García Márquez. Kafka's influence extends beyond literature into art, philosophy, and psychology, making him an important figure of the 20th century. He masterfully expresses the particular challenges that everyone experiences—helplessness, anxiety, suffering, and fear. Kafka was one of the greatest authors to convey these emotions through his exploration of existence. He was bureaucrat, artist, lawyer and ambitious young man, but still, he struggles to find his identity. Franz Kafka was a Jewish Austrian Czech from Prague who wrote in German. Kafka's works often explore identity-based struggles. For example, Metamorphosis depicts the challenges faced by Gregor Samsa when he wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a giant, monstrous insect. This paper aims to explore existential themes in this novel.*

**Key words:** *Kafka, existentialism, absurd, Gregor, alienation, literature, philosophy.*

**Introduction:** As Gregor Samsa awoke from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed into a gigantic insect. He was bread winner of his family, educated and admirable young man transformed into vermin, he is no longer human and son and brother, they hatred him and causing him to die infected wound brought on anger and neglect. He feels loneliness, as same way of Kafka, in letter to his father he wrote he is always felt fundamentally alone despite all physical connections. Kafka's philosophy refers to on the idea of human existence is absurd and does not make any sense, he viewed existence as a chaotic and the whole human race was the product of one of "God's bad days". Gregor works as a salesman to financially support his family, to fulfill his sister's dream of attending music school. After his transformation everything changes, resulting in his isolation from them, Gregor is consumed by existential angst, as he conscious of the absurdity of life and the constant struggle that drives existence alone. Relations with others were already challenging for him, now communicating becomes impossible as his voice changes to chirping and garbling. He retreats himself, with no hope on the horizon to return to his human body. The term "existentialism" had not been coined yet during Kafka's lifetime, but reading his writings reveals how deeply existentialist his beliefs and existence truly were.(1)

**Materials and Methods:** Existentialism proposes that the individual has free will, which means he has the capacity to create his own purpose in life. According to Jones College, the

existentialist view illustrates that humans are thinking beings who are capable of living in Independence. We shape our own lives. The individual is free to choose what to believe in solely responsible for every decision and action made. Existentialism puts forward the idea that humans are independent beings with the freedom to create their own interpretation of the purpose of existence.(2) Gregor's self-identity develops after the transformation, but before this misfortune his life was devoted only for working and his family, his lack of identity is the biggest reason to his tragedy. According to Kafka and existentialism, people have both an individual side and a commitment to society, it is our choice that must be made in moderation. If a person chooses themselves over society, they will lose society's support. However, if a person chooses society over themselves, they will lose their individuality. Gregor initially chooses society over himself, which ultimately transforms him into the working drone he was. After his physical transformation, he is forced to refocus on himself, and society abandons Gregor through his plight. His family, however, becomes more cohesive and productive in society, each contributing to work and leisure. Gregor learns to live for himself too late to become a whole person. Gregor begins to look for entertainment and fun in the form of a bug - a form that knows nothing but to work. He enjoys crawling around the walls and ceiling of his room by ignoring the purpose of being an insect, Gregor defeats the purpose of living in his new form of life and as a result he dies. (3) Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* was widely read last century with its unique intrigue. Another important aspect of novel that is Kafka warns that capitalism harbors inevitable changes that will result ultimately in loneliness and horror. He does so with a prophecy that women will replace men in the twentieth-century workforce to their detriment. The *Metamorphosis* is considered by many as one of the greatest novella ever written, and numerous literary critics and scholars alike have commented on the importance of Kafka's work. According to, Kelly, "Metamorphosis exemplifies the world Kafka invented on paper – recognizable but not quite real, precisely detailed and yet dreamlike.(4)

Results: In the novel, it is this womb-like state - without conflict, decision or self-definition - that Gregor longs to return to. But of course, this is impossible and Gregor's escapist attitude is largely responsible for his failure in life. Gregor's desire to escape is illustrated throughout the text. Escape in fact is a motif which manifests itself in Gregor's sleeping to escape, avoiding decisions and his eventual physical and mental exhaustion, all of which lead to his ultimate escape through death. However, from Kafka's portrayal of Gregor's life before the change, it is clear that transformation is also a logical continuation of certain changes that were occurring inside Gregor's mind and his death can be understood in part as a failure to address or to try to interrupt any of these things before it was too late. Gregor failed to change with the changing world. Kafka expresses his philosophy of existentialism in his novel *The Metamorphosis*. The novel therefore constitutes a picture of life without pattern and is a satire on the kind of pattern which men try to impose on life. (5) According to Camus, the absurd is produced via conflict, a conflict between our expectation of a rational, just universe and the actual universe that it is quite indifferent

to all of our expectations. In Metamorphosis we come across situations where Gregor finds life as absurd because his expectations are not fulfilled by the world. The world remains indifference to him. The human condition, for Kafka is well beyond tragic or depressed.(6)

Discussion: In conclusion, this research attempts to reveal existentialistic themes in Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis". This short masterpiece remains relevant to this day, many young people read "Metamorphosis " and reflect on its themes, as there is a significant connection between Kafka's ideas and experiences of youth. Metamorphosis invites ongoing reflection on the complexities of human existence, urging us to how to find our true identity in society an relationships in indifferent world. The issue of human dignity in society is highlighted, our worth is measured by the value of we provide to society . We are only seen as individuals if we meet the required demands. Those who do not meet such demands find no place society; they are cast aside like refuse and regarded as burdensome insects by those who live alongside them. This research explores existential themes through Gregor Samsa with alienation and solation that can arise from societal expectations.

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