

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**A STUDY OF ALIENATION IN KAFKA'S *THE METAMORPHOSIS* AS A  
MORAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW GENERATION**

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**Weam Majeed Alkhafaji; A Study of Alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as a Moral Guide for the New Generation-Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17 (06 ), 1673-1691. ISSN 1567-214x. Published September, 2020.**

**Keywords: Alienation, Moral Messages, Identity, Struggle for Survive, and Values**

**ABSTRACT**

Modern world can learn a lot from Franz Kafak`s *The Metamorphosis* story. It deeply exposed alienation theme, and employed it as a vehicle to show the fault of modern man. This novel was published at a period when world was only responding to the effects of the industrial revolution. Employees had to change social interactions within the workplace to adapt to the current power system. Individuals struggled to fulfill the pressures of work and personal life and were exhausted. Gregor's alienation was a tragic consequence of the unsustainable socio-economic system of industrialization, contributing to his separation from social principles. This paper investigates the effects of separation of individuals who as a result have not only alienated themselves from their society but they lost their identity as well as moral values. It also focuses on the economic, political and financial issues that have changed them entality of young people from a source of benefits to a source of risks. To do so, my paper is going to consider Kafka`s *The Metamorphosis* as a raw material to examine the concept of alienation of the contemporary man.

## Introduction

Literature as a mirror of life has at all times had a major impact on the development of society. It has formed civilizations, reformed political systems and helped raise well-adjusted generations of people. In other words, literature shows us the power of emotion, reflects the experiences human gains, and provides us with opportunity for the practical study of the history.

Alienation is a common theme in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in literature. This term has been given different interpretations over the ages, but it has kept its original definition as a separation between an individual and a group of people in a community. Recently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this conception mainly means shadow of man (Nisbet, 2014). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as people became engaged in literature regarding the First World War, Franz Kafka's novel *The Metamorphosis* emerged from the ashes of the war, to shift the map for the absurd and nightmarish literature. This genre of literature portrays life as an inescapable condition of suffering and despair.

At the time of its emergence, *The Metamorphosis* story was considered a great change in literature happened, and opened the way to understand what the humanity needs and seeks. It sparked discussion about issues of human existence and alienation from society and self. Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* formed this world with the materials of our world while rearranging them depending on other laws. The protagonist "Gregor Samsa" that Kafka used is nothing but an expression of his anxious and sad soul, that shows *The Metamorphosis* was not just an unclean insect but a reflection of the cruelty of material life, and how the capitalist world enslaved the individual, regardless of any humanity. (Bloom, 1988)

### *The Metamorphosis* in Brief

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is a story about what happens after Gregor Samsa becomes an insect overnight. One of the main themes of the story is isolation. After this remarkable story, Gregor starts to feel inadequate at home. He has been lonely at his work as a traveling salesman for several years before his startling and absurd change. He complains that his frequent travel keeps him from making only casual friends who never become intimate friends. (Bressler, 2007)

When Gregor became insect, his family became more horrified at his new shape. He tries to keep them calm when they see him by hiding under furniture in his room when people might inadvertently catch sight of him. Gregor's sister Grete comes into the room constantly to feed him, at first her acts seem sincere but she soon recoils at his presence.

She did not see him at once, yet when she caught sight of him under the sofa ... she was so startled that without being able to help it she slammed the door shut again. (Dehumanisation, 2017)

Gregor's parents feel repulsed by him, so he keeps his frightened self-concealed away from their view. He misses having time with his family, that makes him try to listen in secret to their discussions.

Gregor now stationed himself directly before the living room door, determined to persuade the hesitant visitor to come in or at least discover who it might be, but the door was not opened again and Gregor waited in vain. ( Kafka, 15)

In *The Metamorphosis* story, the narrator describes how Gregor encounters the after-effects of becoming a bug for the day. He consumes food left by his sister inside of his room's entryway. When he believes he hears someone trying to unlock his door, he eagerly trusting frame of thought. A single day, Gregor feels depressed with the loss of social interaction.

Toward evening every day the living room door . . . was opened, so that lying in the darkness of his room and unseen from the living room, he could view the whole family at the brightly lit table and could listen to their conversation more or less with their consent, completely unlike his prior eavesdropping. ( Kafka, 25)

The narrator describes how, when Gregor's father unintentionally injures him with an apple, Gregor is pleased with the payout for this loss, being able to see his family from the cover of darkness. Although the condition does not make up for his reduced mobility and the reality that his father tried to destroy him, Gregor's contentment with being able to watch his family shows his sense of isolation from people in general and his family especially, as well as his motivation to maintain his companionship. Gregor's removal from humanity extends beyond from how he behaves in private and how he acts in general. He now socially awoken as an insect, discovers his room and knows it as the same room. Gregor uses the women to create social harmony in his life by keeping a private environment separate from the public world.

Above the table, on which an unpacked collection of sample cloth goods was spread out—Samsa was a traveling salesman—hung the picture which he had cut out of an illustrated magazine a little while ago and set in a pretty gilt frame. It was a picture of a woman with a fur hat and a fur boa. She sat erect there, lifting up in the direction of the viewer a solid fur muff into which her entire forearm had disappeared. (Kaka, 3)

The presence of the ladies in this image has an incredible noteworthiness to the story. In the image, the ladies appear to be wearing some sort of hide material; which allegorically speaks to a creature. Gregor appears to identify with this imagery since an amazing entirety his family at any point rewarded him the manner in which they ought to have, now they rewarded him in a way an individual would treat an undesirable creature. Only one in his family that remotely regards him as an individual is his sister Grete. During the initial fourteen days of his change, Gregor guardians don't set out to visit him since they don't have the foggiest idea how to deal with this circumstance Gregor is right now in. The ladies arm missing from the photograph likewise plays a criticalness to Gregor's distance. The arm missing from the image speaks to a missing piece of Gregor's life. Gregor is not, at this point considered being a significance to his family. Since he can no longer accommodate his family and help them out finically, they simply act as he doesn't exist anymore.

His underlying distance is extraordinary, it turns out to be increasingly more radical as the plot creates. There is in Gregor, above all else, a progressive familiarity with the truth of his new condition and circumstance, joined by expanding acquiescence to his destiny and felling of hopelessness. (Mendoza, 2011 )

Twenty-four hours per day, seven days every week all Gregor centers around his family and his activity. In the event that they will have enough cash to take care of the tabs, on the off chance that they will have enough cash to put food on the table, in the event that he goes to have a vocation when he goes into work all he contemplates are those things. His original thought's the point at which he awakens as a colossal verminous bug is that he will be late and afterward a feeling of assurance surpasses him.

Before it strikes a quarter past seven, whatever occurs, I should be totally up. Plus, by then somebody from the workplace will show up to ask about me in light of the fact ...which would likely reason tension, if not dread, behind all the entryways. All things considered, he should face the challenge. ( Kafka, 7)

Gregor's tone is quiet, yet very determined. Through anything Gregor has been a bug; he always has his brain to think logically, concentrated on ensuring his family's needs. He must get up and in the process falls and causes himself torment. On the off chance that he had remained in bed and not chose to have gotten up he would feel enthusiastic torment since he didn't prepare up and begin getting the opportunity to take off to work to accommodate his family. This is the point in the story where Gregor at long last appears to arrive at the resolution that he has distanced himself from his family and from society.

### **Alienation in *The Metamorphosis***

Franz Kafka is frequently supposed to be "significant German-language journalists of the twentieth century. He was a white collar class Jew situated in Prague" (Meissner, 1960). He had a one of thoughtful style and composing most which stayed deficient or were distributed after his demise. Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* generally well known and most popular book has perusers caught from the earliest opening point "One morning, as Gregor Samsa was awakening from on edge dreams, he found that in bed he had been changed into a gigantic verminous". (Kafka,3)

In *The Metamorphosis*, it is difficult to recognize dream and reality as everything appears to be so far off and separated. It shows up as the four dividers are collapsing, and Gregor lays weakly in disorder. All through *The Metamorphosis* revealing potential perils of social dismissal. Basically, this transformation drives Gregor to encounter partition from his family and his regular day to day existence. The subject of distance assumes an immense job is alteration. Estrangement can be characterized as the state or experience of being disengaged from molecule things. Regardless of whether that be a gathering or some kind of action on the off chance that one is distanced they are not invited to something like this.

As indicated by Franz Kafka, estrangement is, exemplified in the ordered respect for the understanding of work of the Land Surveyor, in *The Castle*: 'It was anything but

a consistent letter, somewhat it oversaw him as a freed individual whose opportunity was seen, the technique for area, and the reference to his desires. ( Zeeshan, 2016)

Gregor Samsa is distanced from his body, family, and humankind inside and out. Gregor's expulsion from mankind goes past from his private dynamic into the open domain by affecting his experience and life of social communication. Having stirred as a bug, he looks about his room and remembers it to be the equivalent. Samsa was a voyaging salesman, the image which he had removed of a shown magazine a short time back and set in a really overlaid outline. It was an image of a lady with a hide cap and a hide boa "*She sat erect there, lifting up toward the watcher a strong hide muff into which her whole lower arm had vanished.*" (Kafka, 13). As a methods for making a social parity in his reality, the ladies go about as a companion in Gregor's distance from the open domain. (Guerin, 2004 )

Sokel notes the passing of Gregor Samsa is deliberate in the exacting sense that it happens simply after the assent of the "saint" Gregor completes capital punishment on himself that his sister, as the agent of the family and of life, has articulated against him. He executes it by ethicalness of what must be viewed as clairvoyant force. He executes himself simply by his will. His will is to conform with the "law" which has picked him for penance so his family can live free and the detailing of this will is promptly trailed by its satisfaction Gregor's demise. (Sokel, 2011)

Also Zeeshan adds Generally, pundits of *The Metamorphosis* have underplayed the way that the story is about not exclusively Gregor's transformation yet in addition his family. His parent's first contemplations that enter their psyches after Gregor's passing are that they want to walk. This stresses they are feeling a liberating sensation and negligence. This is the piece of the story that the Samsa family dehumanizes Gregor to the point that he is not, at this point their child. The soul of Gregor Samsa transforms into a dynamic character, exhibiting that, through composition, minorities can communicate their existence see. The mind of a human inside the variety of a creature is run of the mill of the level of the offense within business visionary work abuse. Kafka's accounts make sense of how to avoid through the openings and the tales they told and ascend above standard and winning talks by exhibiting their defects and ramifications for human brain. (Zeeshan, 2016)

Franz Kafka's fictional work *The Metamorphosis* can help us understand the concept of alienation. The protagonist of this novella sacrifices his youth to secure his family's financial well-being. However, when he is transformed into an ugly insect overnight, his family would keep him isolated from their life and community: he is now not only useless but his life as an insect is not affordable. The story demonstrates the alienation and isolation of a devoted man from the human society. This may happen to anyone, whose life transforms from a source of help to a source of need. The transformation may come as a result of any incidents such as old age or an accident that may lead to a person's disability. (Lottman, 1966)

Karl Marx argued that dehumanization of labor was one of the worst effects of the capitalist structure of his era. Capitalism views humans as cogs in a money-making system. They are only useful if they help the controller produce more wealth. In order to keep their reputation as elite, they must obtain as much as possible from their

workers. This also adds to low-pay, unsafe workplace environments, and long-hours. (Marx, 2001)

Thus, industrial revolution robbed workers of their dignity by treating them as a means for benefit. This is why Gregor was so confused when he awakened as an insect, his main distress was job. The bug is concerned about what reason he might use for being late to work. This further illustrates that he was detested before his real dehumanization. Samsa was unimportant to his feeling of being useless; he was still lifeless in the old days even as a real man.

### **Moral Messages in *The Metamorphosis*:**

The *Metamorphosis* events contain various existential moral themes. They include different concepts like the **absurd, survival, and identity**, in addition to the importance of life over essence. These themes contribute to the novel's overall message.

**The absurd** idea encourages people to respond to weird and strange events in their lives in a particular way, rather than allowing it to pull individual down, as Gregor's change, allow life's trials and tribulations to shape individual for the better. It recognizes how something is subjective within our own point of view, and make an effort to think more positively and respond more appropriately. The Absurd, according to existentialism, indicates that nothing in existence is important until we give it value. This implies our perceptions of the universe as "unequal" or "bad". In another words, it makes no difference because, it is up to individuals to determine how they see it.

**Struggle for survival** is a theme that has a number of different variations. The value of one's own life is illustrated in existentialism, which it believes that we live in a dark, unforgiving world in which we must all fight for survival. The individual's primary emphasis should be on his or her own life and improvement. It is up to the individual's values and convictions to determine if it is to the detriment of others. *The Metamorphosis* events are about Gregor's struggle to adapt to his current form, as well as his family's struggle to deal with the consequences. Furthermore, Gregor's fight for survival clashes with his family's determination to improve their life. Eventually, Gregor falls victim to his neglect, and his family is given the opportunity to live happy, healthy lives.

**Theme of Identity** shows one way to solve the identification problem is to ask whether Gregor is indeed Gregor, because he seems to be a bug. As readers of *The Metamorphosis*, we have access to his emotions, but his family they don't. So, to add a new twist to the identity debate, we looking for some identifications:

- Is Gregor still Gregor when he is unable to communicate his thoughts to others?
- Why there is it cleaning woman, rather than one of his family member?
- Who has the authority to determine whether or not Gregor is Gregor?
- What effect does language and speech have on Gregor's sense of self?

The story illustrates how Gregor's identity was socially formed rather than an inborn trait by explaining how others' treatment of him influenced his identity. Not Gregor's insect nature in new shape, but his lack of language, was the most important effect of his transformation; without language, Gregor lacked the ability to articulate himself and regulate his own life.

**The existence precedes essence** concept implies that an individual's identity is more important than any function, position, or stereotype they may exhibit. In this life, the consciousness describes who the individual being. Whereas, Gregor does not describe himself in *the Metamorphosis* by his own identity and consciousness; however, he is identified by the role of financial caretaker that his family assigns to him. He is characterized by his self-sacrifices and devotion to others; he lacks a distinct personality. Gregor's transformation into a giant bug focuses on basic issues of reality for himself and his family.

Gregor was powerless and unable to communicate, at least in a manner that his family and others could recognize, and his failure to express his wishes led to his death. Gregor has worked tirelessly before to pay off his parents' loan to ensuring that his parents and sister could live comfortably without needing to travel. Despite his ability to do his job well, he was plagued by the curse of travel over missing train, poor and irregular food, frequent interaction with new people so that you will never get to know someone or become friends with them. All of this weighed him down, but he never said much about it. Nothing has improved since his transformation.

Gregor was shocked when he heard his own voice answering, it could hardly be recognised as the voice he had had before. As if from deep inside him, there was a painful and uncontrollable squeaking mixed in with it, the words could be made out at first but then there was a sort of echo which made them unclear, leaving the hearer unsure whether he had heard properly or not. (Kafka, 5)

Gregor was unable to inform his mother what was wrong until she eventually asked if he is alright because he was late for work. He had no words to console her as she passed out with terror at the sight of him. Also, he was afraid to answer his sister when she called him, he did not raise his voice high enough for his sister to hear. When she wanted to bring him dinner, he couldn't understand why he no longer liked what he used to like. When Gregor suspected his father was going to scold him, he did not flee; instead, he sought to make it as simple as possible for his father to reprimand him.

Gregor he ran up to his father, stopped when his father stopped, scurried forwards again when he moved, even slightly. In this way they went round the room several times without anything decisive happening, without even giving the impression of a chase as everything went so slowly. Gregor remained all this time on the floor, largely because he feared his father might see it as especially provoking if he fled onto the wall or ceiling. (Kafka, 45)

Since Gregor was unable to communicate with his father that he was actually attempting to make it better, his father misinterpreted his behavior and pelted him with apples. One of them got stuck in Gregor's back and severely injured him, a wound that will almost definitely led to his death. According to *the Metamorphosis*

message, everything that has happened to Gregor, particularly his transformation, is neither good nor bad. He, like his family, continues to see it as a bad thing, and they respond accordingly. Because they choose to see this strange and weird occurrence as a negative, it has a negative impact on them, to the point where it is nearly ruinous. Their refusal to accept what has occurred and respond appropriately nearly destroys their lives, and Gregor loses his identity.

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is important to us because his struggle echoes the misery of modern man. The ethical dilemma that Gregor Samsa is experiencing is not just a fictional tragedy; it is a real crisis that plagues modern man on all sides. It represents an individual's fear and uncertainty in society as a result of changes in the trends or lifestyles, as well as individuals' willingness to abandon who sacrificed his or her life in the blink of an eye, as the Gregor family did. As a consequence, Kafka's narrative is firmly grounded in horrifying dramatic content, and his stories are a satisfying the enthusiasts of ridiculous literature and Kabusi. Kafka's works will always be young for the new generations and any human being, regardless of skin colour, religion, language, or place, believes he has a good friend in Prague. He died at a young age, but his message was universal.

"I will write after all, I will write anyway, it is my struggle for self-preservation " ( Franz Kafka )

### **Conclusion**

This is what they want to do because they never expected Gregor to be a house member. As the family is told of transition, they are more concerned about how they will manage to financially survive than with Gregor's mental well-being. Gregor's family recognized Gregor's looks and is unwilling to establish a way to interact with him. His family is totally unsure how they deal with this alter .The significance of this paper, is the alienation of the individuals from their societies, comes as a result of the widespread adoption of self-destructive ideologies and the massive corruption of thoughts. Over the last four decades, the world has suffered greatly from the phenomenon of disruption that has turned to be a serious issue for the whole world. (Cohn, 1978)

The estrangement of the individual is the product of the new technologies, especially the Internet and social network which has penetrated into every bit of our life: by using new technology, contemporary individual creates their own private world: an unreal world where they get stuck so firmly that no one can ever bring them out to reality. (Ramey, 2017)

We are now living in the 21st century, the era when the modern technology has distanced the individuals from their society, and also provoked them into a sense of alienation from their families and communities. Individuals have lost their sense of humanity and connection with the world around them. One of the too many reasons is economical issues: people willingly adopt technology, only taking its benefits into accounts, and ignoring its many harms.

Finally, this study aims to give the teenagers a new perspective about life and explain the uncontrolled conflicts, resulting from ethnic, economic and political influences

which lead to the loss of the mainage group of the human being that is "the youth"; who get alienated from the society by follow fundamentalists blindly. (McReynolds, 1965)

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