

Introduction depict  
this poor relationship,  
the writer



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## **Introduction**

In his literary works, Kafka amalgamates almost all literary components and crowns them with new ideas and purposes. In 'The Metamorphosis' Kafka uses metaphor and pushes it through its highest points. He successfully used metaphor to demonstrate human relationships (Mitchell 1).

The play 'Oedipus the King' is full of tragedy and sorrow that results into greater pain just as the story progresses. This only serves to advance to popularity of the story (Stewart par. 1).

By examining the two stories, one notices various ways that father-son relationship permeated and influenced the lives of both Gregor and Oedipus (Mitchell 1). This paper seeks to explore the father and son relationships in Metamorphosis and Oedipus the King and offers a comparison for the two.

## **Discussion**

In the 'Metamorphosis', the author clearly talks about poor communication among the members of a low family class. To clearly depict this poor relationship, the writer converts Gregor Samsa, the main character, into a gigantic bug (Kafka 1).

The writer uses this character to represent himself, meaning that Franz Kafka and Gregor are analogous to one another. By analyzing the two, readers get an insight of the father-son relationship as illustrated in the story. The author uses his life relationship with his biological father and the effects of his father's dominance and dictatorships to depict their relationship (Wyllie par. 1-3). In his translation, David Wyllie describes the

bug as a horrible vermin that has pitiful thin legs (Rohl 280-391). In real life scenario, a bug is imagined as weak, insignificant and does not attract much attention. In this context Kafka depicts his own low self image by using the metaphor of the bug. In *Metamorphosis*, the inferiority problems that Kafka encountered in his childhood are depicted by the traits of the bug (Kafka 1).

Even with the challenge of interpreting *Metamorphosis*, nonetheless, it is still possible to provide a plausible explanation of the works of Kafka. As the metamorphosis unfolds, we see Gregor Samsa waking up and to his utter amazement he realized that he has undergone a transformation into a beetle. With the unfolding of this story, it becomes apparent that Gregor is slowly coming into terms with the transformation (Fitzgerald 1). However, this does not deter him from pondering on how exactly such a transformation might have occurred in reality. Already, a keen reader will almost certainly ponder on the peculiarity of a lack of questioning by Gregor about the transformation. The expectation would be that for an individual to have turned into a beetle in the space of one night there is every reason to ask oneself how such a dramatic transformation could have possibly occurred. As such, the reader is left wondering if at all Gregor underwent any physical change. Even as the presentation of the story is such that mutation appears more of a fact, nevertheless, one could as well infer that the story is more of a metaphor seeking to depict the household of Samsa and its state.

Before Gregor underwent the transformation process, his life was rather boring. Coincidentally, this boring life bears a close correlation with that led by such an insect as a beetle. Gregor was fully occupied with his work and was determined to ensure that remained a god provider of his family. Gregor  
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neither had a hobby, nor did he have close friends. Even within the family, the only person that he had a close relationship with was her sister. As such, Gregor may be seen as a complete departure from what one would expect of a normal human being.

Once he becomes aware of his responsibility at the household level and upon a realization of his p current plight, this is the time that the actual metamorphosis takes place. In his early childhood, Kafka failed to figure out his father's motives and reasons for the frequent punishments he received. For a long time, Kafka had assumed that his father's punishments were naturally harbored by his sinful actions. However, this idea is in contrast to classical sentiments which consider children as entirely innocent (Rohl 280-391). This unusual view of himself was fostered by the nonsensical treatment from his father.

In his letter to his father, Kafka says that he was skinny, weakly whereas his father was strong, tall and huge. In this regard, Kaka viewed himself as a bug; something that could be easily grabbed and manipulated. Just as Kafka suffered in the name of punishments from his father, in 'Metamorphosis' Gregor too suffers the same treatment under his father's heavy boots as bug (Wyllie par. 3-7). Kafka shows that his father was superior in almost all aspects; physical strength, ability to command, and also in the innate power over the world that Kafka also thought he had.

This influenced the writer in many ways. In metamorphosis, Kafka depicts Gregor as a woman's portrait framed by hand and dressed in fur. This is an illustration of the jealousy that Kafka felt for his father's stable and strong

marriage. The picture frame of how Gregor holds on to the things that appeal to him loudly echoes to the reader the inadequacy that Kafka felt due to his relationship with his father (Mitchell 1-3). The play ' Oedipus the King' explains about the fall of king Oedipus from his domineering position because of his pride. At the opening of the play, Oedipus has excellent qualities that enable him, as a ruler, to determine the needs of his subjects.

His fame and powers came as a result of resolving the Sphinx riddle. After the terrible plague befalls his kingdom, Creon, the brother to the Queen comes from Thebe oracles and warns that the person who murdered the old king, Laius has to be revealed first before the plague could be lifted. Due to his dedication to protect his people, the king is determined to reveal the root of the problem (Stewart par. 1-3). This shows some kind of responsibility in a parent; however his swiftness turns out dangerous when he kills the ' traveler' who tried to traffic him off. The writer shows that Oedipus has the potential of acting harshly (Stewart par. 1-4).

As demonstrated in Metamorphosis, the tragedy of the son is an illustration of punishment that has no fault. Oedipus was abandoned by his parents whereas Gregor, who represents Kafka, was brought up by his parents. Oedipus was acting out of unknown urge to kill his father, a situation that resulted in total destruction within the family.

After his birth, Oedipus was to kill his father and later marry his mother, as it had been foretold. In this regard, his father orders that his son be dumped in the wilderness. Oedipus was adopted by another royal family who do not

reveal to him about his background. When he had about the prophecy, he ran away to avoid the predicament.

But on the way, he met his true father who overtakes him in traffic. After a heated argument, Oedipus kills the man without knowing it was his father. Later on he becomes the king and unknowingly marries his mother and they both have children.

When the mother discovers, he kills herself while Oedipus goes into exile (Stewart par. 2-5). In the metamorphosis, Kafka was fighting with the alienation that he felt by not being a Czech or a German. More so he was the only son in a family of three siblings.

This increased the pressure that he encountered from his family who expected him to behave in certain ways (Rohl 280-391). This same case applied to Gregor in The Metaphor story where Gregor is shown as the eldest child and the only son. His father made him provide for his family yet the members were capable of finding food for themselves as it is seen as the story progresses. This is a form of punishment without any fault (Mitchell 9) More so, like in Metamorphosis, the tragedy that befell Oedipus depicts a strange and contrasting father -son relationship. In this story, although every father needs a successor, in this play, the father wants to kill his child at birth.

This is a fate that is unchangeable by human. The sorrow and pain as depicted in the story changes the usual mood into a tragedy creating a horrible scenario (Stewart par. 6-9). Oedipus unknowingly confronted his

father by killing him. The father and son relation in this play is depicted as one with so many problems.

This is seen when Oedipus' father commands that his son be abandoned in the wilderness to die so that he does not overthrow him. However, Oedipus unknowingly kills him. This came as a result of a confrontation. Although the writer says that Oedipus killed his father and then married his mother, he successfully uses pity and sorrow to show both sides of father -son relationship in the story (Stewart par.

1-3). In the Metamorphosis it is clear that although Kafka could not physically confront his father for all the pains he had caused him, he had however equipped him to bravely confront him by other (indirect) means (Kafka 2-13). Despite his hard work, Gregor still faced difficulties with his father and could not comprehend why he suffered so much anxiety and difficulties while dealing with his father.

His astonishing state had so little effects and was much bothered about his work. The contrast with Gregors father worked for his good at the confrontation time. Although his father saw him as weak and minute, he knew that his outside condition were as a result of others interpretations just as Kafka had compared his ability to his father's (Rohl 280-391). Despite Gregor's problem, in a conversation with the manager, his mother said, " he is not well, believe me, Mr. Manager.

Otherwise how would Gregor miss a train! The young man has nothing in his head except business. I'm almost angry that he never goes out at night.

Right now he's been in the city eight days, but he's been at home every  
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evening. ....” (Kafka 15). This shows that Gregor could have been wrongly treated by his father for no reasons and that Kafka’s father could be punishing him for no faults (Mitchell 9). This is in contrast to most peoples’ expectation of parents providing guidance to their children as they grow up (Wyllie par. 7-10).

As depicted in the two different literary works, the two ignorantly make decisions that directly affect the lives of their sons without measuring their impacts. These deliberate moves directly or indirectly affect their children. Oedipus is seen to be in constant move, possibly calming down his fateful life.

He is confident and swift when interrogating Creon who later brings in Tiresias so that they could lift the plague. However in a superseding play, Creon takes Oedipus’ children without him acting and getting them back would force him to wholly depend on Theseus (Stewart par. 4-7). This is a situation that has its basis on the poor relationship with his father (Rohl 280-391).

More so, the impact of his father’s decisions was felt among his family lineage (Mitchell 6-9).

## **Conclusion**

Looking at the two stories, it is also notable that the decisions that individuals take, shapes the fates and destinies of the people we live with or of those who are around us. More so, both literary works show that father and son relationship in a child’s life plays a significant role in shaping the child’s image and life. In reading ‘ The Metamorphosis’ one would not that <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-depict-this-poor-relationship-the-writer/>



knowledge is power (Rohl 280-391). As depicted by Gregor's actions, Kafka demonstrated that he was empowering himself by the awareness that the effects of his father's treatment could damage his self image.

In the story, Gregor for some quality time was not concerned about his being a bug and different from the rest of the family. Oedipus never had the choice to determine the fate of his life as well as Gregor who turned into a bug in an overnight.

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