

Gregor samsa as an outsider in the metamorphosis by franz kafka

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The novella has been interpreted and the characters psychoanalyzed in numerous ways by different critics. By subconsciously willing himself to turn into an insect, Gregor Samsa is believed to have self-alienated himself and embraced parasitic dependency on his family to compensate for his feelings of resentment for sacrificing his life working at his uninspiring and tiring traveling salesman job for his family. His only motivation to continue in the same job is to help his father repay all his debts after his business collapsed five years ago. However, Samsa dislikes his long durations away from home, staying in hotels, eating poor quality food, knowing only acquaintances while meeting people on business, with no opportunities to form strong friendships and several other setbacks of his work. This is exemplified by Gregor Samsa's thoughts as follows:

“ what a demanding job I've chosen! Day in, day out on the road. The stresses of trade are much greater than the work going on at the head office, and, in addition to that, I have to deal with the problems of traveling, the worries about train connections, irregular bad food, temporary and constantly changing human relationships which never come from the heart. To hell with it all!” (Kafka 2).

Gregor Samsa's family appears to have considered him as a member of their family only until he was productive and useful in taking care of their financial requirements. When the situation changed by his metamorphosis into vermin, they excluded and imprisoned him in his room as an outsider and a source of embarrassment. Although his sister Grete initially brought him his meals and cleaner his room, she got caught up in her long hours working as a salesperson and became negligent in his care. “ Streaks of dirt ran along

the walls; here and there lay tangles of dust and garbage” (Kafka 33).

Gregor’s father who the person most aggressive with him after his metamorphosis, caused him bodily injuries while trying to get him back into his room, without waiting for him to maneuver himself which he could do only slowly. His isolation and alienation from the family are strongly reflected in his darkroom where Gregory is confined, and where he hid under a couch to avoid causing distress to his sister or mother when they entered his room. His mother continued to express her deepest hope that he would become normal again. However, due to his living conditions, sense of isolation, and rejection, Gregor is unable to eat or to sleep, and his body weakens.

The family considered Gregor as the root of their problems. Horror, disgust, and an immediate decision to move away is shown by the three boarders to whom the family rented a room, upon seeing Gregor, the huge insect crawling out of his room. Grete, the sister immediately influences her parents to think of getting rid of the insect since it was a huge obstacle to their living a normal life. She is emphatic in her determination that he should be removed, and refuses to think of him as her brother. Gregor hears the conversation and the same night he quietly breathes his last. His desire for relieving them of his burden was even stronger than Grete’s. “ He remembered his family with deep feeling and love. In this business, his own thought that he had to disappear was, if possible, even more, decisive than his sister’s” (Kafka 41).

After Gregor’s parents and sister come to know of his passing away, and the cleaning woman disposes of the body, the family takes the day off from work and goes to the countryside to get some rest. Their complete lack of sadness

in Gregory's end, the faithful son and brother who had been their sole support, comes through starkly in the story. They optimistically discuss their present and future prospects. Gregory's father's new job as a bank servant, his mother taking up sewing work, and the sister's job changed that occurred in the earlier family that had lived comfortably on Gregory's income. Thus, the title of the story *The Metamorphosis* can be considered as referring to the family members, and not to Gregory's transformation. It is concluded that Franz Kafka has powerfully depicted the concept of alienation from humanity through the use of rich symbolism in the metaphorical portrayal of man as an insect.