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## MASTER THESIS

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# The Absurdity of Being as Reflected in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis Novella

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## **Dedication**

With great honor, I dedicate this work to my beloved Parents “**Azzedine**” and “**Mounia**” who have been my source of strength and support.

To my brothers “**Mohammed**” and “**Zakaria**”

I also dedicate this work with love and respect to my lovely sister **Abir Laib** who has lived with me every moment with patience and support.

To my best friend **Imen**

To my special friends with whom I spent the best moments.

To my supervisor **Mr .SEDRATI Yasser**

At last, I dedicate this work to myself for being strong and working so hard to create  
this work

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, I am grateful to Allah for the good health and wellbeing that were necessary to complete this Master thesis.

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### **Abstract**

This research examines and proves the absurdity of being as reflected in *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. This study has three goals (1) analyze and interpret Gregor's transformation into a bug, (2) examine the causes of Gregor Samsa's absurdity of being, and (3) describe how Gregor Samsa's life matches the life of the modern man. The three approaches that are used to conduct this study are sociological, psychological, and philosophical approaches. This dissertation illustrates the antecedents and consequences of Gregor's labor under the capitalist system, which leads to his alienation to his human nature and wish-fulfillment of his suppressed desires, and Gregor Samsa's living against Sartre's existentialist principles, which leads to his absurdity of being. Furthermore, it illustrates how Gregor's life is a projection of modern men's condition. The research method includes a thorough reading of *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, as a primary source. Also, it includes an extensive reading of Marx's Theory of Alienation, Freud's Interpretation of Dreams and Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy, as well as, essays, books, articles and dissertations that would serve to give the study a credible result. This research answers the following questions: what are the causes of Gregor Samsa's transformation into a real insect? Why does Gregor Samsa's existence become absurd in the novella? How Gregor's absurdity of being reflects or represents the life of the modern man?

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## General Introduction

Socrates once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” (Plato's Apology 38a5–6) Philosophy started when, out of curiosity, human beings began to raise questions regarding how and what objects really are. The reason that prompted such questions to arise was that people started to understand that things around them are not quite as they appear to be. Therefore, philosophy is an activity people assume when they seek to understand basic truths about themselves, and their relationships with each other and the universe. Human beings usually explore the part of their existence through philosophy, not by science.

Philosophy is an extremely loose collection of perspectives, artistic approaches and solutions to the universe and its internal problems. There are various combinations and varieties of strands of existentialism that cross the disciplinary and inquiry modes. Existential thinkers wanted to bring philosophy away from the academy's ivory pillars and introduce it into the actual lives of people. Philosophy, described as the study of how to perceive and interpret the world, has an impact on the way people live. Philosophy seeks to understand the underlying reasoning behind people's thinking. Existentialists believed that western philosophy, the way western people thought, had been diverged; society had lost its way and driven humankind to risky confrontations toward new realities. The immense human tragedies of the World Wars seem to diminish the West's great confidence in its science and power and to assert the concern that man had created forces outside his control. Existential thinkers questioned the fundamental beliefs of western civilization and pursued new ways of thinking that would better fit what is taking place in real life. (Cogswell)

Freedom is being free of feelings and become aware of all what is making such feelings alive. Therefore, our freedom is the foundation of our lives and without

it our lives remain absurd. Sartre 1956 claimed in his work *Being and Nothingness* that “Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.” (441) Freedom is one of the key characteristics of man's existence.

An absurdity in existence is consistent with existentialism as philosophy. According to Soren Kierkegaard, absurdity is limited to the actions and choices of the human being. (Michelman 27) These are considered absurd since they issue from human freedom, drifting away from their foundation, outside of themselves. Thus, individuals are free to make their own choices and decisions and create their own lives; they cannot escape their freedom even if they encounter, in their lives, overwhelming circumstances. In other words, human existence should be authentic.

Partly as a reaction to the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth century, Schelling and Hegel both see Philosophy as an event which is an essential part of human history and not outside life and the world. In the late nineteenth century, Karl Marx in *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), criticized previous philosophy by saying “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” (Thesis XI) Through existentialist thought, the idea of philosophy as a way of life is present in several ways. Typically, most existentialists appeared to stress the sense of thoughts or feelings to the degree that they were assumed to have a less social or intellectual controlled connection with one's individual and distinct life.

The rapid expansion of industrialization and development in technology and science was often considered in the Nineteenth and Twentieth century to alienate humankind from themselves or from a natural way of life. In the industrial society, the capitalists, who owned businesses to earn a profit, replaced the aristocracy. Furthermore, the proletariat, who labored for wages, replaced the working class.

Capitalist or Bourgeoisie owns the means of production. The role of the capitalist in relation to production is superficial, the work they do could be performed by another person who could be elected or they don't work at all. Their effort comes from owning the means of production. They earn profit from business and then distribute wages to the proletariat. It is the proletariat that will either sell its labor or labor to survive. A proletarian has no means of production or does not possess the property, capital, and machinery required to produce things. Living in close quarters and often dirty, families are torn apart by financial stress, identifying oneself primarily with one's job.

Marx thought that this system was inherently unjust. Under capitalism, he believed that the workers would become more miserable and experience alienation. Marx's Alienation takes place through the relations of production inherent in capitalist society. The capitalist mode of production contains the conditions necessary for alienation to emerge. Labor specialization, the reserve force of labor, and the creation of repetitive workflows like an assembly line are central to the rise of capitalist alienation.

On his first publication on Kafka, "*Kafka's 'Metamorphosis': Rebellion and Punishment*" (1956), Walter H. Sokel analyzed the function of Gregor's transformation in the narrative. He examined its relationship to textual detail, Gregor's narrated monologue near the beginning of the story, which expressed his feelings toward his work and its connection with his father's debt to Gregor's firm. He concluded that Gregor's metamorphosis serves to accommodate and combine two contradictory impulses in one event: rebellion and simultaneous punishment for it.

The idea of human self-alienation played a crucial role, From German classical idealism to Marxism and existentialism. In his *From Marx to Myth: The*

*Structure and Function of Self-Alienation in Kafka's Metamorphosis* (1983) Walter Sokel discussed the concept of self-alienation and how Kafka's story represents it in a literal way. Using a Marxist analysis, Sokel demonstrates how capitalist system structured labor, as it is described in the story, where the worker, Gregor, is alienated from the product of his work. Thus, his work is meaningless to him. Moreover, Sokel shows how Gregor assumes guilt because he is unable to work and, ultimately, dies without ever recovering his humanity.

Zahra Barfi, Fatemeh, Aziz Mohanunadi and Hamedreza Kohzadi (2013) in their research entitled *A Study of Kafka's The Metamorphosis in the Light of Freudian Psychological Theory* analyze the main character, Gregor Samsa. They analyzed the reason why Gregor transformed into a monstrous bug, why his father almost killed him, and why he knows his responsibility for his family financially. They concluded that *The Metamorphosis* is a symbolic representation of Gregor's unconscious world. Furthermore, Kafka represented Gregor's father has the same role and picture with the God who punishes and who does not know mercy.

The story of a man who has become an insect has drawn various critics, who strongly disagree on what the story entails though agreeing on its high content and significance. There have been Freudian, Marxist, existentialist, and religious interpretations. Furthermore, there have been debates regarding whether Gregor Samsa symbolizes the human condition. The researcher will give a Marxist and Freudian interpretation of Gregor's transformation. Moreover, the researcher will use Sartre's existential philosophy to prove the absurdity of Samsa's being. This research will also prove how Gregor's life represents the life of modern man.

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In contrast to this is inauthenticity, which is the individuals' denial to live following their freedom. Gregor was living an inauthentic life by disowning his freedom, which resulted in his bad faith. Not only after his transformation, but even before, he was like an insect. Gregor accepted the role of a worthless bug most of his life since he chose to live in accordance with what one should do or be. For instance, he devoted all his life to the help of his family and to pay his father's debts. Furthermore, he chose to be a machine for his boss doing all that he wants him to do because Gregor thinks this is what he is supposed to do or be. However, after his transformation, his family and the others did not accept his facticity. He became more stuck in being in itself because of his change, and he could not manage to live as being for itself. This resulted in his alienation from himself and his family. In the end, Gregor come to realize the meaningless of his life and come to an end with his death.

Throughout his entire life, Gregor Samsa encounters all the factors that render him the absurdity of being, beginning with his transformation and followed by factors that affect his life, which the researcher will try to prove in this research. In a way, Kafka poses the question of humankind's existence and what constitutes their identity. His fiction reveals that people stuck in a bleak universe, and death is the only release from it. Gregor's life and transformation into an insect serves as a reference for humans or the modern man.

Based on the background of the study, the research conducts this research to answer the following questions: How did Gregor Samsa embody into a real insect? Why does Gregor Samsa's existence become absurd in the novella? How Gregor's absurdity of being reflects or represents the life of the modern man?

From the questions above, this research aims to analyze and interpret Gregor's transformation into a bug. Also, this research aims to examine the causes of Gregor Samsa's existence becoming absurd in *The Metamorphosis*. Furthermore, to describe how Gregor Samsa's life matches the life of the modern man.

In analyzing the data, the researcher will apply a descriptive qualitative analysis. The research will be using the sociological approach, the psychoanalytic approach, as well as the existential approach. The sociological approach will be applied to interpret the state of Gregor as an insect, seen by his family and the society, before his transformation. The psychoanalytic approach will be applied to analyze and interpret Gregor's transformation. To analyze the causes of absurdity of being in Gregor Samsa's life the researcher will be using the existential approach.

The research method includes a thorough reading of *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, as a primary source, and an extensive reading of Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy, as well as, essays, books, articles and dissertations that would serve to give the study a credible result.

Since its publication, "*The Metamorphosis*" has received an utterly excessive number of international scholarly attentions from many different academic angles. However, the researcher's focus will be mainly philosophical. The research will be using Sartre's existentialist philosophy, to analyze the absurdity of being in Gregor Samsa's life, which is the main purpose of this research. Furthermore, to prove how the modern man sees himself from the lenses of Gregor's life. In other words, to prove how Gregor absurd life represents the meaningless life of modern man.

This paper consists of three chapters. The first chapter provides the theoretical groundwork and foundation upon which the researcher will build the next two analytical chapters. Chapter one consists of three sections: Marx Theory of alienation, Freud Theory of dreams and Sartre's existential philosophy. The second chapter consists of three sections. The first section is a Marxist interpretation of Gregor's metamorphosis. The second section is a Freudian interpretation of Gregor's metamorphosis. The third section is a Sartrien existential interpretation of Gregor's metamorphosis. The third chapter is an attempt to prove Gregor's absurdity of being and how the modern man sees himself through the lenses of Gregor's life.

# **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework**

## **1. Introduction:**

Unquestionably, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Jean-Paul Sartre, are among the nineteenth and early twentieth century's thinkers, whose work left a profound impact on human thought. These thinkers have profoundly changed our modern understanding of human nature, mind, and existence within society and the world through their intellectual courage and creative observations hardly matched Western intellectual history. Through this process, they reconstructed the perspective of subsequent philosophy and human mind. Moreover, their ideas radically changed the conventional conception of human existence, behavior and the connection between the self and fundamental problems in society that had long been the foundation for moral philosophy.

This chapter will tackle the theories of these three thinkers. First of all, it will introduce the idea of the self and society and how philosophers reflected and created the self-image of humans following response to social changes happening in their time. The first third of this chapter will be designated to discuss Marx's theory of capitalist society, centered on his image of the fundamental nature of human beings. In which he proves that alienation is widespread in a system of having and ruling, of labor division, of private ownership of goods, tools, products of labor, and institutions. Through his alienation theory, he mentioned four widely relations that influence completely the human life and infiltrate capitalist society. These relations are man's relation to his productive activity, man's relation to his product, men's relation to society and man relation to his species.

The second third of this chapter will be assigned to Freud's theory of repressed desires, which claims that all human beings have to go through enormous repression of desires and feelings, which they cannot satisfy in real life, thus, suppress

them in the unconscious. One way to discover the meaning and operation of the unconscious is through dreams. The latter are usually inspired by the need to fulfill a repressed wish putting aside the waking life restrictions.

The last section of this chapter will denote to existentialism as a philosophy and literary movement. However, our main focus is on Sartre's existential philosophy. Thus, this chapter will discuss Sartre's main concepts such as freedom, being-for-itself and being-in-itself, authentic Existence and bad faith.

## **2. The Self and Society:**

The notion of the self has a historical genesis. The way to perceive 'the self' has evolved through history with philosophers. Indeed, philosophers reflected and created the self-image of humans following a response to social changes happening in their time. There were two primary sources of the self in Western culture: the concept of the person as it developed in ancient Greco-Roman society, and Christian ideas of the soul. The Greco-Roman regard the person as a free individual whereas in Christian beliefs, the soul is perceived as an internal and an inseparable substance that characterizes human individuality. It can be divided from the body. With the works of René Descartes, the Western notion of self appeared in further recognizable form. He thinks that people's higher sense of individuality does not connect to their bodies, desires or appetites. Instead, humans identify their existence through rational reflection on themselves, which makes them unique. (Burkitt 5-6)

Later, Descartes' dualism marked a starting point for philosophers to further develop the notion of the self. They split into two different stands of philosophy. Enlightenment rationalists insisted on thought and reason while Romantic thinkers favored nature and emotion. Kant notes that humans have sensations, desires, needs and inclinations that provide information about the world around them. However, he

believed that it is not feeling which gives humans freedom and dignity but rather reason and rational thinking. Without the latter, humans would never be able to question the received wisdom and could be the slaves of emotion. Yet, unlike Descartes, Kant does not consider the rational mind as a mean to define the whole self. On the other hand, Romantic thinkers believed that humans do not identify their existence through mental reflection alone, but through self-expression, in which they express their natural talents, feelings and desire. (Burkitt 8-9)

All philosophers that have been discussed above have considered, so far, the self being located inside the individual, in thought or inner nature. Therefore, sympathy or a moral imperative can be considered as an aspect of the individual self, which leads the person to socialize with others. Adam Smith, in his book *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), set the groundwork for philosophers, sociologists and social psychologists of the 20th century by his coming close to the idea that the self is a social construction. He believes that if each individual pursues his self-interest through trade, society will achieve greater heights of wealth. However, he did not consider this as the only, or the most essential, human motive. Besides self-interest, emotions or sympathies are other aspects of human nature, which a person has for others. These aspects promote a person's sense of feeling others. In other words, how others must be feeling in whatever situation they find themselves. However, Smith argued that humans do not develop a feeling of sympathy from affection, but from the situation, which evokes it. Likewise, each person expects others to sympathize with him in certain situations, but if they do not, it will be seen as an injustice. Through this mutual interaction and identification with others, a person can view his self, through the eyes of other people. Therefore, society gives each person a mirror for himself. (Burkitt 10)

Hegel added to the idea of the self as a social creation, in a different direction. In which he developed a relational understanding of the creation of the individual self. He argues that the self is often in dispute and conflict within itself. In addition, at times it is alienated from society. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), Hegel developed a dialectical process to the development of society and self. One of his significant achievements has been to see humans as social beings while maintaining the notion of the self as an individual in its own right. (Burkitt 11-13)

Burkitt (2008) states that “the position into which we are born as an individual – our family, neighborhood, social contacts, social class, gender, ethnicity, and the beliefs and values in which we are educated – will put a sizable imprint on the self we become.” (3) The self is not an innate entity. It develops in relationships with others. Through these relationships, individuals learn to realize similarities and differences in them. Jenkins notes that this process of identification with others is a two-way one process. The individual identifies with self-identification, while others identify him as categorization (7-8). Furthermore, since self-identification always involves others, it is a relational process. Jenkins viewed society as a set of relationships between three 'orders'. The individual order of what happens in people's minds. The interactional order of what happens between people and the institutional order, which is the shaped, ordered, and symbolically templated ways of doing things (10). May (2013) states that one's relationship with his surroundings is not only crucial to his sense of self but it is also to build a block of society.

However, Burkitt argues that ideas of the self should not be viewed as merely a product of philosophy. Hegel states that the self-changing experience is also related to social and historical changes, which are refracted in philosophical writings. On this point, the sociologist Norbert Elias observed the self-consciousness of the West; one

could even call it the national consciousness in the light of the civilizing process. He believes that Western society of the last two or three centuries believed itself to be superior to earlier societies. People in modern Western nations have thus come to understand their societies as a standard for civilized behavior. Elias indicates that the course of change has been rising since the medieval period in terms of repugnance and shame. What was previously considered natural behaviors has gradually become seen as inappropriate. Individuals have become more internalized with increasing control of their emotions. (Giddens 1037) This change led to create a sense of a deep division between the individual's logical and regulated mind and his passions, desires, and feelings. This must then be observed and handled with caution. According to Elias, this creates an 'I' that is separate from others in the 'outside' world. Thus, individuals start to hide behind an 'external' image presented to others in order to suppress feelings or desires that can no longer be expressed in public. (Burkitt 15)

### **3. Marx and the Human Essence:**

Five main elements can be identified in Marx's view of man. Firstly, Man is a natural and biological being. Marx opposes the idea that man is given a divine uniqueness to distinct him from other animals. He believes that man is not peculiar or unique. (245) Human, like animals, must work on nature to survive and meet his natural needs, such as hunger.

Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being, and as a living natural being he is, on the one hand, endowed with natural powers and faculties, which exist in him as tendencies and abilities, as drives. On the other hand, as a natural, embodied, sentient, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited being, like animals and plants. (Fromm 140)

Secondly, however, unlike animals, man has developed consciousness of these needs and drives. Man also has an understanding of his relationship with other species. “But man is not merely a natural being; he is a *human* natural being. He is a being for himself, and therefore a *species-being*; and as such he has to express and authenticate himself in being as well as in thought.” (Fromm 141) Man’s ability to live with and for himself is what makes him human, and this is possible because he is a social being. Social life “is life itself, physical and cultural life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, real human existence. Human life is the true social life of man.” (Marx 237) Human essence emerges in social existence. In other words, it is the result of the interaction of men in society.

Thirdly, for Marx man is creative, productive being. As Marx states in *The German Ideology*:

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life (42).

Therefore, man's existence is based on producing and creating the material conditions of his existence. For this reason, man actualizes himself as a human individual. Marx wrote in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts 1844* that “human reality, and for that reason the reality of his *own* essential powers—that all *objects* become for him the *objectification of himself*, become objects which confirm and realize his individuality, become *his* objects: that is, *man himself* becomes the object.” (Marx 108)

Fourthly, man is a history-making being. In the process of production, man creates himself and his nature, and, thus, creates history. Man is the producer and actor of history (Marx 61). In *Holy Family* Marx writes:

History does nothing, it "possesses no immense wealth," it "wages no battles." It is man, real living man, that does all that, that possesses and fights; "history" is not a person apart, using man as a means for its own particular aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.  
(125)

And Marx argues "the whole of what is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labor, and the emergence of nature for man; he therefore has the evident and irrefutable proof of his self-creation, of his own origins." (qtd. in Fromm 24)

Fifthly, "man should be viewed and studied not abstractly, as Hegel and Feuerbach tried to do, but concretely." (Mitias 247) The use of this approach for people dispenses with the traditional idea that the human being has a spiritual or mystical basis. Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*:

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made only in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be established in a purely empirical way (Marx 42).

Marx argues that the only feature that all societies have in common is the need to labor on nature to meet human needs. Marx considers people as productive. Therefore, they have to work in and with nature so they can survive. They provide

their food, clothes, tools, houses, and other essentials that enable them to survive. (Ritzer 25) People must meet these conditions to live a meaningful life and gain a sense of self-worth. Animals may experience joy and pain. They can lead good and happy lives or miserable and anxious lives. However, only humans can experience complete or empty, valuable or valueless, meaningful or meaningless life. (Wood 16) Therefore, what distinguishes humans' labor from that of animals is that "the human being makes his life activity an object of his will and consciousness." and as The German Ideology puts it, consciousness, "can never be anything other than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process." (Marx 47) Marx describes this at the beginning of *Capital*:

A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labour process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally. (Marx 284)

For Marx, the human mode of life should be joined with human nature and correspond to the human essence. Opposes to such a life, is an alienated life, which he considered a dehumanized life. Hence, Marx views that it is necessary to live according to ones' essence for a meaningful human life. (Wood 16)

#### **4. Marx's Division of Labor and Class (The Capitalist Division of Labor):**

One of the main interests of sociology is how social change affects our sense of self. Understanding the impact of social change remains vital in a globalized and rapidly changing society. Individuals are elements of their culture, time and place, and

inseparable from the social world. Even if they shift from one culture to another, they simply switch one social structure for another. The old feudal power structures vanished, and capitalism expanded. The number of people moving into the rapidly growing cities to work in the new factories increased. Because of all this, most areas of human life were affected. Eventually, a division between those who owned the means of production and workers replaced the old feudal class structure. Such a division brought with it new social inequalities. (May 12)

Though he wrote about several periods in history, Marx centers his attention on change in modern times. For him, the most significant changes were linked to the development of capitalism. (Giddens 18) Marx provides a theory of capitalist society centered on his image of the fundamental nature of human beings. According to Marx, to gain a sense of self-worth and meaningful life, humans have to develop and pursue their essential powers, whose core is labor or production. Nevertheless, if its opportunities are to be fully explored and the maximum latent capacity of humanity stimulated, labor must become a numerous task separated into many activities; because no one and no small society can do what the entire human race is called to do. Therefore, to be all-embracing, several unilateral activities have evolved. Individual work processes had to be limited in order to expand production. Indeed, for thousands of years, the prosperity of few and misery for the rest was necessary to facilitate a society of universal wealth. (Fischer 55) Furthermore, this led to class divisions in which one class had control over the means of producing society's needs, contributing to a further separation of the person and their community.

The division of labor established and increased social inequality by inserting differences among various occupations. In which it is divided to serve the stronger at the cost of the weaker. Marx differentiates between the social division of labor (within

society) and the division of labor in manufacture (within each work process). These two divisions are intertwined continuously and related. Division in social production results in the creation of private property and divides society “into haves and have-nots, rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited.” (Fischer 56)

The increase in population, production, power, and commerce led to the division of labor. However, the social and manufacture labor division led to individual mental and physical harm and to class division. The personal relationship of the craftsman to his product was first subjective but began to change with the manufacturing systems. In which the insertion of machinery led to radical depersonalization of the worker.

In handicrafts and manufacture, the workman makes use of a tool, in the factory, the machine makes use of him. ... In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism independent of the workman, who becomes its mere living appendage....The lightening of the labor, even, becomes a sort of torture, since the machine does not free the laborer from work, but deprives the work of all interest. (qtd.in Fischer 58)

Man makes himself into an accessory of the machine, instead of laboring for making himself. Modern Industry obliges society to change the detail-worker of today with the developed individual who is willing to face any change of production and fit for any labor. Marx explained that the division of labor leads to the division of collective property and the shift to private ownership. “The division of labour implies from the outset the division of the conditions of labour, of tools and materials, and thus the splitting-up of accumulated capital among different owners, and thus, also, the division between capital and labour, and the different forms of property itself.” (Marx 91)

The division of labor led to private ownership of the means of production and products of labor, the domination of the product over the producer, and the totality of productive forces and institutions. For Marx the material life is the basis, but not the purpose of human existence. Therefore, the fact that labor became, only, a means of maintaining life is a denial of human nature. Marx argues that the economy should not govern man. However, a society, consisting of connected individuals, which should control the economy. Humans cannot recognize themselves in their works. Creation dominates the creator. The material relationship has become an autonomous power that went beyond individual things.

As a result, alienation is widespread in a system of class division (having and ruling), of labor division, of private ownership of goods, tools, products of labor, and institutions. Developing and controlling the productive forces resulted in the loss of labor power for the majority of society, producers. Hence, the alienation of labor results with class society. For Marx, the one who sells his labor, who takes the product of another man's work, and who sells the product, all have a sense of alienation. (Fischer 62)

##### **5. Alienation and Capitalism:**

Marx particularly recognizes the deep alienation experience inherited in the new bourgeois society. He has established this special experience through his criticism of Hegel. The latter argues that people created a culture by their actions, which in turn challenged them as an alien force. Yet, human activity itself was for Hegel the representation of the Spirit, which was acting in humans. On the other hand, Marx contradicted Hegel in two points. First, he believes that spirit was a human product. Second, he believes that human labor was the creator of culture and history, not the other way around. The activity involves transforming the material world;

therefore, the activity becomes objective. Thus, the labor process was the objectification of human powers. Marx (1844) writes “The object of labor is, therefore, the objectification of man's species life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created.” (77) Whereas if employees linked themselves to their product as the representation of their nature and were accepted in their product and by others, then this was not the reason for alienation; on the opposite, it was the only genuinely human connection.

Marx's writings between 1844 and 1846 considered modern society's labor as the complete alienation of man. Marx claims that the social division of labor takes place solely under the rules of capitalist commodities production instead of considering the humans' talents and the interests of the whole. Under these laws, the product of labor became the one that shapes the nature of the human activity. That is to suggest, the products to represent life rule over their meaning and purposes, and the nature of man is subjected to material relationships. In his work, written in 1844, Marx explains how alienation arises from private labor, from commodity production:

Let us review the various factors as seen in our supposition: My work would be a free manifestation of life, hence an enjoyment of life. Presupposing private property, my work is an alienation of life, for I work in order to live, in order to obtain for myself the means of life. My work is not my life.  
(Comments on James Mill)

Through his alienation theory, Marx explains the disruptive impact of capitalist production on individuals, physical and mental health, and the social systems of which they belong. For Marx alienation in the capitalist mode of production is not only an individual state of mind. However, it is an experimental

process that evolves out of the reality we encounter in capitalist society through labor. Marx, in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, portrays alienation as a part of the four widely distributed relations that affect human existence as a whole and which penetrates capitalist society. These are, man's relation to his productive activity, his product, other human beings and his human nature. (Ollman 136)

### **5.1. Man's Relation to His Productive Activity:**

The relation of labor to the *act of production* within the *labor* process. This relation is the relation of the worker to his own activity as an alien activity not belonging to him; it is activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating, the worker's *own* physical and mental energy, his personal life or what is life other than activity-as an activity which is turned against him, neither depends on nor belongs to him. Here we have *self-estrangement*, as we had previously the estrangement of the *thing*. (Marx 75)

Writing about how labor is external to the worker, Marx describes the character of the proletariat by stating that labor in capitalism mortifies man's body and ruins his mind and that in it, he is uncomfortable and unhappy. (74) Thus, the worker "The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is *forced labor*." (ibid)

Capitalist labor destroys, according to Marx, most of the relations that shape human nature. With the repetitive nature of every productive task and the development of the division of labor, productive activity became no longer a good reflection of the functioning of human powers, or only to the extent that these powers are less and narrow in use. The capitalist labor consumes those powers without

refilling them. Instead of increasing the potential inherent in human powers, it burns them as fuel and leaves the individual worker poorer. As a result, the qualities that characterize a human being become gradually diminished. It is in this sense that Marx refers to labor as “man lost to himself.” (Marx 85)

There are two other aspects, which Marx discusses of alienated labor. First, that such labor is the private property of non-workers. Second, it will lead to a change in man's human and animal functions. Regarding the first, Marx says, “the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another.” (74) Once labor is coerced, even when its efficiency rests in the worker's severe conditions, a capitalist has to impose it. According to Marx, the worker's actions are oppressive to him, and he considers them as being performed in the service, under another man's oppression and exploitation, the capitalist. The latter control and determines the nature of work, its frequency, duration the amount and type of its products, the circumstances and, most significantly, whether it will be performed or not. In its productive process, the worker deals only with the misery of the capitalist and when the latter determines that his output is not profitable, that is to say, it will not produce income, and then the work ends. (Ollman 139)

Alienated labor will lead to a change in man's human and animal functions, referring to a state in which activities shared by human beings with animals are more human than actions, which distinguish them as human beings. Marx says, as a consequence of his productive activities,

As a result, therefore, man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any but his animal functions-eating, drinking, procreating, or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he

no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal. Certainly drinking, eating, procreating, etc., are also genuinely human functions. But in the abstraction which separates them from the sphere of all other human activity and turns them into sole and ultimate ends, they are animal. (Marx 74-75)

Eating, drinking and producing are moments where human's powers can be accomplished together. However, in capitalism, they only perform their primary and most apparent purposes, like their counterparts in the animal world. Nevertheless, despite its depraved nature, the person exercises more control in these practices than in the others, work in particular, which distinguish him as a human being. The worker thinks that at least he does something he likes to do, as unsatisfactory as eating and drinking. The same is not true of his productive activity.

## **5.2. Man's Relation to His Product:**

The second relation that Marx divides alienation is the individual's relation to his product. In Marx's words, it is "The relation of the worker to the product of labor as an alien object exercising power over him." (75) The product is also alienated from the worker as the activity producing the product is alienated. According to Marx, "The product is after all but the summary of the activity, of production... In the estrangement of the object of labor is merely summarized the estrangement, the alienation, in the activity of labor itself." (74) He asks, "How would the worker come to face the product of his activity as a stranger, were it not that in the very act of production he was estranging himself from himself?." (73) Marx discussed the product alienation, in his writings, in separated parts. Nonetheless, the pieces can be gathered in the three different relationships that are mentioned in the following statement:

The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an *external* existence, but that it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own confronting him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien. (72)

The laborer is separated from the product he makes, because another controls it, the bourgeois. People use their creative ability, in all communities, for the production trade or exchange of objects. However, this turns out to be an alienated activity under capitalism. Because, “the worker cannot use the things he produces to keep alive or to engage in further productive activity ... The worker’s needs, no matter how desperate, do not give him a license to lay hands on what these same hands have produced, for all his products are the property of another.” (Ollman 143)

Isaak Rubin, in his *Essays on Marx’s Theory of Value*, marks a quantitative and a qualitative aspect of the production of products. Quantitatively, the laborer earns less than the value he produces. His boss takes over a proportion of what he produces, thus, exploits the worker. Qualitatively, he puts his creativity into the product he creates, yet he cannot get any creative labor as an exchange to it. As Rubin explains, “In exchange for his creative power the worker receives a wage or a salary, namely a sum of money, and in exchange for this money he can purchase products of labor, but he cannot purchase creative power. In other words, in exchange for his creative power the laborer gets things.” (xxv) This creativity for the worker is lost or destroyed. Because working under capitalism does not encourage and inspire the laborer, but instead consumes his energy and makes him feel exhausted.

This condition was specific to capitalism for Marx. Throughout previous cultures, people who work hard generally may hope to consume more. However,

under the law of capitalism, those who work harder maximize a hostile system's control over them. "The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion the devaluation of the world of men." (Marx 71)

### **5.3. Men's Relation to His Fellow Men:**

Third relation is the worker's alienation from his fellow human beings and from the human social community. Marx argues that such alienation occurs when the only purpose of life is competition, and all social relations become economic relations and activities. "Each tries to establish over the other an alien power, so as thereby to find satisfaction of his own selfish need...an extension of the realm of the alien powers to which man is subjected, and every new product represents a new potency of mutual swindling and mutual plundering." (Marx 115-116)

This kind of alienation arises for two reasons. First, people compete with each other as private individuals separately, because industrial capitalism pushes them to isolate and differentiate from one another, in order to maintain their private interests for economic benefit. Individuals were previously united and cooperating at once. However, they are now isolated entities that work and live independently in private. Second, alienation from human beings arises when only one class is the primary patron of the work product. Marx claims that the result of human labor was once used primarily to provide basic needs and sustain life. Now, however, only one class that can benefit from it, to develop itself in society. Marx believes that this form of alienation happens when a labor product offers one class property and value while oppressing and depriving the worker. (Morrison 126-127)

Besides, individuals link to others through the purchase and sale of products. Their lives connect with thousands of people every day, whose work has made their

clothes, food, and home. Nevertheless, they recognize them only by purchasing and consuming objects. Humans embodied in money, property or labor. They relate to each other not as individuals but as representatives of various production relations. “In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.” (Marx 224) Human’s abilities and desires transform into a means for making money, so they perceive other individuals as competitors, lower ones or superiors. People see each other as a source of profit and loss. “He puts himself at the service of the other's most depraved fancies, plays the pimp between him and his need, excites in him morbid appetites, lies in wait for each of his weaknesses-all so that he can then demand the cash for this service of love.” (Marx 116)

#### **5.4. Man Relation to His Species:**

The last of the four broad relations Marx uses to explain man's alienation in capitalist society is the link between the individual and his species. Species, as Ollman explains, “is the category of the possible, denoting in particular those potentialities which mark man off from other living creatures.” (150) Through his quest to explain what is missing by species alienation, Marx made many comparisons between humans and animals.

Marx argues that human beings are productive, conscious individuals by nature and they embody themselves in the products they create. To express themselves is to use their conscious activity in life in order to consider themselves as a part with nature and to realize their conscious thoughts, feelings and objects by their exploitation of nature. In contrast, the nature of most animals is an instinctual activity of life. Most animals function and respond to their needs through their instincts,

whereas humans serve and satisfy their needs through conscious thoughts and their ability to alter nature into the objects of their thoughts.

As a consequence of their alienation from human conscious and productive life-activity, individuals become alienated from their human nature to establish their desired needs and the ability of their species existence. When the capitalist appropriates the product of the worker's labor, Marx 1844 states that the worker's "transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him." (77) Therefore, human's advantages over animals become disadvantages when the natural objects with which the human being is connected become the property of other people. Marx 1844, also, claims that "estranged human labor estranges the species from man." (76) The capitalist labor changed the relations, which distinguishes human beings, into something different.

Productive activity is the primary means of expressing and developing individual power and is distinguished from animal activity by its variety, flexibility, abilities, and strength. In capitalism, however, the worker's labor "turns for him the life of the species into a means of individual life." (ibid) The labor is coerced, obliged, under capitalism. It does not relate to individual desires or collective interests. The capitalist divisions of labor enhanced man's ability to produce, but producers of wealth are deprived of its benefits. Work has developed into a way to stay alive, not a chance to do work. Being alive has always been a necessity for engaging in productive activity, but it has always become an operative purpose in capitalism.

The worker's alienation from his human nature is also in the world of thought. Marx 1844 says, "The consciousness which man has of his species is thus transformed by estrangement in such a way that the species life becomes for him a means." (77) The individual knows and maintains the freedom to choose, prepare and

provide for the skills and knowledge essential to his production, as a part of the human species. In estranged labor, nevertheless, “it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life activity, his essential being, a mere means to his existence.” (Marx 76) Capitalism uses much of human consciousness to keep him alive because he realizes that this focus is needed to succeed.

Human beings are social beings and can act together to maintain their power. However, the private ownership and the class divisions, that capitalism creates, destroy this power. Marx believes that species alienation destroys the current relationship to the species by separating and dividing all interactions from the species. The alienation of humans alters the benefits of existence that nature gives to species since it turns individual consciousness and intelligence into isolated physical beings. (Morrison 125) Individuals can organize their production consciously and to balance what they create with societal needs. Nevertheless, under Capitalism, the authoritarian desire for benefit changes this capacity. Therefore, instead of consciously shaping nature, individuals cannot control, or even predict, the consequences of their activities.

## **6. Freud and The Repressed Desires:**

“The motive of human society is in the last resort an economic one.” (Eagleton 131) This statement was made by Freud, not Karl Marx, in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. The need for labor remains the central aspect of human history; and for Freud, the cruel reality of this implies individuals to overcome their desires for enjoyment and gratitude. If they were not obliged to work in order to survive, they might do nothing all day. All humans have to go through this repression, which Freud named the pleasure principle by the reality principle, but for some of the

individuals, and even entire societies, this repression may become extreme and make them sick.

Marx analyzed the effects of the human need to work in terms of the social ties, social classes and types of politics. Freud, however, examines its impact on mental life. The irony or difference behind his work is that we only become who we are through enormous repressions of the aspects we have created. Eagleton writes “One way in which we cope with desires we cannot fulfill is by 'sublimating' them, by which Freud means directing them towards a more socially valued end. We might find an unconscious outlet for sexual frustration in building bridges or cathedrals.” (132) In reality, we are not conscious of this; since the position to which we charge the desires that, we cannot satisfy known as the unconscious. Unlike, for Marx, individuals are usually aware of the social structures that affect their lives.

Each individual is prematurely born. They would die quickly without the care of mature members, usually of their parents. This particularly continuous dependent on parents is primarily of material matter, of being fed and of being prevented from harm. It is a question of satisfying what can be termed ‘instincts’ in order to provide food, comfort, and for the biologically fixed need of human beings. However, one's reliance on the services of the parents is not only biological. The baby sucked the breast of his mother for milk, but found this natural behavior to be pleasant, too; and thus for Freud, that is the first dawn of sexuality. The latter is born as a kind of drive that was initially inseparable from natural instinct but now it has become separate from it and achieved some independence. Thus, the relationship with the mother has gained a new, libidinal dimension. For Freud, sexuality is a manifestation of a natural self-preserving instinct to another goal. (Eagleton 132-133)

The child is not a forward-looking person who can depend on a tough day of work. He is anarchist, sadistic, aggressive, self-involved and pleasure seeker, in line with what Freud terms the principle of pleasure. "If the child is to succeed in life at all, it obviously has to be taken in hand; and the mechanism by which this happens is what Freud famously terms the Oedipus complex." (Eagleton 134) During pre-oedipal stages, the infant is not only anarchical and sadistic but also incestuous, which contributes to an unconscious desire for sexual union with his mother due to close relationships with her body. However, the father's threat of castration is what persuades the child to sacrifice his mother's uncompromising desire. The Father does not have to express it directly, but the boy starts thinking of it as a punishment that imposed on him, by realizing that she is herself castrated. In anxious acceptance, he, therefore, represses his desire, adapts himself to the principle of reality, surrenders himself to the father and separates himself from the mother. Furthermore, he comforts himself to the unconscious relief that though he cannot expect to get his father out and have his mother, his father represents a position he could adopt and accomplish it the future. The child brings peace and identification with his father and thus integrates in the symbolic role of manhood.

The child has become a gendered subject, which overcomes his Oedipus complex but, so to say, has buried his forbidden desire and repressed it into the place we call the unconscious. The latter is not a position, which is prepared to receive such a desire. This act of primary repression creates and develops it. The work of Freud stresses that the Oedipus complex is not just another complex. Eagleton explains, "It is the structure of relations by which we come to be the men and women that we are... It signals the transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle; from the enclosure of the family to society at large..." (135) For Freud, thus, the Oedipus

complex is the cornerstone of morals, conscience, rules, and any social or religious authority. The actual or assumed prohibition on incest from the father applies to all later higher authority. Moreover, when the patriarchal rule interjects, the child begins to shape a fantastic punishing expression of consciousness in it, what Freud terms the superego.

The child establishes an ego or individual identity, a special place in the sexual, familial and social networks. Furthermore, it can only do that by separating the guilty desires and repressing them into the unconscious. The human subject that arises from the Oedipal process is fragmented, ripped desperately between conscious and unconscious, and can always be plagued by the unconscious. (Eagleton 136)

#### **7. The Dream as a Vehicle of Wish Fulfilment:**

Carr (1914) identifies some traits or aspects of dreams. Firstly, dreams arise during sleep in daily experience and are recalled quite incompletely after waking up. Sleep is a physiological condition of the body. The senses motorize the mechanism of the nervous system, on the one hand, it gets impressions on the sense organs, and it initiates movements at the other. Both of them are in abeyance during sleep — we do not experience or do anything. When we dream during sleep, our dream experience does not derive from stimuli that affect us via the sensory organs or from muscle movements. Often a dream consciousness is strong enough to influence the organs of the senses, and then the dream thought will start moving muscles, but when they do, we wake up in ordinary life, and the dream is gone. Secondly, the dream relates to a troubled or unhealthy body state. Dreams can be intense, disturbing and always followed by more or more pain and exhaustion in disrupted circumstances of the body, particularly the disruptions of the digestive tract or sex organs. Thirdly, the dream is the absurdity or inconsistency of its content. The dream does not repeat the

experience, nor does it create an experience as it does in waking life. Both the objects or contents are drawn from experience, but they are altered or deformed at most details. Fourthly, the dream is its clear association to insanity. An insane individual seems to hold his dream awake. To have a consciousness that is mostly a dream consciousness. Although there is a clear contrast between the dream state and the waking state under normal and healthy situations, insanity seems to be associated with physical function followed by the distortion of reality typical of dream consciousness. (322-323)

Freud sets the basis for the way the mind works, with the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900. Unconscious, he claims, plays a significant role in human behaviors, thoughts, and experiences, hidden from the workings of the conscious mind. Freud claims that one way to discover the meaning and operation of the unconscious is through dreams. He believes that humans form themselves and their environment through the connection of the conscious and unconscious. (Bressler 124)

In the human psyche's economic model, Freud presents two new concepts that both define and help control the human psyche: the principle of pleasure and the principle of reality. Freud claims that the principle of pleasure desires just pleasure and that needs immediate fulfillment of instinctual impulses, without realizing the moral and sexual limits of society. Freud calls the instinctual and mental energy cathexes. Its primary objective is to enhance pleasure since the goal of the pleasure principle is to relieve any pain or suffering immediately. The principle of pleasure is usually not allowed to rule openly in the individual's psyche because what Freud terms the anti-cathexes or an anti-charge is kept under control by the principle of reality, that part of the psyche, which recognizes the need for societal rules and

standards on pleasure. Freud believes that both of them are at war in the human psyche. (Bressler 126) The principle of pleasure drives humans to do good deeds, while the principle of reality urges them to find an outlet of this energy elsewhere. However, the desire for pleasure does not disappear, even when it is repressed into work. The unfulfilling desires are stuffed or suppressed into a specific place in the psyche, which Freud defines as the unconscious. Because it includes repressed desires and thoughts that our conscious mind should not want or should not be mindful of, the unconscious is unavailable by definition to the conscious mind. One cannot know what is in his unconscious by thinking about it directly. (Klages 64)

Although the transformation into man or woman can be successful, in Freud's view, each person has stored several unpleasant memories of repressed sexual needs, frustration, rage, and guilt in his or her consciousness. In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud states that the unconscious strives to express its suppressed wishes and desires. (Bressler 129) Klages writes "Often these wishes can't even be expressed directly in consciousness, because they are forbidden, so they come out in dreams – but in strange ways, in ways that often hide or disguise the true (forbidden) wish behind the dream." (64) The dream is usually associated with daytime events. Freud calls this event a 'day residue'. Such events may be significant enough to make the dream comprehensible. Nevertheless, whether it is significant or irrelevant, the day residue is an event related to the individual in some form and reflects a more fundamental internal struggle. (Segal 3)

Freud states that the need to fulfill a repressed wish inspires dreams to occur. Therefore, a dream directly expresses a wish. He, for instance, describes the dream of a young mother, who was isolated from society for weeks as she nursed an infected child. In her dream, she encountered several famous writers and had interesting

discussions with them. (Snowden 55) Dreams, he says, permit the unexpected to arise and put aside the waking life restrictions. Forbidden wishes emerge from the unconscious during sleep where they are usually regulated during waking hours. Freud believes that any dream has significance and that the dream's meaning is the cause of the dream. (63)

Dreamwork uses techniques like displacement, condensation and symbols. Through displacement, for instance, the unconscious will transfer the hate of a person called Mr. Appleby to a rotten apple in a dream. Alternatively, through condensation, the psyche may combine one's anger toward a variety of people and objects into a simple sentence. Nevertheless, the unconscious always maintains its effect on motives and behaviors through means of symbols and images but not explicitly. If some repressed feelings or thoughts which cannot be properly revealed through dreams, jokes or other ways, the ego must take action to prevent outward behavior. In this sense, the ego and id engage in an internal struggle that Freud terms neurosis. Neurosis may manifest multiple physical and psychological disorders from fear of heights to a pounding headache. (Bressler 129-130)

In a dream, a person will get a better picture of what is occurring in himself or of inner fear. He may sense anxiety, dispute or damage of which he is not conscious of in waking life. While dreaming, one is closer to the reality of oneself. There is no need to play a role, and thus, one is freer to express his feelings, conflicts and desires in an artistic form in dreams. Because of this ability of self-expression, the symbols and images in the dream express the essentials. While Freud described the dream as “the royal road to the unconscious”, Horney sees in it “the royal way to the truth of ourselves.” Dreams are attempts to solve people's problems and find neurotic solutions. Dreams may also represent purely imaginary solutions. (Willig 128)

## 8. Existentialism as a Philosophy:

The philosophical nature of existentialism has a long history, which addresses crucial issues of the human being. In the second half of the 20th century, though, it has become a significant movement; the existentialists are not a hesitantly defined homogeneous school.

Several thinkers track existential philosophy back to Soren Kierkegaard. He also revolted against Hegel's philosophy, which was perceived to be the essence of philosophical thinking by the intellectual elite at that period. Kierkegaard, who declared that there is no existential system, criticized Hegel's theory and stated that no method of thinking could ever fully interpret or predict life (Cogswell).

Friedrich Nietzsche was the other most prominent founder of existentialism. Although Nietzsche had separately formed his philosophy from Kierkegaard, his thought appeared strikingly like that of Kierkegaard, yet he was as staunch an atheist as Kierkegaard was a Christian. Both felt that the current religious and philosophical systems were insufficient to meet the new world's spiritual needs.

Karl Jaspers was one of the leading articulators of the twentieth-century existential philosophy. In his book *Man in the Modern Age*, he wrote that despite the modern shift towards a centralized, hierarchical society, the rising existential philosophy reflects modern man's struggle to lead real and meaningful life. Jaspers brought together the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche for the twentieth century and outlined a unified basis of the existential philosophers in his book *Existenzphilosophie*. However, he opposed the name of existentialism when it emerged later in France because it seemed to suggest a school of thought that he viewed as restrictive.

Walter Kauffman selected the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky, whose novels also provided some of the most eloquent declarations in existential philosophy, as his basis in his 1956 book *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*. Kauffman, in his 1959 book *From Shakespeare to Existentialism*, established ancestors to existentialism from the 1500s to Shakespeare.

Yet the diversity expressed in existential traditions is a common thread throughout history, a popular revolt towards conventional philosophy, particularly Hegel's idealist and rationalistic philosophy, and the increasing complexity of philosophy, which had driven it away from the real world's problems throughout centuries.

#### **9. Existentialism As A literary Movement:**

The movement of existentialism greatly affected the world of art, even from its beginning in the nineteenth century. First the novel and then the film each made essential contributions to existential philosophy. Several existential thinkers have indicated that literature is uniquely capable of communicating the core concepts of their philosophy. From this point of view, art appears to serve as a mirror that reflects or diffuses those patterns of thought that pass through it. An existential writer in this context consumes concepts that are then in vogue and reproduces them in literature. The literature in existentialism differs from one author to another and yet still, fair enough similar to identify the same underlying principles.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's books offered a significant number of existential elements so well. His fantastic work transcends societal boundaries and interacts with the problems instilled in all people who live in modern times. *Crime and Punishment* is a significant example of how a part of existential values can be diminished, triggering the spiritual chaos and the destruction of people

Franz Kafka's works have long been linked to the existentialism of the twentieth century. Kafka survived the chaos of the First World War. The death and destruction, which desolated Central and Western Europe without a doubt, affected Kafka's feelings. He never completed a full-length novel, and he is usually famous for his novella *The Metamorphosis*. Franz Kafka, like other existential writers, considered the individual to be enmeshed in complex systems and bureaucracies. Indeed, living became a kind of authority over individual self-governance. The typical reaction to this is to abandon life, yet Kafka presents the scenario with dry humor.

Modernity has modernized everything, including worldwide war, urban chaos, new technologies, and sexual freedom. The novel though, which is inherited by moderns, seems fundamentally traditional mild, stable and inadequate for the stream, chaos and intensity that modern life currently presents. The modernists, thus, sought to make it new by exchanging the novels traditional forms for experimental forms of chaos, confusion, transparency, skepticism, freedom and terror into new ones. The moderns went so far as to question reality itself. The upcoming writers challenged all forms of values, beliefs, and assumptions. It would always open up to new forms in which to see and reflect the universe.

#### **10. Jean-Paul Sartre Philosophy; (The Core of Sartre's Existentialism):**

Sartre's philosophy of existence stems from his new perception of consciousness. Sartre described existentialism briefly as the philosophy, which maintains that existence precedes essence. Therefore, there is no categorical, predetermined, or instinctual human nature that turns men into villains or morons, successes or failures. Instead, men establish their unique natures through their actions and deeds. Furthermore, the essence of an individual becomes drained in acts he has done and does. The belief that existence precedes essence, thus, implies that the self is

the product of its decisions, subject in principle to alteration and development.  
(Natanson 68)

Sartre establishes his argument through the analogy of a triangle and pen; both have a shape, essence or purpose, which precedes their real existence. For instance, it first takes a specific essential shape for an object to become a triangle: it requires three angles, and all angles are 180 degrees. Sartre argues emphatically against Plato and his different successors that this is not the case with humans, whose way of living is different from anything else, which is why humanism stated in his essay title *Existentialism is a Humanism*. To Sartre, human existence precedes existence, i.e. we exist first and then establish our meaning in the way we live.  
(Reynolds 53)

Therefore, this suggestion that we do not enter the world with a fixed self, spirit, or essence goes against the Western philosophical tradition. In his essay *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre examines consciousness using a phenomenological approach. In it, he describes “unreflected consciousness” as thoughts that have no subject. It is the usual way of thinking about things without thinking of ourselves in relation to them. On the other hand, “Reflected consciousness” is thinking that involves us. The “I am” of Descartes’ statement: “I think, therefore I am,” is only present in reflected consciousness. Sartre disagreed with Descartes that thinking proves the thinker's existence. On the contrary, consciousness is “an impersonal spontaneity” continually flowing out of nothing. (Cogswell)

### **10.1. Humanity is Condemned to Be Free:**

Man is not only free, but like Sartre states several times, he is “condemned to be free.” (Kaufmaan 295) It may seem a little contradictory since he says that it is

human existence that initiates value in the world, but Sartre means that even though we want, we cannot abandon this freedom.

Reynolds claims that despite the assertion of our radical freedom, Sartre does not forget that we are born in a situation with some physical and social circumstances. (56) We might be sick, oppressed, enslaved, or in any other situation. According to Sartre, without a context, we cannot have the freedom, and we can always rebel against this oppression and strive to interpret it in different ways. Although we are being tortured, for example,

Sartre argues that we still have several different possible modes of action open to us. For example, we may want to immerse ourselves completely in our pain and, indeed, consider ourselves as nothing but this pain. On the contrary, we may also attempt to ignore this pain and look defiantly into the eyes of our persecutor, and there are innumerable other examples of the different ways we can behave in such a situation. (ibid)

For Sartre, the situation we encounter does not restrict our freedom but, according to his definition of freedom, actually provides the context in which we can exercise freedom. Freedom then is absolute. It cannot be undermined or restricted. Furthermore, we cannot gain or lose our freedom because it is the cornerstone of human existence.

Sartre claims that humanity comprises mainly of two aspects that are distinct but often inseparable. First, facticity, i.e. such as the individual's past, biology, properties, and the society he belongs, including our social condition and the physical circumstances. Second, the individual's freedom to reject and even perceive this facticity, which he otherwise defines as his transcendence. It is part of one's facticity to be born into a particular society, with specific physical and social traits, which he

did not choose. However, for Sartre, human existence always transcends or negates beyond these facts about one's conditions. The essential claim of Sartre is that human consciousness operates by negating such facts. In other words, a person is not just the total of his previous accomplishments, not just a specific work or role that he fulfils. For Sartre, any human being is always looking for and planning future goals, and this we can achieve this only if we negating what exists. (Reylonds 57-58)

### **10.2. Being-for-Itself and Being-in-Itself:**

Sartre claims that the existence of humankind includes two basic types: being-for-itself and being-in-itself.

Being-for-itself, as the name implies, means self-reflective beings, but cannot be confined to reflective consciousness alone. Instead, the 'for-itself' suggests to all consciousness. Sartre indicated that the essence of the "for-itself" is freedom, and it performs by negating the 'in-itself'. In his own words, the 'for-itself' declares itself always not to be the 'in-itself'. It is not a substantial being and only exists by realizing what it is not, through judging other beings. The for-itself transcends exist and negates one's facticity. Since consciousness only occurs by negating the in-itself and facticity, the consciousness always and inevitably lies in terms of its being in the world. On the other hand, Being-in-itself implies to objects and more generally all that is not consciousness. A tree, for example, does not have the freedom of choice because it must fulfill its existence according to its nature. These objects have no awareness of or value for themselves.

The being-in-itself refers to the being of objects, that is, to their essences, which are fixed and hence are neither active nor passive. The being-for-itself refers to the being of individuals and their existence. Man defines his essence and gives meaning to his existence through the choices he makes. Therefore, while the being-

in-itself is the principle of objectivity or facticity, the being-for-itself stands for the principle of subjectivity or consciousness.

However, Sartre states that man is both in-itself and for-itself. Therefore, there is uncertainty surrounding man's being. It involves both facticity and freedom. Men are both physical objects—and hence Being-in-itself—and self-consciousnesses—and hence Being-for-itself. Nevertheless, the fact that the being of man is always a subject, and never an object affirms that man is essentially different kind of being (Nellickappilly).

### **10.3. Authentic Existence in Sartre:**

Authenticity—in German, *Eigentlichkeit*—terms that attitude in which one engages in his projects as his own. What that implies may be illustrated by bringing moral evaluations into consideration. According to Kant, if one act in accord with duty, for the sake of duty, he is, therefore, acting morally. However, existentially, his moral act is inauthentic if, in holding his promise for the sake of duty, one does so because that is what one does or what 'moral people' do. Nevertheless, he can do that authentically if acting this way is what he chooses as his own, to which, aside from its social sanction, he commits himself. Similarly, he may be a product of one's viewpoint to 'do what one does,' or what it feels 'right' about things and betaking himself inappropriate ways as one is expected to do. Such a character may also represent, however, the choice he made to be an individual of this kind. In both cases, he was good, but he managed to be himself only in the latter case. (Crowell)

The concept of authenticity then applies to a sort of 'transparency' concerning the individual's situation. It is a recognition that an individual can be responsible for being for who he is. Authenticity, thus, indicates a kind of integrity, in which there is no pre-given identity waiting to be identified, but that of a project to

which the individual can commit himself and thus become what it entails. On the other hand, inauthentic life is one without any integrity in which the person allows the world to determine his life project. In committing to a particular way of being in the world, one creates for himself the authority on the role he comes to adopt. In contrast, the inauthentic individual merely performs such a role and can do so without any commitment. (ibid)

Sartre's inescapability of freedom does not imply that any individual can choose whatever he wishes. He believes that, as it defines the essence of man being, freedom is inescapable. He writes, "Man is free because he is not himself but presence himself." (568) Therefore, such inescapability suggests that man have to make actions with responsibility. If people are free to make choices in their lives, they are also responsible for their choices. Freedom, thus, is linked to the possibility of authentic or valid human life. It is not what man chooses that is essential, but how he chooses. Therefore, one has to understand and take responsibility for the inescapability of freedom to have an authentic life.

Therefore, it is a challenge to live authentically. It is to exist with the knowledge that human freedom is limitless, and people have no choice but to make personal decisions. In the absence of transcendental norms and orders, anguish emerges, and this must be accepted as a reality since it belongs to the human condition in existence. People must behave based on their decisions and must not blame external factors or conditions. They must be responsible for choosing them as they are free individuals. Sartre writes in his work *Anti-Semite and Jew* "Authenticity, it is almost needless to say, consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate." (65)

Inauthenticity, thus, involves acting to be anything than oneself; thus, abandon the freedom to create, express, and accomplish one's self. Socio-cultural forces, including family pressure and advertisement, often reinforce inauthenticity. Furthermore, the latter is motivated by the desire to fit in, avoid criticism and reduce or remove the existential anxiety of choice and responsibility. Such as the person who is interested in something just because others do, and the person who get married because he reached his thirties.

#### **10.4. Bad Faith:**

Sartre claims that facticity and transcendence are two significant experiential aspects that make human condition fundamentally vague. One can take his weight as an object of his consideration. Therefore, this person is his weight from the point of view of facticity and not his weight from the viewpoint of transcendence. In the latter, one divides him into two: the inner eye that looks at facticity; and the facticity that is unlike with the inner eye. In short, transcendence refers to how a person experiences and lives facticities, explains them in one form or another or even creates projects about them. (Kadirov and Varey 4)

Bad faith happens when a person accepts only one aspect of his situation, either facticity or transcendence, and ignores the other. Sometimes constant switching between these two may occur. Ironically, an individual in such circumstances would not face any contradiction or controversy. Therefore, Sartre describes bad faith as self-deception. Bad faith may arise, for instance, when a person performs his facticity and rejects transcendence. (ibid) The famous example given by Sartre is of a waiter in the café:

His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a

little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually reestablishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behavior seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. (59)

The waiter becomes engaged in his facticity, i.e. being a waiter. As a free individual, he has several choices to use his freedom, not solely determined by the role. However, he limits himself to the role that he has and can even justify why he can only be (viewed) a waiter. People's life is mostly bound to follow particular processes through the laws and regulations established by systems and so that they cannot move beyond normality. The daily activities of the individuals conform to the way they act, and this is demonstrated by performing those habits in a way that make them seem normal. Therefore, the waiter is acting as an automaton whose essence is to be a waiter. He has another life, which he does not live in falsehood, but due to the nature of the environment that is being-in-itself since he is under the mercy of the employer. However, to play the role of being a waiter he must be conscious at some point, that in reality, he is not a waiter but a conscious individual, who deceives himself to be a waiter.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre makes it clear that there are two fundamental ways of being in bad faith. The first way is to reject one's freedom

(transcendence) and believe that he has no alternative but to accept certain circumstances. One may convince himself in a club, for instance, that he should fight the person who humiliated him. This would be bad faith for Sartre because he is never forced. It is his decision if he responds with violence, and he must take responsibility for that. An individual is also in bad faith if he associates with his possessions or any other aspect of his facticity. If a person thinks that he is superior to anyone else solely because he is wearing the right outfit, listening to specific songs, being powerful in society or having much wealth, he, thus, identifies with his possessions and his facticity. If one accepts his identity as given by his situation or his previous choice, then he is in bad faith. Identity is never given but always has to be constructed in the actions of the individual and not in his situations. Any attempt to fully situate himself in his facticity is in bad faith, as is every attempt to assert his free transcendence. (Reynolds 73)

### **10.5. Absurdity:**

In its basic sense, the term 'absurd' can apply to what is meaningless. Hausman states that the lack of meaning is in a variety of conditions. For example, it may happen as an unpredicted contrary to normal behavior, like a man laughing at the loss of his mother. It can be contrary to regularities in phenomena like raining from a cloudless sky. Hausman says that instances of absurdity may prompt a variety of responses. For instance, absurdity might seem foolish, thus provoking laughter. It may provoke terror, as in incongruity in threatening experience. It may also give a view into man's relation to the world. (126)

The conditions of fundamental absurdity became the interest of authors who talked explicitly about absurdity in the sense of human existence. Sartre's novel *Nausea* contains vivid presentations of the awareness of absurdity, moments when the

logic we attribute to it day-to-day becomes unavailable, showing things to be highly contingent, absurd and frightening. Roquentin recognizes existence as contingent. “In philosophy contingency is contrasted with necessity. If something exists contingently then it exists but it is possible that it should not have existed: It is but it might not have been.” (Priest 22) Sartre reveals the inherent meaningless and useless nature of existence, however cruel and oppressive.

The French existentialist philosopher is an atheist. For him, since the world is not ruled by a divine entity, but rather by irrational forces, no values, moral or otherwise, can exist in the universe outside us. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre speaks of the absolute contingency of human reality saying “Absurd. That which is meaningless. Thus man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no external justification.” (799) In such an absurd universe, people constantly struggle to extract meaning, value, and justification from the relationships between inanimate matter (being-in-itself) and consciousness (being-for-itself). Therefore, Sartre writes, “Our point of departure is, indeed, the subjectivity of the individual.” (302) Since human existence is absurd, Sartre states, “it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist.” (310) Man is a project, which maintains a personal life. Nothing exists before that self-projection. Man can only attain existence when he proposes to be, not what he may wish to be.

Sartre claims, “Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is.” (300) He differentiates clearly between being and existence. One claims to be when one chooses to act, and if one chooses not to act, he only exists.

## 11. Conclusion:

If we want to obtain a detailed and consistent interpretation of the human condition in an era of highly limited knowledge and scattered viewpoints, we somehow have to put together the sociological, psychological and philosophical dimensions of human behavior, perception and existence systematically and coherently. Moreover, in fact, without first settling our accounts with Marx, Freud and Sartre it is hard even to make sense of an attempt to do it. Moreover, it is not surprising that as we refer to the texts of Marx, Freud and Sartre, we know much about ourselves than we do learn from them.

While Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* clearly seems to be only a simple story of a travelling salesman turning into a giant insect, but there is a vast mass of meanings underneath the iceberg. Still, the novella cannot help but contain the elements of Marxism's philosophy. The *Metamorphosis*, also, embraces Freud's theory of dream. Kafka's innovative work reveals the unconscious workings of Gregor's mind. The *Metamorphosis* is a layering of Jaun Paul Sartre existential and anti-existential notions, quotations and messages. Franz Kafka manages to fit a lot of confusion into the forty-some pages of *The Metamorphosis*. Therefore, understanding Jaun Paul Sartre's existentialism is beneficial to the reader to better understand the messages within the story.

This research aim at analyzing the absurdity of being reflected in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The main character Gregor Samsa encounters all factors that render him the absurdity of being, beginning with his transformation and followed by factors that affect his life. In addition to the factors of his transformation, the researcher will examine the causes of the absurdity of being in Gregor's life from Sartre's philosophical point of view about existence. All in all, the main aim of this

research is to prove how Gregor's life represent the meaningless life of the modern man, in other words how the modern man sees himself and his life through the lenses of Gregor's life.

## **Chapter Two: Interpretations of Gregor's Transformation**

## 1. Introduction:

Writing in German, Franz Kafka spent his life in total literary darkness. He was a worker at a state insurance bureau in his native city, Prague, for as long as his fragile health permitted. Kafka had studied law but became a bureaucrat by career. He had troubled relationships with his family and women. He died before his creativity could truly bloom, and became merely an ambiguous footnote in the context of German-speaking literature for decades after he passed away. (Sutherland 216)

Kafka's most famous novel, *The Metamorphosis*, opens with one of modern literature's most surprising and praised opening sentences: "When Gregor Samsa woke one morning from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed right there in his bed into some sort of monstrous insect." (21) Gregor Samsa is a traveling salesman, who has led a life of blind service to others: service to society, family and work. This strange transformation is merely a creative way to serve as the basis and background for other actions and other metamorphoses within his family and society. Overall, Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* attempts to present the readers with various interpretations and meanings. However, in this research, the researcher will interpret the novella using on Marx's Theory of Alienation, Freud's Interpretation of Dreams and Sartre's Philosophy of Existence.

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* brings up many important questions, such as "What might have caused Gregor's transformation?" "How does this alter relationships and the family dynamic?" "Other than the obvious human-to-insect metamorphosis, how does Gregor's identity change through the novella?" Is he at the end who he was at the beginning? If not, who/what is responsible for this change?."

The second chapter will interpret and analyze the factors that lead to Gregor's transformation from Marxist and Freudian perspectives. In other words, the way that

labor under Capitalism system alienated Gregor from his human nature and the way Gregor's suppressed wishes and desires embodied into his transformation in dream form. Also, the second chapter is an examination of Gregor's life through the lens of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy, through analyzing some of Sartre's principals such as Freedom, Authentic existence.

## **2. A Marxist Metamorphosis:**

During the rise of capitalism, many people moved to the rapidly growing cities to work in the new factories. Many aspects of human life were impacted. Consequently, major social inequalities surfaced by a separation between those who controlled the means of production and the workers. By integrating differences between various jobs, the labor division has created and intensified social inequalities, divided to serve the strongest at the expense of the weakest.

In the novella, Gregor Samsa, the protagonist, signifies the proletariat, "By proletariat, the class of modern wage laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live." (Marx & Engels 209) Gregor knows that his only means to survive is to work, though his job offers no value than a small pay-check. His economic necessity is the reason that keeps him going to work every day. Throughout Gregor's life, there is a conflict between his human desire to work in order to support himself and the economic pressures that alienate him from his job by pressuring him to work for another.

On the other hand, there is his manager, a typical member of the bourgeoisie or "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor." (ibid) The unnamed manager is described as controlling, arrogant, and emotionless. The fact that he is not given a name by Kafka signifies his

lack of humanity. He behaves as if by virtue of his advanced economic status he is superior to the workers. He only cares about the production of his workers.

In a society where financial properties are prioritized over the human experience, workers are exploited to provide for others, creating a struggle between the upper and lower classes. Once the manager found Gregor transformed, he left the house and never returned or sent any word to the family. An obvious interpretation of this is that he was afraid of Gregor's insect form. However, realizing that Gregor cannot work, he decided that Gregor had no value, and thus he abandoned him. To the bourgeoisie, the workers are worth nothing more than their labour. Hence, Gregor is worthless and expendable without any labour to offer. Throughout his life, Gregor's only function is as a worker. Without a human form, this function can no longer be fulfilled. Therefore, the manager no longer has any reason for a relationship with Gregor.

When labor becomes, only a way to preserve life; thus, for Marx, is a denial of human nature. As a result, alienation is widespread;

In a world of advanced division of labor, of private ownership of the materials, instruments, and products of labor, of institutions and ideologies, of having and ruling, alienation is generalized: not only the worker who sells his labor but also the employer who appropriates the product of another man's work and the merchant who takes the commodity to market, the "haves" and the "have-nots," the rulers and the ruled, are, In such a world, alienated from their work, from others and from themselves. In many ways it is a world upside down, where objects, appropriated by man, acquire the crazy power of owning men. (Fischer 62)

To maintain their position, capitalists must extract as much as possible from their workers. This is often through exploitation via low wages, hazardous circumstances, and long working hours. Workers must retain it, though, because they must earn a living to support their families. Attempts to demand more from their bosses were often met with resistance and sometimes wage cuts. Gregor is the ideal example of Marx's theory of alienation. He is alienated from his labour and the product he works to make because he does not own it, which causes him to be alienated from his surroundings as well as from his human nature.

### **2.1. Gregor's Alienation From His Productive Activity and Product:**

When reading about Gregor Samsa's life before the metamorphosis, one learns, from his recollections and reflections, that his job is unbearable. As a travelling salesman, Gregor reflects on his life saying "Day in and day out on the road...I have the agony of traveling itself to contend with: worrying about train connections, the irregular, unpalatable meals, and human intercourse that is constantly changing, never developing the least constancy or warmth." (Kafka 23) His use of the words, 'agony,' 'worrying,' and 'never developing' to describe his job demonstrate his dissatisfaction with his daily work. Later, readers find that Gregor is forced into his labor to help his family and settle his father's debt from a failed business. For Marx, human beings become truly human only when labour is engaged in for its own sake. However, when labor is just forced by economic need, the worker is not only alienated from himself as an individual but also from his humanity. (Sokel 486) Due to the nature of his work, Gregor has become alienated from himself and his humanity, by metamorphosing into giant insect. If it were not to pay his parents' debt, he would have quit his job "long ago." (Kafka 24)

Marx states, in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts 1844*, that animals are also producers. They construct for themselves nests, homes, like the bees and ants. However, an animal only produces under an immediate physical necessity, whereas man produces even when he does not have any physical need and produces because he feels free to produce, thus he is humanly creative. (77) Gregor's new body represents the role which his work requires, an insect working for the good of the system in which he functions. His alienated labour leads to a change in his human and animal functions. Gregor live like an ant or a bee, eating, drinking and producing. He, also, works like them, performing a small and precise task for the sake of its society. However and most importantly, Gregor has lost, what Marx thinks distinguish him as a human being, the control over his life activity in making it as an object of his will and consciousness. Thus, he embodies a mentality of insects that capitalism forces into his mind. The worker, in capitalism system, becomes a commodity used to bring value to a product, thereby sacrificing his humanity.

Marx's theory of human self-alienation includes any labour in which one works merely for the salary or the income it brings, not necessary a factory work. The labor that fails to involve the labourer's creative need and ambition dehumanizes him. (Sokel 486) Although Gregor is not a factory worker, he does not produce a commodity; the service he provides, as a travelling salesman, is not directly beneficial to him. Gregor is serving as a mere machine in fulfilling his boss's desires. The manager becomes worried about his lost work, rather than worrying about Gregor's health as he metamorphosed. Despite his long years of service, Gregor had never stopped working when ill, fearing to be labeled as a lazy employee.

The ones that get sick, for the capitalist, are "healthy individuals unwilling to work." (Kafka 25) Gregor's labour does not require any creativity, ambition, or

interest. It is just daily repetitive task. Although Samsa is no more in human form and physique yet his manager, representing the bourgeoisie, is not ready to accept his condition. He suspects Gregor and other salesmen of making lame excuses, believing they cannot fall sick at all. Even if they do, he considers them strong and flexible enough that even despite being ill, they can continue working. The capitalists are not willing to neither understand nor accept that workers too can fall ill and have health or other problems. Every laborer has to work with maximum effort, even if they are physically or mentally stressed. Every laborer must work devotedly and diligently in all circumstances, because in case of any lapse of omission or commission, they run the risk of expulsion from work or of reduction in their wages.

Marx also, in his *The German Ideology* 1845, distinguishes men from animals by consciousness, religion and so on. Once they start creating their means of life, they start separating themselves from animals, a step defined by their physical organization. Through creating their livelihoods, people produce their real material life indirectly. This is not the case of Gregor. He does not perform or participate in any religious rituals, political events or artistic activities. He does nothing for entertainment and does not have any friends. He lives in hotel rooms, eats terrible food and is constantly anxious much like a worthless bug. As Gregor's mother says "The office is the only thing that boy ever thinks of." (Kafka 34)

Gregor's labor is not only alien to his interests but also the money it offers him does not belong to him. His labour does not serve his existence. It belongs to and serves another, his father. The latter is the benefiter and exploiter of Gregor's labour. The product of this work is Gregor's income. The latter belongs to the father who does not work himself, but benefits and control Gregor's income, "the money Gregor had brought home each month\_he only ever kept a few gulden for himself\_had not yet

been entirely used up and had grown into a small capital.” (Kafka 65) Marx 1844 states that the animal's product directly belongs to its physical body, while man freely approaches his product. (77) From Gregor's labour, the father had appropriated the benefits and formed with it his small ‘capital’. The product of the worker's labor becomes alienated from him since he has to give it to the capitalist, the father. The latter provides the worker, Gregor, with what he barely needs to survive and preserves most of the share for himself.

Gregor is alienated from himself even before he cannot work anymore, but more because of his lack of interest in his work. Gregor's labour was out of an economic necessity, in other words, imposed on him to help his parents. In addition to that, the fruit of his labour is alienated from him, exploited by his father. Gregor has no religious, political or even artistic interests or activities. He does not create his livelihood but the latter is created for him, or imposed on him. All this has led to his dehumanization which embodied in his metamorphosis into a giant insect.

## **2.2. Gregor's Alienation From His Surroundings:**

Samsa is a product. He is a tool to raise money for his parents on one side and a resource for the business to serve commercial objectives on the other. It only shows that Samsa is not a human being, but a mere production machine for his boss and family. Therefore the alienated worker, Gregor, have undergone the process of reification, a term used in Marx's major works. Barry explains it as follows “It concerns the way, when capitalist goals and questions of profits and loss are paramount, workers are bereft of their full humanity and are thought as ‘hands’ or ‘the labour force’, so that for instance, the effects of industrial closers are calculated in purely economic terms. People, in a word, become things.” (151) In other words, according to Marx, reification takes place when an individual is 'made into an object';

thus, an individual is merely a thing in this situation. Gregor's family view him as the breadwinner in the house and, in this context, the family replaced this feature of the son with other aspects of the relationships that are mainly economic.

Marx states, in his *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, “The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.” (212) Once he metamorphosed, the family had to abandon Gregor because of social circumstances. When his family has to work to gain a salary, they become too drained to have much empathy for Gregor. “They were fulfilling to the utmost the demands the world makes on the poor: Gregor's father fetched breakfast for the petty employees at the bank, his mother sacrificed herself for the underclothes of strangers, his sister ran back and forth behind the shop counter at her customer's behest, but this was all the strength they had.” (Kafka 90)

Grete, his sister, is kind to Gregor right after the metamorphosis. She gives him food and cleans his room on a daily basis, despite his quite hideous nonhuman appearance. His mother, on the other hand, feels empathy for him in the beginning when saying, “Let me go to Gregor, he is my unhappy son! Can't you understand that I must go to him?.” (Kafka 70) She also kept hoping that Gregor would return the way he were one day, thus she tells Grete:

...and is it not as if by removing the furniture we would be showing that we are giving up all hope of a cure and ruthlessly abandoning him to his own devices? I think it would be best if we try to keep the room in precisely the same state it was in before, so that when Gregor returns to us he will find everything unchanged, which will make it that much easier for him to forget all that has happened in the meantime. (Kafka 73)

However, as times goes by, without any financial help from Gregor, his mother's and sister's affection slowly disappears. Later, Grete does not care what food her brother can eat anymore. She "would quickly thrust some randomly chosen foodstuff into his room with her foot on her way to work in the morning or at midday." (Kafka 91) In the evening, she removes it, without caring, whether he consumed it or not. Finally, Grete says to her father, "We have to get rid of it," (Kafka 105) and "It has to go," referring to Gregor. (Kafka 106) His sister is so insensitive to her brother that she calls him an 'it.' Then, she says "But how could it be Gregor? If it were Gregor, it would have realized a long time ago that it just isn't possible for human beings to live beside such creature, and it would have gone away on its own." (Kafka 107), this shows that she believes that the bug is not her brother but an insect. His mother "lay in her armchair, her extended legs pressed together, barely able to keep her eyes open in her exhaustion..." (Kafka 108) Thus, Gregor stopped to exist as a person when he becomes unable to work. As the relationship of the family was always dependent on shared salaries, the lack of these salaries has also destroyed the relationship. Since he is not working, Grete suggests that the best thing Gregor should do was abandon the family, so that he would not be a financial burden.

Gregor's process of reification occurs in two levels. Firstly, it is present at the external level, where Samsa's family has transformed him into an object to gain money and to live in society. Secondly, at the internal level, Gregor accepted being under reification. "... Gregor later earned so much money that he was in a position to cover the expenses for the entire family, which he then did. All had grown accustomed to this arrangement, not just the family but Gregor as well: they gratefully accepted the money, and he was happy to provide it..." (Kafka 63) Later, he feels helpless as a person not to gain any more for his family, to see the hopes of his sister

shattered and the suffering of his parents triggered by his sudden transformation. He eventually became a huge burden, not only for his family but even for himself as soon as he was unable to work for the family. "...mulling over his worries and indistinct hopes, which however all led to the conclusion that, for the time being, he should behave calmly and by employing patience and the utmost consideration, assist his family in enduring the inconveniences his current state inevitably forced him to impose on them." (Kafka 56)

While the main events in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* cannot happen in the real world, it depicts the truest scenario of the situation in which a family can abandon their son, the worker, after being unable to work and help them financially. All the points above imply that the capitalist system leaves the individual with no options but to abandon his job or die with a burden that is not acknowledged or at least proposed a solution to the individual's closest family. The class system has transformed the family into an institution in which personal and social relations endure a process of reification. Economics has destroyed all personal and emotional relations. The *Metamorphosis* shows how the intense nature of labour can remove individuals' capacity and desire to have empathy towards each other.

### **2.3. Gregor's Alienation From His Species:**

Ollman explains Species as "the category of the possible, denoting in particular those potentialities which mark man off from other living creatures." (150) Marx makes several comparisons between humans and animals in his attempt to explain species alienation.

Productive activity is the central way of expressing and developing personal power. It is distinguished from animal activity by its variety, flexibility, skills, and strength. However, since labor under capitalism is coercive, obligatory and

unrelatable to individual desires or interests, the worker's labor "turns for him the life of the species into a means of individual life. (Marx 76) Gregor's work, as a salesman, under capitalism, is coercive and obligatory, since he is working to pay his father's debts. His boss, the capitalist, controls and determines the nature of his work, its frequency, duration, the circumstances, and, most significantly, whether it will be performed or not. The way that Gregor describes his job as "Day in and day out on the road... traveling... to contend with: worrying about train connections, the irregular, unpalatable meals, and human intercourse that is constantly changing, never developing the least constancy or warmth." (Kafka 23) shows that he has no control over these circumstances. He has to work the way, time and place his boss wants.

Gregor's work gives no good reflection of the functioning of his powers. It is a way to stay alive, not a chance to do work. Thus, he works for operative purposes and not for engaging in productive activity. Gregor's creativity is lost or destroyed. Because his work does not encourage and inspire him, but instead consumes his energy and makes him feel exhausted. Instead of Gregor's work to be a free manifestation and enjoyment of his life, it is an alienation of life. He works to live and to obtain for himself the means of living.

When the capitalist appropriates the product of the worker's labor, Marx 1844 states that the worker's "transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him." (77) Gregor's advantages over animals become disadvantages because the salary with which he is connected becomes the property of another one, his father. Gregor's alienation from his product, his salary, is the reason why his humanistic nature has been taken away from him, which resulted in his metamorphosis into a giant bug.

Gregor's alienation from his human nature can also be seen in the way he thinks. Marx 1844 says, "The consciousness which man has of his species is thus transformed by estrangement in such a way that the species life becomes for him a means." (77) As a part of the human species, Gregor can know and maintain the freedom to choose, prepare, and provide for the skills and knowledge essential to do his job. However, Gregor's alienation transformed his consciousness. The latter in capitalism is used only to keep him alive. Gregor views his species life, his productive life, only as a means of survival. Instead of relating to his productive activity to be a representation of his life in its meaning and purposes, he refers to it in a material relationship.

Marx claims that species alienation breaks the existing relationship of the species by splitting all relations and dividing them from the species. (Morrison 125) Personal and social relations in *The Metamorphosis* are mainly materialistic relations. After Gregor's metamorphosis, his boss considers him as an expired machine, which is no longer beneficial. His family consider him as a burden that they cannot live with, his sister says "it just isn't possible for human beings to live beside such creature." (Kafka 107) Gregor's family relations are based solely on money or salary. As Gregor becomes unable to work and support his family financially, they abandoned him and consider him a burden. The lack of Gregor's salary has also destroyed all his personal and emotional relations with the family.

In conclusion, the restricted nature of Gregor's labor under capitalism, the appropriation of his product and the materialistic relationship with his productive life and surroundings all contributed to his alienation from his species.

### 3. A Freudian Metamorphosis:

Freud proposes two different processes to govern regular human behavior. Firstly, the pleasure principle encourages individuals to fulfill their desires and wishes instantly. In the novella, Gregor desires to quit his job and remove all pressure his role in the family requires; he also wishes to humiliate his boss. Second, the principle of reality contains conscious and rational thoughts, which enables individuals to withhold satisfaction and persist with daily life. (Snowden 75) However, in reality Samsa cannot express or fulfill his wishes and desires because he is afraid of losing his job and his family's respect as well. Kafka attempts to connect reality and dream into a new reality. Kafka's story portrays the decay of reality, vanishing of the borders between dreams and reality, possible and impossible, leading to the magical experience of reality.

The pleasure principle makes us want to do things that feel good, while the reality principle tells us to channel that energy elsewhere. But the desire for pleasure doesn't disappear, even when it's sublimated into work. The desires that can't be fulfilled are packed, or repressed, into a particular place in the mind, which Freud labels the unconscious. (Klages 64)

One way of approaching the unconscious is through dreams. Freud, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, states that dreams are 'symbolic fulfillments' of repressed unfulfilled wishes. These wishes are often expressed in ways that the real (forbidden) desire behind the dream is hidden or altered.

*The Metamorphosis* symbolizes Gregor's unconscious world. The story opens with, "When Gregor Samsa woke one morning from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed right there in bed into some sort of monstrous insect." (Kafka 21) According to the words "woke," "dreams" and "bed," Gregor can be said to be

awakening, but indeed, by that awakening, he transitions from the conscious to the unconscious world, which is of the world of dream. In the latter he expresses his unfulfilled desires and wishes.

Gregor does not like his job. Thus, he lives a life of unexpressed dissatisfaction and suppression. According to Gregor's bitter thoughts throughout the story, through his entire life as a human, he is mistreated and unappreciated. His father, in his words, appears arrogant and he views him very distantly. His father was previously unsuccessful as a businessman. He is in debt to a man, so rather than trying to solve his failure and fix his mistake, he leaves his son, as it seems, with no alternative but having to work as a traveling salesman against his will. Gregor works solely to pay back his father's debt and to support his family, who otherwise cannot provide for themselves. His father and the family expectations cause Gregor to repress many desires and feelings before he gets the chance to see what he might achieve for himself out in the world.

Gregor seems to be frustrating in his workplace. Although he never skipped a day of work, when he is late the chief clerk, who is the boss's underlying, visits to check on him and threatens his job saying "In short: your productivity of late has been highly unsatisfactory; admittedly this is not the best season for drumming up business at all is drummed up is something that does not, and indeed may not exist, Herr Samsa." (Kafka 37) Gregor spends a significant amount of time in the morning, reflecting on how miserable his work and boss are, and how despised he wakes up and has to share the day with them. In his view, he believes that the boss has constructed and placed himself on a higher level than the others, thus abuse everyone around him. This is a clear cause of frustration and anger for Gregor. He says;

If I didn't have to hold back for my parent's sake, I'd have given notice long ago I'd have marched right up to him and given him a piece of my mind. He'd have fallen right off his desk! And what an odd custom that is: perching high up atop one's elevated desk and from this considerable height addressing one's employee down below, especially as the latter is obliged to stand quite close because his boss is hard of hearing. (Kafka 24-25)

Due to his inability to choose aspects of his life, Gregor is unable to express discontent and frustration with any part of his life, so it suppresses inside of him. He grieves internally but does not want to talk about it loud, perhaps out of concern to lose his work and his family's respect. However, since he becomes a bug, he cannot justify and explain his actions verbally. Thus, it is only with and after the transformation that his emotions seek a way out.

Due to the capitalist system, Gregor's work resulted in the suppression of unexpressed feelings and desires, such as hate, frustration and rebellion. Thus, it can be argued that these unexpressed desires are the reason for his transformation to an insect. In his unconscious world, Gregor succeeds in fulfilling his desires or wishes to rebel against the capitalist system, quit his job and free himself from the family's responsibility. Hence, by transforming into an insect, he is unable to contribute in any way to the capitalist institution, to perform the job he despises, and to fulfill his high pressured role as the breadwinner of the family. Gregor expresses his repressed hate and rebellion in a bodily shape.

Why oh why was Gregor condemned to serve in a firm where even the most negligible falling short was enough to arouse the greatest possible suspicion? Was every last one of the firm's employees a scoundrel... who would be driven mad by pangs of conscience should he fail to make the best possible

use of even just few morning hours for his employer's benefit, such that his guilt would render him virtually incapable of rising from his bed?. (Kafka 32)

In the above passage, Gregor reflects on the system of exploitation, of which he is a slave. By these questions, which follow his metamorphosis, he thinks of his inner self, who, without his permission, has opted to transform into something more than a human being. The latter has the potential to be productive, and Samsa turning into a vermin is an apparent revolt against the capitalist system, if adequately considered. While Gregor's metamorphosis is somewhat random and beyond his control, it is possible to assume that he becomes an insect because it is the most useless animal and, therefore, a reaction to his profound repression during his working years.

When Gregor metamorphosed, the chief clerk visits him in the house to know the reason behind his lateness. At first, he feels intense anger toward the visit of the chief clerk. Gregor thinks to himself:

Would it really not have sufficed to send an apprentice to inquire if indeed such inquiries were necessary at all did the general manager have to come in person, and it was necessary to demonstrate to the entire innocent family that the investigation of this suspicious matter could be entrusted only to the general manager's sharp intellect?. (Kafka 32)

Then he thinks that the chief clerk himself might be changed into a bug someday. "Gregor tried to imagine whether anything like he was now experiencing could ever befall the general manager..." (Kafka 33) This thought reflects his previous wish to see the manager drop from his high seat. In both cases, Gregor imagines his superior, the capitalist, humiliated.

While the chief clerk comes suspicious, he slowly withdraws with terror and disgust after finding Gregor at last in his new shape. Since Gregor metamorphosis into a bug, he becomes unable to explain his misinterpreted actions with words. Thus, this allows him to free his unconscious thoughts and desires by intimidating the chief clerk who represented most of his feelings of anger and frustration. Clearly, it is not the chief himself whom Gregor intimidates, but the second in charge. Though, the change of targets does not matter that much because he despises the chief clerk for the same cruel arrogance.

All in all, Gregor's metamorphosis can be an expression to the hate and anger that he shares for the capitalists and a fulfillment to his wish to rebel against them and humiliate them. As well, it is a wish fulfillment to escape the pressure and the responsibility of his family, by being a useless insect and thus unable to work.

#### **4. Sartre's Existential Metamorphosis:**

Sartre focuses on the freedom of choice, as well as the idea that people exist first before they can have any values or essence. *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka presents Gregor Samsa's struggle against Sartre's existentialist principles, in which he denies the freedom Sartre condemned him to have, and instead lives with his facticity (being-in-itself).

##### **4.1. Gregor's being in-itself:**

Being in-itself is the world of physical objects, a set and static world, in which objects have an essence, that is, a specific function. In contrast, being for-itself applies to the world of existence. The man is a being in-itself, a free being thrown into the world, without fault and he is bound to create his path. Sartre asserts that man is both a being in-itself and for-itself. Man is a physical object brought into the world—and hence Being-in-itself—and a consciousness being aware of his freedom to decide

and choose—and hence Being-for-itself. (Nellickappilly) Therefore, man involves both freedom and facticity. The latter is a sum of facts that concern the individual, such as social condition and the physical circumstances. Gregor is an object brought into the world with facticity, such as his social and economic conditions. In addition, he is a conscious being with the freedom to decide what it is and what to make itself.

Sartre states, in his lecture *Existentialism is Humanism*, that “man is condemned to be free.” (295) For him, freedom then is absolute. Gregor struggled between his freedom and the responsibility and demands society and his family imposed on him. However, Sartre explains, in his *Being and nothingness*, “Freedom has no essence. It is not subject to any logical necessity.” (565) Thus, Gregor’s freedom cannot be restricted by any situation he encounters. However, though other members of Gregor’s family have the ability to work, yet none of them do, and Gregor chooses to self-sacrifice, to work and to support his family members. He thinks of his father before and after the metamorphosis as;

The same man who used to lie wearily entombed in his bed when Gregor set off on business trip; who would greet him on the evening of his return sitting in an armchair in his nightshirt; who incapable of rising, would merely raise his arms to signify his delight... now he was standing properly erect; dressed in a smart blue uniform with gold buttons of the sort worn by porters in banking establishment... He himself probably had no idea what he intended to do; at any rate, he raised up each foot unusually high, and Gregor marveled at the gigantic dimensions of his boot-soles. (Kafka 81-82)

Before his metamorphosis, Gregor neglect to act with his freedom. He accepts to act according to his being-in-itself and his facticity. Though he despises his job and always wishes to escape the burden of his role, he refuses to act as he wishes.

Instead, he devotes himself to his work, to support his family financially and to maintain a comfortable lifestyle for them. Gregor takes the responsibility of a protector for his parents and younger sister Grete. The 'for-itself' exists as it transcends and negates one's facticity. However, instead of transcending and negating his facticity and being in-itself, Gregor embraces and lives upon them. He perceives himself first as a laborer and a breadwinner of the family rather than a human being and a free individual.

Unlike trees, rocks, and animals, freedom is human beings' unique ability to rise beyond their given circumstances. Though Gregor is a being in this world with social and economic conditions, he has the freedom to choose to be what he wishes to be. Unlike, a rock, for example, does not have the freedom of choice because it must fulfill its existence according to its nature. Gregor has the freedom to be more than his facticity. Unlike animals, he would still be more than just the sum of his biological parts. Samsa restricts his freedom and lives, only, in accordance with his 'in-itself'. He acts as responsible for the social and economic circumstances put on him and, thus rejects his freedom of choice.

#### **4.2. Gregor's Inauthentic life:**

Sartre believes that there are no social values or norms that can direct one's choice. Gregor acts and lives in accord with duty and for the sake of social morality. He does so because that is what one does, what 'moral people' do, what it feels 'right' or what he is expected to do. A traditional manner of thinking would call Gregor's support of his family something he must do, since he is the only son. His family expects him to hold their financial matter, as his father does not work.. Moreover, he works hard and never complains about his job or his boss because that is what a good worker should do in order not to lose his job. However, existentially, his moral act is

inauthentic. Nevertheless, he can do that authentically if acting this way is what he chooses and commits as his own and not forced upon him by social values or economic conditions. Gregor can be himself only in the latter case.

Sartre asserts that “there is no pre-given nature, or set of essential properties, that constitute human identity.” (Sands, Verhoef 78) Authentic life is a project that the person should devote to, and thereby become what it involves. Samsa, authentically, should be thinking of and choosing the job he would like to work, the woman he wants to marry, the family he wants to make for his own, the places he wants to travel and the food he wants to eat. He should be creating his own life project and commit himself to it. However, Gregor is not even conscious of his freedom.

Inauthentic life, yet, is one in which the individual enables the world to decide his life project. Instead of deciding the latter, Gregor permits society to construct and guide his life project. The salesman, inauthentically, works the job determined for him. Thus, he travels the places chosen for him and eats the food given for him. Samsa does not involve himself in any relationship because he cares only to make his family happy, so he can be a good son. The only woman he cares about and thinks of is his sister. As ‘her brother’ and the only ‘breadwinner’, he is responsible for planning on sending her to music school to study the violin.

To conclude, Socio-cultural demands, including family pressure, often emphasizes inauthenticity. Gregor acts like anything but himself. Thus, he abandons his freedom to create, express, and accomplish himself. He lives in a project created for him by society. He does things only because that what one should do or what is right according to society. Everything in his life is predetermined for him to do. Therefore, Gregor is trapped in an inauthentic life.

## **5. Conclusion:**

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* can serve as a critique, from a Marxist perspective, of the dehumanising and alienating nature of capitalism. Gregor's alienation does not start after he has turned into an insect, but even before that. The *Metamorphosis* presents only the embodiment of the problems which have existed before. Gregor, by his transformation, is not only alienated from his work and his product of labor but also from society and his family, and most importantly, from himself and his human nature. *The Metamorphosis* exists in the world of fiction. However, it reflects the possible situation of a man becoming abandoned by his boss and family after becoming incapable of working and financially sustaining them.

Gregor's metamorphosis is an apparent reaction to the daily suffering and repression of the individual caused by the modern capitalist system. Rebellion often is a type of absurdity in a capitalist system where people get oppressed and suppressed internally. Expressing how one really feels about his situation within the capitalist system is out of insanity. Furthermore, that is what Kafka's groundbreaking work beautifully reveals. Gregor's transformation into an insect was a clever way to detail the unconscious workings of one's mind under the modern capitalist system, revealing impressions of one's anger, fear, and exhaustion about the life he leads.

With Gregor, Kafka presents us with a character who ultimately leaves it to others to define him. Initially, Gregor is portrayed as someone who does not reflect Sartre's characteristics of an existentialist. He allowed his job and his family to control him, and he never had any free will or sense of choice in his life. Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is an example of "what not to do" for Sartre.

## **Chapter Three: Gregor's Absurdity of Being**

## **1. Introduction:**

In their paper “*A Study of Franz Kafka The Metamorphosis*” Hamedreza Kohzadi, along with Azizmohammadi, and Nouri write, “Thus, with the loss of his world and of his position as bread-winner, which he unconsciously rejects in the course of the metamorphosis, Gregor loses the foundation on which his existence has been built up.”(1606) Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is a tale of warning of what may befall one if he does not live by Sartre's existentialist belief that one must take charge of his own life, by making his own choices, and live by his free will. He will wake up to find himself trapped in a life he does not enjoy and is not appreciated in it.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss how, living an inauthentic life, Gregor was trapped in bad faith and unacceptability of facticity, which eventually leads to his death. The researcher will also prove Gregor's absurdity of being in the absurd world that Kafka created and to what extent Gregor Samsa's absurd life matches the modern man's meaningless life.

## **2. Gregor's Bad Faith:**

Bad faith is an attempt to escape the freedom that Sartre considers to be an essential aspect of human life. Through viewing humanity as a passive object of collective human nature, emotional desires, societal pressures, etc., bad faith causes one to escape responsibility for moral choices. If one attempt to fully situate himself in his facticity he is in bad faith, as is any attempt to deny his free transcendence. The latter is the ability of a conscious individual to overcome or move beyond his current circumstance (which reflects facticity). The first way that Gregor is in bad faith, for Sartre, is the denial of his freedom and the assumption that he has little choice but to accept his conditions. Secondly, he associates with aspects of his facticity and accepts

his identity as given by his situation. Thirdly, Gregor's bad faith arises, also, because he performs his facticity and rejects transcendence.

Entrapped as a travelling salesman in a miserable job, Samsa despises his work however feels obliged, by an unavoidable duty, to fulfill his father's expectations to maintain the employment. Thus, Gregor affirms with his facticity and denies his transcendence. Gregor's consciousness content shows he has no choice, yet he never expressed his will towards and against the debts forced on him by others. The salesman denies his transcendence by assuming he is a victim of his economic and social situation, that he has no control over what happens. Gregor does not accept his freedom as truth, and he lies to himself in order to escape the responsibilities of his freedom. Because, if he chooses according to his desire, to quit his job and give his boss a piece of mind on what he thinks about him, he will disappoint his family's and society's expectations, by not being a good son and a good worker.

Gregor associates with his economic and social situation and accepts his identity as given by the latter, by putting himself in the service of others. Gregor is both his facticity and transcendence. He is born at a certain time to certain people with certain conditions. Nevertheless, he is also free to transcend these facts of his life. They do not ultimately define him. However, he identifies with his facticity and thereby ultimately leaves it to others to define him. Throughout the story, from Gregor's consciousness, the reader knows him only as the good, caring and responsible son and a hard worker. He accepts to be identified only that.

Gregor not only identifies with his facticity, but also performs in accordance with it and rejects transcendence. He works extra hard like a money search engine to meet the needs of his family every day. Samsa feels compelled to follow specific processes through the rules and regulations established by systems and so that he

cannot move beyond normality. Therefore, he acts as an automaton whose essence is to be a salesman, due to the nature of his being-in-itself since he is under the mercy of his boss and his family. Even the morning he transforms into an insect, he thinks about catching the next train to work and about his boss's reaction. When his mother called him "it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to catch your train?" he responds "Yes, thank you, Mother, I'm just getting up." (Kafka 26) He says to himself "Before it strikes a quarter past seven, I must absolutely have gotten myself completely out of bed. Besides, by then someone will have come from the office to inquire after me, as the office opens before seven." (Kafka 30)

As a conscious being, Gregor should go beyond his circumstances towards a potential future state of being. So while he is determined by his facticity, he can also determine his facticity by transcending it. Moreover, as a free individual, Samsa has several choices to use his freedom, not solely determined by the role. However, he lives in accordance with his facticity and ignores his transcendence. He allows his situation to define him, he accept it and act with it. Thus, he is in bad faith.

### **3. Unacceptability of Facticity:**

Gregor's metamorphosis can be considered as one of his facticity. Following Samsa's transformation, his entire family rejects him. Instead of showing affection, his family reacts with fear and hatred. On seeing the monstrous insect, Gregor's boss runs away. His father "intended to thrust Gregor back into his room, then glanced uncertainly about the living room, shaded his eyes with his hands, and wept until his mightly chest shook."(Kafka 43) Furthermore, later he wounds him by chunking apples. His mother faints at the sight of him and "her face vanishing completely where it sank to her bosom." (Kafka 43). Nevertheless, Grete gets exhausted of caring

for him, hoping he would leave. Later she says “We have to try to get rid of it.” (Kafka 105)

Since Gregor chooses to devote his life to work to support his family, he is unable to develop a sense of individuality. Once he becomes a bug, Samsa clearly fights for his life, a life he knew. Because of his situation, he is forced to focus on himself. However, his family becomes angry and annoyed with him because they think he is too selfish to realize he troubles them. When his family has been forced to finance themselves, they find that their son is no longer an essential part of their survival. Later, Gregor's ‘selfish’ behaviour starts to annoy them, claiming that if Gregor is trapped in a bug, he “would have realized a long time ago that it just isn't possible for human beings to live beside such creature, and it would have gone away on its own.” (Kafka 107) His family quit perceiving him as useful because he can no longer provide for them. Their affection was solely for the money he earned, not for Gregor himself.

Gregor's family also views him as an embarrassment and a burden that prevents them from doing everything they wish to do or finding their happiness. Once they realize that he would no longer be able to support them, they choose to bring new meaning to their life. So, they continue to support themselves. Eventually, Gregor's family becomes more self-reliant even as they are frustrated about the fact that Gregor will no longer pay their bills.

At first, Gregor has a strong will to fight and to survive. After he fails to make his family understand him in his new shape and they do not accept his facticity, he gives in to the latter and allows his new shape to overrule and control him. He stops his fight for life. His family's failure to connect and conform to his concerned

feelings contributes to the overall feeling of hopelessness which eventually leads to his suicide.

#### **4. Samsa's Absurdity of Being:**

Although it is impossible to attain the physical characteristics of an insect, Kafka highlights by Gregor's metamorphosis a deeper aspect of human existence and shows the reader that not everything is rational or justified in existence. Sartre argues that since God does not exist, and all religions are invalid, then the world is indifferent to the human need for meaning, purpose, and justification. "...thus human beings are not under the yoke of any antecedently established imperatives in those regards; we are strikingly free to forge our identities and characters as we determine; we do so through our choices and actions under conditions of extreme uncertainty..." (Bellio 49) Kafka has chosen an absurdist tool when converting the protagonist into a giant insect in order to watch the chaos unfold in an unpredictable and generally unkind world. Kafka, therefore, presents Sartre's view that the universe is indifferent to the individual's existence and condition. Thus, the world has no system of order.

For Sartre, the absurd "... refers to the lack of an ultimate explanation for existence itself or to a lack of rational justification for particularly profound events." (Berti, Bowman 150) Starting with its first sentence, *The Metamorphosis* discusses an absurd or completely irrational event, which in itself implies that the story is operating in an unpredictable, chaotic universe. The absurd incident is Gregor's waking up to realize that he has become a giant insect. His metamorphosis takes on a supernatural significance because it is physically impossible.

As he is still in bed, struggling to get up, the next absurd moment occurs. His worst fears have come true when his superior has indeed come to inspect him due to his absence. Samsa is not even late for work, but just a moment of delay has made his

boss suspicious, so he came to inspect him. In order to further emphasize the absurdities of Samsa's life, Kafka creates this tense situation and adds even more pressure to the situation that currently develops in the storyline.

Later, in his metamorphosis, we see Gregor experiencing further transformation. While his manager is waiting outside his room to talk to him, Samsa loses his voice gradually; hence his words can hardly be deciphered. The manager asks his parents "Did you understand a single word?" "That was an animal's voice." (Kafka 39) Therefore, as the writer begins to pay attention to the transformation of Samsa's body, the absurd situation gains even more absurdity.

Gregor is a good son and brother who took a job that he did not like so he could support his family and plan to pay for his sister to study music in the conservatory. Nevertheless, Gregor's untiring work before the metamorphosis seems to be rather unnecessary, as his father had saved a decent financial buffer. His father explains that Gregor's income were not all used to support the family's living expenses, but had been saved. This money could have used to pay the family's debt, and Gregor could have quit his job sooner. However, what is more absurd, Gregor is grateful that his father had saved the money, despite his current circumstances.

The reactions of the characters contribute to the sense of absurdity, particularly because they appear almost as absurd as Gregor's transformation. Gregor's family views his metamorphosis as a normal event, like catching a disease. All members of the family are surprisingly calm and unquestioning, and the incident does not confuse any of them. Even Gregor panics only because he is late for work, not that he is physically transformed into an insect. He does not make any attempts to find what triggered or what can fix the transformation. Instead, he thinks of what makes him physically comfortable.

No sooner had this occurred than he felt\_for the first time all morning\_a sense of physical well-being; his legs had solid ground beneath them; they obeyed his will perfectly, as he noted to his delight; they even strove to bear him wherever he wished; and already it seemed to him he would soon be delivered from all his suffering. (Kafka 47)

Other characters in the story generally view the metamorphosis as odd and hideous, but not unusually horrific or impossible. Most of them focus on trying to adapt to the transformation instead of fleeing from Gregor or trying to cure him. For instance, Gregor's family does not seek advice or help. They showed disgust and embarrassment, rather than the help Gregor had been expecting. Despite his family's apparent resentment, he believes that they love him and worry about him. Furthermore, when the renters who live with the Samsas see Gregor, they are mostly disturbed that he is unclean and affects the sense of order in the house. Moreover, instead of being frightened of Gregor, the charwoman, acting calmly, asks "Aha, so that's as far as it goes?." (Kafka 94) These odd reactions add to the story's absurdity, but they often suggest that the characters anticipate absurdity in their world, or at least they are not shocked by it. Hence, transforming into an insect is not worrying Samsa at this point in his life. He does not even raise that issue as he worries about his circumstance.

Sartre claims that "absurdity is a state of affairs." (McMahon 110) Existence is absurd since it has no inherent structure, purpose, or justification. Sartre connects the idea of absurdity with the notion of contingency. He asserts that existence is absurd primarily because it is contingent (e.g., unnecessary). In other words, it has no reason for being because it could be anything than it is; in fact, it is not at all necessary. According to Sartre, when one recognizes the contingency of existence,

one immediately realizes its absurdity, and this realization causes anguish. (ibid) Sartre states “The essential thing is contingency.” (131) However, at the same time, he describes absurdity as the “key to existence.” (129) He takes subjectivity as the starting point, which explains his basic definition of existentialism (i.e., existence comes before essence). The absurd is about the fact that in the absence of real divinities, one must become his own god. One's efforts in this regard are impossible to achieve experientially; however, necessary to follow if one is to live meaningfully. Sartre, in *Existentialism is Humanism*, states that “man will only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be.” (291)

Sartre argues that one tries to “veil the enormous absurdity of existence.” (111) He describes the different veils and ways of “distraction,” that people use to avoid the reality of the human condition and classifies these behaviors under the general term Bad Faith. (79) In Royle description of Sartre and Camus' sense of the absurd states that:

... for Sartre, insofar as one can properly use the term at all, it is absolute Being itself that is absurd; or perhaps we should say that for him the absurd is a relation between two relations, the subjective and objective relations of man to the world; which is another way of saying that we invent meanings instead of discovering them. (qtd.in Bennett 139)

Therefore, Gregor's being itself is absurd. However, he can only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be. Since absolute being itself is absurd, to live meaningfully, he should choose to be his own God by making his own project of life, and thus choosing and acting freely. Nevertheless, that is not what he does. He avoids the reality of his absurd condition by being in bad faith.

*The Metamorphosis* derives from the life that Gregor had lived, a way of life that Sartre strongly warned against and identified as inauthentic and meaningless. His existence is unsatisfactory and devoid of meaning, as he continually follows the wishes of his parents and boss and allows them to control his actions. He erases his desires by putting himself in the service of others, rather than establishing his willingness. Gregor's actions follow, therefore, moral and economic conventions, without considering his wishes and wants, and the different options he has. With no projects of his own, Gregor falls into a state that lacks any authentic engagement with life and others. His purpose lacks directed desire. He literally represents the absence of choice found in an insect.

Gregor refuses to transcend and negate his facticity and to act with his freedom. Instead, he lives and acts according to his being in-itself. He thinks and accepts that working for his boss and supporting his family is what he is meant to do in life. Gregor is the breadwinner of his family. He works without rest. He devotes himself to an empty life of work and serving his family.

Samsa tries to escape his freedom by accepting his societal and economic conditions. Instead of transcending his facticity, he acts like a victim to his conditions. Gregor associates with his dual role as salesman and breadwinner and accepts to be identified so. In the office and at home, he just exists to serve others' interests who need his activity to gain money for their material benefit. In the state which he considers his real and natural existence, he has been transformed into an automaton. He studies train schedules and then sets his alarm clock. Time for him has become entirely regulated. He exists within a mechanical order. Gregor has constantly fallen into an inauthentic existence whose vapidness approaches non-existence.

Gregor accepts and lives according to a predetermined existence. He acts as it was meant for him to be the only breadwinner and the hard worker. He thinks that his being in this world is absolute to his conditions. According to Sartre, Gregor's being, before the metamorphosis, is absurd since it is absolute. Moreover, it is absurd because, in his relation to the world, Samsa should invent his meanings in life, by establishing his own project, instead of discovering them and accepting them as given by the world.

What Gregor awakens to on the morning of his metamorphosis is the reality of his existence, an absurd being in an absurd world. Gregor's life before the transformation violates Sartre's existentialist principals. He accepts a predetermined "essence" before he chooses to act one way or another. To save his family from humiliation and offense, he sacrificed his entire youth at the expense of his true self. After the metamorphosis, Samsa continues to live the life which Sartre identified as meaningless and inauthentic. Therefore, his existence became more absurd. Because his family rejected his facticity and he found himself unable to proceed in the absolute, predetermined existence he was leading.

Gregor has been living a pretense and falsity. For several years his parents lived happily "they had formed the conviction that Gregor was provided for in this office for life, and besides they were so preoccupied with their present worries that they were bereft of all foresight." (Kafka 46) When he awakens transformed, he can no longer live with his parents' conviction. This economic fate already constitutes the only identity through which others are ready to see Gregor. Furthermore, through which the latter accepts to be identified.

Having locked in his room alone, Samsa seeks to regain the identity he lost by living solely for others and scarifying his own desires and needs. However, after

his transformation, Gregor finds that he is still serving his family by leaving the way not to discomfort them. He thinks “he should behave calmly and, by employing patient and the utmost consideration, assist his family in enduring the inconveniences his current state inevitably forced him to impose on them.” (Kafka 56) Gregor’s commitment to his family, however, remains strong. From the first to the last day of his story, their wellbeing and happiness remain more important to him than his own.

In the insect body, Gregor could not get up to open the door for the general manager. Instead of worrying about what happened to him, he thinks of being “... in danger of losing his position, and because his boss would then start hounding his parents once more over their ancient debt... abandoning his family was the farthest thing from his thought.” (Kafka 35). Thinking about the good life he offered for his family, he questions in fear “what if all this tranquility, all this prosperity and contentment were now coming to a horrific end?” (Kafka 54). He still thinks of how to reorder his life. “Gregor spent his nights and days almost entirely without sleeping. Sometimes he thought about taking the family’s affairs in hand again.” (Kafka 90)

His quest for identity appears to be a hapless journey, mainly because he never first had his own identity. Gregor, instead of choosing himself, has made the parental debt his encompassing predilection. Instead of choosing his own project in life, he accepted the project and the role his family chose for him. He reached a point at which predilection is no longer adequate to justify his existence. When he could no longer live to his habitual predilection, Sasma is left with nothing. “Whenever the family came to speak of the necessity of someone earning money, Gregor would let go of the door and throw himself down upon the cool leather sofa beside it, burning with shame and sorrow.” (Kafka 66) Instead of establishing his own resoluteness, Gregor’s existence has been a constant withdrawing from others. Instead of asserting

his will, Gregor vegetates within a social order that provides no outlets and ultimately leads him backwards into regression.

Everyone viewed Gregor, before the metamorphosis, mainly as a means of making money. He becomes a product of other's will; none considers him as a person. In fact, he has no life. After the metamorphosis, Gregor signifies non-functionality and only embarrassment because of his inability to fulfill his money-making function. His family realized that, because of his transformation, Samsa could no longer support them. Hence, they could have chosen to bring new meaning to their life, and start supporting themselves. His parents start to care more about the renters than for their own son. After Samsa suffered from hunger, he thought to himself "Just look how these lodgers take their nourishment while I am wasting away!." (Kafka 98) Forced to support themselves, they realize that Gregor is no longer a necessary component to their survival. When their son was in his natural form, they did not see him or want to see him. After his transformation, his parents continue not to see him. Although Gregor misses spending time with his family, he realizes that his presence was unwanted and that his life is worthless.

His family's rejection destroyed the last semblance of Gregor's attachment to the social world. Samsa ultimately leaves it to others to define him as being a salesman or not a salesman. Because his fearful hideousness constitutes an inability to assume the appearance of a salesman, the others will never acknowledge his implicit request to allow him to continue as an automaton in the social order.

He has been overwhelmed with many responsibilities and feels the burden of failure breathing down his neck at most points in his life. Thus, this transformation allows Samsa to come face to face with his existential crisis. The fact that his family hates him and wants to kill him hurts and further drives Samsa to solitude. Worse is

that he notes that his sister is the one who openly raises the idea to evict him. “His opinion that he must by all means disappear was possibly even more emphatic than that of his sister.” (Kafka 110) Therefore, with time Gregor got skinny, because he was starving himself for a long time. “He remained in this state of empty, peaceful reflection until the clock-tower struck the third hour of morning. He watched as everything began to lighten outside his window. Then his head sank all the way to the floor without volition and from his nostrils his last breath faintly streamed.” (ibid) The charwoman shouted “Come have a look, it’s gone and croaked just lying there, dead as a door-nail!” (Kafka 111) His father said “now we can thank God.” (112)

Sadly, his family appears impatient to move on with their lives and to forget their previous life with their son. They also never mention Gregor's unusual transformation and his subsequent death. They are entirely concentrating on the present, unwilling to look beyond it. After Gregor died, his family prays thanksgiving to God. Then, Mr. Samsa evicts the three renters. They write letters to their employers and clients to excuse themselves from work. Gregor's family satisfied that they have done well, spend the day relaxing and walking.

In conclusion, the condition of being in an insect body is not a mere hideous physical appearance for Gregor. It presents itself as layers of ordinary conventions and experiences. It reveals the inner essence of the annulled manifestation of Samsa. Gregor’s being in the world shows a lack of the power of will, which entangles him in the very core of his own stasis. Through his metamorphosis, he realizes the fundamental lie of his existence. The continual presence of absurdity in the novella emphasizes Sartre’s idea that the world gives no inherent meaning or purpose to live. Gregor’s death can be a powerful manifestation of the existentialist principle that the individual gives their own meaning to life.

## 5. The Tragedy of Modern Individual in Society:

*The Metamorphosis* is a projection of modern people's condition. Looking at Gregor Samsa's life and destiny, one would have the whole picture of an individual's fundamental struggle living in the twentieth-century modern society. Modern civilized individuals are commoditized laborers. Without a performative and financial prospect, a person, though repressed and internally oppressed, is as better as nonexistent. It is not the individual's condition, but his capacity to achieve and accomplish the goals of the current capitalist system, which guarantees his existence in modern society. Modern life, job, or education nearly reduces humans to mechanical robots. The fate of a lonely traveling salesman, Gregor, reflects a modernist concern about the alienating effects of modern society and capitalism. Kafka's emphasis on the disintegration of family relations and the alienating experience of modern life reverberated deeply with a reading public that had just survived World War I and was on its way to a second world war.

The modern man's alienation is inevitable. The example of how Gregor's job is humiliating, exhausting, and unfulfilling is the fact of most modern people that are working so vermin-like. This entire struggle with family support and demands, as well as employment is faced today, especially under the current economic difficulties. The modern man works eight hours a day, five days a week to provide for his family. Often, work is but a repetitive daily effort consisting of routine tasks meaningless to the workers. The workplace has become a controlled institution with the most efficient processes to provide the business owner with the highest revenues. This is the tragedy of modern times. Living merely upon the demands of social obligations means vanishing of the existence. Social demands overlook human existence.

Moreover, personal features, emotions, and reflections underlying subjective decisions and choices are reduced only to social codes.

Kafka uses metamorphosis to bring people's attention to the issue of alienation which occurs unnoticeably every day to millions of people. The essential fact is that alienation does not begin after Gregor has become an insect. Metamorphosis only presents the problems which have existed before. Alienation from society and surroundings is merely a part of the problem. Nonetheless, the most serious problem is the individual's alienation from himself. Gregor is an instance of people who lose their identity in the chase for wealth, popularity and wish to correspond to others' expectations that cause omission of the meaning of existence. Therefore, the metamorphosis is a reaction against bourgeois society and being imprisoned by its social and economic demands.

Gregor remains in chains of social necessities and serves as a slave to his family's financial needs. Never considering whether he likes his job and the way he lives, he is taken for granted until the day of his transformation. He is no longer one of the herd as he transforms into a vermin. Therefore, his family sells him. Modern social life wants one to resemble another and to destroy the specialties that distinguish one from another.

Furthermore, the capitalist system similarizes individuals and deprives their individualities. It covers the individual's personal and cognitive abilities reducing them to a changeable part of a machine. In this way, when a person cannot work anymore, another can replace him. This is what happens to Grete, the sister in the story. The sister's exchange for brother demonstrates why the capitalist system wants people to resemble each other. Like a mechanical machine, the brother is disabled, so the sister can replace him to provide the system's continuity. She transforms at

another's expense, and she will carry within her the marketplace value that has eventually destroyed Gregor, which may destroy her as well.

The story reveals the feelings of shame and guilt. Gregor feels ashamed because he could not get out of bed, that he could not work, that his voice fails him, that his family has to feed him, and that he must hide his body. After all, it is a shame to others. It is a shame for the family that they have a vermin son. Gregor is now something that is to hide. It shows how the modern man acts considering other people's judgments and to society's expectations or taboos, for not to feel ashamed. Modern society enforces individuals to dress or act in a certain way. Many people would otherwise be misunderstood and misjudged.

In an article named "*Predicament of the modern man in the City: Reading Kafka's The Trial and The Metamorphosis*" by Pradip Mondal says that: Reality and reflection play an important role in *The Metamorphosis* because the events that happened could be applied and assimilated with modern society. The most gruesome aspect of Samsa's fate is not his metamorphosis but the blindness with which everybody treats this metamorphosis. His self is what is absolutely alien, void, and nonexistent, not only in the world of business in the city but also in the world of the family. His façade self in the city is very pathetic which must toil in the commercial world outside. This restless self staggers around the world while the 'beetle' self takes rest. Gregor's reduction to a real self (being, essence) and his consequent destruction are conditioned by a parallel change in the external world. (69)

The author's quote states that the events that happen in *The Metamorphosis* represent the reality of modern society. Gregor's metamorphosis becomes less important compared to how Samsa's family member treats him. The moment Samsa stops being the source of earnings for his family, he is abandoned and considered to

be an embarrassment and burden for the family. Samsa, who is already left alone as a travelling salesman, is also alienated by his family, who are the most intricate part of his inner self. His real self, his inner consciousness, has become something worse than any insect as he is destroyed by the people who give his life a meaning, a will to work. Human empathy has no place in modern society, in which all relationship lies under the systems imposed on it by society and the capitalist system, and human beings must regard themselves as a source of financial security, which is also the principal source of survival for any person who belongs to the modern society.

*The Metamorphosis* reflects the difficulties of human communication. This functions in two ways. On the one hand, before the transformation, Gregor had not attempted to communicate with his family save on the superficial level of everyday contact. He knew them in externality as father, mother, and sister but not as personalities. However, as a cockroach, he wants to express his more than cockroach reactions but is always misunderstood. For instance, when he tries to express his admiration for his sister's music by approaching her side, the family thinks he is attacking them. They are horrified at his meaningless noise as he attempts to talk. Kafka shows the failure of perfect communication and understanding between human beings. Kafka shows the failure of perfect communication and understanding between human beings. It is felt by individuals in modern times but which is here carried to the ultimate extreme. Hence the human in animal form is chosen, since here the need for communication is the greatest and there are no alternatives.

Like millions of people today, the main character, Gregor, lives daily, a rather dull and dreary existence. He worked at a job he despised in order to pay off his father's debts. He also did not have a social life outside of work and domestic life. Gregor abandoned his true human nature and his desires to external forces and

became faithful to them. Instead of creating his own beliefs, values, and rules, he accepts them as giving by others. His family made him consider his role as provider and financial supporter as an honor.

Time is another of the pressures Samsa needs to face every day. The expression “time is money” perfectly expresses the value of time in the modern economy-driven world. Due to the limitation of time available and so much to accomplish, any wasted time leads to the loss of an opportunity to earn. The value of time comes from the drive for capital, which the economy-driven world dictates. Gregor realizes this and sets his life accordingly, to work as much as possible. As a bug, he urges on being out of the bed before quarter past seven to get to work.

Kafka uses the fictional literary elements he creates to address the non-fictional, existentialist aspects of modern society and life. In the twentieth century, the average becomes increasingly determined by economic conditions that have people seeking to exploit each other by imposing indebtedness. In many families, kids are raised with their professional life already planned by their parents, which causes tremendous pressure. Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* demonstrates how an unthinking acceptance of inherited identity, structured as family debt, transforms Gregor Samsa into a dung beetle. It symbolizes Gregor’s vain and meaningless life as a traveling salesman committed only to earning money. Kafka shows how modern life makes people forget about their existence and their potentialities that can be actualized by themselves when they realize their power.

*The Metamorphosis* ironically reveals how modern society crushes an individual who leaves the herd and assimilates the other person. Moreover, it shows how modern social relations transform the subject into an object, and how society can be inhuman as it externalizes someone who does not resemble it. Kafka depicts a

harsh picture of a modernist society where personal identity and significance have ceased to exist, where humans are judged by their economic contribution, where the family ties have silently become extinct. The Metamorphosis reflects the difficulties of living in modern society and the struggle for acceptance of others when in a time of need.

## **6. Conclusion:**

Kafka provides an example for future existentialists by demonstrating the trouble that goes with accepting circumstances and not fighting to overcome facticity. Before the transformation, Gregor denies his freedom and assumes he has little choice but to accept his circumstances. He identifies with his economic and social situation and acts with it, ignoring his ability as a conscious individual to move beyond his circumstance. Therefore, Samsa is in bad faith. Furthermore, after the transformation, his family rejected his facticity. They think he is no longer useful because he cannot provide for them anymore.

Gregor had led an inauthentic life by accepting and living according to a predetermined existence. Not only the world that Kafka created for him is absurd, but also his being is absurd. He believes his being in this world is absolute to his conditions. Furthermore, his being becomes more absurd after the metamorphosis because he could not proceed in the absolute, predetermined existence he was leading. Gregor Samsa's life and destiny are projections of an individual's fundamental struggle living in the twentieth-century modern society.

### **General Conclusion**

In *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka encompasses the private, night-world of dream-logic and the dehumanizing day-world of capitalism; the Freudian realm of irrational dreams that have rational meanings and the Marxian realm of rational systems that become irrational realities. The analysis of *The Metamorphosis* from Sociological and Psychoanalytic and Philosophical approaches, the novel was interpreted and analyzed from the angles of these approaches, which aided the researcher to prove his hypothesis.

This study analyzed Gregor's metamorphosis from the Marxist and Freudian perspective. Using Marx theory of alienation, the researcher has shown how labor under capitalism alienated Gregor from his work, his product of labor, society, his family, and most importantly, from himself and his human nature. Using Freud interpretation of dreams the researcher has shown Gregor's metamorphosis as an apparent reaction to his daily suffering and repression under the capitalist system. Gregor, by his transformation, fulfilled his wishes for rebel against and humiliate the capitalist and to escape the pressure of his responsibility of his family.

The research answers the previously stated research questions and proves the absurdity of being reflected in the novella. The researcher examined Gregor Samsa's struggle against Sartre's existentialist principles. Gregor seeks to define his existence not through searching inside himself but through the world around him: his family and work, society as a whole, and its views. He shows no inclination toward free choice or self-determinism. He allows others to make choices for him or waits for circumstances to force his hand. Thus, inside Sartre's Existential framework, Gregor is a total failure. He shows a denial to the freedom that Sartre condemned humans to have, and instead lives with his facticity (being-in-itself). Thus, he was trapped in bad

faith and unacceptability of facticity. Believing his being in this world to be absolute to his conditions, Samsa could not proceed in his absolute existence after the metamorphosis. Hence, he realizes the fundamental lie of his existence, as being absurd. The researcher, finally, proved *The Metamorphosis* to be a projection of modern people's condition.

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## ملخص

يفحص هذا البحث ويثبت سخافة الوجود الذي ينعكس في التحول المسخ للكاتب فرانز كافكا. تحتوي هذه الدراسة على ثلاثة أهداف (1) تحليل وتفسير تحول غريغور إلى حشرة (2) فحص أسباب سخافة وجود غريغور سامسا ، و (3) وصف كيف تتوافق حياة غريغور سامسا مع حياة الرجل الحديث. المناهج المستخدمة لإجراء هذه الدراسة وهي المنهج الاجتماعي والنفسي والفلسفي. توضح هذه الأطروحة السوابق والنتائج المترتبة على عمل جريجور في ظل النظام الرأسمالي ، مما يؤدي إلى عزله عن طبيعته البشرية وتحقيق رغباته المكبوتة ، وعيش غريغور سامسا ضد المبادئ الوجودية لسارتر ، مما أدى إلى سخافة الوجوده. علاوة على ذلك ، يوضح كيف أن حياة غريغور هي إسقاط لحالة الرجال الحديثة

## Résumé

Cette recherche examine et prouve l'absurdité d'être telle que reflétée dans La Métamorphose de Franz Kafka. Cette étude a trois objectifs (1) analyser et interpréter la transformation de Gregor en bogue, (2) examiner les causes de l'absurdité d'être de Gregor Samsa et (3) décrire comment la vie de Gregor Samsa correspond à la vie de l'homme moderne. Les trois approches utilisées pour mener cette étude sont des approches sociologiques, psychologiques et philosophiques. Cette thèse illustre les antécédents et les conséquences du travail de Gregor sous le système capitaliste, qui conduit à son aliénation à sa nature humaine et à l'accomplissement des souhaits de ses désirs supprimés, et la vie de Gregor Samsa contre les principes existentialistes de Sartre, ce qui conduit à son absurdité d'être. De plus, il illustre comment la vie de Gregor est une projection de la condition des hommes modernes.