

Magical Realism, Unrealities Of Realities And Dehumanisation In The Metamorphosis By Franz Kafka.

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This paper throws light on the Franz Kafka's novella, 'The Metamorphosis' written in 1915 which immensely gained huge success and the writer skilfully intertwined it by blending the unreal of realities, magical realism and dehumanisation which creates a narrative of challenges of the human life and condition of reality in the society. "Unreal Realities" means the strange things feel real like the protagonist Gregor Samsa traveling salesman, underwent the horrifying and complete transformation into an oversized insect which is impossible but everyone treat him as burden to their family. Franz Kafka uses the new Kafkaesque technique that shows how people and character changed or ignored the deep problems and accept weird situation of making unreal feel like reality. These elements are not explained or justified but they simply exist, creating a world where the magic is a part of the reality. Franz Kafka's works examine themes such as alienation, dehumanization, absurdity and so on. It is a profound theme that reflects the dehumanization, alienation and exploitation experienced in the Metamorphosis. Gregor Samsa family financially depends on him but after transformation they begin to treat him as a repulsive burden looking after him. This descent him into isolation and neglected, reflects the process of dehumanisation, where Gregor is no longer seen as a person but as a thing, an inconvenience and overbearing of his family's wish to be rid of him. He completely loses the will to live and starves. By discovering that Gregor is dead his family feels a great sense of relieved and optimistically plans their future noting his sister Grete's blossoming into a young woman ready for marriage.

KEYWORDS : unreal realities, magical realism, dehumanisation, alienation, the metamorphosis, Franz Kafka.

INTRODUCTION

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) was a German writer who is considered as one of the most eminent and influential authors of the 20th century. His works are known for fusing elements of magical realism and fantastic, often featuring isolated, dehumanisation and alienation. The term "Kafkaesque" entered the lexicon to describe such absurdly complex situations and which describes bizarre and illogical situations, gained massive posthumous recognition after his death in 1924, making him one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. During his lifetime he published very little, but his friend Max Brod posthumously published his major works against his wishes. His works include 'The Metamorphosis', 'The Trail', 'The Castle', 'Letter to his father', 'Amerika', 'The judgement' and many other. His works are a profound exploration of the human condition often depicting characters in surreal situations that challenge the readers understanding of reality. Franz Kafka's influences extend beyond literature, impacting artists, philosophers, composers, filmmakers, literary historians, religious scholars and cultural theorists. His writings are sometimes seen as prophetic or premonitory of a totalitarian future, reflecting the anxieties and alienation felt by many in 20th century Europe and North America.

Franz Kafka's renowned novella "The Metamorphosis", a seminal work of modernist literature which dwells the readers into a new world where the human being can think pragmatic and diversely that explores the different viewpoint and focus on real world situation. The story begins with a fantastical unexplained event, the protagonist Gregor Samsa, a diligent traveling salesman, wakes up one morning transformation into a "monstrous vermin", is a core of the unreal event serves as the central blending of magical realism. The highly detailed realistic setting is invaded by something unbelievable, yet accepted as part of the narrative's reality. The darker side of the horror however lies not in the physical transformation itself, but in the ensuring process of dehumanisation. Franz Kafka masterfully uses this absurd element as a vivid metaphor for the alienation and objectification faced by individual in utilitarian society. Despite retaining his human consciousness, thoughts and emotions, Gregor Samsa is immediately deprived of his place in the family and society because he can no longer work or communicate with any one effectively. His family subsequently actions from initial shock and limited care to eventual neglect and disgust highlight how human connections can be conditional, dependent on an individual's ability to contribute financially. This introduction will explore how the writer employs the narrative strategy of the magical realism to expose the profound psychological and social mechanisms of dehumanisations, challenging our conventional notions of identity and the inherent value of human life.

The novella contains several elements of magical realism, is a literary genre where fantastic events or magical elements are intertwined into a realistic setting and mundane setting treated as normal occurrences. It draws a fine line between reality and fantasy, unlike traditional fantasy which creates alternate world. The focus is often on what these magical elements signify within the story's realistic context making it distinct from fantasy which typically focuses on the magic itself. The primary magical elements the protagonist, Gregor Samsa's inexplicable transformation into monstrous vermin overnight, which is presented factually and without any scientific or supernatural explanation. Unlike fantasy, which creates an entirely new world, this extraordinary event invades the familiar, detailed reality of the Samsa family's middle class apartment and everyday life which revolves around work and financial obligations. The key characteristic of magical realism present in the novella is the characters subdued pragmatic reaction to the impossible. Gregor's initial concern is not with his new physical form's impossibility, but with how it will affect his ability to go to work and provide food for his family. The family's response is one of horror and disgust, but also a practical need to adapt their lives to this new reality, such as finding new sources of income and managing Gregor's care. This blending of the bizarre with the ordinary and the focus on the human experience and social theme like alienation and family duty, allows the narrative to use the "magical" element as a powerful, literalized metaphor for the dehumanisation forces of modern life. While the text is also often categorized as absurdist fiction, its seamless integration of the fantastic into a highly detailed realistic world strongly aligns it with the techniques of magical realism.

The methodology used here is analytic approach and the theory analysis elements of "unreal realities" and "Dehumanization" in the seminal work of Franz Kafka's, The metamorphosis. Primarily it revolves the elements of magical realism, dehumanisation and literary lens of absurdity which often combines with Marxist and psychological critical theory. The core methodology used here is magical realism which narrates the irrational, fantastic, dehumanisation event with transformation of Gregor Samsa into "monstrous vermin" is accepted as a given fact not something to be explained or questioned but the fine line between the realism and surrealism. This approach feels the reader unreal realities in the realistic settings forcing them to focus on the human societal reactions rather than the impossibilities of the events itself. Dehumanisation is explored through this modern lens of human alienation and anomie of capitalist and bureaucratic society. The worker being reduced to a dehumanized whose value is solely tied to their productivity, here the protagonist halt work discarded by his family and society. Further it leads to internal feelings of insignificance, guilt and social anxiety, reflecting Franz Kafka's own life experience.

The concept of unreal realities is the central theme of the Franz Kafka's work "The Metamorphosis", which profoundly employs magical realism to explore the themes of alienation and dehumanization. The story opens Gregor Samsa's drastic transformation into a giant insect, is presented not as a nightmare or a fantasy, but as a bizarre, unquestioned fact of his existence. This is the essence of magical realism the insertion of a fantastical element into realistic setting.

Gregor's initial thought, "What if I went back to sleep for a while and forgot all this foolishness," and later conviction that "he should disappear".

Franz Kafka elaborates the journalistic tone throughout the narrative. There is no explanation for the Gregor's condition he simply wakes up one early morning and entering to a new horrifying world of reality. The focus shifts quickly from the metamorphosis to its practical implications for Gregor Samsa and his family. The character reactions are not disbelief but rather pragmatic concern over financial stability and the logistics of caring for a monstrous vermin. They try to hide him from lodgers and debate his food preferences. This seamless blending of the impossible with the everyday creates a disorienting, unsettling effect. The true unreality of reality is not just the insect but the family's cold, gradual dehumanisation of Gregor shocks him rather than the physical transformation itself. Here the writer seeks the readers to confront the profound isolation and the cruel indifference of a world where such a radical, life-altering event can be absorbed into the middle-class life. The surreal becomes the everyday, highlighting the hidden anxieties and apathetic cruelties of human existence.

Gregor Samsa was the sole breadwinner for his family and treated him primarily as a financial provider whose worth was tied to his income. As the sole breadwinner, he worked as a traveling salesman to support his mother, sister Grete and father to pay off his father's business debts. The family was entirely dependent on his earnings and his sacrifices though initially met with gratitude eventually became expected. He worked as a strong sense of duty and love for his family that the relationship was largely transactional and lacked genuine emotional depth or appreciation for him as an individual. There was a superficial bond of the loving relationship with him the family appreciation was largely conditional on his utility. They took him for granted and his long working hours of traveling salesman where he rarely visited home and somewhat isolated from their daily lives. The family especially the father took advantage of his selflessness, even though having secret savings while feigning an inability to work. He was a struggler than a cherished individual a fact cruelly exposed when his inability to provide after his metamorphosis instantly shifted their attitude from initial concern to frustration and eventual repulsion. After transformation the family's attitude shifted dramatically from initial shock and limited concern to disgust, resentment and completely dehumanisation. His father who had left with debt again start in search of job, family planned to rent some portion of their house. Now the protagonist became burden and futile to his family, his father who had previously been lethargic became hostile attacking Gregor on multiple occasions never like to see him, look after him and not allowing him to come out of his room and once his father threw an apple that caused a lasting injury. His mother felt a conflict between maternal love and revulsion ultimately, unable to cope with his appearance. His sister Grete, initially his primary caregiver gradually annoyed and was the one to finally insist they must get rid of "it" referring to him as an object rather than her own brother. The family adopted by finding jobs and taking in lodgers after Gregor's death. They profound sense of relief and liberation quickly moving on with their lives and started to focusing on future.

Gregor Samsa's relationship with his professional life also highlights the dehumanization aspects of the modern society both before and after his physical transformation into an insect. Being traveling salesman he was trapped in an exhausting, alienating job with superficial human relationships. His employer treats him with suspicion, even sending a chief clerk to his home to investigate his single instance of tardiness and implicitly accusing him of poor performance demonstrating a lack of empathy and a focus purely on productivity. In this environment his value as an office person is strictly transactional tied to his ability to generate income. Following his transformation this transactional treatment intensified into total social and familial rejection. Once Gregor can no longer work, he loses all value in the eyes of his family and the wide society became a burden to be hidden and eventually discarded. The chief clerk reacted with immediate horror and disgust, fleeing his presence and cutting him off completely from his former professional and social life. The core difference in treatment is the shift from a cold, exploitative yet functional relationship based on his utility to complete objectification once he is unable to meet societal and economic expectations. His existence as an insect symbolizes his total alienation and the stark reality that in a bureaucracy driven world and one individual's humanity or status is often measured by their economic contribution.

Throwing light on Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Marxist theory provides a potent lens for examining the dehumanisation and alienation of the protagonist Gregor Samsa within a capitalist framework. He is reduced to mere economic functionary a traveling salesman whose identity is entirely contingent upon his ability to financially support his family. His transformation into a giant insect can be interpreted as physical manifestation of his inherent worthlessness in a system that values productivity over humanity. This aligns with the Marxist concept of alienation of labour, where workers become estranged from their work, the products they produce their fellow human being including his family life, professional life and even society and ultimately themselves. The family reaction also applies the initial concern quickly shifts to logistical and financial anxieties, seeing Gregor not as a suffering relative but as a burden and an obstacle to capital accumulation. They are dependent on his exploitation and discard him once he ceases to be profitable, highlighting the commodity inherent in a bourgeois society. Subsequent Gregor's physical and mental deterioration culminating in his death and the family's immediate relief serves as a stark indictment of a system that treats the individual as a disposable means of production, making his tragedy a powerful allegory for the proletariat's struggle in a capitalist world.

The conclusion of the *Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka employs magical realism to starkly portray the unreal realities of dehumanization in modern society. The writer highlights how easily an individual's humanity can be stripped away when they can no longer fulfil a utilitarian role. Here the writer elaborates the Gregor's family progressively isolated and neglects him underscoring the chilling indifference that often accompanies alienation. Gregor's physical change is a powerful metaphor for the psychological and emotional estrangement he already experienced as a tireless, unappreciated breadwinner of the family. Ultimately, the novella concludes that in a conformist, capitalist world those who become "different" or "unproductive" are readily discarded and forgotten, their quiet disappearance allows the human world to move on by the uncomfortable reality of their own conditional empathy.

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