

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Masculinity in crisis: Reading Kafka's *The Metamorphosis***

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Bipin Regmi has completed his thesis entitled **Masculinity in crisis: Reading Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*** under my supervision. He carried out his research from 27<sup>th</sup>, November 2008 AD to 14<sup>th</sup>, July 2009 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for Viva Voce.

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This thesis entitled **Masculinity in crisis: Reading Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*** by Bipin Regmi has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## **Abstract**

Franz Kafka, in its essential ground, brings forth the masculinity crisis in his work.

*The Metamorphosis*. protagonist, Gregor Samsa, metamorphosed into a bug due to his inability to hold masculine identity burdened by patriarchal society.

Samsa is a salesman. He has burden to run daily affairs of his family. As a son he has to pay back his father's business debt and as brother he has to educate his sister and after all he has sole responsibility to tackle the problem, generate income and look after the matter of whole family affairs.

He is not satisfied with his present job even though he is struggling to hold the masculine identity being afraid of the society, his family and eventually of himself. There remains the genuine gap between the demand set by the patriarchal society in order to hold up masculine identity and the capacity of Samsa to hold it up for long. In reality, Samsa's failure to hold the masculine identity more creates his metamorphosed into a bug, thus his masculinity is in crisis.

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## Chapter: I

### Introduction

This research entitled “Masculinity in Crisis: A Study of Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*” probes into the problem of male subject on the verge of crisis with particular reference to Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Kafka’s novella *The Metamorphosis*. Gregor Samsa is the sole bread winner of the family. He has been bounded to his family and jobs after his father’s business collapsed. He has the burden of educating his sister and a grave responsibility of paying back his father’s business debts. But the problem is Gregor Samsa suddenly turns into a bug. Now, the question is why does Gregor Samsa get metamorphosed into a bug? The main contention of this research and the major argument of this researcher is that Gregor Samsa gets metamorphosed into a bug due to his inability to hold masculine identity assigned by the patriarchal society.

The concept of 'masculinity / masculinities', informed by recent feminist thought and the women's movement , has emerged as a means of renewing feminist discourse by encouraging a more relational approach to masculinities and femininities. This also allows for the investigation, problematization and interrogation of masculinity equally with femininity. Notwithstanding these enabling possibilities, however, "gender" is still essentially deployed in contemporary social science discourse and everyday praxis as a synonym for women, its relational aspect obscured and the invitation to interrogate masculinities largely ignored. That is why, the study of masculinity is important in that it is "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender and the affects of these practices in bodily experiences personality and culture" (Connell 71). Moreover, a textured understanding of the diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, practices, situations, sexualities and institutions is essential to not only challenging the social dominance of men over women but for building a more humane world.

Traditionally men are considered to be strong and brave physically; intellectually to be rational, logical and practical; interpersonally to be leader, dominating, disciplinarian, and competitive. Moreover, in their personal characteristics men are thought to be success – oriented, ambitious, aggressive, proud and adventurous. These qualities of men are always defined in opposition to the qualities attributed to women. In gender discourse masculinity is defined in terms of the practices in gender relations. The space in gender relations is culture – specific and temporal. So there can be multiple forms of masculinities according to specific culture and historical time. However, all forms of masculinities share what George Mosse calls "the manly ideal" (qtd. in Glover and Kaplan 59). At the centre of the ideal [lies] a renewed emphasis upon the perfectibility of the male body which [becomes] an outward sign of a man's moral superiority and inner strength of character (59).

In gendered society masculinity is taken to be the cumulative effect of the masculine norms and behaviors. For Patricia Sexton, to be masculine means "holding male values and following male behaviors norms" (qtd. in Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee 104). Sexton further remarks: " Male norms stress values such as courage , inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure, and a considerable amount of toughness in mind and body" (104). Some theorists claim that masculinity can be found both in male and female bodies. Judith Halberstan comments that "what we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced by and across both male and female bodies" (359). This implies that masculinity can be taken as independent of particular sexed- body. This view of Judith Halberstan is more significant if we take masculinity to have larger social implications by means of gender institutions. Judith Lorber argues " As a social institution, gender is one of the major ways that human beings organize their lives" (15).

The exploration of 'masculinity in crisis' is projected through the male characters, who lose economic power, involve in household activities and failed to perform conventional masculine roles. Masculinity is a social definition given to boys and men by societies; like gender it is a social construct. Nature makes people male and female; it gives them their biological definition how they should be treated etc. So, masculinity is a characteristic in socio-cultural bases. But, an argument- what will be the situation if the boys/men unable to perform the masculine role and start the feminine roles is a striking question. Certainly, if so happens the concept of masculinity will be problematic. Addressing this problematic change, Kamala Bhasin says- "masculinity is not static, like gender, it is constantly reconstructed. It may keep change in response to community and economic pattern"(6).

In the conventional views the power is exclusive to men. If women exercise any power emanating from their sexuality or by physicality, that power is considered always at the mercy of men. On the level of sexuality, heterosexuality is mainly concept that men accept the first or appear in position. The very essence, definition and nature of heterosexuality are men first. Heterosexuality has reinforced men's supremacy over women. Women, who had sex with men, were supposed to surrendering themselves to the dominance of men. But in the postmodern era, lesbianism and gay activities came into practice that blurred the conventional view of sexuality. By anticipating this view, Scott Gunter writes:

For American queers, the goal is to defy the social and historical construction of categories of sexuality and gender, and in particular the fixed identities of "straight sex", "gay", "lesbian", and "homosexual"; because any construction of identity only serves to restrict the autonomous expression or performance of desire. This act of defiance presupposes the essence of sexual identities.

(23)

Born in Prague on 3 July 1883, Franz Kafka got primary education from Gymnasium and received his doctorate in Jurisprudence in 1906. One year later, he took up regular employment in an insurance Company that detested him. In his diary he mentions the cause of dislike in his job: “My job is unbearable because it goes counter to my sole desire and my sole vocation which is literature” (qtd. In Albres and Boisdefire 7). His love and devotion for literature become clearer when we observe a letter to his fiancée’s father where he writes, “Since I am nothing except literature, since I cannot and will not be anything else, my job can never excite me, but it can easily distract me completely, I have almost reached that point...” (ibid).

The above expression clearly evinces Kafka’s deep affection towards literature. His profession could not please him. He worshipped literature as a religion; writing for him was a means of redemption that used to give him pleasure and pain at the same time. Kafka’s environment heavily shaped his writing. Kafka was able to express the complexities and paradoxes of human existence which he discovered in himself and portrayed in his writing. We can see his vision that grows out of his own life experiences rooted in gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and culture. Impact of familial and social background of Kafka is discernible in his writing. Kafka was born into middle –class Jewish merchant family. His father, Hermann Kafka, was a merchant who overshadowed his works as well as existence. This father figure is one of his impressive creations in his writings. Robert P. Gwinn comments on father’s impression on Kafka, “ For in his imagination, this coarse, practical and domineering shopkeeper and patriarch, who worshipped nothing but material success and social advancement, belonged to a race of giants and was an awesome, admirable, but repulsive tyrant” (677). Kafka had a contradictory view towards his father. He feared his father but at the same time admired him. In one letter to his father, Kafka attributed his failure to live as well as his escape into literature to the prohibitive father figure who created

in him a sense of self-importance. He was always threatened by his father, as a result he suffered inferiority complex. In one letter to his father Kafka comments on his father's rude behavior:

But your shouts, your flushed face, your brash manner of snapping your suspenders and putting them on the back of chair- all of this was almost than blows. The same thing applies to a man who is on the point of being hanged. If he is actually hanged, he dies and everything is ended. But if he is obliged to witness all the preliminary steps and told that he has been pardoned only after the noose is hanging over his shoulders, he may have to suffer for it throughout his whole life. (qtd. In Albres and Boisdefire 5)

Kafka's analogy of a hanged man resembles to his life, because he suffered the terrible fear of the threat of his father all his life. Kafka could not forget the childhood impression of his father.

The source of Kafka's despair lays in a sense of ultimate isolation through true communication- the women he loved, the job he disliked, the society he lived in- and with the God he believed. As a Jew, Kafka was isolated from the German community in Prague, and as a modern intellectual he was also alienated from his own Jewish heritage. But Kafka was German both in language and culture. He was a timid and an obedient child who did well in elementary school and in higher educational institution. Though he was lived and liked by his teachers, inwardly, he rebelled against the authoritarian institution. Thus, social isolation and rootlessness contributed to Kafka's lifelong personal unhappiness.

During his lifetime Kafka published only a few of his writings. Among them were "Meditation" (1913), "Metamorphosis" (1916), "The Penal Colony" (1919), "The Country Doctor" (1920), and others. Kafka is famous for his several fragments and uncompleted novels which he told his literary executor Max Bord to burn after his death.

Bord insisted that he would not obey Kafka's wishes and he did not. Instead, after Kafka's death, Bord published the three major novels: *Der Prozess* (1925: English translation, *The Trial*, 1937), *Das Schloss* (1926, English translation, *The Castle*, 1930) and *Amerika* (1927: English translation 1938), as well as many aphorisms and diaries. Today almost all of his writings have been published. When he died in 1924, his reputation as a writer was already established, but it was confined almost entirely to a small circle of readers. It was during the period of World War II and after that interest in Kafka spread worldwide. Kafka's works are not very easily understandable because he deals with man's hopeless attempts in an unintelligible world. Kafka's use of symbols and imagery makes his works ambiguous and obscure despite his concise and lucid writing. Moreover his writing is influenced by surrealist and expressionist type of writing. His works reflect the duality of two worlds- the world of everyday experience and the world of absurd- which exist side by side. This intended fusion of two worlds creates a kind of complexity and contributed to the varieties of interpretations. Commenting on Kafka's writings, Ronald Gray writes, "...Kafka's style is unpretentious, more serious in the pursuit of truth, i.e., the appropriateness of language to subject, and less diverted by striving for extraneous decoration or effect..." (264). Every thing in Kafka's work has more than one meaning. Albert Camus comments: "Kafka offers us everything and confirms nothing forcing us constantly to reread" (158). This is the world of absolute relativity and Kafka tries to overcome this uncertainty by the search for the indestructible, authentic, but the road that leads to the goal is inaccessible like the castle on the top of the hill which is visible from everywhere but no road leads to it. Kafka's works present a man suffering in spirit and body, searching desperately for meaning, security, self-worth and purpose. Kafka himself looked his writings as a means of redemption, as a form of prayer. The inexplicable absurdity and darkness of his works reveal Kafka's own frustrated personal struggle. Through his powerless characters and the strange incidents they encounter, Kafka

achieved a strong symbolism that signifies the anxiety and alienation of the twentieth-century world.

The characters in Kafka's works fail to establish communication with others. They follow a hidden logic. They are engaged in grotesque incidents, violence and absurdities of human life. Each character is the expression of suffering, a man vainly questioning for information and trying to understand the world around him. Thus, his characters are in search of identity and existence. Many of Kafka's writings contain an inscrutable mixture of the normal and the fantastic.

The metamorphosis is the depiction of nightmarish story of a son who wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a monstrous and repulsive insect, who later dies because of his family shame and his own guilty despair. Jerome S. Gans views *The Metamorphosis* with the standpoint "to offer some lesson" for psychotherapist considering the fact that it has contained "the centrality of felling in human affairs"(363).

Critic Mark Spilka comments on the source of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* providing it with analytical comparison to Dickens', Tolstoy's and Mirabeau's novels. Kafka gained inspiration through the diverse fields of these writers. It carries "the quality of that genre in full and clear development" including "dream like contours, the realistic surface, the psychological depth, the infantile perception" in order to focus the humanity in crisis (307).

Similarly, Michael P. Rayan comments on *The Metamorphosis* relating it with Hindu Philosophy of the circle of the Death and Birth. He analyses the representation of Samsa to "Samsara" (world) with the implication "of craving, lust, suffering, death, rebirth and disease" (133). *The Metamorphosis* has also been viewed with regard to the crisis in identity. Kevin W. Sweeney comments that "personal identity is maintained by preserving the constitutive social relationship. Even though an individual is able to maintain psychological or material continuity, failure to preserve them erodes personal identity" (47).

Kaplan Cora relates the text to the supporting demands of patriarchal based sense of masculinity and the inability of Gregor Samsa to fulfill such demands and argues that 'it might be accurate to say, not that Gregor is in the process of taking on female attributes, but rather he has become unable to continue to live up to the demands of masculinity that have been his lot in life until now (83-84). So the issue of gender is very dominant in the text. However, the text is analyzed and interpreted rarely through the perspective of gender studies. That is why the main contention of this research is to fill this critical gap.

This research work has been divided into four chapters. First chapter gives the general introduction of the writer and of this research work itself and observes the review of literature. Second chapter deals with the theoretical methodology which is gender studies with particular focus on Masculinity Study. The third chapter deals with application part and analyses in detail the text *The Metamorphosis* showing how the masculinity is in crisis. Finally, the fourth chapter concludes the entire research with explicit mentioning of the findings.

## II. Masculinity: A Historical and Cultural Construction

The concept of 'masculinity / masculinities', informed by recent feminist thought and the women's movement, has emerged as a means of renewing feminist discourse by encouraging a more relational approach to masculinities and femininities. This also allows for the investigation, problematization and interrogation of masculinity equally with femininity. Notwithstanding these enabling possibilities, however, "gender" is still essentially deployed in contemporary social science discourse and everyday praxis as a synonym for women, its relational aspect obscured and the invitation to interrogate masculinities largely ignored. That is why, the study of masculinity is important in that it is "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender and the affects of these practices in bodily experiences personality and culture" (Connell 71). Moreover, a textured understanding of the diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, practices, situations, sexualities and institutions is essential to not only challenging the social dominance of men over women but for building a more humane world.

Masculinity Studies observes the gender identity and gender problems. Oxford Dictionary defines masculinity as "qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men. It is the masculinity which has to do with particular traits and qualities rather with biology". The Collins's Thesaurus defines masculinity as "male, manful, manlike, manly, virile, bold, brave, butch, gallant, hardy, macho, muscular, powerful, ramboesque, re-blooded, resolute, robust, stout-hearted, strapping, strong, vigorous, and well-built". These characteristics or qualities of men are considered masculine. Therefore, masculinity is a social definition given to boys and men and social construction.

There is no simple shift from "traditional" to "modern". Rather, in the world created by European empires, complex structures of gender relations in which dominant, subordinated and marginalized masculinities are in constant interaction, changing the conditions for each others' existence and transforming themselves as they do. Masculinity is, therefore, a traditional gender concept that developed with a long history of politico-political, economic, and cultural discourses and practices. The history of masculinity is intimately tied to a larger gender history. According to R.W.

Connell, “it has come into existence at particular times and places, and is always subject to change (245)”.

Masculinity studies, in recent era have shown that masculinities are not only plural but they are inflected by issues of race, class, sexuality and ethnicity. These transformations—in bodies, masculinity, and patriarchy—were spread throughout the world with one worldview to another, social practices to cultural practices either by people’s movement or by colonialism. For example, Harvey’s anticipation of Fletcher refreshes “ancient scriptural patriarchy” was replaced with “modern secular patriarchy” (305). Because of these consequences, Connell again shows the upheavals of the English civil war—“the world turned upside down by revolutionary struggle could be gender as well as the class order. In the English speaking countries it was the Quakers, a religious-cum-political sect emerging from the upheavals of English civil war who made the first public defense of equality in religion for women. They not only proclaimed the principle, but actually gave women a significant organizing role in practice” (248). Therefore, these conceptual practices and gender orders are the part of the periodization of history of masculinity, modernity and nature of human civilizing process.

Masculinity, in Connell’s words, is constructed through the discourse which was based on the economy and state institutions. That discourse created representation of gendered individual character which ultimately represented as masculine or feminine. Such representation and discourse explored the ideas acknowledging the inequality of the sexes. Thus, in one sense, we can say that the construction of masculinity, at that time was a political ideology. Hegemonic masculinity forms the sexual ideology through the most influential active agents: “priest, journalists, advertisers, politicians, psychiatrists, designers, playwrights, film makers, actors, novelists, musicians, activists, academics, coaches and sportsmen. They are the “weavers of hegemony” as Gramsci put it, its “organizing intellectuals” (646). These people regulate and manage gender regimes:

Articulate experiences, fantasies, and perspectives, reflects on and interpret gender relations. Hegemonic masculinity, therefore, is not necessarily associated with what powerful men are, but is what sustains their power. The large numbers of men are

motivated to support it because it benefits them. So, “hegemonic masculinity is naturalized in the form of the hero and presented through forms that revolve around heroes: sagas, ballads, westerns, thrillers, in books, films, television, and in sporting events. (646)

Thus, a particular form of masculinity is hegemonic means its exaltation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole. Masculinities are often bound together by their domination of women but this obscures important difference between masculinities. Working class, black and gay men are excluded or subordinated to hegemonic masculinity. Thus, by these all means we can account that hegemonic masculinity is an umbrella under which all types of masculinities are formed, and all these are controlled and dominated by its physical and institutional powers. On the other side, there are the possibilities that if the masculinities protest against the physical and institutional power of hegemonic masculinity and its defining features, it will be problematic.

In the history of America, the form of hegemonic masculinity was the gentry masculinity. The gentry masculinity, as R. W. Connell writes:

Was the class of hereditary landowners, the gentry, who dominated the North Atlantic world of the eighteenth century. George Washington was a notable example of the class and its hegemonic form of masculinity. Based in land ownership, gentry masculinity was involved in capitalist economic relations but did not emphasize strict relations calculation in the manner of the merchants. (248)

The history of American masculinity as in Connell’s illustration was preoccupied with the landownership and establishment of plantation. If we examine American history, we find the American people had brought black people to make their slave. But, later blacks were largely brought to work in the plantation fields. The most interesting matter was that American people not only institutionalized the business markets but also constructed their masculinity in opposition to black

people. The growing literature in the United States and Britain, were locating 'black masculinity' as oppositional, discrete, and implicated in construction of white masculinity. In an analysis, citing A.S. Chen, Robert Morrell expresses the purpose of literature "is to dignify the lives and experiences of black men, an approach that can, however, degenerate into treating black men simply as 'heroic victims of racism' (611)". Thus, such purpose was a project that succeeded in undermining the stereotypes of black masculinity which had been fixed on the body, on physicality, physical strength, and it was taken as a site for European fantasies about black male sexuality. Black masculinity was commonly pictured as a sexual and social threat in dominant white cultures.

The most striking feature of the present moment gender order, mostly in the rich countries, is the open challenge to men's privileges made by feminism and this challenge is circulating globally as soon as it was made. Here is also the challenge to hegemonic sexuality from lesbian and gay sexuality. The oppositional movements have opened which is also historically new. The emergence of transgender subjects and transsexual male/female, from the twentieth-century to till now, are creating their masculinity in deliberately ambiguous body. These transgender subjects, according to Judith Halberstam, are not attempting to slide seamlessly into manhood, and their retention of the FTM (female to male) suggests the emergence of new gender position. However, another strand of male transsexualism has produced a new discourse of masculinity. Thus, the construction of masculinity in recent years is on the process of reconstruction of multiple identities. It is all, because masculinity and femininity are not biologically determined rather socially constructed and thought. Unlike sex, which is biological, the masculinity of men are psychologically and socially constructed which means historically and culturally determined.

The study of masculinity, perhaps the most important development of feminist criticism was the shift from 'woman' to 'gender' as a primary object of study. A term that applies to men and women, like gender would enable scholars to approach masculinity as a social role that like masculinity needed to be understood and interrogated. It is here necessary to discuss the crucial distinction between sex and gender role. Almost all human being are born with a more or less clearly definable sex as male or female. But, in some cases, infants with constant sex characteristics can be

misunderstood at birth due to distortions of the genitals. Raised as members of the other sex, they find it difficult if not impossible to function like other members of their own sex. Thus, “gender role is a order of phenomenon than sex, and the relevant terms are not “male” or “female”, which are sex terms, but “masculine” and “feminine”(Chafetz:1978, 3). The formation of gender category, as Chafetz views:

It does not require a very astute social observer to notice [gender role] from very early childhood to death, people act differently according to sex. Most female display, to a greater extent, a set of behavioral, temperamental, emotional, intellectual, and attitudinal characteristics identified, )n a given culture at a given cu t ra at a given time, as feminine. Similarly, most males display, to a greater or lesser extent, a set of different characteristics can be conceptualized together under the general rubric of ‘gender roles’. (3)

Chafetz defines the gender roles in terms of a cluster of socially or culturally defined expectations that every individuals are expected to fulfill. At any given time infant born into culture, starts perform gender roles, but the roles are given in the sense that they exist outside of that individual. If s/he is confronted by a set of socially and culturally prescribed roles, s/he will be pressured, rewarded, and punished to accept and internalize certain roles and others during the process of socialization.

Through Chafetz, what we acknowledge here is that it is sufficient to understand that the concept ‘role’ centers on two fundamental phenomena. First roles are defined more or less precisely by society and presumed to apply to all individuals in a given category; and second, roles are more or less well-learned responses by individuals. The main implications of these two aspects of the definition are always subject to change over time and place. However, the traditional gender stereotypes in males tended to choose only male jobs or perform masculine roles and female do same. Therefore, the exercise of ‘gender roles’ is used to convey the socio-cultural components that are typically associated with each sex. But the male gender role practices have been denounced as a male tool to dissipate women’s power whereby women became viable subjects only when placed alongside men, and reinforcing their position as ‘other’. “As Judith Bennet cautioned a history of gender as meaning

intellectualizes and abstracts the inequality of the sexes” (qtd. in Harvey: 296).

In Harvey’s analysis-the gender inequality for women and feminist historians- is a political problem. Such gender problem can be disciplined because it allows them to forget the material working of power in the past. In this sense, gender history or gender inequality often explores ideas about and meaning of femininity and masculinity; such ideas emphatically speak about power. Judith Bennet’s manifesto piece on women’s history [talked] “the oppression and subordination of women through a reinvigoration of the concept of patriarchy” (296-97). The concept of patriarchy, as Bhasin defines: “is a social and ideological system which men have more control over resources and decision-making. Patriarchy is historically constructed and its form, content and extent can be different in different contexts and at different time” (8).

Patriarchal ideology undertakes masculinism as the notion that men and masculinity are superior to women and femininity. Like all societal system, patriarchy too has an ideology and structure which together ensure that men are head of households, inheritors of family name and property, by which all societal institutions are male dominated. In course of time, its nature is always subject to change.

Sangita Rayamajhi in the first masculinity studies seminar (jointly organized by Social Science Baha, the Central Department of English, CNAS, and Aakar, New Delhi) says-“Because of a patriarchal ideology and system, gender relations everywhere are unequal and hierarchical; women are subjected and discriminated against. What holds good for men and boys holds true for women and girls as well”. Such views are apparent all over the social and cultural institutions and practices-education, health, economic sectors, sports, marriage, household, festivals etc.

The essentialist concept of men is centrally reinforced by these societal or cultural institutions and, by media. All the conceptualization of gender and sexuality are, thus, the patriarchal product in correspond to biological, societal and cultural attributes. In this sense, the gender of men is particularly masculine; the sexuality of men is explicitly heterosexual. If a man is not performing masculine traits he is considered either feminine or transvestite. And if a man is participating in

homosexual activities or sharing homosexual attributes that is not masculine. These homosexuals are considered opposite to masculine traits. It is all because patriarchy assumes the masculinity is only associated with men, and what man is strictly defined by patriarchal ideology. Kamala Bhasin, in her book *Exploring Masculinity* expresses the attributes of patriarchy-“in a patriarchal ideology, masculinity is the notion that men and masculinity are superior to women and femininity.

Masculinism believes in, and justifies male superiority and male dominations. It naturalizes masculinity, thus making it inevitable and non-negotiable” (13). Masculinity, thus a form of patriarchy, clearly talks about power and assertion of power over others; and different from femininity because it gives command and controls. Since men’s gendered practices, the hegemonic masculinity is so deeply implicated through the use, generation, threat and reproduction of violence. This attention and reproduction of violence to women has provided one test of social and political significance of men’s different discursive practices. From the late nineteenth-century, “what emerged as a prominent topic was a sense that theories of gender were not fully adequate to address sexuality, either as a social practice or as a vector of oppression. It is essential to separate gender and sexuality analytically to more accurately reflect their separate social existence” (183). According to Trumbach, by the late 1980s and early 1990, “the call to develop theories of sexuality was being answered by an expanding body of literature that addressed the political and cultural positions of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, sex-workers, sadomasochists, and others- diverse conglomeration of ‘sexual minorities’ who were increasingly identified as queer” (183). “The dominant, hegemonic man is no longer defined by his house-holding status and his good domestic and Christian order but by the fact that he desires and has sex only with women” (301). If we cast a short view upon the final two decades of the eighteenth century, according to Harvey, “a growing emphasis on domesticity seemed to threaten masculinity with too close a relationship with women and led on to an imperative to prove masculinity through male-only encounters”(304).

Michael S. Kimmell’s argument was the articulation of the new claims made by women derived from these macro- and micro-structural changes that promoted re-evaluation of traditional gender relations by men and constituted the structural origins of the crisis of masculinity. “In the

public sphere, the rise of the women's college, women's increased literacy, delayed marriage, an ideology of upward mobility, and capitalist development gave rise to the New woman" (265).

Such, highly educated and economically autonomous woman challenged existing gender relations and the distribution of power. Hartman, here, responds to the late nineteenth-century crisis of masculinity, and such crisis resulted because of the complex set of relationship of gender categories and of economic and social order. In Douglas's words such subject change and decay initiates sexual tension and hatred of women by men and the reverse. "A strongly misogynist current runs through a number of social and religious tracts, medical treatises, and political pamphlet" (266). The women's increasing power, thus was symptomatic of cultural changes that had reduced the importance and visibility of masculinity. Masculinist sentiments countered feminization as a cultural process, rather than opposing advancement of women as a group or as individuals. The equality was searched within the growing labor movement. According to Kimmell, in his updated pamphlet, "Women-Comrade and Equal", Eugene V. Debs proclaimed himself-"glad to align myself with a party that declares for absolute equality between the sexes. Anything less than this is too narrow for twentieth-century civilization and too small for a man who has a right conception of manhood" (qtd. in Kimmel,275). The social emancipation of women to the end of violence against women and transformation of masculinity was the commitment of feminists.

Debs concludes his pamphlet:

Under our brutal forms of existence, beating womanhood to dust, we have raised in passion for the individual women, for use only. Some day we shall develop the social passion for womanhood, and then the gross will disappear in service and justice and companionship. Then we shall left woman from the mire where our fist have struck her, and set her by our side as our comrade and equal, and that will be shown, not in the fact that he had enslaved his wife, but in that he has made her force.(275)

Debs's conclusion suggests that the feminist movement did not lead masculinity on the verge of crisis rather it developed a new form of man called pro-feminist, who participated in women's right

movement, and supported them to be free from social injustices and inequality. The pro-feminist men sought to resolve the crisis of masculinity by supporting women's claims for autonomy in marriage and in their demands for sexual freedom" (295).

The new wave of feminism and the sexual revolution placed a number of stresses and strains on men (Lemon 62). The crisis of masculinity theory suggests that men today, more than ever are confused about what it means to be a man, and are attempting to push beyond the rigid role prescriptions of traditional concept of masculinity. Jennifer Lemon, in her analysis of Brod observes:

To be a man is to have a particular psychological identity, social role, place in the labor force, and sense of self. In industrial societies, 'real men' defined themselves in three ways: Firstly, they earned money in the public work force and supported their families through that effort (the man as provider and breadwinner), secondly, they (should) have had formal power over women and children in these families (the man as head of house). And finally, "real men" were unquestionably heterosexual (62).

Lemon's assertion of traditional concept of masculinity features some images or roles of men. To be a masculine figure one should have all these qualities. However, post-industrial societies disrupted such a definition of masculinity. They were heedlessly destructive of the individual jobs that men traditionally filled, and tended to generate lower-paying filled, service jobs that women frequently occupy. Moreover, post-industrial culture are extremely heterogeneous and tend to adopt the values of egalitarianism and the ideology of liberal individualism more readily. They are making space for greater freedom for women and offering a wider range of options regarding sexual preference and expression for both sexes. "A contradiction thus existed between the hegemonic male image (patriarchal ideology) and the real conditions of men's lives"(62).

The study of gender and sexuality, in the later years, is more vibrant to the formation of masculinity. It examined the historical ideology of sex and gender and put some new consequences that are developed along with the passage of time. More assaults on dominant gender regimes came from gender butch art and performance, which might include drag kings, butch theatrical roles, or art

featuring gender variant subjects. In an introduction of *Female Masculinity* (1998), Judith Halberstam suggests that “female masculinity to explore a queer subject position that can successfully challenge the hegemonic models of gender conformity” (9). Female masculinity has been situated as the place where patriarchy goes to work on the female psyche and reproduced misogyny with femaleness. Halberstam coincides female masculinity with the excesses of male supremacy and a unique form of social rebellion and says that “female masculinity is the sign of sexual alterity, but occasionally it marks heterosexual variation: sometimes [. . .] the place of pathology” (9). Halberstam’s such affirmations begins not by subverting masculine power or taking up a position against power but by turning a blind eye to conventional masculinities and refusing to engage. Gender ambiguous or gender deviant configurations are constantly challenged about their gender identity, and always producing alternative masculinities. Making a critique of “You are Just Like My Father”, by Peggy Shaw (1995), Halberstam writes:

Shaw constructs her own masculinity by reworking and improving the masculinities (and) observes all around her. Shaw moves easily back and forth between various personal: she is the fighter, the crooner, the soldier, the breadwinner, the Romeo, the patriarch. In each of these roles, she makes it clear that she is feminist bodied person inhabiting each role and that each role is part of her gender identity. (32)

Halberstam’s analysis exposes a variety of masculine identifications that woman can acquire and become father and appropriate to maleness, therefore female masculinity is equivalent or exists parallel to male masculinity. Performing these roles, Shaw crossed the gender bound roles. Such crossing-gender performance is the contemporary modes of gender that tend to perform continuity between lesbian or Tran sexuality and cross-gender identification. The types of gender variance are differentiated through the clothing. Clothing, indeed, becomes the means by which transsexual women/men cover their queerness and find a comfortable gender expression. “Clothing is [. . .] the way of making masculinity both real and potent, convincing and is either outward (in women’s clothes) or inadequate next to the “real” embodied masculinity of a man” (100).

Cross-dressing is a technique to abandon traditional stylistic acting conventions and gradually to liberate themselves from the convention of as well as the traditional ideology of gender difference encoded in its gestures and costuming. “The image of cross-dressed men in Hollywood-the standard plot of the transvestite man genre features a moral lesson in which we learn that men make better women than women do. However, when women appear crossed as men [. . .] are coded as flawed women rather than perfect men” (205). The genre of the transvestite woman demands careful attention because the various themes of gender theatricality, gender dysphoria, androgyny, and butch masquerade all produce very different narratives. Sometimes, cross-dressing produces an image of essential androgyny, and constructs the transvestite woman as a meeting of the sexes. In other, the male drag has become more than a costume, and the butch inside it has an erotic relation to her clothes and uses masculine clothing to complete her gender presentation. “Cross-dressing assumed female masculinity in relation to the notion of disguise” (206-7). The conventions of the cross-dressing genres is to place the female transvestite within it is the relation of the butch character to the cross-dressing narrative, which gives way to the hard realities of masculine identification. Caryl Churchill, for instance, has used the cross-dressing as a technique in her drama *Cloud Nine*(1970) to project the constructions of the “natural” order of things, and subverted the traditional masculine concept by asserting the female masculinity. Thus female masculinity is to explore a queer subject position through the cross-dressing technique that can successfully challenges hegemonic modes of gender conformity. “Whereas male masculinity all too often depends on the functionality of the penis and its ability literally to be phallic” (104), the masculine woman, on the other hand, “is not limited to the unpredictable movements of phallic desire; she can “bear the subject’s desire in a masculine mode” through an artificial phallus, in her fingers, through tribalism and so on.” (104).

The construction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biologically intractability sex apparatus to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence neither the causal result of sex nor an seemingly fixed as sex (Butler 9-10). But the feminist theorists claim that gender is the unity of the subject, and is cultural interpretation of gender and a multiple interpretation of sex. Thus, there is the existence of ‘third gender’ categories, or other confusing/ problematic genders. This

gender is theorized in comparison to their sexuality and cultural practices, and binary opposition. According to Butler, “the lesbian” emerges as a third gender that promises to transcend the binary restriction on sex imposed by the system of compulsory heterosexuality” (26), and always on the way to sexual liberation. In this sense, the gender categories: gay/lesbian, homosexual, butch-femme, transvestite, transsexual, bisexual-all practice categorical sexuality. Therefore, the concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” initiated by patriarchal normative masculinity is declining. Butler, in her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of Identity*, believes that “a construction is not ‘a kind of manipulability artifice’ because the subject of gender neither produces nor follows the process of this gendering but emerges only within as the matrix of gender relations themselves” (qtd. in Halberstam: 119).

Thus, the theoretical framework developed above clearly evinces that the stereotypical version of gender, and sexuality, race and ethnicity defined by traditional masculinity is under threat. The recently existed alternative masculinities developed a visible sense that the “white manhood has been marked as an unmarked location of power can be resignified with subversive and ever potentially revolutionary results” (181). They hint at an ‘align logic of gender within which masculinity is as much a production of ethnicity as it is of gender and sexuality, is attaching its unorthodox gender performance with a pervasively alien identity.

### III. Masculinity under Threat and Gregor Samsa's Transformation into a bug

The main contention of this dissertation research and the major argument of this researcher is that the main cause of Gregor Samsa's transformation into a bug is his inability to hold the masculine roles that the society has assigned to him. The society has assigned Gregor Samsa certain masculine roles: as a successor of his father's parental property, he is expected to run the business successfully with full confidence, to take the responsibility of educating his sister, to manage the house financially and so and so forth. Everything is fine as far as Samsa fulfills all his duties: wakes up early in the morning, goes to office, fulfills his duties and returns home, looks after the family problems. But the problem arises when he does not wake up one morning and does not go through his masculine roles.

Franz Kafka's novella "The Metamorphosis" unfolds with a beautiful naturalness and a classic economy. It takes place in three acts: three times the metamorphosed Gregor Samsa ventures out of his room, with tumultuous results. The members of his family – rather simpler than Kafka's own, which had three sisters- dispose themselves around the central horror with a touching, as well as an amusing, plausibility. The father's injury, roused in defense of the fragile mother, stems directly from the action and inflicts a psychic wound gruesomely objectified in the rotting apple Gregor carries in his back; the evolutions of the sister, Grete, from shock to distasteful ministrations to a certain sulky possessiveness and finally to exasperated indifference are beautifully sketched, with not a stroke too much. The terrible but terribly human tale ends with Grete's own metamorphosis into a comely young woman.

Franz Kafka's the best-known story *The Metamorphosis* begins with the statement which has become one of the most famous in modern fiction:

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. He was lying on his hand, as it were armor-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his

dome-like brown belly divided into stiff arched segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes. (733)

Franz Kafka thus subverts narrative tradition by stating his climax in his initial declarative sentence. He then organizes three sub-climaxes in three frustrated attempts by Gregor to escape from the imprisonment of his bedroom. The novella's three sections divide it into three clearly identifiable parts, showing Gregor in his relation to his occupation, his family, and his divided psyche. In the first section, Gregor Samsa accepts his fantastic transformation matter-of-factly, perhaps wishing to bury its causes in his subconscious mind. Instead of worrying about the mystery of his metamorphosis, he worries about the nature and security of position as travelling salesman for a firm whose severity he despises. Even though his boss treats him tyrannically, and overworks him, Gregor needs to keep his degrading job because his father owes his employer a huge debt. He can only dream of walking out into freedom in five or six years, after having slowly repaid it from his earnings.

Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of the story, is a self-sacrificing, dutiful young man who is mysteriously transformed into a giant insect as the story begins. He lives with his parents and his sister, whom he has been supporting by working as a travelling salesman, a job he very much dislikes, but which he devotes his life to: he seems to have no close friends and no social life. There are hints of repressed resentment in Gregor's attitude towards his family; he seems to feel that his sacrifices for them have not been properly appreciated. And despite his dutiful nature, he does not seem very close to his family, except for his sister, whose musical studies he has been planning to finance.

After his transformation, Gregor's character changes somewhat: on two occasions, he puts his own desires ahead of what others want, first when he tries to defend his belongings in

opposition to his sister's plan to remove them, and second when he seeks to obtain the mysterious nourishment associated with his sister's violin playing. In the end, however, he reverts to his self-sacrificing ways by willingly going to his death because his family wants to be rid of him. Grete Samsa, usually referred to in the story as Gregor's sister, is the family member Gregor seems closest to and is the one who takes care of him after his transformation. Even she seems disgusted by his new form, however, and she is the one who at the end demands that he be get rid of. Before the transformation, the seventeen- year-old Grete leads an idle life and is regarded by her parents as "a somewhat useless daughter". After his transformation, she becomes a sales clerk as well as taking on the responsibility of caring for Gregor. Tired out by all these new duties, she begins to neglect Gregor, but is furious when her mother cleans Gregor's room, seeing this action as an invasion of her domain.

Twice Grete does things that lead Gregor to leave his room, for which he suffers serious consequences. First, her decision to remove Gregor's furniture leads to a confrontation in the living room that ends with Gregor being seriously injured. Later her violin playing lures Gregor into the living room again, provoking the conflict that leads to his death. She is also the one who argues the most strongly for getting rid of Gregor. After Gregor's death, Grete blooms, and her parents think she is ready for a husband.

Mr. Samsa, referred to only as Gregor's father until Gregor's death, is a failed businessman who has been idle for five years, living off what Gregor earns. He seems quite antagonistic to his son, fierce towards him, though at the same time weak: when he first sees the transformed Gregor, he shakes a fist at him, but then breaks down and cries. It is the fierceness that dominates, however. The first two times Gregor ventures out of his room, his father forces him back in, the first time brandishing a walking stick and a newspaper at him, the second time bombarding him with apples. He does injury to Gregor both times.

After Gregor's transformation, Mr. Samsa is also transformed; before, he was a sluggish man who hardly ever got dressed and who could barely walk; now he is a bank messenger in a small uniform who is reluctant ever to take it off. He is still weak in some ways, though, waiting cap in hand on the lodgers, for instance, until Gregor's death, at which point he becomes invigorated and is able to stand up to both the lodgers and the charwoman. Mrs. Samsa, who is referred to as Gregor's mother throughout except after Gregor dies is perhaps the character most sympathetic to Gregor, and the most willing to come to his defense. When something first seems wrong with Gregor, she assumes he is ill and wants to send for the doctor. When the chief clerk is being critical of Gregor, she assures him that Gregor is a very hard worker. When Mr. Samsa throws apples at Gregor, Mr. Samsa rushes to intervene.

On the other hand, Mrs. Samsa cannot really stand to look at her son in his transformed state: the first two times she does so she screams and faints. She is also not strong enough to defend Gregor successfully: she allows Grete to overrule her on whether to remove Gregor's furniture; and when Grete and Mr. Samsa begin to discuss getting rid of Gregor, Mrs. Samsa has an asthmatic fit and is unable to return. So, this researcher argues that all the members of the family change their attitude and treatment to Gregor Samsa when he is transformed into a bug. It also demonstrates the selfish attitude of human beings in general and of the family in particular. As long as Samsa fulfilled his duties, he was the most loved one in the family. But when he fails to perform his masculine roles, he is rejected and hated in the family.

The firm's "chief clerk" (equivalent to an American office manager) appears in the Samsa's apartment at 7:10am and inquires why Gregor failed to catch the 5:00 am train to work. He yells at Gregor that he is "making a disgraceful exhibition" of himself, exploiting

his anxiety and insecurity by telling him that his sales have slackened to the point where he faces dismissal:

“Mr. Samsa,” the chief clerk called now in a louder voice, “What’s the matter with you? Here you are, barricading yourself in your room, giving only ‘yes’ and ‘no’ for answers, causing your parents a lot of unnecessary trouble and neglecting-I mention this only in passing neglecting your business duties in an incredible fashion. I am speaking here in the name of your parents and of your chief, and I beg you quite seriously to give an immediate and precise explanation. You amaze me, you amaze me. I thought you were a quiet, dependable person, and now all at once you seem bent on making a disgraceful exhibition of yourself. The chief did hint to me early this morning a possible explanation for your disappearance with reference to the cash payments that were entrusted to you recently- but I almost pledged my solemn word of honor that this not be so. But now that I see how incredibly obstinate you are, I no longer have the slightest desire to take your part at all. And your position in the firm is not so unassailable. I came with the intention of telling you this entire in private but since you are wasting my time so needlessly I don’t see why your parents shouldn’t hear it too. For some time past your work has been most unsatisfactory; this is not the season of the year for a business boom, of course, we admit that, but a season of the year for doing no business at all, that does not exist, Mr. Samsa, must not exist”. (738)

Gregor responds with an agitated speech replete with a succession of special pleas which contradict one another. He is only mildly indisposed, yet cannot rise from his bed; he feels all right, yet is struck down with a sudden malady. “Oh, sir, do spare my parents!” he cries hysterically—but the chief clerk cannot understand him: Gregor has lost his capacity for

human speech. Frantic, Gregor manages to open his bedroom door by painfully turning its lock key with his toothless mouth. When he scuttles into the clerk's sight, however, ostensibly to reassure him about his health and competence, he instead puts him into panicked flight, with the clerk relinquishing his cane as he leaps down the stairs. This will prove Gregor's sole triumph over authority; it is short-lived. His father snatches up the cane and "pitilessly" drives his son back into his bedroom, with Gregor bleeding heavily from the agony of squeezing his broad, clumsy body through its half-door.

His father, of course, in his present mood was far from thinking of such a thing as opening the other half of the door, to let Gregor have enough space. He had merely the fixed idea of driving Gregor back into his room as quickly as possible. He would never have suffered Gregor to make the circumstantial preparations for standing up on end and perhaps slipping his way through the door. May be he was making more noise than ever to urge Gregor forward, as if no obstacle impeded him; to Gregor, anyhow, the noise in his rear sounded no longer like the voice of one single father; this was really no joke, and Gregor thrust himself-come what might- into the doorway. One side of body rose up, he was tilted at an angle in the doorway, his flank was quite bruised, horrid blotches stained the white door, so he was stuck fast and, left to himself, could not have moved at all, his legs on one side fluttered trembling to the air, those on the other were crushed painfully to the floor- when from behind his father gave him a strong push which was literally a deliverance and he flew far into the room, bleeding freely. The door was slammed behind him with the stick, and then there was silence. (744)

In section 2, Gregor's isolation and alienation intensify. The reader learns about his relations, past and present, with his family; they have been characterized by concealment,

mistrust and exploitation on the father's part. Gregor now discovers that, contrary to what he was led to believe, his father did not go bankrupt when his business failed but managed to save and augment a tidy sum while relying on Gregor's income to sustain the Samsas. Ever the dutiful son, Gregor "rejoiced at this evidence of unexpected thrift and foresight". Gregor's mother is gentle, selfless, weak, and shallow; in the story's development she becomes increasingly her husband's appendage. His sister Grete is his favorite; he once hoped to subsidize her violin training in a conservatory. Yet, though she now ministers to his animal needs, she fails him emotionally, suggesting that his furniture be removed from his room—thereby stripping him of the last vestiges of his humanity. Desperately, Gregor scurries about the room trying to protect his possessions; his mother faints; his sister shakes her fist at him; then his father, now vigorously self-confident, joins battle with his son again and bombards him with apples, one of which grievously wounds his back. As Gregor is about to faint with pain, he sees his mother, her clothes in disarray, embracing his father as she begged for her son's life.

Gregor wanted to drag himself forward, as if this startling, incredible pain could be left behind him: but he felt as if nailed to the spot and flattered himself out in a complete derangement of all his senses. With his last conscious look he saw the door of his room being torn open and his mother rushing out ahead of his screaming sister, in her under bodice, for her daughter had loosened her clothing to let her breathe more freely and recover from her swoon, he saw his mother rushing towards his father, leaving one after another behind her on the floor her loosened petticoats, stumbling over her petticoats straight to his father and embracing him. (755)

In section 3, Gregor, defeated, yields up all hope of returning to the human community. His parents and sisters form a triadic unit that shuts him out, as Gregor's

miserable existence now slopes resignedly toward death. The wound in his back agonizingly; his room becomes a repository for the household's discarded articles and rejected food; he eats almost nothing. He does erupt from his room for what turns out to be the last time when he hears his sister performs a violin recital for roomers the Samsas have taken in; horrified by his appearance, they give immediate notice and threaten the family with a lawsuit for damages. Grete thereupon presides over the family conference where she brusquely announces her determination to get rid of

Gregor: "If this were Gregor, he would have realized long ago that human beings can't live with such a creature" (763). Gregor agrees with her, and that night dies a sacrificial death, reconciled with his family as he thinks of them "with tenderness and love." The next morning the relieved Samsas make a holiday of his death day, review their promising prospects, and admire Grete's blooming young womanhood, bursting with crude health as she stretches her body in the sunshine:

"He must go", cried Gregor's sister. "That is the only solution, Father. You must just try to get rid of the idea that this is Gregor. The fact that we're believed it for so long is the root of all our trouble. But how can it be Gregor? If this were Gregor, he would have realized long ago that human being can't live with such a creature, and he'd have gone away on his own accord. Then we would not have any brother, but we'd be able to go on living and keep his memory in honor. As it is, this creature persecutes us, drives away our lodgers, obviously wants the whole apartment to himself and would have us all sleep in the gutter". "Just look, Father", she shrieked all at once, "he's at it again!" And in an access of panic that was quite incomprehensible to Gregor, and rushed behind her father, who also rose up, being simply upset by her agitation and half-spread his arms out as if to protect her. (763)

As long as he has completed his duties, he was the most affectionate member of the family. He went to his office in right time, helped his father in the business, and took the burden of educating his sister. But when he fails to complete his duties as expected by his family and society as a whole, he is vehemently detested and all treat him apathetically. So, the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a bug is a symbolic representation of his shift in his masculinity. Everything was fine as long as he uphold his masculine roles. But he becomes an “unworthy creature” to live with as he fails to do his duties and perform his masculine roles.

Now the question is why does Gregor Samsa out of a sudden metamorphose into a bug? This researcher argues that the transformation of Gregor Samsa into an insect symbolizes the anxiety and stress put forth by the society as he has to perform the masculine roles. Gregor’s metamorphosis accomplishes several of his aims: First it frees him from his hated job with an odious employer by disabling him from working; second, it relieves him of the requirement to make an agonizing choice between his filial duties to his parents- particularly his father- and his desperate yearning to emancipate himself from such obligation and dependence. It thus enables him to “bug out” of his loathsome constraints yet do so on a level of conscious innocence, with Gregor merely a victim of an uncontrollable calamity. Moreover, Gregor’s fantasies include aggressive and retaliatory action against the oppressive firm. He accomplishes this by terrorizing the pitiless, arrogant office manager, who tells him, “I am speaking here in the name of parents and of your chief (739). On the conscious level, Gregor pursues the clerk to appease him and secure his advocacy for Gregor’s cause at the office; subconsciously, his threatening appearance and apparently hostile gestures humiliate his hated superiors.

Gregor’s change also expresses his sense of guilt at having betrayed his work and his parents, at having broken the familial circle. It is a treacherous appeasement of this guilt

complex, inviting his isolation, punishment and death. His loss of human speech prevents him from communicating his humanity. His enormous size, though an insect (he is at least two feet wide), his ugly features, and his malodorous stench invite fear and revulsion. Yet his pacific temperament and lack of claws, teeth, or wings make him far more vulnerable than when his body was human. His metamorphosis therefore gives him the worst of both worlds. He is offensive in appearance but defenseless in fact, exposed to the merciless attack of anyone – such as his furious father- ready to exploit his vulnerability. *The Metamorphosis*, then, can be seen as a punishment fantasy with Gregor Samsa feeling triply guilty of having displaced his father as leading breadwinner for the family, for his hatred of his job and resentment of his family's expectations of him. He turns himself into a detestable insect, thereby both rebelling against the authority of his father and firm, and punishing himself for this rebellion by seeking estrangement, rejection, and death. Insofar as Gregor's physical manifestation constitutes a translation of the interior self to the external world, *The Metamorphosis* is a comment on Gregor's inability of holding his masculine traits.

This novella, thus, is an extended literalization of the implications of the metaphor used in its initial sentence. Gregor is metamorphosed into an insect like species of vermin, with Kafka careful not to identify the precise nature of Gregor's bug hood. German uses apply Kafka's term, Ungeziefer, to contemptible, spineless, parasitic persons, akin to English connotations of the word "cockroach". Gregor's passivity and abjectness before authority link him with these meanings, as Kafka develops the fable by transforming the metaphor back into the imaginative reality of his fiction. After all, Gregor's metamorphosis constitutes a revelation of the truth regarding his low self-esteem. It is a self-judgment by his repressed and continually defeated humanity. By having Gregor become a bug Kafka has also accomplished a bitterly parodistic inversion of a traditional motif in fairy tales. In folktales the prince is rescued from his frog hood by the princess' kiss; beauty redeems the beast with

love. In Kafka's version, however, the "beauty", sister Gregor loves, is horrified by her beastlike brother and condemns him to die rather than metamorphosing him through affection. The most poignant aspect of the story is the inextinguishable beauty of Gregor's soul, as he consents to his family's rejection of his humanity and dies on their behalf.

Kafka illustrates Gregor's subjection to his father by the implied parable of the episode involving the lodgers. This triad duplicates the Samsa triad that excludes Gregor, with the middle lodger, like Mr. Samsa, exerting authority over his supporters. Initially they intimidate and threaten the Samsas. After Gregor's death, however, Mr. Samsa curtly orders these boarders out of the apartment, and they accede without a struggle- their apparently awesome power proves spurious. Equivalently, had Gregor found the self-confidence to revolt openly against both his firm and his father, had he walked out on his job and asserted his autonomy against his family's clutches, he, too, could have matured into triumphant adulthood and would not have needed the disguised hostility of his metamorphosis.



#### IV. Conclusion

After the meticulous discussion and analysis of Franz Kafka's novella "The Metamorphosis", the researcher reaches to the conclusion that the sudden transformation of Gregor Samsa, the major character of the novella, into a bug represents the shift in masculinity. It evinces Gregor's masculinity under threat. The main cause of Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis into a bug is his inability to hold the masculine roles that the society has assigned to him. The society has assigned Gregor Samsa certain masculine roles: as a successor of his father's parental property, he is expected to run the business successfully with full confidence, to take the responsibility of educating his sister, to manage the house financially and so and so forth. Everything is fine as far as Samsa fulfills all his duties: wakes up early in the morning, goes to office, fulfills his duties and returns home, looks after the family problems. But the problem arises when he does not wake up one morning and does not go through his masculine roles.

Gregor Samsa is the sole bread winner of the family. He has been bounded to his family and jobs after his father's business collapsed. He has the burden of educating his sister and a grave responsibility of paying back his father's business debts. But the problem is Gregor Samsa suddenly turns into a bug. Now, the question is why does Gregor Samsa get metamorphosed into a bug? The main contention of this research and the major finding of this researcher is that Gregor Samsa gets metamorphosed into a bug due to his inability to hold masculine identity assigned by the patriarchal society.

The transformation of Gregor Samsa into an insect symbolizes the anxiety and stress put forth by the society as he has to perform the masculine roles. Gregor's metamorphosis accomplishes several of his aims: First it frees him from his hated job with an odious employer by disabling him from working; second, it relieves him of the requirement to make an agonizing choice between his filial duties to his parents- particularly his father- and his

desperate yearning to emancipate himself from such obligation and dependence. It thus enables him to “bug out” of his loathsome constraints yet do so on a level of conscious innocence, with Gregor merely a victim of an uncontrollable calamity. Moreover, Gregor’s fantasies include aggressive and retaliatory action against the oppressive firm. He accomplishes this by terrorizing the pitiless, arrogant office manager.

As long as he has completed his duties, he was the most affectionate member of the family. He went to his office in right time, helped his father in the business, and took the burden of educating his sister. But when he fails to complete his duties as expected by his family and society as a whole, he is vehemently detested and all treat him apathetically. So, the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a bug is a symbolic representation of his shift in his masculinity. Everything was fine as long as he uphold his masculine roles. But he becomes an “unworthy creature” to live with as he fails to do his duties and perform his masculine roles.

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