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Samsa Suffering from Existential Crisis

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the concept of existential crisis in *The Metamorphosis* (1915) by Franz Kafka (1883-1924) through giving the proper attention to the interpretation of the characteristics of Samsa. It is the study of the existential crisis of Samsa, which tends to focus on the relation with the existential philosophy of Sartre, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Heidegger. This paper finds that an existential crisis occurs if a person does not have proper concentration on his/her existence. This way of looking at one's own identity is problematic as it creates complexity within the existence of the self. Existentialism always emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. It is such a point of view where human beings attain the power to illustrate their meaning of life, and at the same time give efforts to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. Samsa is a traveling salesman, who has to maintain all responsibilities of his family, and he has understood it in a very short time. Despite being metamorphosed into an insect, he never forgets his family members in such a hard situation. Existentialism always gives priority to one's own choice, and freedom, and at the same time provides the opportunity to give a proper shape of life according to one's own will, but Samsa does not want to leave his family members till the end of his life. This is why, he faces the path of death, and finally dies. He is always ready to take care of his fellows neglecting and denying his own needs. Instead of fighting for his existence, he always gets ready to do whatever he is supposed to do as if he were made to have the belief that he should always do the same as long as he will exist on earth, and this is why, he deserves to face an existential crisis. So, his selfless and dutiful attitude toward others' lives trigger the ultimate result of his loneliness, sorrow, mental trauma, and at last his death.

Key Words: Existential crisis, Mental trauma, Loneliness, Dutifulness, Selflessness

Introduction

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) has attained a special place in the field of literature by his writings and thinking qualities. He is especially remembered for their innovative writing styles and features. For instance, *The Metamorphosis* (1915) by Franz Kafka (1883-1924) is such kind of literary form where any traditional narrative techniques, sentence patterns, and even coherent use of language will not be found. This is why the modern world has learned a lot from this literary text and explored many concepts as a vehicle to uphold the fault and at the same time the compensation of a modern man. He has written in his writings about the pains and crises of the individual over his/her existence and also the boundless question of the entity, which combines life with death. These are the eternal thoughts of the mystery of life in the modern human consciousness. Samsa, as a symbol of a modern man, is struggling to fulfill the pressure of his deeds and also in his personal life. This paper investigates the effects of the feeling of existential crisis of Samsa and also the view of his surroundings where he has lost his identity as well as values. For that reason, he is nothing but the reflection of an anxious and sad soul, which sparks the discussion about the issues of their existence

Methodology

The entire study will be primary and secondary resources based on literature reviews. The sources of my information will be online articles. The collected data will then go through the qualitative analysis to search the answer to whether this character (Samsa) has become the victim of an existential crisis or not.

This paper tends to seek the relation with the existential philosophy of Sartre, Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky and Heidegger to show how Samsa has lost his individualism and faced existential crisis by taking the attempt to serve other people living around them neglecting and denying the very self to be the best version of them. In addition, how totalitarianism is also liable for his existential crisis will also be explored.

Literature Review

Several researches have been done on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915). To demonstrate, Sutandio and Minar have explored Sartre's concept of shame and alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* using the title "Shame and Alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*". In this article they reveal that shame and alienation may occur when a person realizes that one is judged by others and sees oneself through the eyes of others. Weam Majeed Alkhafaji has

researched on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* through giving the title "A Study of Alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as a Moral Guide for The New Generation" where he has deeply exposed alienation theme, and employed it as a vehicle to show the fault of modern man. Matthew T. Powell has explored the tension between human and non-human in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by using the title "Bestial Representations of Otherness: Kafka's Animal Stories". Here he enlists animal stories in order to clarify the space between self and other that is critical to maintaining notions of identity. Kevin W. Sweeney has invented a new concept on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* through giving the title "Competing Theories of Identity in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*". Here he has upheld his ideas that an individual is personally identical and consciousness is a separate substance distinct from the body. Stuart Hanscomb has written a research article on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by giving the title "Existentialism and Art-Horror". In this paper, he explores the relationship between existentialism and horror genre. Here he claims that the association between existentialism and art-horror can explain the appeal of horror. Johnstone has also written an article on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by giving the title "The Enigma of Being Toward Death". This article considers the relationship of Heidegger's metaphysics of being toward death to what Heidegger describes as "the enigma of motion". Arnab Das has depicted a new concept on Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by using the title "Kafka and the metamorphosis of the Human Body". This paper reveals the complex understanding of the issues regarding body and the vehement political battle for supremacy

Theoretical Framework

Existentialism is a philosophy that provides the emphasis on individual existence, freedom and choice. It is such a point of view that human beings define their own meaning in life, and at the same time try to make rational decisions in spite of existing in an irrational universe. It has focus on the question of human existence, and the also the feeling that there is no purpose or explanation at the core of existence. It does hold that, as there is no sigh of God or any other transcendent force, the only way to counter this nothingness is by embracing existence.

Dostoyevsky

Dostoyevsky's existential messages is the purpose of life is to act properly by being authentic to yourself. He is adamant that rationality alone can be deceiving. He denies the point of view of rationalists and others who value neat schemes above the full scope of individuality. Passions are not an enemy of rationality but work in unison to assist the human individual live accordingly.

Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard saw rationality as a mechanism humans use to counter their existential anxiety, their fear of being in the world. Kierkegaard also stressed that individuals must choose their own way without the aid of universal, objective standards.

Sartre

In Sartre's existentialism, "existence is prior to essence" (Lavine, 2011, p. 330) in the sense that the meaning of man's life is not established before his existence. Only a person himself/herself will have made what he/she will be.

Sartre firmly believed that everyone, always and everywhere, has choices and therefore freedom. A person always has a choice of actions. Here the freedom is empowering, but it also comes with responsibility. Sartre saw rationality as a form of bad faith and this bad faith hinders us from finding meaning in freedom, and confines us within everyday experience. Sartre famously claimed that man is condemned to be free.

Heidegger

Heidegger's "existentialism" philosophy starts with a profound anti-Cartesianism that rejects any dualism regarding mind and body, the distinction between subject and object, and the very language of "consciousness", "experience", and "mind". Thus, he begins with an analysis of Dasein. But the question emerges, because we are the "ontological" creatures. Thus, Heidegger's philosophy becomes a search for authenticity or "own-ness" or personal integrity. This search for authenticity will carry us into the familiar but ever-renewed questions about the nature of the self, and the meaning of life.

Samsa Suffering from Existential Crisis

In *The Metamorphosis* (1915), the protagonist of the text is Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman, and the only son as well as the breadwinner of the family. He miraculously metamorphoses into humongous vermin which ensures his alienation from the family, and afterward, this alienation causes his existential crisis. But what he experiences is not only directly caused by his appearance but also an indirect consequence of his characteristics. And now here in this text, the author has portrayed him in such a way that he has always had a fascination with taking care of other people and has also will to do whatever people expect him to do. These types of characteristics instigate him to do some activities and at the same time raise a feeling of shame and liabilities for his own living life. This is why these notions are eventually also responsible for his deviance out of his own family, himself, and also society.

Gregor can be considered as a being for others' welfare and in the text, we have seen this. So, his selflessness attitude is very obvious as he always gives priority to his family members' well-being instead of giving importance to his existence. The word "selfless" (Minar & Sutandio, 2017, p. 126) stands for "thinking the needs, the happiness of other people than about one's own" ("Selfless"). At the beginning of the story, we have found Samsa has been metamorphosed into an insect, and he expresses his dissatisfaction with his job as a traveling salesman. He considers the job "a grueling job" (Kafka, 1981, p. 3) and "much worse than the actual business in the home office" (Kafka, 1981, p. 4). Moreover, he illustrates the job as a "torture of traveling, worrying about changing trains, eating miserable food at all hours, constantly seeing new faces, no relationships that last or get more intimate" (Kafka, 1981, p. 4). That is why he does not have a quest for holding the job anymore. Nevertheless, he keeps down his desire, and instead of quitting the job instantly, he carries on his profession for paying his parents' debt to the chief under whom he works for. Here Samsa has lost his "choices and therefore freedom" (Lavine, 2011, p. 333). Existentialism always emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. According to Sartre, everyone always in

anywhere has “choices and therefore freedom” (Lavine, 2011, p. 333) and he has further told, “existence is prior to essence” (Lavine, 2011, p. 330). Sartre himself believes in the freedom of the individual. But Samsa was engrossed in his meditative thoughts and woke up to think as an insect and told himself “I haven’t given up home completely, I’ve gotten the money together to pay off my parents’ debt to him—that will probably take another five or six years—I’m going to do it without fail. Then I’m going to make the big break” (Kafka, 1981, p. 4). If he were not having a selfless attitude in his characteristics, he could easily throw up the job and become free from that burdensome job. But he remains himself devoted to the job even though he is going through searing pain and suffering that prevents him from fully developing his personality! There is no such thing as personal freedom or choice that existentialism does not support. His reluctance to work does not meet his family’s needs, which proves that his family is more important than the full development of his own free will or personality, but Sartre claimed that “man is condemned to be free” (Lavine, 2011, p. 349), a person can do anything whatever he/she likes to do but should not disrespect to individual freedom and choice, but this notion does not survive in Samsa’s personality, and this is why he puts his existence in jeopardy.

The grotesque in Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* (1915) of his animal stories where animals have been portrayed as the protagonist, and Kafka searches for the opportunity to explore the tension between humans and non-humans. Kafka uses the word grotesque as a means of manifesting the envying shadows that are not real selves and that need to have the proper definition for becoming a self. Samsa is also treated as grotesque for which he has a precarious relationship between the self and also his family. The grotesque world signifies what is beyond our normal, typical, and wholesome world, but Samsa’s family members do not want to think in this way; rather, they keep Samsa in a dark room and treat him as a “horror of the grotesque otherness” (Powel, 2008, p. 151). This notion pushes him to the path of existential crisis as he is unable to make his side clear, but he has soft feelings towards his family, so he cannot quit them also, and this is why he is responsible for his existential crisis. The same thing has also happened in Kafka’s “The Cares of a Man”, where Odradek’s occasional and random presence merely supports the possibility of something meaningful. He is fundamentally an enigmatic figure like Samsa. And like Samsa, Odradek is also an unfortunate creature and treated as a flat star-shaped object that symbolizes all distortion and deformation. And at last, he is a troublesome figure like Samsa, and the family members tell him that he does no harm anyone that one can see; but the idea that he wants to survive me but we find almost pain. Odradek, like Samsa, is Kafka’s fundamental expression of the grotesque and both of them face an existential crisis in their lives. Dostoevsky tells us that the purpose of life is to act properly by being authentic to yourself. He is denying the point of view of rationalists and others, who give value to the full scope of individuality. Passions that Samsa has for his family are not an enemy of rationality; rather, they work in unison way to help an individual life according to his/her way. But Samsa could not maintain it in an organized way, and this is why he faced an existential crisis and lost his freedom and choices.

In the middle of the story, Samsa’s family members want to clean Samsa’s room by removing all of his furniture and also his other belongings as they are looking all of those things have just fallen apart, and Gregor is no longer a human being, so there is no use of keeping those things in his room. Initially, Gregor accepts their plans, but afterward, he changes his mind— these statements are as follow—

Had he really wanted to have his warm room, comfortably fitted with furniture that
had always been in the family, changed into cave in which, of course
he would be able to crawl around unhampered in all directions
but at the cost of simultaneously, rapidly and totally forgetting his human past? (Kafka, 1981, p. 25)

And then finally, Samsa thinks that “nothing should be removed; everything had to stay; (Kafka, 1981, p. 25). So, he aims to stay in the same direction which indicates that he always clings to human memories and human experience which is like a reminder of his human identity—although he claims his family to live in such a way where nobody would face any threat and also face any trouble of taking care of a gigantic vermin. According to Powel, “by playing off this tension between human and non-human, between what is the self and what is not the self, all these notions play a vital role” (Powel, 2008, p. 130). Kafka can explore the “ontological otherness” (Powel, 2008, p. 130), that clarifies the space between self and other. Now, Samsa is no longer in himself as he is now considered as “other” (Powel, 2008, p. 130) and this idea of the process of “othering” (Powel, 2008, p. 130) leads his life to the path of existential crisis where he does not have choices, freedom and has lack of “own-ness” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) according to Heidegger.

Gregor is very modest about his surroundings which always keeps him busy serving his family members. And it is very natural for him to keep himself busy with his family since they largely depend on his income. After realizing their dependence upon him, he has awareness of his family members, but day by day he has become an “object” (Lavine, 2011, p. 377) of judgment to his family members. This is why the idea of being aware of one’s judgment leads Samsa’s life to Sartre’s concept of “Shame” (Minar, 2017, p. 124 & Sutandio, 2017, p. 125). “Shame” (Minar, 2017, p. 124 & Sutandio, 2017, p. 125), in the Sartrean term, is a “form of consciousness in an individual where one has to be aware of the presence of others” (Minar, 2017, p. 124 & Sutandio, 2017, p. 125). Samsa has this type of personality which causes him to be “alienated” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) from his family and at last, faces an existential crisis. Despite thinking of himself as a living existence on earth, Samsa loses his own existence gradually. He cannot reject his dual personalities, but according to Heidegger’s existential philosophy, “one has to reject any dualism regarding mind and body” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332). Heidegger also expresses the ideas of “subject” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) and “object” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332). And Samsa is considered as an “object” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) of judgment, let alone a “subject” (Lavine, 2011, p. 332), and faces a threat of his existence, but nevertheless, after being transformed into vermin, he never denies and escapes from his responsibilities; rather, he claims— “But for the time being I’d better get up since my train leaves at five” (Kafka, 1981, p. 4).

Kierkegaard points out that the very most common dejection of a human being is “not choosing or willing to be oneself” (Lavine, 2011, p. 324). He further adds the deepest form of despair is to choose “to be another than himself/herself” (Lavine, 2011, p. 324). He has stressed that individuals must

choose their way without the aid of universal. In *The Metamorphosis* (1915), we have seen Samsa is always busy with his family members and rejects all of his passions, emotions, and feelings. He is never his own, even he never tries to become his own, and that is why he keeps himself always busy in response to fulfilling the demands of others but as a result, he gets nothing but a torrent of torture and humiliation from all of his family members and afterward falls the victim of non-existence as the given statements show—

a lightly flung object hit the floor near him and rolled in front of him. It was

an apple, a second one came flying right after it, Gregor stopped dead with fear.

One apple, thrown weakly, grazed Gregor's back and slid off harmlessly

Gregor's sight went dim (Kafka, 1981, p. 28-29)

From the above quotations, we have seen the crises that ultimately conduct him towards the end of his life including facing an existential crisis. Though the apple in Gregor's back upholds the desire to live later it gradually decays in his back and the desire to live is also gradually rotten. So, he no longer omits his death; rather, he accepts it without hesitation.

Kafka's heroes are often observed as an allegorical projection of the intellectual, but it is a matter of regret that there is no intellectual sign we see in Samsa's character as he does not pay any attention to his existence. Though he has transformed into a beetle, he is only concerned about how to get to the office on time. Inside his head, he has always the thinking that how he will always be an obedient and disciplined person in his profession as these quotations tell us—

There is no basis for any of the accusation that you're making against me now,

Perhaps you haven't seen the last orders I sent in. I'm still going on the road with

the eight o'clock train. I'm coming and I'll manage my deeds after reaching in the office

(Kafka, 1981, p. 10)

Samsa tries to be a man among men like Sartre's Orestes. He wants to have been accepted only by his institution and also by his family members. But he has been recognized as an "object" (Lavine, 2011, p. 377) according to Heidegger. For this reason, Samsa searches his "own-ness" (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) and also his integrity. But, instead of achieving these expectations, he has gathered only hermetic experience, and this motion of life brings despair and existential crisis.

Our social system, which we call a democratic social system, is a symbol of bureaucracy and depersonalization. The entire planet has become the stage of this process, and Samsa falls victim to these social and political issues because he is in a fixed position where he is bound to obey the entire rules and regulations, and also the expectations of his family members. For this reason, he cannot express his views and emotions to none of his family members. In his family and also in the office, he suffers and experiences a torrent of torture of bourgeois morality of capitalism. This capitalistic attitude we also see in the character of the manager as these statements remind us—

I'm amazed, amazed. I knew you to be a quiet, reasonable person. And now you suddenly seem to want to start strutting about, flaunting strange whims. Your performance of late has been very unsatisfactory. You were very responsible of your deeds from before, now it is a matter of regret (Kafka, 1981, p. 9)

And along with those words of the manager, Samsa's father and his sister also started behaving badly toward him which pushes him towards a crisis of existence. In Kafka's "The Judgement" where we also see the crisis of the relationship between father and son. The father does not have a good relationship with his son, and he denounces his son and commands him to draw himself. Then, the son accepts his guilt and throws himself into the river. But, Samsa is not like the son we have seen in "The Judgement", and this is why Samsa faces an existential crisis and also loses his individualism.

Like Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Joseph K, in Kafka's *The Trial*, wakes up from sleep and finds himself charged with a crime, and this mysterious event prevails throughout the text. His essence is stuck in a certain place and he suffers from hopelessness like Samsa, who also wakes up and finds himself transformed into a large insect. Joseph K and Samsa have lost their fate to do whatever they want to do. They are not like Vladimir and Estragon of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, who are free to do anything. Joseph K and Samsa are in a fixed position and they both face the rejection of freedom. Now, we can connect their condition with Sartre's concept of "bad faith" (Lavine, 2011, p. 367) which is related to the self-deception associated with the rejection of freedom, and it is mingled with rationality, but Sartre does not give priority to the idea of rationality. Joseph K. and Samsa cannot make up their mind to leave the disturbing place forever, and this is why they fall a victim to an existential crisis and lose all of their freedom and free will.

"The existence precedes essence" (Lavine, 2011, p. 330) concept connotes that an individual's identity would be given more priority than any other functions, positions, or stereotypes. Whereas Samsa does not give proper focus on his own identity, and at the same time he does not have also consciousness for attaining the proper respect of identity; rather, he is characterized as a financial caretaker and his family urges him to do the job, as these quotations agree— "Gregor, 'it's a quarter to seven. Didn't you want to catch the train? Gregor, Gregor, 'what's going on' (Kafka, 1981, p. 5). He is characterized in the text as a sacrificing person and at the same time has devotion to others. He has lack of distinct personality, and this is why day by day he has transformed into a giant bug, and later faces an existential crisis because he has lost his individuality and "own-ness" (Lavine, 2011, p. 332), and "authenticity" (Lavine, 2011, p. 332) according to Heidegger, and these proportions focus on the basic issues of Samsa's and also his family's reality.

In *Dialectical of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer illustrate how both animals and their nature are close to their capabilities to enunciate the reason of man. In the section titled “Man and Animal” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 164), Adorno and Horkheimer explain that man is distinguished from the animal, and this is why in the “Concept of Enlightenment” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 164) Horkheimer and Adorno elaborate a person has the right to do whatever he/she likes to do. They call it an “ideology of domination” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 164). Human beings never try to treat an animal in a good manner. In Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Samsa is an animal, but his mind is just as like as human being, but Samsa’s family members and even his office manager never gives him proper respect as Samsa has become an insect, and they do not even try to think of how an animal can be Samsa for which Grete, Samsa’s sister, behaves this way as mentioned below—

I won’t pronounce the name of my brother in front of this monster, we’ve
done everything humanly possible to take care of it and to put up with it;
I don’t think anyone can blame us in the least. We must try to get rid of it
as early as possible, otherwise we might have to pay for this. (Kafka, 1981, p. 37)

They behave with Samsa in such a way that Adorno explains, “to be condemned to an animal body is to be damned” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 164). Though at the very beginning they were busy with this creature, later they did not think of “it” and even did not try to understand that “it” could be their son or brother. They did not imagine it because the ideological place of domination remained in their minds. That is why Samsa was facing the crisis of existence which ended through death.

Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* (1915) is important for us as it does have echoes of the misery of a modern man. This crisis of a modern man leads his life to the direction of tragedy as well as an existential crisis. We can see the similarities between Samsa and the character Hamlet in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Like Samsa, he (Hamlet) was also in dilemma and crisis at the time of killing his uncle. Hamlet could not make up his mind to kill his uncle. As a modern man, both Samsa and Hamlet belong to the same place of victimization. Samsa experiences these situations on a larger scale where his identity falls victim to fear and uncertainty in his surroundings. This is why Dostoevsky has told us to attain the ideology where one does not have any chances to fall victim to his/her existence. But both Samsa and Hamlet have lost their authenticity, ideology, and identity through the process of victimization and spoiled their existence forever. Samsa has become a witness to the horrifying dramatic scene, as these statements support—

Woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his
Bed into monstrous vermin. He was lying on his bed as hard as armor plate, he saw
his vaulted brown belly, his many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of
the rest of the rest of him, were waving helplessly before his eyes (Kafka, 1981, p. 3).

Kafka’s stories according to Deleuze and Guattari “are essentially animalistic even though they aren’t animals in all the stories” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 166). This is why thus the term “becoming-animal” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 166) circles both in the stories which are connected to the idea of animals and at the same time which are not. By applying the term “becoming-animal” (Gerhardt, 2006, p. 166), Deleuze and Guattari focus on the animality living in human beings. In *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Samsa was victimized by human bestiality, and for which he has lost his individuality, but Kierkegaard has stressed that one has to have his/her personal philosophical stand which can bring something fruitful for his/her existence. But Samsa has never got himself as his own but he has always kept himself engaged in the fight for others’ existence. He specially acknowledged the brutality of his father and sister as mentioned below--

You, Gregor! cried his sister with raised fist and piercing eyes. It isn’t possible
for human beings to live with such a creature. (Kafka, 1981, p. 26,38)
With a hostile expression his father clenched his fist, pitilessly came on, hissing like
a wild man, his father gave him a hard shove, which was truly his salvation and
bleeding profusely, he flew far into his room (Kafka, 1981, p. 12,15)

So, for this reason, Kafka’s tales of animals give us the idea of the animality existing in every human being.

Disgust has been reckoned as a universal impulse where we see the methodology of cross-culturally acknowledgeable facial expressions. Disgust is one of the major components of art horror, which has concerned with the future-oriented nature of fear. Horror is all about building-up suspense and this fearful notion may come to anyone. By this measure, Sartre’s *Nausea* is a symbol of a horror story where Roquentin faces an existential crisis and experiences episodes in which the material world gives threat by invading and engulfing him. Samsa also faces this harsh situation where he is seen in an “other-worldly” (Hanscomb, 2010, p. 7) way. He has been considered a “poisonous passion” (Hanscomb, 2010, p. 9). Gradually he also discovers that with the victimization of disgust, now he has also turned into the superfluity of objects as these statements focus on—

It has to go, cried his sister. That’s the only answer, Father. You just have
to get rid of it. If it were Gregor, he would have realized long ago that it isn’t

possible for human beings to live with such a creature. So, as early as possible, try to
get it out from our home (Kafka, 1981, p. 38)

From the above quotations, we see that according to the socially prescribed rules, Samsa has been treated as “disgust” (Hanscomb, 2010, p. 3) and “other” (Hanscomb, 2010, p. 3) which bring a negative impact on his existence, and ultimately, he faces an existential crisis.

Gregor has consciousness but is disembodied from his original body and also locked into an “alien organism” (Sweeney, 1990, p. 23). His locked room was “a regular human room (Kafka, 1981, p. 3), but now nobody dares to go to his room, and this is why according to Harold Skulsky, Samsa has faced a psychotic breakdown and his mental state is so wretched with his metamorphosed body, and for this reason, Lock and Descartes have told that Samsa is in “self and personal identity” (Sweeney, 1990, p. 24) crisis. They have also said that a person can only possibly live in a free life in his/her original body, and they also believe in personal freedom and choice like the idea of existentialism. But Samsa is in the crisis of his existence and at the same time ontological disconnectedness, as quoted in the below—

he tried to get out of his bed with the lower part of his body, too difficult
to budge, slammed himself violently, the searing pain he felt taught him that
exactly the lower part of his body was, for the moment anyway, the most sensitive
but nevertheless, Samsa tried hard to get back where he had been before (Kafka, 1981, p. 6)

From the above quotations, we see that there is no relation between his mind and body, but Heidegger has told us one has to keep a balance between body and mind, and he also rejects dualism regarding this concept. But Samsa now looks for mental control over his new body. Descartes describes a person needs to remain close to his/her body than a pilot to a ship. Samsa has “numerous little legs, which were in every different kind of perpetual motion and which besides he could not control” (Kafka, 1981, p. 3). So, all of his disabilities move him forward to face an existential crisis and at last in a deadly position.

Almost at the last moment of the story, there are three gentlemen we have found who symbolize masculine genitals. They are in a commanding position in the house, dominating Samsa’s father, mother, and sister until their authority is transferred to Samsa’s father. This is the climactic transformation of Samsa’s family. But after coming into Samsa’s house, the three gentlemen are added as a new threat to Samsa’s existence. They have ill feelings for dirt, and this is why the garbage and the ashes both are simultaneously kept in Samsa’s room, for this reason, Samsa has faced an existential crisis as he cannot move easily for shifting these dirty things into his room, as quoted in the below—

many things had become superfluous.
All these things migrated into Gregor room.
Likewise, the ash and the garbage all things are thrown to Gregor’s room
from kitchen. Whatever was not being used at the moment was thrown to
Gregor’s room and for which he couldn’t move easily and faced difficulties

(Kafka, 1981, p. 33)

According to Heidegger, one has to attain the language specialty for consciousness, experience, and also mind. Samsa has all of these qualities, but he cannot express his feelings and emotions, and even cannot turn all these qualities into a language, for this reason, he has suffered from an existential crisis.

Feelings do not have a place in Heidegger’s world of “metaphysics” (Johnstone, 2015, p. 557). Heidegger says “only speech enables man considered as a living being” (Johnstone 189). Speech has the connectedness with “relational concepts” (Johnstone, 2015, p. 500) and this is why only hearing and responding do not make any sense at all. Unless one will have any speech in the form of language, he/she will not be able “to be his/her own” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 208). Heidegger has told “stillness or not being able to talk through language is not anything regarded as human” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 208). So, language affirms and brings human beings into the shed of light. If something opposite happens, the ontological problem will come, and it will push human beings far away from their identity and also bring the crisis of existence. In *The Metamorphosis* (1915), Samsa cannot speak properly. He only says “yes” (Kafka, 1981, p. 9) and “no” (Kafka, 1981, p. 9), and this is why he feels togetherness in separateness. Heidegger describes this type of relationship as “difference” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 202) which means “neither distinction nor relation” (Heidegger, 1995, p. 202). So, Samsa is in existential crisis since none has tried to mix or talk with him in a proper way which has gradually shown him the path of existential crisis and deadly position as mentioned in this manner— “Cleaning woman shouted at the top of her voice into the darkness: “come and have a look, it’s croaked; it’s lying there, dead as a doornail” (Kafka, 1981, p. 40).

Kafka was well known for the idea of totemism in general. Animal totemism, according to him, seems to be an important thing that needs to be upheld, and this is why his association with totemism has functioned as an adjustment that both humans and animals in the metaphysical world are related to each other in action or behavior. In *The Metamorphosis* (1915), we have seen Samsa finds searing pain and suffering except happiness. His new body has gained schizophrenic “cell proliferation” (Seyppel, 1956, p. 82) but does not lose his old mentality. He is half animal and half human what Kafka calls “vexierbild” (Seyppel, 1956, p. 78), but his behavior and attitude are very calm and cool, and he is still in the same position as he was before though he

has been transformed into an insect. Apart from Samsa, his other family members do not show a proper approach to Samsa; rather, they consider him “fission-fungus” (Seyppel, 1995, p. 82), and a demonic bodily existence. So, the inner bestiality of the people of Samsa’s family has come out through their negative behavior which has ultimately shown his family members’ totalitarianism against Samsa, and he falls into the victim of existential crisis, and at last, dies.

Findings of the Study

Sometimes we make various decisions, and we have to make them even knowing that they will not bring something fruitful to our existence. Sometimes circumstances compel us to take the decision. But if we do or see something very unusual, then we consider it as “other”, because we cannot go beyond the conventional social structure and accept others’ world of thought with respect. Such type of example of this situation is noticed in the reflection of the character of Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* (1915) by Franz Kafka (1883-1924). He has a very little job (salesman) and is the only earning source of his family, who has to understand all the responsibilities in a very short time of life. Abandoning all his dreams of his own life, he has chosen the place of self-exile. Despite being transformed into an insect, he never forgets his family members in the hard times of life. Even towards the end of his life, he cannot decide to leave his family. Existentialism always gives priority to one’s own choice, and freedom, and at the same time provides the opportunity to give a proper shape of life according to one’s own will, but people cannot do everything on their own will, but sometimes they can as much as they want. However, Samsa does not go into the “right” decision at the right time in the need of his life. That is why he has to say goodbye to his life. A person cannot always separate himself/herself from all relationships or memories, even if it does bring anything beneficial for him/her. He observes the indulgence of all kinds of inconsistencies in his home and keeps himself busy with his family members’ happiness and sorrows considering those things as a success of his life, but it is a threat to his existence. Although he sometimes tries to reach different conclusions based on the procedure and history of the relationship; at last, Samsa cannot reach any conclusion beyond the welfare of the family and also the people of his family. So, Samsa has taken his loving place (although it threatens his existence) ignoring his bright future which reflects his antisocial structural thinking. Existentialism always emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. It is such a point of view where human beings attain the power to illustrate their meaning of life and at the same time gives efforts to taking rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. There is not always the case that one has to do everything in his/her life purposefully, the value of one’s personal preference lies in existentialism! So nothing in the world is universal! He can refrain from taking all the liabilities on his shoulder if he wants to, but he does not do this. From the impression of his life struggle and also the responsibility for his family and society, we can realize the loving attitude of Samsa towards his family and also his family members. Invisibly as if Samsa is guided by the reflection of pathos come from his family members. So he, like others, does not forget his family members even in such an adverse situation; he does not forget until his death and does not even deny how much he does have a responsibility to society and family. So, Samsa’s this type of mentality reflects the antisocial conventional thinking demarked by society.

So, this paper shows antisocial conventional thinking which is one of the most important aspects of his (Samsa) own characteristics. However, in the world of anti-conventional thinking, Samsa, as a human being in the battle of life span, is not able to properly in deal with the reality and emotion (according to Dostoevsky), and at the same time, he has dedicated himself in the crisis of existence, and become a puppet in an unseen irresistible force of fate, but he will be unique example to someone else in the society and also across the globe.

Conclusion

Samsa is never treated as a family member because of his transformation into an insect. His family members have more concerned about how they will cope with such financial insolvency. That is why his family members are not eager to interact with him. They are unpredictable to deal with such alter. The significance of the paper is the existential crisis of Samsa from his family and society which has come as a result of his self-destructive ideologies and humungous devolution of thoughts. The modern world has suffered a lot from the phenomenon of disruption, and it has become a serious issue in our existence. Like Samsa, other estranged individuals are becoming a product of family and society which is penetrated every bit of their life. This modern era has developed people to keep their distance from each other and also enraged them into a sense of alienation. This is why individuals are going to lose the sense of humanity and other connections with the world moving around them. These notions have brought a catastrophic change in Samsa’s life, and he has faced an existential crisis.

Finally, this study aims to give a new dimension to life and illustrates Samsa’s existential crisis due to the blind belief to his surroundings.

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Samsa is a traveling salesman, who has to maintain all responsibilities of his family, and he has understood it in a very short time. Despite being metamorphosed into an insect, he never forgets his family members in such a hard situation. Existentialism always gives priority to one's own choice, and freedom, and at the same time provides the opportunity to give a proper shape of life according to one's own will, but Samsa does not want to leave his family members till the end of his life. This is why, he faced the path of death, and finally died. So, both of them are always ready to take care of their fellows neglecting and denying themselves. Instead of fighting for themselves, they always get ready to do whatever they are supposed to do as if they are made to have the belief that they should always do the same as long as they exist on earth, and also, they deserve to face an existential crisis. So, their selfless and dutiful attitude toward others' lives triggers the ultimate result of one's death, and another's loneliness, sorrow and mental trauma.