



WITHDRAWAL, SOCIAL ALIENATION, AND THE BURDEN OF UNPROCESSED GRIEF: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF SOCIETY AND SUBJECTIVITY IN KAFKA'S THE METAMORPHOSIS AND THE TRIAL

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Abstract

*Grief is a complex psychological experience that is not only internal but is also shaped, regulated, and often constrained by social norms, cultural expectations, and institutional structures. Individuals confronting loss or existential disruption frequently encounter social environments that discourage the open expression of grief, compelling them toward silence and emotional withdrawal. While psychological research has extensively examined grief as a mental and emotional process, its literary representation, particularly in relation to social pressure and enforced withdrawal, remains insufficiently explored. Therefore, drawing on Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief within a broader psychoanalytic framework, the present study examines how societal forces drive the protagonists of *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* from unprocessed grief toward socio-psychological isolation.*

The findings demonstrate that Kafka's works reveal society as an active agent in intensifying grief and shaping withdrawal. In both texts, rigid social, familial, and bureaucratic structures deny the protagonists emotional recognition, pushing grief inward rather than allowing it to be expressed. As a result, Gregor Samsa and Josef K. respond to loss through progressive withdrawal, distancing themselves emotionally, socially, and psychologically. This withdrawal deepens their sense of alienation, disrupts their identities, and erodes their capacity for connection. Ultimately, the study highlights how Kafka portrays society not as a passive background but as a driving force that transforms unprocessed grief into withdrawal and culminates in profound socio-psychological isolation.

Keywords: *Socio-psychological isolation, Unprocessed grief, Repression, Neurosis, Mourning and melancholia, Kübler-Ross grief model, Modernist literature, Franz Kafka.*

Introduction

Grief is a deeply personal experience that varies individually and is expressed differently. Traditionally viewed as an internal response to pain, grief is widely considered a socially constructed process shaped by societal expectations, cultural norms, and familial dynamics. Oftentimes, the expression of grief is restricted and repressed by the rules and culture of a society. This repression often leaves individuals unable to process their emotions healthily, leading to emotional stagnation, psychological repression, and socio-psychological isolation (Doka, 1989; Freud, 1917/1957).



Sigmund Freud's classic essay *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917/1957) provides one of the earliest and most influential explanations for what happens when grief becomes internalized rather than expressed. Freud argues that normal mourning allows individuals to gradually detach from what has been lost, but melancholia, which is an unhealthy, unresolved form of grief, occurs when this detachment fails. In melancholia, the lost object or idea becomes buried within the unconscious. The mind then turns the emotional energy inward, leading to self-blame, emotional paralysis, and a diminished sense of self-worth. For Freud, suppressed grief is not only painful but dangerous; the feelings the person avoids eventually return in the form of repression, neurosis, anxiety, and psychological withdrawal.

Nearly fifty years later, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1969) introduced the widely recognized five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While often misunderstood as a fixed sequence, the model describes a flexible, fluid set of emotional states through which people may move back and forth. Each stage represents a different way of coping with overwhelming emotional pain.

Among Kafka's works, *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and *The Trial* (1925) stand out not only for their surreal tone and nightmarish environments but for their detailed portrayal of individuals experiencing deep internal suffering. Although neither novel discusses grief explicitly, both Gregor Samsa and Josef K. undergo emotional unraveling that aligns closely with the psychoanalytic and grief-related frameworks described above. Their psychological disintegration is not merely a response to the bizarre events in their lives; it reflects the emotional consequences of repression, alienation, and societal neglect.

The Metamorphosis follows Gregor Samsa, a young traveling salesman who wakes one morning transformed into an insect. While the premise appears fantastical, the emotional core of the novel lies in Gregor's silent suffering. Years of economic burden, familial obligation, and emotional neglect have shaped Gregor into a figure who suppresses his own needs. His literal transformation symbolizes a deeper emotional crisis: he becomes what he has always felt like, something unwanted, unvalued, and burdensome. Instead of reacting with horror at his new form, Gregor's first thoughts are practical and emotionally muted. His gradual withdrawal from food, light, human contact, and eventually life demonstrates the shift from suppressed grief to full emotional collapse. Gregor's decline echoes what Freud would call melancholia, an internalization of loss that leads to self-erasure.

The Trial presents Josef K., a respected bank clerk who is suddenly arrested for an unspecified crime. The novel follows the course of Josef's attempts to understand, fight, and eventually submit to the mysterious legal system that controls his fate. Emotionally, Josef begins in denial; he downplays the seriousness of the arrest, treats it as a bureaucratic error, and continues to behave as if nothing is wrong. However, as the absurd trial consumes his life, Josef experiences intense anxiety, guilt, confusion, and despair. He becomes trapped in a cycle of overthinking and helplessness, clear symptoms of repressed grief and neurotic distress, in Freudian terms. Josef's mind shifts between anger, hopelessness, and feigned normalcy, reflecting the non-linear emotional responses described by Kübler-Ross. Unlike Gregor, Josef does not physically transform, but he undergoes a psychological unraveling that is just as destructive.



Although Gregor and Josef inhabit different narrative worlds, one surreal and bodily transformed, the other legalistic and socially entangled, both suffer silently within oppressive structures that deny them emotional expression.

Statement of the problem

Grief is a deeply personal yet socially influenced experience, and its expression is often constrained by societal expectations. In many cases, individuals struggling with loss or existential crises find minimal space for social acceptance of their grief, leading to psychological repression, alienation, and emotional turmoil. Despite that, the research on literary representation of the phenomenon is a bit lacking. Thereby, the current study aims to explore the journey of the protagonists in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* from unprocessed grief into socio-psychological isolation.

Research Aim

The current study aims to examine how unprocessed grief in the protagonists of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* is shaped by societal pressure, leading to psychological withdrawal and ultimately resulting in socio-psychological isolation.

Research Gap

A review of the existing critical research on literary studies shows that no full-length study has been adequately conducted on the idea of the impact of unprocessed grief leading towards socio-psychological isolation, specifically on the texts selected by the researcher. Therefore, the current study seeks to investigate how Kafka portrays grief as a silent force that leads to psychological decline and social isolation in both texts.

Research objectives

1. To analyze the ways in which unprocessed grief leads to psychological and social withdrawal in the protagonists, ultimately producing socio-psychological isolation in the selected texts.
2. To examine the role of societal pressure and bureaucratic power in intensifying unprocessed grief and shaping the protagonists' withdrawal and isolation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*.

Research Questions

1. How does unprocessed grief manifest as withdrawal, leading to socio-psychological isolation in the protagonists of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*?
2. How do societal pressure and bureaucratic power actively contribute to the protagonists' unprocessed grief, resulting in withdrawal and socio-psychological isolation in the selected texts?

Significance of the Research

This study is significant because it addresses a critical gap in Kafka scholarship by examining *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* through the lens of unprocessed grief, a theme often overshadowed by discussions of alienation and existential dread. By integrating Freud's psychoanalytic theory with Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief, the research offers a nuanced understanding of the protagonists' emotional decline, showing how suppressed grief fuels psychological repression and social isolation. This study is an addition to existing discourses in psychoanalytical literary studies.



Literature Review

The world of Franz Kafka is a world of unspoken losses and invisible wounds. In his major narratives, most notably *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and *The Trial* (published posthumously in 1925), grief rarely manifests in the conventional form of bereavement following a death. Instead, it permeates the existential fabric of his characters' lives as a pervasive, multifarious, and often unnamed psychic condition. It is a grief for a lost self, for an eroded social standing, for the impossibility of genuine communication, and for a humanity that is systematically denied recognition and validation. This grief, because it does not conform to socially sanctioned scripts of loss, remains unprocessed which turns into a toxic, internalized residue that festers and ultimately catalyzes a complete socio-psychological disintegration.

Both Gregor and Josef K. are quintessential victims of disenfranchised grief. Gregor's loss of his humanity is so radical that it falls outside any conceivable cultural script for mourning. His family cannot hold a funeral for a son who is still, technically, alive. Their response is not empathy but shame, embarrassment, and a pragmatic desire for him to disappear. They refer to the insect as "it," systematically denying his enduring consciousness. Josef K.'s loss of his legal innocence and social standing is similarly disenfranchised. There is no public trial, no opportunity to face his accusers, no community outrage at the injustice. His plight is a private, shameful secret. As Doka argues, disenfranchised grief intensifies suffering because the griever is denied the "grief passports" of ritual and social support, forcing them to grieve in isolation and often leading to complications like chronic depression and somatic illness.

Pauline Boss's (1999) concept of "ambiguous loss" powerfully complements Doka's work. She identifies two types: Type 1, physical absence with psychological presence (e.g., a missing soldier, a divorced spouse), and Type 2, physical presence with psychological absence (e.g., a person with severe dementia). Ambiguous loss is particularly torturous because it freezes the grief process; without clarity or closure, the tasks of mourning cannot be completed.

Kafka's worlds are systematically engineered to sabotage this process. For Gregor Samsa, his metamorphosis is an event that defies all narrative logic. There is no "why." He cannot construct a story that makes sense of his new reality, and neither can his family. His existence becomes a non-narrative, a meaningless, repetitive cycle of hiding, eating, and listening. For Josef K., the entire Court apparatus is a machine for generating narrative chaos. Every attempt he makes to construct a coherent story of his predicament "I am innocent," "This is a misunderstanding," "There is a higher court", is met with counter-narratives, paradoxes, and dead ends. The parable "Before the Law," related by the priest, is the ultimate metaphor for this: the meaning of the Law is perpetually deferred, existing only in its unattainability. This narrative breakdown is central to their unprocessed grief. Without a story, there is no meaning; without meaning, there is only despair

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological structure employed to examine the portrayal of unprocessed grief and socio-psychological isolation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*. It will outline the research design, theoretical framework, analytical framework, and the methods used for data collection and data analysis in conducting this study. The primary goal of the methodology is to establish a clear and academically rigorous pathway for analyzing the two novels through Freudian psychoanalysis and Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief model.



This study follows a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive research design, which is appropriate for exploring psychological and emotional themes in literary texts. Since the research does not rely on numerical data but instead on conceptual interpretation, the qualitative design enables a deeper engagement with symbolic meanings, character behavior, narrative structure, psychological patterns, and emotional transitions.

The study is also comparative, as it places the two works, *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*, side by side to identify shared patterns of grief, repression, emotional deterioration, and social alienation. The comparative nature helps highlight how Kafka constructs similar psychological journeys across different narrative contexts.

This design also allows flexibility in interpreting the characters' mental states, emotional disruptions, and responses to societal pressures. As emotional experiences are subjective, the qualitative approach offers the most suitable means of analyzing grief as a multidimensional phenomenon embedded in literature.

This research also attempts to understand whether literature accurately represents psychological theories of grief. While psychological models such as Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief and Stroebe and Schut's Dual Process Model are often applied in counseling and therapy, it is important to examine whether these frameworks align with the emotional responses and coping strategies depicted in fictional narratives. Literature is not only a reflection of human emotions but also a medium that shapes how individuals perceive grief and loss. By comparing literary portrayals of bereavement with established psychological theories, this research provides insights into whether fiction follows the expected patterns of mourning or introduces alternative interpretations of grief that differ from psychological assumptions.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's model of grief to examine the psychological effects of unprocessed grief in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*. Freud's essay *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) provides the primary psychoanalytic lens, explaining how suppressed grief becomes internalized and leads to repression, melancholia, and neurotic disturbance. When loss is not consciously processed, it is absorbed into the unconscious, resulting in emotional paralysis, self-blame, and fragmentation of the self. Key Freudian concepts applied in this analysis include repression, melancholia, and defense mechanisms such as denial and rationalization, which help explain Gregor Samsa's self-erasure and Josef K.'s neurotic distress.

Complementing Freud's framework, Kübler-Ross's (1969) five stages of grief, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, are used to trace the protagonists' emotional trajectories. The model's non-linear nature makes it particularly applicable to literary analysis, as characters often experience overlapping emotional states. In both texts, Gregor and Josef remain psychologically fixed within early stages of grief and never reach acceptance. This emotional stagnation reinforces repression and intensifies neurotic symptoms, ultimately contributing to their socio-psychological isolation.

Analysis:

Grief in literature often becomes a way for characters to make sense of their reality, respond to pain, and experience emotional change. Unprocessed grief happens when a person's loss is not acknowledged or validated by others. Ambiguous loss is even harder to resolve because the



absence is unclear when someone is not fully gone yet not fully present. Without social recognition, people lose the stories, rituals, and shared support that help them move through grief. In his essay *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917/2005), Freud said that grief takes two directions. The other is in grieving, which is natural mourning. It is in instances when an individual is sad but gradually adapts to what has occurred and moves on. The other is melancholia that is the unprocessed grief. The melancholy does not pass in melancholia. Rather, it goes within itself and consumes the individual internally. This may be neurotic, which brings in obsessive thoughts, anxiety, irrational actions, and most importantly society. Withdrawal refers to the individual drawing back of the other people and even oneself. They cease communicating, cease relating and cease living a complete life. They can retreat or shun other people leading to sociopsychological isolation.

The *Metamorphosis* by Gregor demonstrates withdrawal immediately after Gregor wakes up and realizes that he has now become an enormous insect. Rather than behave in the way a normal person will behave, he conceals his emotions. The book indicates that, he was tender and loving towards his family and remained silent in the room (Kafka, 2007, p. 14). This scene demonstrates the beginning of withdrawal. Although he loves his family, he is unable to confront them. Freud (1917/2005) has described that during melancholy; the individual does not cope directly with their grief but instead resorts to an inward look. Gregor is already doing this. His sadness of being deprived of his human body is crude and therefore, he does not mourn, he avoids his family and remains out of sight. It is a social withdrawal, as he does not venture out to meet anyone, and a psychological one, in that he is not able to confront his own emotions.

Later, Gregor hides even more. The book explains that, under the sofa he crawled and hid there, wrapping himself up in a sheet in order that he was not sighted (Kafka, 2007, p. 21). This displays a very clear withdrawal effect. He does not desire his family to see him. He conceals his insect body, as well as his emotions. According to Freud (1917/2005), individuals who are unprocessed about grief lose interest in the external world and go into seclusion. Gregor is receding, physically by concealing himself and emotionally by not linking up. This represents the withdrawal effect of raw grief. He gets psychologically isolated rather than seeking his help and love by hiding and isolating himself.

With the course of time, Gregor becomes even more withdrawn. According to the story, he crawled on the wall and the ceiling every day and did not even think about anything different (Kafka, 2007, p. 29). This indicates that he is losing all the normal human behaviour. He does not eat with his family or even talk to them but is instead alone, making insect-like movements. Freud (1917/2005) provided that, due to melancholia, people are no longer interested in life and become disoriented towards human relationships. The raw emotion of losing his identity that Gregor experienced has gone too far, and an individual is now totally withdrawn. His sociopsychological isolation is almost total, since now he does not interact meaningfully with his family. He is isolated both mentally and physically.

The withdrawal effects build up to the extent Gregor even denies food. It reads, he did not touch the milk and bread that was the meal of his childhood (Kafka, 2007, p. 18). It is a very important detail. One of the simplest means of human keeping in touch with life is food. Gregor refuses to eat, which is an indication of his renunciation of life. Freud (1917/2005) revealed that as a result of melancholia, people tend to punish themselves, as well as to abandon the form of



existence. Gregor refusing to eat demonstrates that he has been affected by his pure grief and become so isolated that he is even turning off the connection of his body with life. This is the last phase of sociopsychological loneliness. Not only is he away with his family but also with the fundamental things that sustain people.

The withdrawal effect is also evident in Josef K. in *The Trial* although it is in a different manner. His crude sorrow is that he is charged with the crime he does not even comprehend. Initially, he attempts to live a normal life but shortly the ordeal occupies his entire life. According to what the narrator mentions, he used to sit in his office and spent hours without even working, but only thinking about his case (Kafka, 2009, p. 72). Here is the psychological withdrawal effect. He cannot concentrate on his work or his responsibilities. His crude sorrow over the loss of his freedom and image has caused him to become preoccupied with the trial. According to Freud (1917/2005), melancholia is what causes individuals to be frozen in obsessive thoughts and be unable to move on. Josef is imprisoned in the trial; hence he retreats in a normal life. That is sociopsychological isolation since at times he is physically in the company of his colleagues but is mentally afloat.

Josef too starts to isolate himself socially. He is very irate or dismissive whenever they attempt to assist him, such as his lawyer or even his uncle. At one occasion, he remarks that he does not require the advice of anybody as he is capable of handling this case on his own (Kafka, 2009, p. 84). This reveals that he is driving away people. He does not embrace help instead isolating himself even more. In melancholia, Freud (1917/2005) expounded that individuals direct the anger towards themselves but also project it to others too. The rawest emotions of Josef cause him to be hostile thus causing away those who love him. This is the withdrawal effect once more, he shut off his social lives, resulting in sociopsychological isolation.

The more time the trial lasts, the weaker and more withdrawn Josef becomes. The passage refers to the fact that he felt that the trial was devouring his life and leaving nothing behind (Kafka, 2009, p. 119). This sentence demonstrates how everything is usurped by the trial. His raw sorrow has now grown so big that it is devouring his being. In his writing, Freud (1917/2005) explained that in most instances, melancholy culminates with the individual giving up altogether. It is precisely what becomes of Josef. At the climax as he is carried off to be executed, he does not rebel. He allows himself to be murdered without resistance. According to the narrator, he gazed round, as a dog is led to slaughter (Kafka, 2009, p. 231). This melancholic picture depicts that he has lost all withdrawn. He is no longer a man who had hopes and dignity. His sociopsychological aloofness is complete, and it concludes with his demise.

Both Gregor and Josef are stuck in the rut. They start with grief and denial/ anger but rather than the grieving being cured, they become depressed and melancholy. Due to this, they dissociate themselves with life and become socio psychologically isolated. In Gregor, the withdrawal is most prominent in the depression, as he will not eat, and will seek to avoid his family. The withdrawal is most evident in depression in Josef where he is feeling exhausted and in despair and lastly where he is resigned to death with shame.

The society has the largest role in ruining the life of the main characters in both *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917/2005), Freud described how when a person loses something but is not able to cope with the loss, the grief will be unprocessed. In its pure form, this untamed mourning turns into melancholia. In melancholia, the sadness is



inward, the individual feels guilty or hopeless, and he or she begins to exhibit neurotic behaviours. They can retire to themselves and suffer a sociopsychological isolation. Gregor Samsa and Josef K. in the stories by Kafka are not only confronting their inner issues but also confronting the surrounding society. The society, that incorporates family, work, and even bigger mechanisms such as the court, disowns them and renders them unable to grieve appropriately. This rejection leaves their grief unprocessed and turns into melancholia and makes them fall.

The most evident instance of social aggravation of unprocessed grief is the story of Gregor in *The Metamorphosis*. Gregor even after transforming into an insect, continues to consider his duty to his family. It reads, he was so proud that he managed to take care of his family (Kafka, 2007, p. 8). This demonstrates that Gregor is not in first responding about himself, but his position in society. According to Freud, mourning (1917/2005) is meant to enable an individual to come to terms with a loss of an important thing, although Gregor is deprived of such opportunity. Rather, his family as the reflection of society considers him as a burden.

The scene with apples is particularly significant since it demonstrates that the society directly assaults Gregor rather than helps him. His father throws apples on him and one of them lodged in his back and made him a lot of pain (Kafka, 2007, p. 35). This is a turning point in this act of violence. His family literally harms Gregor instead of enabling him to handle his loss of human body and his belonging to society. His theory of melancholia by Freud is very suitable in this case. In melancholia, sorrow is directed inwards and kills one. The apple in the back of Gregor is an actual indication of how he is being consumed by his raw sorrow. It is making him weaker and weaker; in the same way melancholy is making the mind sicker.

In a different way of thinking about this scene, the apple is also a symbol of rejection. The apple is traditionally used as food, yet in this case the apple is a weapon. Society refuses to feed Gregor instead of feeding him with love and assaulting him with rejection. According to Freud (1917/2005), such rejection does not allow mourning. Lack of mourning with the support of others makes Gregor have an unprocessed grief. His back is wounded just like his brain. It is not a mere piece of fruit his father gives Gregor, but an expression of the society that he should no longer be among them. This denial leads him deeper into withdrawal and isolation of the social and psychosocial sphere.

The same tendency is observed in the case of Josef K. in *The Trial*. At the beginning of the story, he is subjected to injustice by the society in the shape of the court. One morning he is arrested with no fault committed (Kafka, 2009, p. 1). This brings confusion and terror, and this is where unprocessed grief starts. This is because according to Freud (1917/2005), grief is unprocessed when an individual is unable to process the loss or event experienced. Josef is unaware of the reasons of his arrest and hence he is unable to start grieving. Rather, his depression turns to melancholy, and he exhibits neurotic behaviour such as obsession with thoughts and anxiousness.

The Trial court functions in a similar manner as the apple in *The Metamorphosis*. It serves as an icon of rejection which makes Josef even more unprocessed in his grief. The court dismisses him whenever Josef attempts to defend himself. He at one time shouts, you are a bunch of rotten officials! (Kafka, 2009, p. 86). This demonstrates the degree to which the court has brought frustration and anger to him. According to Freud, melancholia tends to transform the sorrow to rage and illogical conduct. This is evidenced by what Josef says. Rather than being healed, the cruelty of the society bends his sorrow to neurotic anger.



When we examine the court in a different perspective, it is not just a body of officials, it is the system of judgment in society. Josef is not given an opportunity to defend himself by the society. It does not provide him with clarity, support, and fairness. According to Freud (1917/2005), mourning cannot be successful unless the individual realizes what he/she has lost. But Josef is unable to do this since the society does not ever inform him about his crime. His grief is raw due to this ambiguity. He is fixated on the trial and remarks that, "The trial never left him, it was always there (Kafka, 2009, p. 118). These compulsive thoughts are neurotic conditions brought about by the fact that the society would not allow him to grieve. Similar to Gregor and the apple he had at the back, Josef has the court as a wound that could never heal in his mind.

In both stories, the aspect of society is evident at the conclusion. The family of Gregor totally isolates him referring to him as it and uttering, he must go (Kafka, 2007, p. 53). Josef is executed by his society with shame, and his final words are like a dog! (Kafka, 2009, p. 231). These last scenes demonstrate how the society drives both characters to complete sociopsychological loneliness. They do not perish just because of their own sorrow but because they are further made to feel sorrow by the society not acknowledging the fact. According to the theory of Freud, the reason why: in the absence of support, mourning cannot occur. Grief remains raw and becomes melancholy, develops neurotic qualities, and eventually kills the self.

Once we take a closer look, we can see that the same thing applies to the apple in the back of Gregor and the court in the life of Josef. They are archetypes of the way the society treats vulnerable or different people. They are instead hurt in the society, rather than being helped. Rather than bringing about clarity to society, it brings confusion to the society. The society is cruel instead of compassionate. The thoughts of Freud in Mourning and Melancholia can assist us to understand how these rejection acts prevent the mourning and result in raw grief. This crude sorrow becomes melancholy which results in neurotic withdrawal and causes sociopsychological isolation.

Conclusion

This paper examined Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* through a psychoanalytic lens to explore how unprocessed grief evolves into socio-psychological isolation. By integrating Freudian theory, grief models, and modern affect studies, the research demonstrated that the emotional experiences of Gregor Samsa and Josef K. can be understood as complex psychological responses to losses like, the loss of identity, agency, social belonging, and symbolic order. Rather than presenting grief in a conventional or overt manner, Kafka embeds it within the emotional fractures, behavioral distortions, and existential pressures that shape his protagonists' lives. In this way, the novels reveal grief not simply as a personal reaction to death, but as a pervasive condition produced by oppressive social structures and internalized expectations.

In conclusion, this paper asserts that Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial* offer compelling representations of how unprocessed grief becomes a force that shapes, and ultimately destroys, the human psyche. The protagonists' tragic isolation illustrates the dangers of a world where emotional needs are suppressed in favor of efficiency, rationality, and social order. By foregrounding the psychological mechanisms of repression, anxiety, and withdrawal, Kafka's fiction invites readers to reconsider the significance of grief as a fundamental human experience. His narratives remind us that healing requires recognition, connection, and emotional openness, the elements absent in the lives of Gregor Samsa and Josef K. Their stories stand as enduring



warnings about the psychological cost of silence, the emotional consequences of social indifference, and the deep isolation that emerges when grief remains unresolved.

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