

FRANZ KAFKA'S MESSAGE OF PASSIVE NIHILISM IN THE NOVEL METAMORPHOSIS

Wafiiq Majdiy Al Husaini¹, Sumayah²

^{1,2} Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta

a320190287@student.ums.ac.id , sum207@ums.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study explores how Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of passive nihilism is reflected in Franz Kafka's novella The Metamorphosis, while examining its intimate connection to the author's own life experiences. Using a descriptive qualitative design grounded in Gadamerian hermeneutics, textual elements—such as dialogues and narrative units—were critically interpreted alongside philosophical literature and biographical sources. The findings reveal that Gregor Samsa's existential decline manifests through five key dimensions: mental exhaustion and dwindling vitality, profound apathy, the erosion of personal values, escapism, and blind obedience to external demands. Samsa's tragic collapse closely echoes Kafka's personal struggles under an overbearing paternal figure and a stifling corporate routine. Ultimately, through this absurd tale of transformation, Kafka offers more than a portrayal of helplessness; he delivers a subtle yet powerful critique of modern structures that strip the individuals of their humanity, urging readers to preserve their autonomy and inner freedom.

Keywords: *Passive Nihilism, Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis, Gregor Samsa, Friedrich*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana konsep nihilisme pasif Friedrich Nietzsche tecermin dalam novel Metamorphosis karya Franz Kafka, serta menyelami keterkaitannya dengan pengalaman hidup sang penulis sendiri. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif berbasis hermeneutika Gadamer, data berupa dialog dan narasi tekstual dianalisis secara mendalam bersama literatur filsafat dan catatan biografis Kafka. Hasil kajian memperlihatkan bahwa kepasrahan dan keruntuhan eksistensial tokoh Gregor Samsa mewujud dalam lima bentuk utama: kelelahan mental yang mengikis vitalitas, perasaan apatis dan putus asa, lunturnya nilai-nilai pribadi, upaya melarikan diri dari kenyataan, hingga ketaatan buta terhadap otoritas di sekitarnya. Tragedi yang dialami Gregor ini sejatinya merupakan cermin dari pergulatan batin Kafka yang terkekang oleh dominasi figur ayah yang otoriter dan himpitan rutinitas kerja birokratis. Lewat narasi absurd tentang perubahan wujud ini, Kafka tidak sekadar menggambarkan keputusasaan, melainkan menyampaikan kritik filosofis yang tajam terhadap tatanan masyarakat

modern yang mendehumanisasi, sekaligus mengingatkan pentingnya menjaga kebebasan dan kedaulatan diri.

Kata Kunci: Nihilisme Pasif, Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis , Gregor Samsa, Friedrich Nietzsche.

A. Introduction

Literary works serve as a mirror of reality, fundamentally shaped by an author's life experiences, thoughts, and values (Alkhajafi, 2020). Far from mere entertainment, literature actively reflects and engages with societal, political, and cultural realities. In the case of Franz Kafka, his writing uniquely blends expressionist, existentialist, absurd, and ironic themes (Dnes, 2020). This rich multivalence invites readers to continually re-analyze his texts through evolving theoretical lenses (Joshi, 2021).

Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* which follows Gregor Samsa's sudden transformation into a giant insect—serves as a profound exploration of isolation and alienation. Critics frequently interpret the novella through capitalist worker alienation, psychoanalysis, or existential absurdity (Wardani, 2022; Zhang& Fan, 2022).

Beyond these frameworks, Gregor's struggle directly echoes Kafka's own personal trauma,

oppressive family dynamics, and burdensome work relationships (Atikah et al.,2021). Ultimately, both Franz Kafka and his protagonist (Gregor Samsa) navigate life's facticity by withdrawing from social spaces, leading to the gradual erosion of life's inherent meaning.

This worldview aligns closely with Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical thinking on nihilism. This philosophical premise states that life has no intrinsic meaning, value, or moral purpose (Alfi, 2023). Nietzsche divided nihilism into two types: passive nihilism and active nihilism. While active nihilism empowers individuals to actively create their own meaning, passive nihilism manifests as resignation, quiet surrender, and decadent decline (Rahman, 2023).

Through Gregor's tragic helplessness, Kafka depicts passive nihilism not only to spread gloom but also to subtly critique the anxiety, irony, and dignity of modern humanity. Therefore, this study aims to examine the message of passive nihilism that Franz Kafka intended to

convey in his novel, *The Metamorphosis*.

B. Research Methods

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon of passive nihilism in Franz Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis*. Primary data are sourced from textual units (sentences and dialogues) in the novel, while secondary data include philosophical literature surrounding nihilism and Kafka's biographical documents. Data collection techniques are carried out through library research with a focus on literary texts as material objects. Data analysis uses the Gadamer model of hermeneutics (Alfaruqy, 2022) which includes the processes of reflexivity, dialogue, and interpretation. Hermeneutics is used to explore the hidden meanings behind symbols in the novel and connect the fictional narrative to the author's socio-historical context.

C. Research Results and Discussion

Research result

Analysis of Intrinsic Elements of the Novel

The intrinsic structure of Franz Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis* includes theme, setting, plot,

characterization, and point of view. All of these elements build the story's coherence and support the novel's idea of passive nihilism.

Table 1 Analysis of Intrinsic Elements of the Novel

Intrinsic element	Findings
Theme	Alienation and commodification of humans
Channel	The flow used is linear-progressive.
Figure	Gregor as a passive protagonist; Mr. Gregor as authoritarian and repressive; Mrs. Gregor as weak; and Grete who transforms from empathy to cold pragmatism.
Background	The setting of Gregor's room functions as a symbolic space of seclusion.
Viewpoint	Limited third person point of view

Representation of Passive Nihilism in the Character of Gregor Samsa

Friedrich Nietzsche's thoughts on decadence and the collapse of transcendental values (Gott ist tot) in *The Will to Power* (1967) is the primary theoretical framework for formulating indicators of passive nihilism. According to Nietzsche, someone experiencing passive nihilism will experience a state of

Decadence, characterized by a decline in vitality due to a loss of courage in the face of suffering and the dominance of servant morality, which stifles the will to power. The collapse of absolute moral foundations triggers a void in existential meaning.

Based on the synthesis of these thoughts, five main indicators of passive nihilism were found as a benchmark for analysis: (1) Mental Fatigue and Decrease in Vitality, (2) Apathy and Despair, (3) Disintegration of Personal Values, (4) Escapism, and (5) Blind Obedience.

Table 2 Representation of Passive Nihilism in the Character of Gregor Samsa

Passive Nihilism in the Character of Gregor Samsa				
Indicator	Amount of Data	Page		
Mental Fatigue and Decreased Vitality:	4	(1)	(32)	(40)
Apathy and Despair (Tired Nihilism):	7	(2)	(21)	(23) (25) (33)
Disintegration of Personal Values:	4	(8)	(17)	(17)
Escape from Reality (Escapism):	4	(7)	(24)	(37)
Blind Obedience:	7	(3-4)	(12)	(5) (7) (15) (17)

(18)

Kafka's Philosophical Message and Biographical Background

This research found that Franz Kafka's novel "Metamorphosis" is a means of conveying the message of "passive nihilism," which he deliberately wrote. This is evidenced by the fact that the reality of passive nihilism experienced by Gregor Samsa is highly relevant to Franz Kafka's real-life experiences.

Table 3 Franz Kafka's Passive Nihilism Message in the Novel Metamorphosis

Findings	Amount of Data	Page	
The Absurd World and the Collapse of Existential Foundations	3	(1)	(1)
Work Routine as a Nihilistic Prison	2	(17)	(18)
Slave Morality and the Destruction of Self-Sovereignty	3	(44)	(59)
Life Affirmation (Ja-sagen) and Escapism	2	(24)	(46)

Furthermore, these findings will be described in the discussion section.

Discussion

Intrinsic Elements of a Novel

The theme of the novel *Metamorphosis* is human alienation and commodification. This is evident in the following findings:

Table 4 Novel Theme: Alienation and commodification of humans

Novel Theme: Alienation and commodification of humans	
Findings	Data
Gregor Samsa's transformation into a symbol of alienation	Data 1: "One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin"
The demands of work as a salesman as a form of commodification of the character Gregor	Data 2: "And even if he did catch the train he wouldn't avoid his boss's anger..." Data 3: "Oh, God... what a strenuous career it is that I've chosen!"
The demand to pay off his parents' debts makes Gregor experience mental stress.	Data 4: "If I didn't have my parents to think about I'd have given it in my notice a long time ago..." (Data 5: "Now then," said Mr. Samsa, "let's give thanks to God for that"),

Kuntowijoyo explains that alienation can be caused by the dominance of modern industry which separates humans from their true

humanity (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). The demands of his job as a salesman diminish Gregor's identity; instead of lamenting his physical condition, his primary focus is consumed by the fear of his boss's anger. Although Gregor feels frustrated with his profession, he continues to work because of external factors: the desire to pay off his parents' debts. Gregor has become alienated, uprooted from his humanity and reduced to nothing more than a full-time machine. Gregor has little time to do the things he truly wants to do.

This condition of alienation is reinforced by the setting of the place which is centered on Gregor's family home, showing a shift in the function of space from the domestic realm to a place of exile:

Table 5 Background Scene

Background scene	
Samsa's room	Data 6: "Gregor's room, a proper human room although a little too small..."
living room	Data 7: "The chief clerk turned away in alarm, while Gregor's father clenched his fist..."
sitting room	Data 8: "Gregor remained hidden behind the half-open door..."; Data 9: "The gentlemen sat at the table where Gregor had once eaten..."

Most of the setting is set in Gregor's room, making him a solitary creature, cut off from the social connections around him. He is unable to communicate with his family, only able to peek at them from a distance.

The story's movement is constructed through a progressive (linear) plot that creates a claustrophobic atmosphere. According to Thene et al. (2025), this atmosphere is causing the reader to feel confined and suffocated. Gregor's environment, relationships, and social order are so restrictive that he feels he has lost his mental space.

Table 6 Novel Storyline

Channel	
Orientation	The orientation stage begins with Gregor's physical metamorphosis: Data 7: "One morning... he found himself transformed..."
Complications	Conflict due to rejection from family and office manager Data 8: "Gregor, open the door... his father gave him a hefty shove..."
Complications	Conflict escalates as financial conditions worsen (Data 9: "Grete... was the only one who dared to enter... They had all got used to it..."),
Climax	climax when Grete demands that the creature be

removed

Data 10: "We must try to get rid of it... if this were Gregor, he would have gone away..."

Resolution	The tragic resolution is marked by Gregor's death, which is greeted with relief by his family. Data 11: "Then his head sank down completely... 'Well,' said Mr. Gregor, 'now we can thank God'
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The novel uses a forward-looking plot that depicts Gregor's worsening condition after he loses his "human existence." Ultimately, he dies, in a very strange way. Instead of being greeted with grief, his death is greeted with joy by his family.

Gregor plays the protagonist, experiencing various hardships in life. He is passive and self-sacrificing when confronted by his authoritarian and repressive father, Mr. Samsa, and his loving but weak mother, Mrs. Samsa. Meanwhile, his younger sister, Grete, experiences a character shift from a caring person to a cold, pragmatic one.

Table 7 Characters and Characterization

Characters and Characterization			
Samsa	Gregor	Samsa	as the protagonist
Data 12: "If I didn't have my			

	parents to think about... once I've got together the money to pay off my parents' debt...").
Grete Samsa	Grete Samsa undergoes a character transformation from a caring sister to a cold and pragmatic woman. Data 13: "His sister... carefully brought him all the things... We must try to get rid of it..."
Mr. Samsa	Mr. Samsa plays the role of an authoritarian, emotional, and reactive father figure. Data 14: "...his father gave him a hefty shove... An apple was thrown without much force exploring towards Gregor's back..."
Mrs. Samsa	Mrs. Samsa is a loving but weak and helpless mother figure. Data 15: "Let me go to Gregor, he is my unfortunate son!... he collapsed into the arms of his father"

The entire narrative is delivered through a limited third-person perspective that limits the reader's access to Gregor's inner perceptions, thus emphasizing his experience of alienation and existential crisis.

Representation of Passive Nihilism in the Character of Gregor Samsa

Nietzsche's passive nihilism in Gregor Samsa is manifested through five main indicators, namely: (1) Mental Fatigue and Decrease in

Vitality, (2) Apathy and Despair, (3) Disintegration of Personal Values, (4) Escape from Reality (Escapism), and (5) Blind Obedience. Mental Exhaustion and Decline in Vitality depicts the decline of Gregor Samsa's vitality since his physical metamorphosis.

Table 8 Mental Fatigue and Decreased Vitality

Mental Fatigue and Decreased Vitality	
Gregor turns into an insect	Data 1: "One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin"
Gregor's inner turmoil after the metamorphosis	Data 2: "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense..."
Mental stress resulting from the room being vacated	Data 3: "...forced to admit to himself that he could not stand all of this much longer") erodes his identity.
Gregor's loss of sight	Data 4: "Now Gregor lost his ability to see anything..."

Gregor's mental exhaustion and declining vitality are depicted from the beginning, when his body absurdly transforms into an insect. His mental and physical condition continues to deteriorate until he tragically dies. As stated by (Conill, 2022), passive

nihilism is the element that produces "the experience of the absurd and the destructive tendency towards life itself," which in Gregor's case, culminates in his silent death as a form of total surrender to meaninglessness.

According to Asadollahi & Fathi (2020) Passive nihilism is defined as an indication of "a decline and recession of spiritual strength" that triggers feelings of despair, frustration, and emptiness due to the perceived lack of purpose in life. Gregor's resignation to the dehumanizing demands of his job and his acceptance of his status as a burden on his family reflect what has been described as pessimism. De Martino et al. (2023) explains that the passive nihilist view is based on "resignation and acceptance of the status quo," which results in emptiness and a lack of commitment to facing life's challenges. This is what triggers Gregor's inner restlessness and declining health in the novel.

Apathy and Despair reflect Gregor Samsa's psychological resignation after experiencing the collapse of the meaning of life. The

following is the data found regarding this matter.

Table 9 Apathy and Despair

Apathy and Despair	
Gregor surrenders without a fight when his father showers him with apples.	(Data 5: "...Gregor froze in shock; there was no longer any point in running...").
Gregor lay passively allowing the bad treatment of those around him.	Data 6: "Throughout all this, Gregor had another still... He was not even started out of this state when the violin... fell..."),

Research data shows the presence of symptoms of tired nihilism, where individuals accept futility without any effort to resist external aggression. This is clearly seen when Gregor's father throws an apple at him. Gregor chooses to freeze in shock because he feels "there is no point in running anymore." His inability to react, even when there is a loud noise (a violin falling), indicates a total desensitization to the environment. Gregor has given up all his agency because he considers all forms of struggle to be futile.

Deciding that "there was no point in running anymore," Gregor

had done what Vazquez (2021) called as an act of "turning one's back on the will to exist." Ultimately, Gregor retreats into a state that resembles Nietzsche's concept of the "last man." (Luks, 2020) reinforces this by stating that passive nihilism is a process of "fading and declining" in which individuals tend to avoid great suffering and abandon their existential ambitions for the comfort of silent isolation.

Gregor also experiences the Disintegration of Personal Values which shows the fragility of his internal moral compass.

Table 10 Disintegration of Personal Values

Disintegration of Personal Values	
Gregor sacrifices his desires for the sake of his family.	(Data 7: "If I didn't have my parents to think about I'd have given it in my notice a long time ago...").
Family abandonment then turns his altruism into empty anger	(Data 8: "...he made plans of how he could get into the pantry... even if he was not hungry"),

Gregor Samsa demonstrates a phenomenon in which human identity is eroded by the dominance of external values, both family and work. As stated by Tôrres Barbosa (2005),

In a dehumanizing system, humans are "degraded from the condition of subjects to mere objects," where all of the individual's expressions, bodies, and behaviors are simply measured and quantified according to patterns established by social class or external demands.

The meaninglessness Gregor experiences is also rooted in the neglect of human needs for the sake of the production system. Mukhopadhyay (2021) emphasizes that in conditions of work alienation, "human needs and the ability to cultivate one's faculties are completely ignored as being unimportant to the goals of the system," which over time actually worsens the position of humans until they are considered mere commodities.

Escapism is a form of passive nihilism where a person seeks a false sense of calm to avoid existential anxiety and the lack of purpose in life.

Table11Escapism

Escape from Reality (Escapism)	
Gregor lay still in the morning silence.	Data 9: "...he lay there quietly a while longer... as if he perhaps expected the total stillness to bring things back..."

Crawling back and forth.	Data 10: "...so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room")
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watching the family from the dark	Data 11: "...lying in the darkness of his room...he could watch the family in the light of the dinner table..."
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Gregor Samsa's crawling up and down his room is a concrete manifestation of passive nihilism, where the subject uses physical escapism as an attempt to avoid direct confrontation with the destruction of his existence. As analyzed by Widyaningrum (2012), Gregor chooses to keep moving and creeping around the room solely so that he can "not dwell on" the frightening thoughts, an act that serves as a psychological "anesthesia" to dampen his extreme despair. This attempt at withdrawal, according to Edeh (2019), is not a sign of acceptance of the new status, but rather a temporary escape or a form of systematic withdrawal from the absurd new reality. In this condition, Gregor is trapped in the delusion that by maintaining a new physical routine, he can maintain the remnants of his sanity in the midst of an irrational world.

Blind Obedience confirms what Nietzsche (in Pandie, 2024) called as the domination of servant morality and the loss of self-autonomy.

Table 12 Blind Obedience

Blind Obedience	
Gregor is more worried about the sanctions from his superiors and accusations of laziness.	Data 12: "What about if he was reported sick? ... His boss would certainly... accuse his parents of having a lazy son..."
His decision forced his insect body to swing out of bed for hours of work	Data 13: "...I'll definitely have to have got properly out of bed... swinging the entire length of his body..."

Gregor Samsa's blind obedience is evident in his response to an existential crisis. Rather than lamenting his physical transformation into an insect, his focus is consumed by the fear of being late for the train and being punished by his superiors. As Joshi (2021) explains, This reaction reflects a "systematic withdrawal" from the reality of his monstrosity toward the mechanical logic of the working world that has been shackling him. This nihilistic irony reaches its peak when Gregor tries to justify his inhuman voice change as merely an "occupational disease"

(Berufskrankheit) or a symptom of a severe flu common among traveling salesmen. According to Dian Dwi Anisa (2012), This denial is Gregor's attempt to maintain the framework of modernist rationality in the midst of a completely irrational situation.

This obedience proves that Gregor has internalized the logic of his oppressor to such an extent that he has lost his self-sovereignty. Wisma Kurniawati (2018) emphasizes that in the capitalist system described by Kafka, the concept of employee has been distorted into a kind of "slave" or "machine" with only obligations and no rights, even when suffering from illness. This condition is a manifestation of slave morality, where individuals do not act according to their own will but react to external authorities perceived as "masters" (Cahyanto, 2023).

Kafka's Philosophical Message of Passive Nihilism

The world of *Metamorphosis* can be said to be a symbol of the existential crisis that Kafka experienced in the real world, especially the mental isolation and repression from a despotic father figure and a work routine that was contrary to his interests.

The first finding highlights the Absurd World and the Collapse of Existential Foundations.

Table 13 The Absurd World and the Collapse of Existential Foundations Under the Pressure of External Authority

The Absurd World and the Collapse of Existential Foundations	
Gregor's metamorphosis into a giant insect	Data 1: "One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin..."

The absurdity of Gregor's transformation into a giant vermin is not merely a biological metaphor, but rather a representation of the loss of dignity in the face of absolute authority. This authority comes in the form of pressure from a father figure and the pressures of work. Sidra Kafka (2019) notes that this insect metaphor symbolizes Kafka's self-assessment of worthlessness and being trapped in chronic mental isolation due to the pressure of Hermann Kafka's authoritarian figure. The impersonal system of modern work routines becomes an existential prison that reduces Gregor Samsa's individual sovereignty, so that he is only able to define himself through

economic utility alone. According to Kurniawati (2018), Under the oppressive capitalist system, the notion of employee has been distorted into a kind of "slave" or "machine" whose only obligation is to continue producing without any room for autonomous self-realization. This experience is a direct reflection of Franz Kafka's personal anxiety, who felt alienated in his job at an insurance office that took away his creative vitality to pursue his pleasure, namely writing.

Ajay M (2023) explains that the randomness of this world is depicted through a confusing and unstoppable process of transformation, which is completely beyond the subject's control and radically transforms his life into a meaningless tragedy. Gregor's transformation into an insect is an absurd transformation that depicts Kafka's loss of meaning in life due to external pressure from his father's authority and his job.

The second message shows the Work Routine as a Nihilistic Prison.

Table 14 Work Routine as a Nihilistic Prison

Work Routine as a Nihilistic Prison	
Gregor is more Data 38: "...I'll get worried about the dressed straight train schedule than away now, pack	

his condition.	physical up my samples and set off. Will you please just let me leave?...being a commercial traveler is difficult but without traveling I couldn't earn my living.").
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Gregor Samsa is trapped in a routine job as a salesman that he hates in order to pay off his parents' debts. This is relevant to Kafka's confession in his "Letter to My Father") that he felt he had no real freedom in choosing a career; he saw his path as having been "chewed by a thousand other mouths" and he had no hope of salvation from the bureaucratic system. Guilt became a chain that destroyed the subject's autonomy. Kafka felt that every achievement was an "undeserved gift" and that he always lived as a "disinherited son," a sentiment that also exploded in the character of Gregor Samsa. Veiden (2002) emphasizes that Kafka viewed the work as a real form of repression, where humans were reduced to mere commodities for the sake of the accumulation of capital in power. Like Gregor, whose identity was only recognized as a "moneymaker" by his family, Kafka also felt a similar

pressure to become a successful businessman according to his father's expectations, even though it killed his humanity.

The third message covers Slave Morality and the Destruction of Self-Sovereignty.

Table 15 Slave Morality and the Destruction of Self-Sovereignty

Slave Morality and the Destruction of Self-Sovereignty	
Feelings of guilt and extreme self-sacrifice for the sake of the family	"This money... was certainly not enough... Would Gregor's elderly mother now have to go and earn money?... Would his sister... still a child of seventeen?... Gregor would... throw himself onto the cool, leather sofa... as he became quite hot with shame and regret." (32)

Cahyanto (2023) explains that slave morality is characterized by actions that do not originate from one's own will, but are rather reactive to external authority, which appears in the form of fear and obedience without self-sovereignty.

Slave morality in this novel is based on guilt and extreme self-sacrifice for the sake of the family. Gregor's shame and guilt upon hearing of his family's financial difficulties, as analyzed by

Quindadiarto (2022), is evidence that the subject has lost his sovereignty and only sees himself through the judgmental "gaze of others."

This condition reflects the reality of Kafka's relationship with his father; in Letter to My Father, he states that he lived as a "slave" under the arbitrary laws created by his father, which he could never fully fulfill. Mastuti (2015) observes that Gregor's mental suffering is a projection of Kafka's powerlessness in asserting his capacity as a free individual amidst an authoritarian domestic structure.

The fourth message exposes the Failure of Life Affirmation (Ja-sagen) and Escapism

Table 16 Life Affirmation Failure (Ja-sagen) and Escapism

Life Affirmation Failure (Ja-sagen) and Escapism	
Crawling up and down the room as a form of escapism	"What a quiet life... the family leads... But what now, if all this is peaceful... should come to a horrible... end? That was something that Gregor didn't want to think about... so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room." (24)

Gregor Samsa experienced existential failure because he was unable to Ja-sagen (say yes to life) for his new form, so he failed to become a "superior man" (Übermensch) and was trapped in a passive mentality that made him a weak and outcast person (Sulhanudin, 2010). This weakness is exacerbated by his attachment to his old identity as a family supporter, which makes him unable to build a new meaning of life on top of the destruction of his human identity (Joshi, 2021).

Unable to create new values in life, Samsa eventually tries to overcome his feelings of alienation by crawling up and down the room. This reaction, according to Edeh (2019), is a form of escape from the existential reality that he cannot bear.

Gregor's prison-like work reflects Kafka's frustration with the routine of his insurance office, which stifles his creative writing but which he cannot abandon for the sake of his family. This dilemma creates a neurotic state of either-or (either-or) that plunges him into despair (Veiden, 2002). until Kafka explicitly refers to himself as a "vermin" (vermin) who is

powerless under the authority of his father and his work.

D. Conclusion

Franz Kafka's novel *Metamorphosis* depicts passive nihilism through Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect, which projects the loss of human dignity due to the pressures of work that commodify humans and an authoritarian family environment.

This condition is reflected in five indicators: mental exhaustion, apathy, disintegration of self-worth, escapism, and blind obedience. Because his life is spent living the expectations of others, Gregor fails to love his own life. Gregor's reality mirrors Kafka's real-life reality. Therefore, it can be said that this novel embodies the implicit message Franz Kafka intended to convey.

Through this novel, Kafka conveys a strong message that the modern life system, with its oppressive work routines and repressive and authoritarian environment, can kill the soul; and that humans will be trapped in a state of meaninglessness if they fail to fight for their own freedom.

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