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Research Article

THE FACE OF THE FACELESS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRANZ KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS AND ANURADHA ROY'S THE FOLDED EARTH

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the phenomenon of disfiguration in the context of Franz Kafa and Anuradha Roy's protagonist of the peculiar aesthetics of formlessness and about broken identity of the faces who suffered brutally in the oppression of the authority. *Metamorphosis* is the story of Gregor Samsa, who one morning awakens to discover that he has been changed into a massive insect-like creature. The narrative centers on Gregor's challenges adjusting to his new physical form and his family's responses. *The Folded Earth* is the narrative of a young woman named Maya, who following her husband's death, relocates to a secluded mountain village in the Indian Himalayas. Maya navigates the cultural and social dynamics of the community she now calls home, while dealing with grief, loneliness, and the complexities of relationships in the strange settings. This paper compares the characters Gregor Samsa from *Metamorphosis* and Maya from *The Folded Earth* and how these two characters search for their identity in the subjugation of authority.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Metamorphosis* is a novella by Franz Kafa first published in 1915. It has been cited as one of the seminal works of fiction of the 20th century. The story begins with a traveling salesman, Gregor Samsa, waking to find himself transformed (metamorphosed) into a large, monstrous insect-like creature. The cause of Samsa's transformation is never revealed and Kafa's novella deals with Gregor's attempts to adjust to his new condition as he deals with being burden some to his parents and sister, who are repulsed by the horrible, verminous creature Gregor has become.

The Folded Earth (2011), is a novel by Anuradha Roy, a contemporary Indian writer. The novel is a profoundly poignant story about human emotions, especially overcoming transformation. The story of a young lady named Maya, whom her father disinherited because she wanted to live life with Michael, a Christian, is the man she marries. As a result, she was disowned and disinherited by her father. Despite her disappointment, she continues to mentally get ready to live a confident life with her husband. Tragically, her husband dies on a mountaineering expedition. She is devastated. The widowhood in Indian society is brutal. She decides to seek safety in the Himalayas hill town of Ranikhet rather than return to her parents.

Gregor Samsa and Maya are two different dimensions of two different centuries. Comparing Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*

and Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth* would make for an intriguing study, while both texts explore themes of alienation and transformation they do so within distinct cultural and narrative contexts.

"Loneliness is precipitated by a change in a person's social relationships that leads to a sub-optimal level of achieved social interaction" (Perlman, 33). Physical metamorphosis symbolizes his inner feelings of estrangement and detachment from his family and society at large. The sense of alienation is also influenced by Gregor's relationship with his family. He initially provides all his family's financial support as the only earner but following his metamorphosis, his family's perspective on him sharply shifts. They see him as a liability and source of shame, which further isolates him on an emotional level. "One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into horrible vermin" (Kafa, 13).

The Folded Earth explores the transformation journey of the protagonist a young widow Maya, living as a widow in Indian society is horrible. Women have no voice and no face. They cannot have any individuality of their own. They cannot assert themselves in any situation. They are known only in terms of their relationship with the male members of their family. "Militarization of men, on the other hand, always implies violence against, and the degradation of women" (Brownmiller, 131). A woman is either a daughter of her father or the wife of

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her husband or the mother of her son. Beyond these relational terms of identification, no other social designation was/ is significant as she is a mere appendage to men. "My father had made a great show of formally disowning me when I married. A son-in-law of a different religion was abhorrent" (Roy, 11).

Mr. Samsa, Gregor's father, is regarded as the head of the family. He gives Gregor responsibility for the family's care after the job fails. Mr. Samsa consistently assigns Gregor the duty of supporting their family's needs and repaying family debt. Mr. Samsa's tendency to put pressure on Gregor has an automatic effect on Gregor's mental health. Gregor Samsa's family not pay attention about him, but he also has little money support them and leads an indifferent life. While Gregor reflects on his life as a travelling salesman while lying in bed he is forced to carry out his tedious work. Gregor realizes continuing to work is his only chance of survival, even if his employment pays an inadequate wage.

Similarly, Maya the only daughter of wealthy parents was her father's favorite however the relationship broke down over Maya's closeness and love for Michael. When her father finds out that she is in love with Michael, he uses his patriarchal power to control her in house arrest and other restrictions. "I left his cold-eyed gaze traveling over my body as if he were trying to gauge which part of it Michael had touched" (Roy, 13-14). 'Right to live' is not a natural thing for women. It is a concession given and an of mercy shown by men and the male – chauvinistic society.

Maya and Gregor Samsa's mother characters are society's lost faces of the society. Mrs. Samsa Gregor's mother is affectionate and cautious, like every mother in this world. She gave Gregor and Grete, her child, a very tender look. It is evident in the narration of Kafa that he used the words 'cautiously' and 'gentle' in all of Gregor Samsa's mother's descriptions in the novel. As a housewife, she tries to show her children a lot of love with sacrifice. Gregor's mother, Mrs Samsa is receptive to her husband's authoritarian behaviour. She is constantly voicing how much she loves her forsaken son Gregor. Her desperate attempt to save Gregor's life from the most authoritative Mr Samasa:

Gregor saw his mother run up to his father and, on the way, her unfastened petticoats slide to the floor one by one; and saw as, stumbling over the skirts, she forced herself onto his father and embracing him, in complete union with him – but now Gregor's sight went dim – her hands clasping his father's neck begged for Gregor's life (Kafa, 45). "Indian women, in view of their limited freedom and insular mode of life have shown for ages a marked tendency towards growing introspective which is prelude for neurotic reaction" (Shukala, 79).

The mother of Maya is the unrecognized symbol of voiceless protest that every Indian mother doing in their life. She tries her best to save Maya from patriarchal oppression because she knows the torment of the oppression. "My mother was too intimidated by him [Maya's father] to do more than steal out for occasional trysts with me at temple... my mother was tearful and imploring... we could be together again as before" (Roy, 11,20).

A patriarchal system of power subjugates and hegemonizes the vulnerable systematically. It accomplishes this by formalizing and approving their oppression to challenge and change these androcentric dynamics it is necessary to address systematic injustices, advance gender equality, and establish inclusive settings that respect and encourage women's agency. The collective voice of both Gregor and Maya is to live life like others. Both felt like an insect in their inner mind in front of the father's authoritative presence and even developed a stammer while speaking to him. The unraised voice of Maya and Gregor Samsa is the voice of longing to live life. In *The Folded Earth* "Let me go! I want to live! I want to live!" (Roy 14). In *Metamorphosis* Gregor Samsa's voice "How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this sense" (Kafka, 14).

The social phenomenon of contemporary society typically encounters alienation. When someone is marginalized by their community, they are said to be alienated. The two distinct characters, different cultural settings, and different periods, yet Maya and Gregor share a hegemonical relationship. While these works may differ in terms of setting and cultural context their exploration of themes such as transformation, isolation, and family dynamics analyzed parallels, Kafa's *Metamorphosis* and Roy's *The Folded Earth* to suggest that in lives of human beings who are unrecognized, unrealized on the superficial level. In conclusion, it is stated that the concepts of Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, Subaltern, And Trauma Studies are less analysed area of Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth* and Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

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