



From Individual Trauma to Family Trauma: Forms and Symptoms of Trauma in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates psycho-trauma in *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka (1915), focusing on its forms and symptoms of trauma as experienced by the main characters. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine how trauma is represented through the psychological, emotional, and physical conditions of the characters in the novella. The findings reveal that Gregor Samsa, as the main character, experiences dominant trauma characterized by catastrophic transformation and intrusive phenomena. These forms of trauma are reflected in various emotional and psychological symptoms, including shock, denial, confusion, anxiety, fear, guilt, anger, and hopelessness, as well as physical symptoms such as insomnia, bodily pain, agitation, and fatigue. Gregor's transformation into a monstrous verminous insect functions as the central traumatic event that disrupts his identity and daily functioning. Furthermore, the study finds that other family members also experience trauma in response to Gregor's condition. Grete shows emotional instability that develops from care into rejection and hostility, while Mr. Samsa exhibits anger and aggressive reactions, and Mrs. Samsa demonstrates fear, helplessness, and emotional fragility. These findings indicate that trauma is not limited to the individual level but also emerges within relational and familial contexts. The study concludes that trauma in *The Metamorphosis* operates as a process of psychological transmission within the Samsa family. Gregor's transformation acts as the initiating traumatic event that generates secondary trauma among other family members, ultimately reshaping family relationships and leading to emotional fragmentation and family disintegration.

Keywords: psycho-trauma, trauma forms, trauma symptoms, family trauma, The Metamorphosis

Introduction

Emotional/psychological symptoms are the focus of discussion in psycho-trauma, which is addressed in the novel entitled *The Metamorphosis* (1915). These symptoms of trauma are often found in various novel genres, such as drama, romance, thrillers, horror, and others. However, in this novella written by Franz Kafka, it is a type of absurdist fiction genre novella where this phenomenon does not determine the type of genre. Trauma does not mean fear of an event experienced, but it is more than fear. (Caruth, 1996); (Freud et al., 1956); Rothberg, (2000); Morrison, (2014); (Kurtz, 2018) argued that trauma describes an extremely extreme experience of a sudden or catastrophic event where the response to the event occurs in the form of hallucinations and the phenomenon of "pain experience," which repeatedly enters the individual's mind.

Meanwhile, emotional/psychological and physical symptoms arise due to triggers that cause trauma. This becomes a trigger as a form of response, both psychological and sensory (Robinson et al., 2016). When people experience symptoms of trauma, they are likely experiencing trauma. On the other hand, when people experience trauma from an event in life, they are likely to experience emotional/psychological and physical symptoms. Emotional and psychological trauma will destroy your sense of comfort and calm. Traumatic experiences often pose a threat to life or safety, but any situation that makes you feel overwhelmed and isolated can be traumatic, even if it does not involve physical injury. Therefore, it is important to review that when an individual experiences trauma, the next step is to look at and analyze the symptoms that occur within themselves. This is applied to several characters in the novel to show the existence of traumatic disorders by proving the symptoms of trauma that exist in the individual characters.

The Metamorphosis in the novella written by Franz Kafka in 1915 has a plural meaning, such as Gregor's physical changes, Gregor's mental changes, physical changes in the Samsa family, and changes in the affection that usually surrounds them. Gregor Samsa, the main character in the novel, wakes up in the form of an insect. Gregor, who is the backbone of his family, turns into a huge insect. He is unable to work, earn money, take care of the house, or socialize with his family. His appearance even made the family, especially the mother, afraid and uncomfortable. Gregor's feelings become increasingly violent as he tries to maintain his humanity. Gregor realizes that his changes are not just physical changes but also his identity as a human. These changes can be seen when they dislike rotten food, dark and dirty room conditions, and sleeping in a corner or on the ceiling of the room. Apart from Gregor, other characters are Grete, Gregor's younger sister; his father, Mr. Samsa; and his mother, Mrs. Samsa. In the novel, it can be seen when the characters experience changes in emotional and psychological conditions and then experience trauma based on the symptoms of trauma. This is in accordance with what Robinson et al., (2016) stated: trauma symptoms are seen when feelings are disturbed

from time to time through painful memories or emotions—especially in response to triggers.

Several experts have discussed this phenomenon before. After researchers made observations and conducted research about the topic and phenomenon, several studies were found that related to psycho-trauma and its symptoms and objects. The research started from 2020 to 2023. The first research article written by Nur Wahyuni was published by the JIIP-Scientific Journal of Educational Sciences in 2020 with the title *Types of Freedom in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis: An Existentialist Perspective*. The research identifies the types of freedom in the novel, describes how freedom is depicted in the novel, and reveals the reasons underlying Franz Kafka's discussion of individual freedom in the novel. Second, an article written by Alkhafaji, W. M., was published by PalArch's Journal of Archeology of Egypt/Egyptology in 2020 with the title *A Study of Alienation in Kafka's The Metamorphosis as a Moral Guide for the New Generation*. This research investigates the effects of individual separation, which results in not only alienating themselves from their society but also losing their identity and moral values. It also focuses on the economic, political, and financial issues that have changed the youth entity from a source of benefit to a resource. risk. The third research was written by Campodonico, C., Varese, F., and Berry, K., and was published by BMC Psychiatry in 2022 with the title *Trauma and Psychosis: A qualitative Study Exploring the Perspectives of People with Psychosis on the Influence of Traumatic Experiences on Psychotic Symptoms and Quality of Life*. This research examines service users' perceptions of the influence of trauma on the development and maintenance of their psychotic symptoms, as well as their views on how their lives and mental health are affected by traumatic events and their disclosure (or lack of disclosure).

The fourth is a research article written by Chishti, A. J., Agrawal, S., and Sachdeva, A., which was published by Boletin de Literatura Oral in 2023 with the title *A Study of Personal and Collective Trauma in "The Book of Gold Leaves" by Mirza Waheed*. This research examines the psychological and physical suffering of the people of Kashmir, a conflict-torn region flanked by third-world Asian countries. It highlights that "The Book of Gold Leaves" by a journalist-turned-author, Mirza Waheed, narrates the personal and collective trauma of the Kashmiri people caught in the midst of ongoing conflict using the theoretical framework of trauma studies, which includes personal trauma as well as collective trauma. The fifth research was written by Liu, Y. A., published by the Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences in 2023, entitled *Study on the Psychological Trauma in the Novel The Sense of an Ending*. This research discusses psychological trauma and destructive emotions after experiencing a damaging event. Memory and trauma are two important elements in Julian Barnes's *The Sense of Ending*.

Several scholars have examined trauma and related psychological phenomena from various perspectives. Campodonico et al. (2022), for instance, explored the relationship between traumatic experiences and psychotic symptoms, while Chishti et al. (2023) investigated personal and collective trauma in a conflict-ridden society. Other studies have focused on psychological trauma as a consequence of destructive life events and memory reconstruction (Liu, 2023). In the context of Franz Kafka's *The*

Metamorphosis, previous studies have predominantly examined themes of freedom, alienation, identity crisis, and psychological suffering (Wahyuni, 2020; Alkhafaji, 2020). These studies have provided valuable insights into Gregor Samsa's transformation and its existential implications. However, limited attention has been paid to trauma as a dynamic process that extends beyond Gregor as the primary sufferer and gradually affects other members of the Samsa family. Consequently, existing studies tend to treat trauma as an individual experience, while its development into a collective family experience remains underexplored. Although contemporary trauma studies have increasingly examined collective trauma in social and community contexts (Saul, 2022; Thamotharampillai & Somasundaram, 2021), limited research has investigated how individual trauma is transmitted into family trauma within literary narratives, particularly in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates not only the forms and symptoms of trauma experienced by the characters but also the transmission of trauma within the Samsa family following Gregor's transformation. This perspective enables trauma to be understood as a shared psychological experience that reshapes emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships among family members. Specifically, the study examines two interconnected dimensions of trauma: the forms of trauma represented through catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena, and the emotional/psychological as well as physical symptoms that emerge as responses to traumatic experiences. By integrating Caruth's (1996) trauma theory with Robinson et al.'s (2016) framework of trauma symptoms, this study demonstrates how Gregor's traumatic condition generates secondary traumatic responses in Grete, Mr. Samsa, and Mrs. Samsa, ultimately transforming individual trauma into family trauma in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915).

Literature Review

Forms of Trauma

The term psycho-trauma refers to a psychological condition that emerges following exposure to a traumatic event. Trauma may affect an individual's emotional, cognitive, and behavioral functioning and, in severe cases, may contribute to posttraumatic stress disorder. According to Caruth (1996), trauma is an extraordinary experience resulting from a sudden or catastrophic event whose effects are not fully comprehended at the moment of occurrence. Instead, the event returns repeatedly through delayed and uncontrollable responses such as intrusive memories, hallucinations, dreams, or other disturbing psychological manifestations. Trauma therefore represents not only the experience of a distressing event but also the continuing psychological struggle to process that experience. This understanding has been further developed in contemporary trauma studies, which view trauma as a multidimensional phenomenon involving psychological, social, relational, and cultural dimensions rather than merely an individual response to a disturbing event (Zoromba et al., 2024; Sütterlin, 2020; Gu 2024). Caruth (1996) categorizes trauma into two major forms: catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena. Catastrophic events refer to sudden

and unexpected occurrences that generate profound psychological consequences for individuals. Such events disrupt an individual's sense of security and normality, producing emotional responses that may persist long after the event itself. Tota and Hagen (2015) further explain that catastrophic events may arise from social disasters that unexpectedly affect human life or from structural social conditions that generate psychological suffering. In both cases, the event functions as a traumatic trigger that alters an individual's psychological state. The second form of trauma is intrusive phenomena. According to Caruth (1995), intrusive phenomena consist of unwanted thoughts, memories, dreams, hallucinations, or repetitive behaviors that emerge involuntarily after a traumatic experience. These recurring experiences indicate that traumatic memories have not been fully integrated into an individual's consciousness. Bryant (2019) explains that trauma memories are often stored in fragmented and disorganized forms, making them difficult to incorporate into autobiographical memory. Consequently, traumatic experiences tend to reappear unexpectedly and repeatedly, causing continuous psychological distress.

Although Caruth conceptualizes trauma primarily as an individual psychological experience, traumatic events frequently affect people who are closely connected to the primary sufferer. Recent trauma scholarship emphasizes that trauma may extend beyond the individual and become a collective experience shared by members of a family, community, or social group. Collective trauma emerges when a disruptive event generates emotional, psychological, and relational consequences that are experienced collectively and continuously by those connected to the primary sufferer (Thamotharampillai & Somasundaram, 2021; Saul, 2022). The consequences of trauma may therefore extend beyond the individual and influence interpersonal relationships within a social or familial environment. This perspective provides an important framework for examining how Gregor Samsa's transformation functions not only as a traumatic experience for himself but also as a source of psychological disturbance for other members of the Samsa family.

Trauma Symptoms and Family Trauma

Traumatic experiences are commonly accompanied by emotional, psychological, and physical symptoms that reflect an individual's response to distressing events. According to Robinson, Smith, and Segal (2016), emotional and physical trauma results from highly stressful experiences that undermine an individual's sense of safety, comfort, and control. Trauma symptoms therefore function as observable indicators of psychological suffering and provide evidence of the impact of traumatic events on an individual's well-being. The intensity of trauma is often associated not only with the objective nature of an event but also with the degree of fear, helplessness, and vulnerability experienced by the individual. Robinson et al. (2016) identify several emotional and psychological symptoms associated with trauma, including shock, denial, disbelief, confusion, difficulty concentrating, anger, irritability, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, self-blame, social withdrawal, sadness, hopelessness, emotional numbness, and feelings of disconnection from others. Morrison (2014) associates these symptoms with trauma-

and stressor-related disorders that disrupt emotional stability and social functioning. Similarly, Church et al. (2013) argue that trauma-related psychological disturbances may manifest through anxiety, depression, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity, and obsessive-compulsive tendencies. These emotional and psychological symptoms indicate that traumatic experiences significantly influence an individual's mental and emotional condition.

In addition to emotional and psychological manifestations, trauma may also produce physical symptoms. Robinson et al. (2016) note that trauma sufferers frequently experience insomnia, nightmares, fatigue, hypervigilance, concentration difficulties, rapid heartbeat, agitation, aches and pains, and muscle tension. These symptoms demonstrate the close relationship between psychological distress and bodily responses. Contemporary studies further suggest that traumatic experiences frequently produce interconnected psychological and somatic manifestations, indicating that emotional suffering is often expressed through bodily responses and physical discomfort (McHugh & Egan, 2023; Vagnini et al., 2023). Morrison (2014) describes such conditions as somatic symptoms and related disorders, in which psychological suffering manifests through physical sensations that may not be fully explained by physiological causes. Consequently, trauma affects both the mind and the body, generating symptoms that can be experienced, observed, and interpreted as indicators of psychological disturbance. Trauma symptoms, however, are not always restricted to individuals who directly experience traumatic events. Emotional responses such as fear, anxiety, guilt, helplessness, and psychological distress may also emerge among individuals who are continuously exposed to the suffering of others. Within family environments, traumatic experiences often reshape interpersonal relationships and generate shared emotional consequences among family members. Trauma can therefore be understood not only as an individual psychological condition but also as a collective experience that affects family dynamics. In family settings, prolonged exposure to another family member's suffering may produce secondary trauma, emotional burden, and psychological distress among relatives who are not direct victims of the traumatic event. Consequently, trauma may be transmitted through interpersonal relationships and reshape family interactions over time (Saul, 2022; Thamotharampillai & Somasundaram, 2021).

This perspective is particularly relevant to Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915). Gregor Samsa's transformation functions as a catastrophic event that initiates traumatic responses not only in Gregor himself but also in Grete, Mr. Samsa, and Mrs. Samsa. Accordingly, the present study investigates the forms and symptoms of trauma experienced by the characters while examining how Gregor's traumatic condition contributes to the emergence of family trauma within the Samsa household. Through this approach, trauma is understood as a process that develops from individual suffering into a broader family experience.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the representation and transmission of psycho-trauma in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915). The use of a qualitative descriptive design is aligned with the research objectives, namely to identify the forms and symptoms of trauma experienced by the characters and to explain how individual trauma develops into collective family trauma within the Samsa household. This approach is considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth interpretation of textual data without statistical procedures, focusing instead on meaning construction within literary discourse. The data in this study are textual elements in the form of words, sentences, and narrative descriptions taken from *The Metamorphosis* (Kafka, 1999). These data are treated as representations of psychological and emotional conditions reflected through character behavior, dialogue, and narrative events. The primary focus of data selection is on four main characters, namely Gregor Samsa, Grete Samsa, Mr. Samsa, and Mrs. Samsa, as they are directly involved in the emergence and transmission of traumatic experiences within the story. Data collection is conducted through purposive reading. In this process, the researcher repeatedly reads the novella to identify and select textual excerpts that indicate traumatic events and trauma symptoms. The selection is guided by theoretical indicators derived from Caruth's (1996) trauma theory, particularly catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena, as well as Robinson, Smith, and Segal's (2016) framework of emotional, psychological, and physical trauma symptoms.

The data analysis follows Spradley's ethnographic analysis model (2016), which is conducted in four systematic stages. First, domain analysis is used to categorize data into broad domains of trauma forms and symptoms based on the theoretical framework. Second, taxonomy analysis is applied to classify the data in more detail according to each character and type of trauma experienced. Third, componential analysis is conducted to examine the relationships between trauma forms and symptoms, as well as to identify patterns of similarity and difference among the characters. Fourth, cultural theme analysis is used to synthesize the findings and identify the dominant theme of the study, namely the transformation of individual trauma into collective family trauma within the Samsa family. This methodological procedure is designed to ensure coherence with the research objectives and to provide a structured and systematic analysis of psycho-trauma representation in *The Metamorphosis*. Through this approach, the study not only identifies trauma symptoms but also explains how trauma is transmitted and shared among family members.

Result

This section presents the findings of the study based on Spradley's ethnographic analysis, which consists of four stages: domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis. The findings reveal forms and symptoms of trauma experienced by the characters in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915), as well as the transformation of individual trauma into family trauma within the Samsa family.

Table 1. Emotional/Psychological and Physical Symptoms for Forms Trauma in The Metamorphosis Characters

The Characters	Emotional and Psychological Symptoms										Physical Symptoms									
	SDD	CDC	AIM	AF	GSS	WFO	FSH	FDN	IN	Fat	BSE	DC	RH	EG	AP	MT				
	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP	CE IP				
Gregor	√	x	√	x	x	√	√	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	x	x
Grete	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mr. Samsa	√	√	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mrs. Samsa	√	√	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

SDD	: Shock, Denial, or Disbelief	IN	: Insomnia or Nightmares
CDC	: Confusion, Difficulty Concentrating	Fat	: Fatigue
AIM	: Anger, Irritability, Mood Swings	BSE	: Being Startled Easily
AF	: Anxiety and Fear	DC	: Difficulty Concentrating
GSS	: Guilt, Shame, Self-blame	RH	: Racing Heartbeat
WFO	: Withdrawing from others	EG	: Edginess and Agitation
FSH	: Feeling Sad or Hopeless	AP	: Aches and Pains
FDN	: Feeling Disconnected or Numb	MT	: Muscle Tension
CE	: Catastrophic Events	IP	: Intrusive Phenomena

Table 1 shows that the character who experiences the most trauma and its symptoms is Gregor, the main character in the novel. Gregor exhibits emotional and psychological symptoms in the form of SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief), CDC (confusion, difficulty concentrating), AF (anxiety and fear), GSS (guilt, shame, self-blame), and FSH (feeling sad or hopeless) with the form of CE (catastrophic event) trauma. Additionally, AIM (Anger, Irritability, Mood Swings) and GSS (Guilt, Shame, Self-blame) come from the IP (Intrusive Phenomena) form of trauma. While Gregor's physical symptoms are seen in EG (edginess and aggression) and AP (aches and pains) with the CE (catastrophic events) form of trauma, For the IP (intrusive phenomenon) trauma form, the psychological symptoms are seen in IN (insomnia or nightmares) and AP (aches and pains). The character Grete has emotional and psychological symptoms in the form of AIM (Anger, Irritability, Mood Swings) and AF (Anxiety and Fear) with the form of CE (Catastrophic Events) trauma. Additionally, the symptoms of AIM (Anger, Irritability, Mood Swings), GSS (Guilt, Shame, Self-blame), and FSH (Feeling Sad or Hopeless) are categorized under the IP (Intrusive Phenomena) form of trauma. The physical symptoms of Grete's character are not found in the novel.

Furthermore, the parental characters are Mr. and Mrs. Samsa. Mr. Samsa has emotional and psychological symptoms in the form of SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief), which falls under the CE (catastrophic events) trauma category. For IP (intrusive phenomenon) trauma, symptoms such as SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief), AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings), GSS (guilt, shame, self-blame), and FSH (feeling sad or

hopeless) were found. Meanwhile, Mrs. Samsa had emotional and psychological symptoms in the form of SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief), AF (anxiety and fear), and GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame), along with trauma from CE (catastrophic events). Additionally, SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief) and GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame) found trauma in the form of IP (intrusive phenomena). Physical symptoms in the parental characters of both Mr. Samsa and Mrs. Samsa were not found in the novella.

Gregor as The Main Character being a Monstrous Verminous Bug

The main character in the novella is Gregor. A boy from the Samsa family lives off the proceeds of Gregor's work as a salesman. Gregor's parents depend on his work, including his sister Grete. His trauma first appeared when he woke up from his sleep, surprised to find himself suddenly turned into an insect. It wasn't enough to shock him with his new body shape; Gregor also had to think hard to deal with the changes, which not only affected him but also the lives of his parents and the sister he cared about. Gregor's body changes made it difficult for him. There used to be two pairs of limbs ready to move at will. Now, those limbs have turned into pairs of delicate legs that are difficult to control. Not only physically, Gregor had to face the fact that, as an insect, his life would no longer be the same. His communication difficulties made it difficult for him to connect with his parents and younger sister. Not only that, the trauma he experienced made his psychological and emotional changes.

Table 2. Textual Data for Gregor in *The Metamorphosis*

The Character	Textual Data for Emotional and Psychological Symptoms	Textual Data for Physical Symptoms	Trauma Forms
	SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief): <i>...he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug (Kafka, F., 1999:3).</i>	EG (edginess and aggression) and AP (aches and pains) <i>The attempt went so slowly. When, having become almost frantic, he finally hurled himself forward with all his force and without thinking, he chose his direction incorrectly, and he hit the lower bedpost hard. The violent pain he felt</i>	CE

		revealed to him that the lower part of his body was at the moment probably the most sensitive (Kafka, F., 1999:8).	
Gregor	AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings): <i>...I have to deal with the problems of traveling, the worries about train connections, irregular bad food, temporary and constantly changing human relationships which never come from the heart. To hell with it all!' (Kafka, F., 1999:4).</i>	AP (aches and pains): <i>He remembered that he had already often felt a light pain or other in bed, perhaps the result of an awkward lying position, which later turned out to be purely imaginary when he stood up, and he was eager to see how his present fantasies would gradually dissipate (Kafka, F., 1999:7).</i>	IP
		IN (insomnia or nightmares): <i>Gregor spent his nights and days with hardly any sleep. Sometimes he thought that the next time the door opened he would take over the family arrangements just as he had earlier (Kafka, F., 1999:57).</i>	
	SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief), CDC		CE

(confusion, difficulty concentrating), AF (anxiety and fear):

...Gregor was startled when he heard his voice answering. It was clearly and unmistakably his earlier voice, but in it was intermingled, as if from below, an irrepressibly painful squeaking which left the words positively distinct only in the first moment and distorted them in the reverberation, so that one didn't know if one had heard correctly (Kafka, F., 1999:6).

AF (anxiety and fear), and GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame):

CE

'So can Mr. Manager come in to see you now' asked his father impatiently and knocked once again on the door. 'No,' said Gregor. In the neighbouring room on the left a painful stillness descended. In the neighbouring room on the right the sister began to sob (Kafka, F., 1999:13).

FSH (Feeling Sad or Hopeless):

CE

He could not open the door, and he did not want to chase away his sister who had to remain with her mother. At this point he had nothing to do but wait, and overwhelmed with self-reproach and worry, he began to creep and crawl over everything: walls, furniture, and ceiling..(Kafka, F., 1999:48).

Table 2 shows textual data from Gregor's character, where he experiences forms of trauma in the form of catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena, and also shows the emotional and physical symptoms of the trauma. Seen when he was first shocked and denied that he was turning into an insect, ...he discovered that in bed he had been transformed into a monstrous verminous bug (Kafka, F., 1999:3). In this case, the emotional/psychological symptoms are SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief). Based on the theory of Robinson et al. (2016), categorize the emotional and physical symptoms of the trauma. Symptoms such as shock, denial, and disbelief are categorized as psychological symptoms of trauma. Gregor did not believe it when he woke up in the morning because he had turned into an insect monster. He really couldn't believe it, which made him frustrated and unaccepting of himself. The trauma that emerged was categorized as a catastrophic event. Caruth (1996) calls it a sudden trauma or an unpleasant event that occurs suddenly.

Gregor's change in attitude is also seen when he is angry, panicked, and erratic, which frustrates him. It is seen in the following sentence: ...I have to deal with the problems of traveling, the worries about train connections, irregular bad food, temporary and constantly changing human relationships which never come from the heart. To hell with it all!" (Kafka, F., 1999:4). An emerging form of trauma is intrusive phenomena—memories that appear suddenly (Caruth, 1996, p. 11). When Gregor realizes his physical changes, he remembers that he has to go to work that morning. It can be seen when Gregor panics and misses the train. He was in shock and did not dare to leave the room. Even Gregor was angry in such circumstances. The symptoms that arise from his emotions are (AIM) anger, irritability, and mood swings (Robinson et al., 2016). A huge emotional change from Gregor's psychic. His mind was raging because he thought of his work and knew that he had to leave immediately but could not leave the room.

Other evidence also shows that Gregor is anxious and afraid of everything. Fear of losing his job, not being accepted by his family, not daring to leave the house, and so on.

'So can Mr. Manager come in to see you now' asked his father impatiently and knocked once again on the door. 'No,' said Gregor. In the neighboring room on the left a painful stillness descended. In the neighboring room on the right the sister began to sob (Kafka, F., 1999:13). Based on the data, Gregor is afraid to leave the room, even though the boss of the company where he works tells him to leave the house. He is also afraid of being found out that he turned into an insect that frightens everyone. The symptoms of trauma that appear in Gregor's psyche are AF anxiety and fear, a fear that he cannot control and that makes him frustrated with himself. In addition, another form of symptom is GSS guilt, shame, and self-blame (Robinson et al., 2016). She felt ashamed of herself when people saw her body turn into a disgusting insect. In this case, the form of trauma that emerged was catastrophic events (Caruth, 1996), where she experienced the event suddenly without realizing it.

Gregor Samsa represents the primary trauma bearer in *The Metamorphosis*. His transformation into a monstrous verminous insect functions as the initial catastrophic event that triggers continuous psychological and physical disturbances. The findings show that Gregor experiences both catastrophic event trauma and intrusive phenomena, manifested through dominant symptoms such as shock, confusion, anxiety, guilt, emotional instability, insomnia, and physical pain. These symptoms indicate that Gregor's trauma is internal, intense, and sustained, positioning him as the central source of traumatic emergence in the narrative.

Grete's Trauma as a sister

Grete is Gregor's younger sister. In the beginning, she is described as a sister who is quite close to Gregor. Even before the incident of Gregor turning into an insect, she was close. When Gregor physically transforms into a horrible insect, his sister is very concerned and even sad when he changes. When no one dared to meet Gregor, Grete was willing to meet and even feed him, like a caring sister. Grete always feeds and cleans Gregor's room. However, at the end of the story, Grete changes very drastically. Grete, who used to be very close to Gregor, was suddenly disgusted and did not even want to clean Gregor's room and feed him anymore. Grete's change in attitude also made Mr. Samsa hate Gregor very much; even the final attitude of Grete was to get rid of Gregor from the house. Grete loudly hates her brother, who has turned into an insect.

Table 3. Textual Data for Grete in *The Metamorphosis*

The Character	Textual Data for Emotional and Psychological Symptoms	Textual Data for Physical Symptoms	Trauma Forms
	FSH (Feeling Sad or Hopeless) GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame): <i>The future of Gregor and his family really depended on it! If only the sister had been there! She was clever. She had already cried</i>		IP

	<i>while Gregor was still lying quietly on his back (Kafka, F., 1999:22).</i>	
	AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings):	CE
Grete	<i>She did not find him immediately, but when she noticed him under the couch (God, he had to be somewhere or other; for he could hardly fly away) she got such a shock that, without being able to control herself, she slammed the door shut once again from the outside (Kafka, F., 1999:30).</i>	
	AF (anxiety and fear):	CE
	<i>But she not only did not step inside; she even retreated and shut the door. A stranger really could have concluded from this that Gregor had been lying in wait for her and wanted to bite her (Kafka, F., 1999:39).</i>	
	AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings):	IP
	<i>'We must try to get rid of it,' the sister now said decisively to the father, for the mother, in her coughing fit, wasn't listening to anything, 'it is killing you both (Kafka, F., 1999:68).</i>	

Table 3 shows that Grete is traumatized by what happened to her brother. Gregor's transformation into an insect has psychologically changed the Samsa family, even his sister Grete. Grete is psychologically traumatized with emotional symptoms, as in this novella. The future of Gregor and his family really depended on it! If only the sister had been there! She was clever. She had already cried while Gregor was still lying quietly on his back (Kafka, F., 1999:22). Symptoms of trauma that appear emotionally are (FSH) feeling sad or hopeless; (GSS) guilt, shame, and self-blame; there is a feeling of sadness, guilt, and shame (Robinson et al., 2016). In this case, Grete was very sad after learning that her brother Gregor had turned into an insect. She felt guilty about the situation because the Samsa family was very dependent on Gregor's work and was financially dependent on Gregor. This is the basis for Grete being very traumatized and stressed by the situation. The form of trauma seen in that is intrusive phenomenon, Caruth (1996), the presence of thoughts that suddenly hit without being wanted by the individual. In this case, the Samsa family made Grete also feel the trauma faced by the family. It is also seen when Grete really knows the real Gregor. She did not find him immediately, but when she noticed him under the couch (God, he had to be somewhere or other; for he could hardly fly away) she got such a shock that, without being able to control herself, she slammed the door shut once again from the outside (Kafka, F., 1999: 30). Grete experienced trauma in the form of catastrophic events with symptoms of emotional trauma (AIM) anger,

irritability, mood swings. Angry with the situation where Gregor is very disgusting and turns into a dirty Gregor.

After the physical changes of Gregor. Grete experienced emotional and psychological trauma symptoms in (AF) anxiety and fear. But she not only did not step inside; she even retreated and shut the door. A stranger really could have concluded from this that Gregor had been lying in wait for her and wanted to bite her (Kafka, F., 1999: 39). The fear experienced by Grete in Gregor. It can be illustrated in the sentence above that Gregor is scary enough to leave the room and show himself as an insect. The form of trauma experienced by Grete is catastrophic. However, Grete changed quickly. She even began to hate her brother Gregor and felt disgusted with Gregor for being too dirty to be in the house. Grete's change made her angry with the situation. (AIM) anger, irritability, mood swings are symptoms of trauma experienced by Grete with the following description: 'We must try to get rid of it,' the sister now said decisively to the father, for the mother, in her coughing fit, wasn't listening to anything, 'it is killing you both' (Kafka, F., 1999:68). She even began to want to get rid of Gregor for disturbing the Samsa family and realized that she would not be able to do business if there were still dirty insects in the house.

Grete Samsa experiences secondary trauma as a psychological response to Gregor's condition. Initially characterized by care and emotional attachment, Grete gradually develops emotional instability marked by anger, fear, guilt, and emotional withdrawal. The findings indicate that her trauma emerges not from direct transformation but from continuous exposure to Gregor's altered condition, which generates intrusive emotional responses and moral conflict. This positions Grete as a secondary trauma subject whose psychological state is shaped by relational proximity to the primary victim.

Parental Trauma to Gregor the Insect Bug

Gregor's parents were initially very appreciative of his work. His parents were financially dependent on Gregor. However, when Gregor turned into an insect, Mr. Samsa especially changed his attitude and treatment towards Gregor. Mrs. Samsa, on the other hand, was very attentive to Gregor's condition, even keeping Gregor's room clean. When there was a dispute between the prospective tenants of the apartment house and the Samsa family, Gregor's mother could not stop the anger of Gregor's father, who hated him. Even Gregor's father supposes that if there was no Gregor as an insect, the tenant of the apartment house would definitely want to rent and pay money to the Samsa family.

Table 4. Textual Data for Mr. Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*

The Character	Textual Data for Emotional and Psychological Symptoms	Textual Data for Physical Symptoms	Trauma Forms
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Mr. Samsa	SDD (shock, denial, or disbelief):	CE
	<i>His father clenched his fist with a hostile expression, as if he wished to push Gregor back into his room, then looked uncertainly around the living room, covered his eyes with his hands, and cried so that his mighty breast shook (Kafka, F., 1999:19).</i>	
	SDD (shock, denial, or disbelief):	IP
	<i>...‘Mother fainted, but she’s getting better now. Gregor has broken loose.’ ‘Yes, I have expected that,’ said his father, ‘I always told you that, but you women don’t want to listen.’ (Kafka, F., 1999:49).</i>	
	FSH (Feeling Sad or Hopeless):	IP
	<i>...look back and forth at the mother and sister, and habitually say ‘This is a life. This is the peace and quiet of my old age.’ And propped up by both women, he would heave himself up, elaborately, as if for him it was the greatest travail, allow himself to be led to the door by the women,... (Kafka, F., 1999:55).</i>	
	GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame):	IP
	<i>...the mother that she was not to take over the cleaning of Gregor’s room from the sister</i>	

and, turning to his left, he shouted at the sister that she would no longer be allowed to clean Gregor's room ever again, (Kafka, F., 1999:58).

GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame):

IP

'Mr. Samsa,' called out the middle lodger to the father, and pointed his index finger, without uttering a further word, at Gregor as he was moving slowly forward (Kafka, F., 1999:65).

AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings):

IP

The father groped his way tottering to his chair and let himself fall in it. It looked as if he was stretching out for his usual evening snooze,...(Kafka, F., 1999:67).

AIM (anger, irritability, mood swings):

IP

'Well,' said Mr. Samsa, 'now we can give thanks to God.' He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example (Kafka, F., 1999:73).

In Table 4, Mr. Samsa experiences symptoms of emotional and psychological trauma. While the symptoms of physical trauma are not found in the novella, When Mr. Samsa saw Gregor's transformation into an insect, he was in shock and disbelief. Mr. Samsa felt frustrated with Gregor because it was also seen by the boss of the company where he worked. The trauma symptoms that appear are (SSD) shock, denial, or disbelief (Robinson et al., 2016). These emotional symptoms make Mr. Samsa feel stressed and also experience catastrophic events trauma (Caruth, 1996), trauma that occurs suddenly or events that suddenly approach. His father clenched his fist with a hostile expression,

as if he wished to push Gregor back into his room, then looked uncertainly around the living room, covered his eyes with his hands, and cried so that his mighty breast shook (Kafka, F., 1999:19). In the sentence, it is clear that Mr. Samsa feels traumatized and shocked by the situation of Gregor turning into an insect. The trauma experienced by Mr. Samsa created a sense of hatred towards Gregor because the Samsa family became ashamed. Even in this sentence, Gregor's father is grateful that Gregor died in disgrace. 'Well,' said Mr. Samsa, 'now we can give thanks to God.' He crossed himself, and the three women followed his example (Kafka, F., 1999:73). In this case, the symptoms of trauma that appear are (AIM) anger, irritability, and mood swings where Gregor's father is angry, as well as a significant change in attitude that occurs in him, which makes him feel like that.

Mr. Samsa demonstrates reactive aggression trauma characterized by sudden emotional outbursts, hostility, and rejection toward Gregor. The findings show that his trauma is expressed through shock, denial, anger, and aggressive behavioral responses. Unlike Gregor and Grete, his trauma manifests outwardly as controlling and punitive actions. This indicates that his psychological distress is transformed into reactive aggression as a coping mechanism against the disruption of family stability and economic dependency.

Table 5. Textual Data for Mrs. Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*

The Character	Textual Data for Emotional and Psychological Symptoms	Textual Data for Physical Symptoms	Trauma Forms
	FSH (Feeling Sad or Hopeless): <i>... 'Is he playing the fool with us?' 'For God's sake,' cried the mother already in tears, 'perhaps he's very ill and we're upsetting him. Grete! Grete!' she yelled at that point. 'Mother?' called the sister from the other side (Kafka, F., 1999:16).</i>		CE
	GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame), AF (anxiety and fear) SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief): <i>...his mother (apparently totally sunk into herself) she</i>		CE

**Mrs.
Samsa**

suddenly sprang right up with her arms spread far apart and her fingers extended and cried out, 'Help, for God's sake, help!' She held her head bowed down, as if she wanted to view Gregor better, but ran senselessly back, contradicting that gesture,...(Kafka, F., 1999:23).

GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame):

IP

...she thanked them for the dismissal with tears in her eyes, as if she was receiving the greatest favour which people had shown her there, and, without anyone demanding it from her, she swore a fearful oath not to betray anyone, not even the slightest bit (Kafka, F., 1999:34).

SSD (shock, denial, or disbelief):

IP

His mother approached Gregor's room with cries of excited joy, but she fell silent at the door (Kafka, F., 1999:42).

GSS (guilt, shame, and self-blame):

IP

...the mother that she was not to take over the cleaning of Gregor's room from the sister and, turning to his left, he shouted at the sister that she would no longer be allowed to clean Gregor's room ever again, (Kafka, F., 1999:58).

Table 5 shows that Mrs. Samsa experienced catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena trauma. It is characterized by the symptoms of trauma that appear emotionally and psychologically in the novel. In this sentence, it shows that Gregor's mother is very concerned about Gregor's state of turning into an insect. ...'Is he playing the fool with us?' 'For God's sake,' cried the mother already in tears, 'perhaps he's very ill and we're upsetting him. Grete! Grete!' she yelled at that point. 'Mother?' called the sister from the other side (Kafka, F., 1999:16). The trauma symptom that appears is (FSH) feeling sad or hopeless (Robinson et al., 2016). It was seen when Gregor's mother cried over the state of physical changes from Gregor. Another thing is also seen in emotional symptoms in the form of (GSS) guilt, shame, and self-blame ...the mother that she was not to take over the cleaning of Gregor's room from the sister and, turning to his left, he shouted at the sister that she would no longer be allowed to clean Gregor's room ever again, (Kafka, F., 1999: 58). Where Gregor's mother feels guilty and ashamed of Gregor's condition. The Samsa family has also been reluctant to accept Gregor who became a disgusting insect. In this case, the form of trauma that arises is intrusive phenomena, the existence of thoughts that appear suddenly without being wanted by the individual (Caruth, 1996, p. 11).

Mrs. Samsa exhibits helplessness-based trauma characterized by emotional fragility, fear, confusion, and dependency on others for emotional regulation. The findings reveal that she consistently responds to Gregor's condition with sadness, anxiety, and emotional collapse rather than confrontation or rejection. Her trauma reflects a passive psychological state in which she is unable to exert control over the situation, resulting in continuous emotional distress and vulnerability.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that trauma in *The Metamorphosis* (1915) is not confined to individual psychological experience but extends into a collective family condition. While Gregor Samsa functions as the primary bearer of trauma through his catastrophic transformation into a monstrous verminous insect, his condition simultaneously becomes the triggering point for the emergence of secondary traumatic responses within the Samsa family. The findings show that Gregor experiences dominant forms of trauma, including catastrophic events and intrusive phenomena, which are manifested through emotional and psychological symptoms such as shock, confusion, anxiety, guilt, anger, and hopelessness, as well as physical symptoms such as insomnia, aches, and bodily distress. These symptoms position Gregor as the central source of traumatic disruption in the narrative. However, the study further reveals that trauma is transmitted relationally within the family structure. Grete develops secondary trauma characterized by emotional instability, shifting from care to rejection. Mr. Samsa expresses trauma through reactive aggression, hostility, and rejection toward Gregor, while Mrs. Samsa demonstrates trauma through emotional fragility, fear, and helplessness. These responses indicate that each family member experiences trauma differently, depending on their relational proximity and role within the family system.

Therefore, the study concludes that *The Metamorphosis* portrays trauma as a process of psychological transmission within the family, where an individual traumatic event develops into collective suffering that reshapes emotional bonds, disrupts family roles, and ultimately contributes to the disintegration of the Samsa family. This finding extends previous trauma studies by emphasizing that trauma in Kafka's novella operates not only as an individual psychological condition but also as a relational and familial phenomenon.

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