

Gregor zamza as a posthumanistic transformation of "the excessive person"

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Abstract: This article explores the metamorphosis of the figure of the "superfluous man" in the work of Franz Kafka, particularly through the character of Gregor Samsa in the novella *The Metamorphosis* (1915). A comparative analysis is carried out between Samsa and the classical representatives of the Russian type of "superfluous man" — Onegin, Pechorin, and Chatsky. Special attention is given to the themes of alienation, silence, non-functionality, and the collapse of the humanist model of the subject. The study combines methods of hermeneutics, existential philosophy, and literary comparativism.

Keywords: - Superfluous man, Franz Kafka, existentialism, posthumanism, alienation, subject, modernism, silence.

Introduction: The figure of the "superfluous person" occupies a special place in the literary tradition of the 19th century, especially in Russian culture, where it serves not only as a social and psychological portrait of the era but also as a philosophical category. In the works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Griboyedov, this image reflects the clash of the hero's inner world with a conservative, repressive society. However, in the 20th century, this figure undergoes transformation. It takes on a special form in the work of Franz Kafka, where "deprivation" acquires an ontological, not just social, nature. The protagonist of the novella "The Transformation" (1915) [5], Gregor Samsa, becomes an icon of modernist alienation and post-humanistic existence. The purpose of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis between the figure of Zamza and the classical "superfluous person," to identify key differences in the structure of alienation, the degree of subjectivity, and the philosophical status of the characters. The methodology is based on the synthesis of hermeneutics, existential philosophy, and post-humanistic criticism. Main part Researchers interpret Kafka's story as an existential allegory in which Zamza embodies a modernist era person - atomized, alienated, having lost connection with body, labor, language, and the meaning of life [9]. His life before transformation is no better - he was already a

functional element of the corporate machine, existing for the benefit of others. Turning into an insect only makes his inner "deprivation" obvious and undeniable: "He became an insect - but this is only a manifestation of the isolation he had felt before"2. Zamza's alienation is total: it is not only social, but also physical, verbal, and communicative. He loses not just his job or status - he loses his human form of being, transitioning to a zone of mute and meaninglessness. Loss of speech becomes a symbol of identity loss: "He wanted to say something in response, but only a meaningless clang escaped from his throat" [5]. Zamza is not a protesting subject, but a silent object deprived even of the possibility of declaration. His suffering is not meaningful, but biological; not tragic, but absurd. In this, he differs sharply from Onegin, Pechorin, and Chatsky, whose inner conflict is colored by reflection, moral search, and attempts at dialogue with society. The figures of Onegin, Pechorin, and Chatsky represent the earliest variations of the image of the "superfluous person" in Russian literature, each of which carries a complex internal conflict imbued with reflection, moral aspirations, and attempts to establish dialogue with society. Unlike later representatives of this type, such as Oblomov or Bazarov, these characters are not so passive or destructive as to suffer from internal discord between themselves and the social environment.

Yevgeny Onegin, the hero of Alexander Pushkin's novel of the same name, experiences deep spiritual apathy and boredom, which is the result of both excessive education and the absence of applying his mental abilities in life. His inability to respond to Tatiana's feelings and subsequent tragic awareness of missed opportunity demonstrate the reflexive nature of his conflict: Onegin not only rejects society but also proves incapable of genuine interaction with it. Pechorin, the central figure in Lermontov's novel "The Hero of Our Time," embodies the next phase in the evolution of the "superfluous person": he is not just an observer, but also an active participant, ironically aware of his destructive power. Pechorin suffers from internal discord and emptiness, which he himself produces, experimenting with the feelings of others and at the same time seeking the meaning of his existence. His diaries are a true testament to the reflective work of a mind striving not only to understand its nature but also its inability to be morally integrity.

Chatsky, the hero of Griboyedov's comedy "Woe from the Mind," contrasts Moscow's flowery society with his sincerity, independence, and wit. Its conflict lies in the clash of new ideas with an archaic system of values. Unlike Onegin and Pechorin, Chatsky hasn't lost faith in the possibility of dialogue yet, but his monologues are reduced to emptiness: the public either doesn't hear his voice or rejects it. It is precisely in this tragic impossibility of being understood that lies the depth of his "deprivation."

Zamza's physical metamorphosis has not only symbolic but also philosophical meaning. The body becomes an arena for the deconstruction of identity: it doesn't simply feel like a stranger, it becomes physically different. This uniqueness turns him into an object of disgust, fear, and violence, which intensifies the feeling of not just alienation, but complete desubjectivization.

Post-humanistic interpretations emphasize that Kafka's mutation breaks the fundamental boundaries between humans and non-living nature, between subject and object. As R. Esposito writes, "Kafka undermines the very idea of an autonomous human subject by placing it in a body that has lost its human status" [10]. Unlike the "superfluous people" of the manual tradition, whose body remains a place of freedom, desire, or at least pain, Zamza's body loses its significance - it becomes a functional barrier and a symbol of the impossibility of communication.

Kafka radically reframes the familiar topologies of the subject. The space in the room where Zamza is found becomes a metaphor of ontological exile. This is not just prison isolation, but isolation within the framework of inhuman existence. The family is not a place of support, but an instrument of alienation. He wasn't expelled

from society - he had never truly joined it.

The space does not open up for escape or salvation. As Benjamin notes, in the Kafka world "there are no doors leading outside - only corridors leading deeper inside"[1]. Such a transient sense of helplessness radically contrasts with the fates of Onegin or Pechorin, whose "deprivation" implies movement, choice, even death as a result of an act of will. Zamza has no will - only the process of dying. One of the central elements of Zamza's alienation is his silence. It's not that he can't speak - he loses access to the sign system as such. This is not a simple absence of speech, but a testament to the collapse of the logos that in the humanistic tradition defined a person. Zamza's silence symbolizes the end of intersubjectivity. It becomes an untranslatable, uninterpretable, mute sign of difference. Onegin, Pechorin, and Chatsky are not just "superfluous people," but also bearers of intellectual and moral anxiety, which questions the boundaries between individual freedom and social duty. Their internal conflict is not limited to existential dissatisfaction, but includes an active attempt to comprehend and express their own difference - the way, and with a tragic outcome.

"Excess people," despite their tragic nature, are always engaged in dialogue - with society, with women, with themselves. Their words - meaningless and ironic, desperate or futile - are still included in the structure of the meaning [6]. Zamza, however, loses not only its language, but also its ability to be understood, which means to be. Comparing Gregor Zamza with the classical representatives of the "superfluous person" tradition - Onegin, Pechorin, and Chatsky - reveals a fundamental difference not only in the motivation and fate of the heroes but also in the very ontology of their existence. A "superfluous person" is a subject who has entered into conflict with social reality, but retains internal integrity and reflexive capacity. It is a product of the cultural system, a path, and its marginal element. He suffers within the framework of this system, realizes his "deprivation" as a tragedy, and is capable of expressing protest, even if passive or ironic. Its conflict is ethical and historical-cultural, and it is rooted in a humanistic tradition.

Kafka's hero is fundamentally of a different kind. Gregor Samsa does not engage in dialogue with the public - he is excluded from it before the beginning of the narrative, even in anthropological terms. His transformation into an insect merely visualizes the ontological alienation he had previously possessed. He is not deprived of something external - power, love, meaning; he is excluded from the possibility of being human. His "deprivation" has no cause, and this makes it absurd and extreme.

Zamza's alienation is not social or moral, but ontological. He is not banished because he is bad, and not even because he conflicts with the system - he is a stranger in the fact that he exists. Even the closest relatives who perceive it before metamorphosis solely as a source of income do not experience genuine horror or pity when it "falls" from human status. His exclusion from home proceeds with cold-blooded pragmatism, indicating the destruction not only of the family but also of the anthropocentric myth about man as a value.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in the figure of Zamza, a radical deconstruction of the humanistic foundations of Western culture begins - work, family, identity lose their sacred status. This allows us to speak of Kafka as a preacher of post-humanistic consciousness, where man is no longer the center of the world, and his "deprivation" becomes a norm, not an exception. Zamza is not excluded, but impossible. He is radically different - outside of culture, outside of language, outside of the body. If Onegin and Pechorin can still speak, suffer, and love, then Zamza is deprived even of these forms of connection with the world. Its existence is a testament not to the rejection of humanity, but to the collapse of its very possibilities.

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