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## **Role of Animal in the Fly, Metamorphosis and the Wandering Dog**

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### **Abstract:**

*It has been ages that authors are including animals in their stories, but the purpose of choosing these three stories lies in the kind of role that has been announced for them in the narration. The three short stories have been tactfully put together from different parts of the world to show how similar the minds of their authors could be. The methods to be worked on in this article is mostly psychological and it will deal with the change in the protagonists' characters and the results would be interesting.*

### **1. Introduction**

What made Gregor a beetle was the stillness of his life, not doing anything different and not thinking about the pleasures in life, all he wanted to do was to make enough money so that he could make a good life for his sister but he didn't realize that he was trapped in an everyday life and was dead in life. But what made the dog leave the human life was the low pleasure seeking. Yet they do have something in common, it's as if the Mother Nature has punished them both for getting out of balance; one for not thinking about himself and another for thinking a lot.

Comparing the dog, the beetle and the fly it is significant that fly and beetle are of the loathsome insects but the dog is "The Man's best friend". Yet this animal lacks the characteristics of a loyal tamed one or seems to have lost them. So he has become similar to the other two but what is important is his transformation. I mean the beetle and the fly are already loathsome but it takes a lot to change from a perfect home dog to a wanderer in the garbage area. But why it is this way is a question I look forward to answer.

### **2. Body**

Gregor has a picture of a woman on his wall which its frame is gold; her hand covered in her fur coat is straightened toward the viewers. When looking at the window he hears the raindrops (this reference to water is like the one in *The Wandering Dog* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he feels depressed in the sight of the rain, which indicates an ominous happening in the near future).

Gregor's body has become very ugly, which I believe is the leakage of his mind of the life he has made for himself. A life of stress and pressure of the things he has done for the sake of his family.

Gregor is so much like the old Woodifield and his boss is exactly like Woodifield's. This is what derived them both to misery. It doesn't matter whether you are in Germany or in England; the economic situation of master and slave always gets to you if the situation is not equal to all the citizens. The boss always needs to take control of somebody or something and the slave is so powerless that has no other way than to give in to the situation and in the end just like Gregor and Woodifield and the Fly fall into mental illness and a very miserable life and eventually death.

These stories are not just about the transformation of a human into an animal but in a Marxist point of view the situation of the society that runs these people to madness. Both Woodifield and Gregor are working class people who need to surrender to the people in power in order to survive.

We can see the suppression of the working class everywhere in the story. Unfortunately, Gregor cannot leave his job because his family has debts to the boss, debts they wouldn't have if they wouldn't live a life they couldn't afford.

Step by step Gregor is changing from human to animal; even his diet has changed and the food that used to suit him well are now indigestible. He can now only eat garbage like other beetles.

The interesting point is that although he has lost his human body he hasn't lost his sense of humanity. He doesn't try to scare his sister, and he doesn't greed for food.

The story of Gregor is so similar to Ivan Ilych, they both tried to make so much money for their family in order to make a better life for them but eventually they lost contact with them, became isolated and depressed and had an unfortunate death.

In the second part we see that the whole family has somehow adjusted to the situation. Gregor has an apple stuck to his bottom and no one is brave enough to take it out. It seems to me that the apple is just like Gregor himself; the apple is a burden to him and Gregor is a burden to his family and cannot be withdrawn.

Everything has become mundane and hectic in the house, though he can now see the salon in the afternoons that's not very enjoyable because they have to work so hard and are too tired to talk. The father doesn't even take out his uniform as a sign of permanent slavery and doing everything for money that he is not himself anymore. Mother and sister work so hard throughout the night.

Although the fly has no specific personality and we don't know its feelings and thoughts but the dog and the beetle both have humanity inside and the people around them don't seem to notice that. Both writers are implying that since they don't have a human body they are treated as animals and others who do have a human body but no sense of humanity are considered as human. This fact is very much applicable to our world that people only care about what they see with their solid eyes and don't pay attention to what's inside.

The ending is very crucial; at least to me. The son who was devoted to his family and would do anything for them, one who had shouldered all the burden and had no other wish than to make his family happy was first deceived into thinking that his father had no money and he had to work hard to pay their debts and in the end when he dies they celebrate their new life, think about the future and marring their daughter. What I see in this scene is nothing other than three selfish people turning into animals. Whose own well-being and happiness is the only significant thing in their lives.

In "Sag-e-Velgard" by Hedayat which I have translated into "The Wandering Dog" the scene that is described is dull, yet beyond this dullness there is life, a miserable one, a kind of life in which the birds don't sing while dogs groan. The dog whose name is Pot in the story is like the beetle, Gregor; he is just as ugly and dirty yet just as intelligent and wise as a man. He is like the beetle with the only difference that we haven't seen his metamorphosis.

Reference to water and plant which in past was pleasant but now is just dump, reminds me of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man", in which when Stephen was in school all indications of water were cold and very bad but at home they were very pleasant. In "The Wandering Dog" the past replaces home. Although it is a dog but he has the soul of a human, so I don't think it's of any difference between the dog and Gregor. Water represents purity, humanity; the fact that they threw him out of the brook symbolizes his loss of humanity. Then he was out of human life and wasn't allowed in the beasts' either, and that's when his misery began.

The dog's commitments and his loyalty is a significance of his humanity but some people were just less human than he was and didn't treat him well. The fact that our protagonist is a dog with human soul suggests that some people might get involved with their libido so much and get to a very low point of humanity. Sometime a very low class person of society can have more ethics than many other high class people. What you are is not defined by your position but by your sense of humanity.

Pot has lived with humans from when he was born so he was inseparable from them. He felt like one member of the family and that's how the family thought about him too.

The ending is crucial, just like "Metamorphosis" and "The Fly"; the dog dies, why? Because he was trapped in a purgatory that he couldn't come out of. When he dies the crows come to take out his "bluish-green" eyes, in Persian this color is taken from the name of the animal ewe, which is known as an innocent animal, Hedayat's saying that he died as an innocent soul. So if he's innocent why he kills Pot? A fact we should know about Hedayat is that he kills the characters that he likes, and that he sees salvation in death; I'll get to the bottom of it later on.

Hedayat questions the heredity of the dog and philosophically declares that in a world that nobility has no significance this is what happens if you want to hold up to your ethics.

What Hedayat is doing in this story is that by showing the low level characteristics of humanity like greed, ferocity and having a humble life would make us disgust these types of inhumanity.

Looking through Hedayat's works it is obvious that except some parts, most of his favorite characters find misery or die whenever they try for the opposite sex or when their love gives its place to lust. He respects love but hates lust. Whenever a character of his drowns in lust he kills them or makes them miserable because he believes human needs more than sex to live on. That's what happens in this story, he loses himself when he smells a female dog's odor and consequently he loses his owner.

The Wandering Dog can be considered among the "psycho-fictions" of Hedayat. This kind it is usually criticized psychologically, because these stories are concerned with mind, psychology, philosophy and metaphysics. These stories are usually dark, with an unsolvable and complicated story and usually in the end a human or a cat or a dog dies or commits suicide. These stories are concerned with issues like life or death, the world, determination or liberation, the distance between perfectness or defectiveness, wish, winning and losing relationship, or even lack of relationship of man and woman, human and demon.

Looking through the story we see that some of its elements are contributable to psycho-fiction. The transparent fact is the death of our dog in the end, the other factors like the human mind of a dog and the problems he came up with. The demon characteristics of humans are in contrast with the human characteristics of the dog and other animals.

Hedayat is the originator of Realism in Iran. During his life he benefited from the European culture and knowing French and English helped him know their style of writing and living better. He was influenced by the Second World War and consequently made him the father of realism in Iran. He was a cynic like all the other fellow writers of his time which is the result of unpleasant situation of his society and the world. The elements that are seen mostly in his stories are abandonment, self-control, drift promiscuity, detachment and archaism which are all taken from his view of life and his surroundings.

It can be said that all of Hedayat's works are involved in a dead-end. In his stories he wants to show that he's escaping from helplessness by the help of hope but even this cannot free him from the dead-end of his stories. With this he wants to tell his people that for escaping this dead-end we have to condemn to wickedness and seek a way to salvation. He has tried in his stories to struggle with this wickedness and demonstrate a clear image of his society but he wasn't able to overcome helplessness.

As a realist he tries to show the realities of his society. He can be called a revolutionary writer because by showing this darkness he's trying to aware people and make them not do these mistakes. The fact that we see that most of his characters commit suicide or face an

early death is somehow Hedayat's understanding of the situation of society and the world of the time; no one could have expected better.

During a trip he had to India he became familiar with Buddhism and under its influence he became vegetarian and we can see its effects on his works. That's why he loved animals and showed a great respect to them. Mr. Ardebili in his book "Hedayat in the passage of time" is criticizing Hedayat's stories marxistically and claiming that his nihilism is a result of his society around him. He says that even if he had mental illness it was a result of bad society. Of course it is not too hard to believe but there are other factors which needs more deliberation in his background.

Pot, the Scottish dog who has lost his owner and is not finding him is like a man who is lost in the world and cannot get back to his real identity. He is a confused man who is hugely passionate about his opposite sex. The crows at the end of the story are representatives of other people who wish our death.

Hedayat has translated some of Kafka's works into Farsi first in order to bring Kafka to Iran and spread his ideas there; and second to show how similar he is to Kafka in their philosophy of life. Their story writings are somehow the same. For example, in this case they both have used animals in place of people, they're both suffering from their society and surroundings; but their difference is in the use of these animals. Kafka changes a man into a beetle, Hedayat brings humanity to a dog but then brings about his libido and damns him and then kills him a miserable death. Another fact that we should know about Hedayat is that he was born rich but he always hated his class of society and had a tendency toward the poor. That's why his stories are about them.

The name of the character and his breed which is not Persian shows that he is under the influence of European realism and maybe he wanted to show that this style is not purely Iranian. Although the story takes place in Iran but the Dog is from Europe, it is exactly like the European style which is brought to Iran. So his story was dominated by the European shadow.

It is interesting that Hedayat does not see sex as a low-level characteristic of humanity but in his opinion it is something beyond the human power, of course the fact that he was never married explains it but in the end we see that he kills Pot, why? Because he finds himself trapped in life and although he daunts death he finds it a way out of life, that's why he kills all the characters that he cares about and ultimately he kills himself. The fact that he was suffering from a sexless life explains the whole story. We can in this way imagine Pot as the author himself; he was born a noble birth, he had the best education anyone could have at that time abroad; just like Pot who was living in a good house where his owner cared about him. He was clean and healthy and was provided with anything he needed; he felt respected and happy but there was something missing in his life, just like Hedayat. Maybe he was unattractive to women or didn't have the guts to approach one; anyway, he never had the chance to experience it, so in the story he pictures it as something mysterious. It's a smell, he doesn't even see the female dog, it's as if he has never seen a naked woman, maybe he even feared it a little. Then because of following this sensation his life became miserable, he loses everything. Just like Hedayat's mental illness. They're both searching for it and they're both drowning in it. Finally, not only they don't find their woman they are unable to go back to their previous normal life so the only ultimatum is death.

The only difference between Pot's death and Hedayat's; Hedayat tries to kill himself twice; he repents the first time and survives but doesn't the second time and dies. His death was on his own hands but in Pot's case it's different. Pot dies because he loses his power trying to get back to his previous life, he runs and runs but cannot catch the car; like life was moving faster than him and he couldn't outrace it or that he didn't deserve that life anymore so he dies of struggling. It shows that Hedayat wanted to struggle for life deep down but he thought that it's of no use, life is moving so much faster so why bother.

Hedayat had a great respect for Kafka; he has studied him, translated his stories and has written about him. As Hedayat says about Kafka their lives are somehow similar, they both had wealthy families that they wanted to run from and they both lived a solitary life. But in his life Kafka is very much like Gregor, he lives an isolated life. He feels distorted from people around him. He thinks of his characters as law-breakers but not sinners. He always is in fluctuation between isolation and law.

Hedayat thinks that Kafka's works are a kind of compensation act for his deficiencies in life. Man spends his life doing not meaningful works and tries to evade the sins that are being burdens to him and struggles in the dead-end of loneliness and hopelessness. As Hedayat says, this is the demonstration of Kafka's life which is beautifully pictured in the metamorphosis' situation. His characters are much like himself logical and careful in life. So he says "the author and the work are so indistinguishable it's like he has lived his work".

Nabokov says each man's world is different, one may live in a logical world which he thinks is real and another may live in a sensational one. Those who live in an imaginary world like Gregor are distant from the world of other people around them. Some may like to stay in this situation but others need to get out of it and communicate with other people, in this case unfortunately since Gregor has been metamorphosed and is being punished for his previous acts, there's no way out of it. Actually Kafka's with Imaginary people. He thinks logical thinking people don't pay attention to the beauty of the world and are trapped in the everyday life and most of them are involved in what we call death in life. So Kafka takes one of these ordinary people and takes him to the imaginary world, that's when his sense of art increases and he sees things he hadn't seen before. But ultimately it kills him because when you enter the imaginary world there is no way back and so according to Hedayat the only way is death.

As Nabokov says "the vain protagonist belongs to his vain world but is tragically and miserably trying to get out of it and join the human world and so dies in misery." But the question is why should he get back to the human world and also more importantly which human world? A world in which people lie and cheat and work so hard to get more money and don't look into themselves or think of the beauty and the value of the world? Does this world worth living? I'm with Hedayat in this issue, death is much better than death in life.

Nabokov beautifully describes Gregor's transformation into a beetle; he says it is his family, the three parasites has made his hard back. He believes it is the pressure of family that is changing him. In the outset of the story he still has a sense of humanity, he looks

at his watch, sees the street and all but he loses it in progression. Metamorphosis is about a man who loses his humanity as a result of outer and inner pressure, unlike the Wandering Dog who loses his humanity as a result of sexual compression. Kafka likes to show the change in his imaginary world but Hedayat's character is a dog from the beginning. They both are saying the same thing if you want to take a didactic lesson out of it; but their view of the world is different. Kafka blames the family and victimizes Gregor; Hedayat blames man's sexual instincts which are scary and unreachable for him.

Little by little he becomes a complete beetle, his voice changes his needs alters and cannot eat like a human anymore. He now has a beetle like temper but not completely, he's still able to apprehend people talking and realizes many things which are punishments to him for he cannot talk back or change the situation his family is trapped in.

The irony in the story is very interesting; in a situation where the son of the family has turned to a beetle, the family are reading their afternoon paper and enjoying their meals. Gregor has been marginalized and the only thing they do is trying to keep him alive. They're even sometimes angry with him for not being able to work and that now they themselves have to make their own living. It shows just how selfish can some people be.

When Gregor loses his eyesight gradually Nabokov interprets it as his insect-like general view of life has predominated his human-like particular view. Despite his ugly figure and his beast like instincts he still has kept his human tempers, he respects people, he doesn't want to make them upset, he is sensitive toward his surroundings and his aesthetic view is what differentiates him from other beetles.

The concept of the door changes role throughout the story. In the beginning it is completely closed and his sister opens it slowly in order to notify Gregor to hide himself. But in the end we see that the door is slightly open and he can see his family throughout the door. He sees that his father has become like himself somehow; he is tired, dirty, and is becoming weak, furthermore his uniform that he never takes off has become similar to Gregor's shell. It's like his metamorphosis has become contagious.

The story of Gregor's metamorphosis reminds me of people who are in a coma. We believe that they don't hear a word we say; Gregor's family also thinks that he has been paralyzed and has no sense of humanity, none whatsoever. So in the end even his loving sister is tired of him and thinks of him as a burden. Just like coma patients that may or may not come out of it and some doctors suggest that if we let them die it would be easier to them, the Samsa family wants to do the same. They think he's not their son and brother anymore and should get rid of him immediately; not knowing that all the while this poor coma patient of theirs is listening and sadly for him, suffering.

Nabokov says "Gregor is a human in the form of a beast, and his family is beasts in the bodies of human". Just like Pot and his surroundings. It is interesting that in these stories the character who has a sense of humanity is metamorphosed for example why the father is not trapped in this situation, or the people who hit Pot? My idea, there are some prerequisites for having an epiphany; it actually is a gift and not a punishment, one has to be of value in order to reward it. God doesn't bother those who are completely out of his way, but those who still do righteous deeds but have gone a little astray.

Deleuze and Guattari say in their book that in Kafka's works there are two stable elements, a portrait and a tilted head, like the picture of the woman with fur and the tilted head of his mother.

They focus a little on the Oedipus Complex of Kafka with his father. They insist that Gregor wanted incest so did his mother and his sister. For example, in the scene that Gregor sticks to the portrait of the lady, they interpret it that he wanted to have sex with that woman and when his sister saw that she became jealous and stopped loving him. And other examples of this kind, they have a whole chapter about it and other sexual urges and its significance throughout this and other stories of Kafka. They say that because of Kafka's father's influence on him and his Oedipus complex and the problems he had with his father, Kafka, like Hedayat never had a successful sexual relationship. But in this issue I'm with Nabokov who strictly disagrees with this type of interpretation of Kafka's works and I only wanted the reader to know that this interpretation exists and has many advocates but I don't care to discuss it any further.

Another significant theme in Kafka's work is travel. As we see Gregor has to travel a lot for his work and even when he has turned into a beetle and is trapped in his room he starts another journey; he climbs his walls and his roof, he walks on his furniture and also has a spiritual journey. He sees his surroundings more clearly, he finds things out he didn't know before which shock him, but those things are of no significance any more. Kafka's view of journeys is not classic; he thinks of them as an endless and insignificant search in which no answer is never found, its goal is only to put doubt in his bourgeoisie interlocutors so as not to search for an answer for getting out of insignificance in their lives.

As various interpretations suggest about *The Fly*, Mansfield thinks of herself as the fly; she finds herself trapped in a dark situation that she cannot get out of, and she blames a higher power for her disease. She thinks God is toying with her and she's powerless to fight with him.

In each of these stories the animal has a relation with the author; Hedayat's desire for sex, Kafka's reclusion and Mansfield's tuberculosis for which she blames a higher power.

Everybody in this story is a victim of his own, even the boss is a victim of his son's death for after that he had nothing to live for, and in my idea the scene of killing the fly is a revenge scene. Just like the warriors who can easily take lives he wanted to get revenge by taking the fly's life. During these six years he had tried to keep his face and pretend that nothing has happened but he finally faced his trauma he became a normal man just like Woodfield who couldn't remember what he wanted to tell the boss in the outset.

This view of life is not out of sort for Mansfield both because of war and disease. Her illness because it was taking her life gradually and continuously and she couldn't do anything about it; the influence of war and the fact that her young brother was killed in the First World War, exactly the time that the two sons died in the story in 1915.

### 3. Conclusion

What can be said in the end is that in these three stories the role of animals is awakening human beings into realizing that maybe some of us humans are being worse than animals and some people who may be from a lower class of society have more sense of humanity and we unthinkingly and with our narrow mindedness believe that we're better than them oblivious of the fact that problems of the material life have blinded us into seeing that we ourselves are working like an animal and attending to our animalistic instincts just like them.

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