

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Based on the analyses of the protagonists of *The Metamorphosis* and *The Face of Another* I present in this thesis, I will now provide a number of conclusions. As I have stated in the beginning, the purpose of the analysis is to show how the authors portray the protagonists and what the purpose of the authors is in creating such characters.

First, we follow the story of Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*, which begins with Gregor waking up as a giant insect. He is a static character with selflessness and dutifulness as his major traits. Instead of questioning the mystery of his physical transformation, he desperately tries to get back to work so that he can provide for his family. He prioritises his family's well-being than his own as he is a selfless person. Besides being selfless, he is also a dutiful son and breadwinner; he tries his best to meet his family's needs despite his discontentment of his job. Upon discovering Gregor's metamorphosis, his family isolates him because of his frightening physical form; they isolate him in his room

as they cannot bear the sight of him. Thus, Gregor experiences alienation that is by his physical appearance. However, he also experiences a different kind of alienation, one that is actually a non-direct consequence of his characteristics, and it is not only estrangement from others but also from his own self. His selflessness and dutifulness come with an awareness that he is an object of judgment by his family, and make him see himself the way his family sees him, which in Sartrean term is known as shame. Because of the metamorphosis, Gregor's family sees him as a worthless, horrifying creature. Moreover, prior to Gregor's metamorphosis, they only see him as the breadwinner of the family. By seeing him that way, they deny the possibilities of Gregor as a complex individual, which alienates Gregor.

Next, in *The Face of Another*, we follow a nameless scientist with a deformed face who narrates the story. He is a static character portrayed as an obsessive and observant person. As an observant individual, he notices how people, including his own wife, behave in an alienating way towards him after the accident that costs him his face. The way people alienate him makes him obsessed with face and its significance in the society. Then the narrator creates a new face to cope with his alienation. Although his appearance is the obvious, visible cause of his alienation from others, his being obsessive and observant also alienates him from both others and himself. From the way people behave towards him, he is aware that people judge him and see him as a monster, which indicates that he has the Sartrean shame. He sees himself the way people see him even though he personally believes that a man's worth is not determined by his looks. Thus, he experiences alienation that is actually caused by his own characteristics.

The purpose of the authors in creating such characters is to illustrate how alienation comes from within an individual. Both stories show how the protagonists are being estranged by the people around them because of the outer part of the individual, which is their physical appearance. However, if analysed with Sartre's concept of alienation, the source of alienation is actually from the inner part of the individual. Their characteristics induce shame, which means they realise that they are judged by others and see themselves the way others see them. The feeling of shame eventually leads to alienation, which affects an individual in determining one's own existence. As depicted in the novels, alienation overwhelms the protagonists without them realising it. Being estranged from others, Gregor gradually loses his will to live, and the narrator becomes consumed by a conviction that is against his own. Thus, in my opinion, it is an implication that humans have a subconscious need for connecting with others, and that the existence of others has an impact on an individual's existence.

The Metamorphosis and *The Face of Another* share some similarities. Both novels revolve around individuals who experience alienation. Moreover, the alienation they experience is a consequence of not only their appearances, but also their characteristics; in the Sartrean term, both protagonists experience shame, which leads to alienation. Furthermore, both protagonists share a similar fate: they end up alone and cannot overcome their alienation. Gregor dies on his own inside his room; the narrator is left alone by his wife.

Besides similarities, there is also a contrast between the two novels. The difference lies in how the protagonists deal with alienation. Gregor is helpless as

he is trapped in his insect body whereas the narrator tries to overcome it by creating a mask, although he eventually fails to achieve his goal, which is to connect with his wife and other people.

Finally, in my opinion, *The Metamorphosis* is better than *The Face of Another*. In terms of its relevance with Sartre's concept of alienation, *The Metamorphosis* depicts Sartrean shame more aptly. Gregor is an individual who willingly accepts what others think of him whereas the narrator of *The Face of Another* constantly denies other people's opinion of him. More generally speaking, the absurd nature of the first novel leaves more spaces for the readers to explore and interpret aspects of the story, such as the reason as to why Gregor metamorphoses, why he takes the physical form of an insect, what the significance of the painting in Gregor's room is, and so on. In that way, it is more involving for the readers on a personal level. However, it is undeniable that *The Face of Another* also has its own room for interpretations. Nonetheless, it is more realistic; therefore, the interpretations are more limited. Furthermore, in terms of universality, *The Metamorphosis* is more universal. Although it is written with European background, international readers will find it easy to relate themselves to the novel. *The Face of Another*, on the other hand, contains a few aspects that are specific to Japanese culture so that the readers from outside the culture will need to acquire additional knowledge to grasp the context and essence of the story better.