

Comparative Analysis of “The Hunger Artist” by Franz Kafka and “The Happy Prince” by Oscar Wilde: Postmodernist Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to conduct a postmodern comparison of The Hunger Artist by Franz Kafka and The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde. Key themes under study are art and the artist, alienation and loneliness, the end of big stories, a broken sense of who we are and the barriers to effective communication. While each work has been the subject of literary discussion, no study has yet examined them through the postmodernist lens. Both stories are analyzed here, using qualitative textual analysis, to illustrate that they mirror postmodern worries about identity, everyday social pressures and the erosion of traditional values. The results indicate that Kafka and Wilde both go against typical views on art, right and wrong and human relationships in a world that feels distant and unconnected. This study will help fill the research gap by shedding light on how these two works debate the reliability of meaning, identity and community in a postmodern context. This is a qualitative study which requires primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was obtained from the texts of both short stories and secondary data from already published research articles. Further research can be conducted on the stories using different theoretical lenses.

Keywords: Identity, Alienation, Postmodern, Qualitative Study.

Introduction

Pour (as cited in Miri and Shahrokh, 2019) believes that Comparative analysis is a kind of process where there is an analysis of phenomena by putting them together to determine the similarities and differences between them. There are various models proposed regarding the modes of comparison, one of which is David Freidenreich's model, as cited in Miri and Shahrokh (2019). It distinguishes four modes of comparison the f: the first one focuses on similarities and ignores differences, the second one only studies difference with a one-sided approach, the third one focuses on genus-species relationships, and the last one describes the study that uses comparison to refocus on understanding phenomenon A in the light of B, with a refocused lens.

Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, into a middle-class family in Prague, which was then part of Auto- the Hungarian Empire and considered one of the most influential writers. He has a unique writing style and frequently delves into the inner world of his characters, offering deep insights

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into their thoughts, fears and anxieties. Kafka frequently employs the parables and Allegories to explore societal themes. Kafkaesque is a word used to describe the writing style of Franz Kafka and also to describe situations that are strange and frustrating, where individuals feel trapped and powerless. It also describes the stories or settings that have a sense of mystery and uncertainty, leaving you with unanswered questions. It is also exploring deep emotions and thoughts, like fears and anxieties, and questioning the meaning of life. He also writes various Novels like *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927), novellas like *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and *The Judgement* (1912), short stories like *In the Penal Colony* (1919), *A Country Doctor* (1919) and diaries and correspondences like *Diaries*, *Letters to Milena* and *Letters to Family* (English Literature in Urdu & Hindi, 2023).

Franz Kafka's "A Hunger Artist" (1922) focuses on alienation, absurdity, and existential despair. Drawing on actual performers who fasted publicly, Kafka prefigures the hunger artist as a symbol of spiritual longing, artistic solitude, and seeking meaning in a universe indifferent to human existence. Trapped and misinterpreted, the artist becomes a figure of existential imprisonment, recalling Max Weber's "iron cage" and Yalom's concept of "existential isolation." Similar to Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* and Josef K. in *The Trial*, the hunger artist represents the tragic absurdity of the isolated individual lost in a society that neither perceives nor appreciates him (English with AR Comrade, 2021).

Oscar Wilde was an Irish poet and Dramatist famous for his three prominent works: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Moreover, get a Degree of Honor from Magdalen College, Oxford (1874- 78). He was impressed by John Ruskin and Walter Pater, also supporters of an Aesthetic Movement (Art for Art's sake). He was also famous for his comedy (Yusuf, 2024).

The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde is a short story and Allegory that, with the help of a statue of a prince, teaches us selflessness, sacrifice and compassion. This story is set in a city where there stands a grand statue of a prince who lived luxury life in his palace. After his death, he was turned into a beautiful statue with gold leaf, with sapphires for his eyes and a ruby in his sword's hilt. However, the Prince's perspective on life changes after his death. From his lofty position, he sees the misery and poverty of the people in the city. He distributed all his valuable things, like gold leaf, sapphires, etc., among the poor and needy through Swallow (Bird), who is migrating to Egypt as winter approaches (English Literature, 2022).

According to Carter (as cited in Elaati, 2016), postmodernism was first manifested in painting, architecture and civil engineering. Later it spread to philosophy, literature, art, and tech and so on. Today, postmodern views can be seen in a variety of fields such as education, ethics, sociology, politics, economics, and culture. Postmodernism is the term that followed modernism. Moreover, it challenges grand ideas about truth, identity, language and meaning in Western thought. Postmodernism often eschews fixed rules and feels that there are always multiple interpretations to consider. It incorporates concepts like uncertainty, disagreement and disruption of old systems. Its ideas strike a chord with some philosophies, nihilism and anarchism, that rail against the notion of order and meaning in life.

Research Questions

1. How do *The Hunger Artist* and *The Happy Prince* reflect postmodern themes in their narratives?

2. How do both stories explore the characters' misunderstandings through isolation, fragmented identity, the collapse of grand narratives, and language limitations and failures of communication?

Objectives of the Research

1. To explore how *The Hunger Artist* and *The Happy Prince* reflect postmodern themes in their narratives.
2. Find out how both stories explore the characters' misunderstandings through isolation, fragmented identity, collapse of grand narratives, limitations of language, and failure of communication.

Problem's Statement

Various literary critics explore both *The Hunger Artist* and *The Happy Prince* by focusing on their themes and symbolic approaches. However, there is a lack of comparative analysis of these two through a postmodern lens. No study has yet been conducted to do a comparative analysis through the lens of postmodernism. The study explores how these two reflect postmodern concerns like isolation and alienation, unstable identity, rejection of grand narratives, etc. This research aims to address this gap by focusing on the postmodern comparison of these two stories.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it introduces a fresh comparative perspective on Franz Kafka's *The Hunger Artist* and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, focusing on how both texts can be analyzed through the lens of postmodern literary theory. While these tales have long been analyzed intensively for their moral, symbolic, and aesthetic content, there remains an apparent absence of scholarship that uses postmodern ideas—alienation, fragmented self, and the disintegration of master narratives—to both works comparatively. This study seeks to address that deficiency and illustrate how each tale, though written in different periods of history and differing cultures, captures essential features of postmodernism.

Furthermore, the research also emphasizes how the role and worth of the artist or philanthropist character in both narratives change. Kafka depicts the hunger artist as an unappreciated and overlooked performer, while Wilde describes the statue as a self-sacrificing being neglected by the powers that be. Both figures represent how postmodern society tends not to see true meaning, beauty, or authenticity. Through this factor, the study adds to the general understanding of how art, function, and personal expression are understood and diminished in modern and postmodern times.

Finally, this study is significant not just for its addition to literary theory but also as an educational contribution. It offers a new theoretical perspective to familiar texts for students and researchers of literature, inviting critical engagement and interdisciplinary inquiry. In bringing classical texts to contemporary theory, the research enriches postmodern studies in literature. It signals further investigation into the ways that older texts continue to address the issues of the modern era.

Literature Review

The Hunger Artist

Franz Kafka, the German-speaking Bohemian author, is regarded as one of the most prominent literary figures of the 20th century. His writing combines realism and fantasy, frequently dealing with the topics of alienation, absurdity, and existential despair. Published in 1922, *The Hunger*

Artist addresses these issues, depicting a figure isolated from a society that does not comprehend him. Drawn from the lives of hunger artists—actors who publicly fasted in Europe and America between the 17th and early 20th centuries—Kafka transposes the activity into a metaphor for spiritual desire, artistic alienation, and questing for significance in an aimless world. The character, locked in a cage, fasts as a work of art but is faced with ignorance and indifference and slowly disappears from view.

Kafka's narrative encapsulates fundamental postmodern and existential motifs, including fragmented identity, the disintegration of conventional values, and the individual's conflict within systems of oppression. The cage also refers to physical and existential confinement, reminiscent of Max Weber's "iron cage" hypothesis on the dehumanizing tendencies of modern society. Ideas such as Yalom's "existential isolation" also emphasize the artist's isolation and separation. Similar to much of Kafka's cast of characters—such as Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* and Josef K. in *The Trial*—the hunger artist is himself a lost figure in a world that fails to notice or appreciate him, the very essence of the tragic absurdity of human existence (English with AR Comrade, 2021).

Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland, on October 16, 1854. He was an Irish poet and playwright who wrote with great wit and literary skill. Wilde's father, William Wilde, was a surgeon and writer, while his mother, Jane Wilde, was a writer who used the pen name "Speranza." Wilde emerged as one of the leading literary figures of his day, making significant contributions to literature with writings that dealt with serious philosophical and social issues. His sole novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, is an evil story of vanity and moral corruption, depicting a man whose portrait grows old on his behalf, symbolizing his inner wickedness. Wilde also composed plays like *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a sophisticated social comedy attacking Victorian hypocrisy and gender attitudes. The most influential member of the Aesthetic Movement, Wilde advocated "Art for Art's Sake," encouraging beauty, sensation, and personal expression. By writing such books as *Salomé* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, he left a lasting legacy for literature and the arts (Yusuf, 2024).

The Happy Prince

As part of his book *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, Oscar Wilde's short story "The Happy Prince" was first published in 1888. It is a moving parable about kindness, selflessness, and the difference between genuine giving and society's apathy. Overlooking a city is a statue of the Happy Prince, lavishly ornamented. The Prince observes the plight of people experiencing poverty from his lofty vantage point and, with the assistance of a generous Swallow, donates all of his riches and jewels to alleviate their misery. The Swallow dies from the cold after remaining with the Prince out of love (English Keys Academy, 2022).

Research Methodology

Comparative Research Approach

The comparative research approach is a social science method of investigating and analyzing things about life, societies, or cultures in different countries or contexts. It is a qualitative analysis where scholars seek to reveal similarities and differences between entities like nations, cultures, or systems. By comparing these entities, scholars can detect universal patterns or particular variations that may otherwise not be realized. One of the usual strategies of the comparative research method is using case studies, in which profound examinations of specific cases are done

to analyze how certain factors unfold within various settings. This approach also integrates theoretical ideas and data collection, in which the focus is to test existing theories or construct new theories based on the learnings obtained from empirical data. In the end, the comparative research approach offers a broader perception of global processes since it tries to shed light on the similarities as well as the differences between different societies (Given, 2008), as cited in Miri & Shahrokh (2019). Causality poses a significant challenge in comparative research since researchers are trying to establish the causes of variations and similarities across cases. The absence of a uniform scale of comparison may result in errors in establishing causal relationships. Significant issues include variations in context between the cases, inconsistencies in measurement, confounding variables that are ignored, and possible selection bias. To solve these challenges, researchers employ statistical methods and cross-case analysis, yet proving causality is complex and demands close attention to context and variables (Smelser, 2013, as cited in Miri & Shahrokh, 2019).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) commences with creating a truth table, which provides a systematic representation of all of the distinct patterns of study members and situational variables found to exist in the data. For each pattern, the relevant types of incidents, events, or phenomena actually observed are listed. Every line in the truth table equates to a unique set of conditions (variables) across the study cases, presenting an all-encompassing picture of how varying configurations connect with specific outcomes. Using this approach, researchers are able to analyze the intricate interconnections between conditions and outcomes with a view to determining patterns or causal processes throughout the data (Miethe and Drass, 1999, as cited in Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017).

Quantitative Research Analysis

Quantitative research design is the systematic and organized method employed to gather and analyze numerical data to learn about patterns, relationships, or trends. It is concerned with measuring variables and testing hypotheses with mathematical, statistical, or computational methods. Quantitative research aims to establish generalizable facts, make conclusions, and forecast future trends (Scribbr, 2019).

Data Collection

Data is facts, statistics, or information that are gathered and stored for reference or analysis. It may exist in a variety of forms, such as numbers, text, images, sounds, or other content, and may be structured (such as numbers in a spreadsheet) or unstructured (such as an image or sound clip). More broadly, data is the unprocessed material that may be processed, analyzed, and interpreted to produce meaningful information, make a decision, or power some application. For instance: Numerical data (such as sales figures or thermometer readings), Text data (like customer comments or news articles) and Visual data (such as images or videos). Data is further divided on the basis of sources as Primary and Secondary. Primary data is data that is gathered directly from sources for a particular research intention or study. It is original information that has not been gathered or analyzed before by anyone else. Primary data is more accurate and specific to a specific research issue since it is collected with a particular aim in mind. However, it is time-consuming and expensive to collect. The primary data for this study comprise *A Hunger Artist* by Franz Kafka and *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde. Researchers collect primary data themselves using

different methods, making it relevant and accurate for their specific project. Some of the common ways of gathering primary data are Surveys and questionnaires, interviews, experiments, observations and focus groups. Secondary data saves time and resources because it already exists. However, it cannot be easy to fit your needs precisely, and the accuracy and quality of data may vary depending on the source. The credibility of secondary data must be tested before utilizing it in your research (Digital E-Learning, 2024).

Method of Analysis

The research uses qualitative methods and depends on analyzing written material. The primary method is reading and interpreting Franz Kafka's *The Hunger Artist* and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*. The study uses postmodern literary theory as its primary method of studying and comparing the two works.

The research concentrates on finding and studying five important postmodern qualities found in the chosen works.

1. Art and the artist form a postmodern aspect of creative writing.
2. The feeling of being cut off and separate
3. The end of grand stories about progress.
4. Subjectivity is being divided.
5. Problems related to the way we express ourselves

Both Kafka's and Wilde's stories are explored using postmodern concepts to show how they reflect postmodern ideas on identity, truth and traditional values. The analysis and interpretation were based on consulting appropriate theoretical papers and studies on Postmodernism.

Data Analysis

Art and the Artist as a Postmodern Element: Deconstruction of Aesthetic Value

One major postmodern idea is the rejection of fixed meaning and questioning of traditional beliefs, including the idea that art is always attractive, charming, and meaningful. In Postmodernism, art is often misunderstood and misused only by its appearances, not by judging its whole. It also questions whether artists have proper control in a society that doesn't truly understand art.

In *The Hunger Artist*, Franz Kafka tries to present a profoundly postmodern view of art and artist and how it is commercialized, misunderstood and ultimately deconstructed. The Hunger Artist practices fasting as a performing art, but society totally fails to appreciate his efforts behind his art. Instead, they treat his performance as a means of entertainment, judging it only by its external appearance. When they get bored and fade, they stop paying attention. This shows that art is valued for a short time and for how it looks, not for what it means. The artist feels alone and unimportant, and at the end, he says that he fasted only because he never found the food he liked-- not for any significant reason. This ending shows that his art has no deep meaning and that society never cared about his art. Kafka tries to expose through this story that art is always beautiful and full of truth. Instead, he shows that art can be meaningless and artists can be forgotten. The Hunger Artist, whose "art" is not admired for the spiritual dimension of his act and also not for the spectacles it provides, Kafka opens by noting the cultural irrelevance of the Hunger Artist as;

"During these last decades, the interest in professional fasting has markedly diminished."

This line shows that the public is no longer interested in art, and what was once seen become strange or fascinating has become boring to people. The artist's work is no longer valued, not because it gets changed but because of changing the public taste. Society moves on quickly and

acts like a passing trend. It shows that art is temporary, and its value depends on the public interest not on any deep meaning and beauty. The artist loses his importance, and it reflects cultural emptiness, where art is consumed and then forgotten.

“Because I couldn't find the food I liked. If I had found it, believe me, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else.”

This line is spoken by the Hunger Artist before his death, when he finally got the real reason why he fasted. It shocks the readers by knowing it that there was no artistic purpose behind his suffering. It also shows that his art has no deep meaning but he is fasting only for the reason that he doesn't find the food he liked and on the other side it also means that he uttered it because he got fed up from the people and their lack of understanding and interest diminish his spirit.

“For he alone knew, what no other initiate knew, how easy it was to fast. It was the easiest thing in the world.”

This line reveals the ironic truth behind the artist's lifelong art and the Hunger artist was not disciplined in a heroic way. It discloses both the absurdity of artist's life and also the societal reaction. The rejection of grand meaning and irony are central to postmodern literature.

“We live in a different world now.”

This line reflects the changing standards of art and taste. It suggests that art has dynamic value and is changing over time. The world today is not like it used to be. It reflects a he is ignored shift in cultural values—where once the hunger artist was admired, now he is ignored.

Oscar Wilde shows in his work (*The Happy Prince*) that how the people of Victorian society looked at the outside appearance of the thing and avoiding the inner meaning of it. At first, they praise the statue for its shiny and attractive appearance that is covered in jewels and also gold. But when the statue starts helping poor by giving gold and Jewels to help poor and suffering, has no longer admired it. They call it ugly and not looking good and finally they pull it down and melt it. Through this story Wilde tries to show how people judge the thing by its outside appearance not look at its internal truth mean they just judge the book by its cover. This shows that the true value is not in appearance but in actions.

“He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold; for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt. He was very much admired indeed.”

This quote shows how people admired and respect one by judging its outside appearances and physical beauty. People admired it because of gold, jewels and the sparkle not because of its actions and for its standing. It sets the stage when the statue starts helping others by giving gold and Jewels to others from self they rejected and discarded it. This quote supports the theme of deconstructing aesthetic value which is a key and postmodern element of the story. Wilde employs this tale to condemn a society where beauty is paramount and genuine goodness is overlooked. This is an expression of a postmodern concept that rejects the notion of classic beauty and probes what real worth in art and individuals should be.

“The living always think that gold can make them happy.”

This quote shows how people often believe that wealth and beauty are the most important things in life. The statue is admired by everyone in the city when it is covered with jewels and gold. People think that it is perfect because it is rich and beautiful. Society is totally materialistic they

connect happiness with material things like money and outside look. Wilde shows that real happiness comes from sacrifice, kindness and helping others. This also shows how people often fail to recognize the real beauty when its outside appearance is not good. This teaches us that giving and caring give more meaning than material things ever.

“Bring me the two most precious things in the city,” said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.”

This happens when the people melted down the statue and thrown away the dead swallow, thinking that they are useless but the God know the real worth and true value. The angel brings the dead swallow who sacrifice his life to serve others and also leaden heart of the statue which symbolizes the Prince's compassion and love for the needy and poor. It also teaches us that true value lies in sacrifice not in appearance and also about how society judges and how God judges. Postmodern speaking, this quote defies the ideal of everlasting beauty. Beauty is revealed to be fleeting and illusory when it is without intention. True meaning exists in what is discarded, forgotten, or broken—a recurrent postmodern idea.

“Dear little Swallow,” said the Prince, “you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women.”

In *The Happy Prince*, Oscar Wilde demonstrates that true beauty in art is not in the way it appears, but in what it does to others. When the Prince speaks, "Dear little Swallow, you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women," he illustrates that he can see now human suffering and need are greater than any gold or jewels. This is an effective change from a gorgeous statue admired for his rich looks to one who desires to assist people. Wilde employs this moment to question the belief that art should be appreciated solely for its appearance. Rather, he implies that art should be related to kindness, feeling, and social duty. By describing human suffering as "more marvellous" than the wondrous world, Wilde deviates from conventional aesthetic values and demonstrates that beauty is more valuable than ornament. This is an indication of a postmodern philosophy, whereby the real value of art lies not in appearing to be perfect, but in how profoundly it relates to actual life.

Although both stories are written before the postmodern era and asking the same questions like what is art? Who is artist? And how does society treat both art and artist.

Both Kafka and Wilde dismantle the conventional artist's role by demonstrating how society misinterprets and misuses art. In *The Hunger Artist*, Kafka depicts a world where art becomes a spectacle. The performance of the hunger artist is intended to convey something profound and intimate, yet the audience approaches it as a fad. They admire the externality—his fasting capacity—but disregards the substance. In *The Happy Prince*, Wilde illustrates the same issue. The statue is admired when it is decorated in gold and gems, but after it donates everything to the poor, people consider it worthless and destroy it. In both works, society does not acknowledge genuine artistic or moral worth. Kafka's artist becomes an old sideshow, and Wilde's statue is discarded after its self-sacrifice. These tales indicate a postmodern perspective which critiques the old assumption that art is ever noble, beautiful, and revered. Rather, they illustrate how modern society will pay more attention to appearance than meaning and to beauty than to truth. Both writers protest how culture and art have lost their higher significance in a surface-conscious and profit-oriented world.

Even both don't write in the postmodern era, but both challenge traditional idea like the art, beauty and role of the artist. They believe that art is not just about appearances but it is about deeper meaning, truth and sacrifice.

Alienation and Isolation

Alienation is feeling someone alone and separated from others, emotionally or socially. It often happens when someone is misunderstood, ignored and feels like that they are not for this zone while isolation means physically or emotionally separated, without any support, friendship and recognition. In literature these themes are common in modern and postmodern works where characters feel alone, disgusted and of low standard that they are not from this world.

In *The Hunger Artist* by Franz Kafka, the Hunger artist is totally misunderstood and avoided by the society. He is fasting for performing art but people take it a strange show. No one understands the deep meaning and outcome behind the performance. When they get fed up, they avoided him. He is dying alone, buried under straw and unnoticed by the world for which he is fasting and performing art.

Yet for other reasons he was never satisfied; it was not perhaps mere fasting that had brought him to such skeleton thinness that many people had regretfully to keep away from his exhibitions, because the sight of him was too much for them, perhaps it was dissatisfaction with himself that had worn him down.

The Hunger Artist is never satisfied with his own performance which shows his inner conflict and deviated from himself. He has no sense of peace in his life and he devotes himself to the art. People trying to keep away from him because he is physically looking disturbed. Even when they come to watch they cannot engage and understand him because he is separated literally and physically. It also suggests that his loneliness is as much mental as physical. He is totally cut off from others and also joy, worn down by loneliness and also by lack of understanding with others.

No one could possibly watch the hunger artist continuously, day and night, and so no one could produce first-hand evidence that the fast had really been rigorous and continuous; only the artist himself could know that, he was therefore bound to be the sole completely satisfied spectator of his own fast.

The cage of Hunger Artist symbolizes his separation from the people both physically and emotionally. Despite being display on a public place no one could witness his fasting and it only him who is the real evidence of his fasting. The Hunger Artist represents the misunderstood spectators to whom his art is meaningless, making him alienated to himself and death. It represents how one feel lonely even when surrounded by many. It captures the deep isolation of the artist and no one could verify his sacrifice except himself, making him both performer and spectator. It touches on the theme of isolation and the search for meaning.

“No one would take his trouble seriously.”

The Hunger Artist was deeply in troubled and loneliness; people around him didn't believe in his art and didn't care. His performance, efforts and inner pain were unimportant to them and were invisible to them. They viewed his fasting as a show not a meaningful one. The public skeptical, indifferent over time and they either suspected him of cheating or lost interest. It reflects how society often fails to recognize and appreciate those who are the real performer or those who hold unconventional belief.

“At one time the whole town took a lively interest in the hunger artist.”

There was the time where people in the beginning took huge interest in him and many gathered for him. Everyone in the town was excited and curious about him and they used to visit him and were fascinated by his performance. His fasting was seemed something unusual and entertaining, and many people paid close attention to his performance.

On the other hand, in the Happy Prince, Oscar Wilde explores the alimentation and isolation through both the statue of Prince and The Swallow. The Happy Prince was once a real man who lived a luxurious life and now placed as a statue in Public Chowk high above the city. From the high position, he is observing the sufferings of all poor and can't do anything by his own. Although, he is admired by his beauty and no one listens to his message which he wants to convey. He is physically close to the people but emotionally isolated and unable to help without The Swallow. The Swallow too becomes isolated and he chooses to stay with The Happy Prince and all his bird friends flown to Egypt. At the end both are rejected by the society. The Statue of Happy Prince melts down and lost his beauty, and also the Swallow dies in the cold. This shows how society respected other through his outside appearances and not through his sacrifice and kindness (inner goodness).

“When I was alive and had a human heart,” answered the statue, “I did not know what tears were.”

In this line there is a wonderful conversation between The Swallow and The Happy Prince as it reflects that how The Happy Prince during his life was emotionally isolated from the real suffering of the world. He lived in comfort and pleasure and completely separated from the efforts of living the life like an ordinary people. Only after death, he turns into the real face of world and starts recognizing the real pain and sorrow of the people around him which leads to emotional awakening but still have greater loneliness, as no one else sees and understands what he wants to say and do.

“It is curious,” he remarked, “but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold.”

This line is uttered by The Swallow just before he dies from the cold. He says it while staying beside The Happy Prince, having chosen love and compassion with migration and survival. The Swallow is physically cold and alone but in spite of that he feels inner warmth because of his act of kindness. He has been alienated from their companions but in spite of that he feels emotional connection with his sacrifice and work for others. This moment shows how the sacrifice for others gives true and real meaning, even they lead to suffering. It also reflects the contrast between the external reality (cold and isolation) and also inner truth (warmth and fulfilment).

“My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness.”

This is an authentic quote which reflects an emotional isolation of the Prince during his life. He was surrounded by pleasure, wealth, beauty and all those facilities which are the part of this world and living an unaware life from the suffering of others. Wilde uses this to reflect how people confuses pleasure with real joy, and how those in power can live in ignorant isolation from the suffering around them. He is completely aware about all the sufferings and pains in true sense when he sees the truth_ a tragic shift from privilege to powerlessness.

“I lived in the Palace of Sans Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter.”

It shows how he is completely shielded from the pain and suffering before becoming the statue. He lived in comfort and unaware zone where he is unaware from the difficulties and sufferings of others and enjoying life. This created a form of isolation even when he is surrounded by wealth and beauty. Wilde critiques this kind of ignorance, that true recognition and awareness come to him after his death, when he could finally see misery around him but he was powerless to act alone. Characterizing the artist in postmodern literature, most often as one without vision and giving no heroic acts at all, it is rather as outsider-one, misunderstood and marginalized by a society that sees outward appearance as more important craft powerfully reflects the miserable life encountered by such an individual as this in both Franz Kafka's *The Hunger Artist* and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*. In Kafka's story, the hunger artist lives in a cage, manifesting a form of art (fasting) that no one truly understands. He stands surrounded by spectators, yet all these make it clear as depicted in the line, "It was not the fasting that made him so wretched, but the watchers"; really he is isolated from it all. The crowd lives his suffering as entertainment, reducing his art to shallow spectacle and emotionally draining him; similarly in Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, the statue of the Prince stands high above the city, able to view the suffering below without being able to reach out to it, save for the Swallow. Whereas in life, the Prince resided in luxury "where no sorrow is allowed to enter," showing reality as an emotional severance; it helps him even after he gave up his beauty to help the poor. Society rejects him when he loses his decorative value, wherein they pulled down the status of the Happy Prince as he is no longer beautiful. Both characters share the notion that artists and idealists are disenfranchised in a world exclusively bent towards the surface than the substance. They ail apart from being isolated physically by being isolated emotionally; their real worth being invisible to a blind or indifferent society.

Collapse of Grand Narratives

The collapse of the Grand narrative means people have stopped believing in big, universal stories that used to give meaning to life, history and society. These grand narratives, also called Meta narratives, include religion, science and progress, art and the artist and morality. Postmodern thinkers are of the opinion that these big ideas no longer work for everyone and people live in a world where truth is subjective and truth is replaced by irony and uncertainty. The collapse of Grand Narratives means that people no longer believe in big, comforting stories about life having clear meaning or direction. Postmodern stories often show confusion, irony, and disillusionment instead.

In *The Hunger Artist*, Franz Kafka uses this idea to break the traditional idea of the artist as a heroic or spiritual figure. The Hunger Artist is not understood and respected by the public. Instead, he is disrespected and used for entertainment by the public. As they fade up, it shows that society is no longer interested in the true meaning of art. The most tragic moment was when he uttered that he fasted only because he could not find the food he liked, an ironic statement that destroys any idea of noble sacrifice. Kafka also shows how truth is personal; no one is about his fast except himself. This reflects the Collapse of Grand Narratives where moral ideas and universal truths collapse and leave behind suspense and doubt.

“For their elders he was often just a joke that happened to be in fashion.”

It is highly significant quote which shows how the Hunger Artist, others and art itself losses seriousness and meaning in the eyes of society. The elders just see him as a part of temporary fade not as a spiritual figure or someone worthy of respect. It deconstructs the grand narratives and also

reflects that art is no longer valuable and it became a source of laughable thing. It also reflects the postmodern skepticism towards the cultural institutions.

“Many people had regretfully to keep away from his exhibitions, because the sight of him was too much for them.”

This line appears when Kafka's got the fame and gain fewer spectators. Though his condition is going towards degradation and slowly and gradually he is acquiring shape of skeletal. It was a direct result of his faithfulness to his art and people could no longer bear to witness it. Even those who one might have appreciated it now find it disturbing. It shows that public is no longer believes in artistic devotion because artist is completely misunderstood and avoided. It also reflects the reduction of Grand meaning into personal absurdity.

“Yet for other reasons he was never satisfied...”

This quote shows that artist is not totally satisfied from his actions not because of external criticism but also because of inner unclear reasons for this art and he does not truly find meaning in his art. There is no grand purpose behind his suffering and also does not bring any peace and resolution to him. Even he cannot justify his truth and reflects the postmodern collapse of the heroic artist myth.

In *The Happy Prince*, Oscar Wilde clearly illustrates the collapse of Grand Narratives, a key theme in postmodern literature. Traditional ideals such as religion, beauty and moral virtues are all challenged in the story. The Prince once admired by his outward appearance, becomes truly good when he sacrifice his beauty to help the poor. However, this sacrifice goes unnoticed and both he and swallow are discarded by the people without any honor. Wilde reveals where world fails, appearances deceive, and kindness is often rejected--highlighting a deeply postmodern skepticism towards grand, comforting narratives.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. "The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything."

The mother is instructing her son to cease crying and act like the Happy Prince, who (in her opinion) never cried or wished for anything. She regards the Prince as a paragon of virtue—serene, courteous, and ever-cheerful. This line is rich in irony and served as a key moment in Oscar Wilde's critique of the Grand narrative. The sensible mother used the Happy Prince as a sign of emotional restraint and idealized behaviour, but later, the readers got that all his former happiness was based on ignorance. The Happy Prince is not a heroic figure when he is alive and gets awakened after death.

"As he is no longer beautiful, he is no longer useful," said the Art Professor at the University."

The art professor at the University, during his lecture, uttered that Happy Prince is no longer helpful and attractive by giving all his assets to helping people experiencing poverty, but this is entirely wrong. He became valuable when he gave away his beauty to help others and also his kindness and sacrifice made him meaningful-- even if he no longer looks beautiful. This line also shows how society cares more about outward appearances than kindness. Wilde says:

"Real values come from what you do for others-- not how you look." So, the collapse of Grand Narratives here is the fall of the belief that beauty and usefulness are the most important things.

"Little better than a beggar," said the Town Councillors."

This lines the situation of the Happy Prince. After giving away all his assets to others and helping others, people start mocking him. Even the responsible person councillors also mock and compare him with a beggar. The people who have wealth and look beautiful are respected, and Wilde is of the view that people are deceived by the outward appearances of the people, not to judge one by his internal sense.

The Collapse of Grand Narratives refers to the rejection of universal truths that have cultural and social weight. Both *The Hunger Artist* and *The Happy Prince* explore these in various ways by illustrating personal stories and experiences. In *The Hunger Artist*, at first, the act of fasting used to be meaningful, but over time, they lost interest because they didn't understand. The idea that suffering for art is essential also broke because it no longer values the artist's sacrifice. The artist is left alone and misunderstood, which shows how great ideas like Art as sacrifice are rejected. In *The Happy Prince*, the statue represents the assets of the Prince, while after death, he sees the sufferings of the needy and decides to give away all wealth and gold to the needy. The idea that wealth and beauty are enough for happiness is shown to be irrelevant and false when real human needs are ignored. The Prince gives up his Grand Narratives of wealth and beauty to live a more meaningful life by helping people experiencing poverty. So, both stories show that traditional values like fame or wealth can be empty, and a real and meaningful life is to help others.

Fragmentation of Subjectivity

Fragmentation of Subjectivity refers to the breakdown of a unified and coherent sense of identity. In modernist literature, it is in trouble, but often, it has some core identity. In postmodern literature, it is decentered, divided, and surrounded by many external forces like culture, language and tradition. In other words, postmodern subjectivity, then, is not an individual "I" but a fractured, fluid configuration of identities—each shaped by language, context, and power. It is characterized by loss of a stable identity, alienation from the self, contradictory roles, the influence of External Gaze and Liminality (The self exists in "in-between" states—between life and death, Art and reality, or silence and speech).

In *Hunger Artist*, Kafka presents a protagonist whose sense of self is fragmented and has a postmodern breakdown of unified identity. The hunger artist also dives in between internal convictions and external expectations of his audience. He is performing fast merely as an art or maybe a spiritual duty, but an audience uses it as entertainment. It divides his identity whether he is an artist or performer. Moreover, he is separated from himself and uses fast as a tool to show how long he can fast, not who he is. He has no apparent reason or objective behind fasting. His motive for fasting is unclear, but in the end, he clarifies that he is fasting because he never found the food he liked. The hunger artist is not a whole or stable person, but his identity is confused, uncertain and shaped by how others see him. He becomes a symbol of a postmodern individual who is isolated, misunderstood and confused about who he really is.

"I always wanted you to admire my fasting," said the hunger artist."

"Well then we don't admire it,"

"Because I have to fast, I can't help it," said the hunger artist."

These lines reflect how his identity is confused and fragmented. At first, he is fasting for admiring him but then when he admits nothing to admire it –he fasts not by choice but because he has no other way to live. He does not even know why he is fasting and bearing all this suffering. This makes his identity unclear and confused. He is not entirely in control of himself. He becomes a

person who is not clear about himself, someone doing something over and over but not knowing why. His identity is fragmented, torn between wanting meaning and feeling empty inside.

"They buried the hunger artist, straw and all. Into the cage, they put a young panther."

Through this quote author delivers a quite remarkable message about the futility of artistic suffering in an indifferent world. When he dies, he is buried along with straw from his cage without any ceremony. There is no mourning, just the disposal of a man who had devoted himself to art. In his place, the circus installs a young panther (a young panther is placed in his cage. The panther is intense, full of life, and eats with joy—the opposite of the hunger artist) to captivate the audience. The contrast is brutal, where the hunger artist represents discipline and search for meaning while the panther represents something society finds far more compelling. This abrupt substitution demonstrates that the hunger artist's identity was constantly precarious—his self was constructed upon suffering, performance, and being misunderstood. When he is dead, there is no abiding remnant of him, and the world rapidly forgets. His fractured subjectivity is supplanted by the panther's cohesive, instinctual existence, drawing attention to the vacancy at the centre of the artist's self.

"Why stop fasting at this particular moment, after forty days of it."

Here, in this quote question is asked the hunger artist when he is asked if people are no longer interested in him beyond a specific limit of forty days. The limit is meaningless for him. He does not care about numbers but wants to keep his fast for a long time or forever. But for the public, the forty days are more, and they cannot admire or tolerate for such a long time. The organizers want to set an attractive stage for audiences in these forty days. But for hunger artists, it does not show—it is his whole identity. The hunger artist himself self in long-term fasting, but people cannot tolerate him for such a long time. He is disconnected from public expectations and also his own body's needs. The question "Why stop?" reflects that they do not understand one another, and he lives in his reality.

Though The Happy Prince is a fairy tale, Oscar Wilde embodies it with various philosophical and social critiques. The Prince's identity and awareness are divided into multiple parts in the following ways;

- When the Prince was alive, he was totally separated from others and lived an unaware life with no pain and suffering. As a statue, he overlooks the city and notices all the injustices and sufferings of people. This reflects a shift from his past identity to his present identity.
- Both characters avoided their priority, as the Prince rejected his ornamental purpose while the Swallow left his flock and started living with the Prince.

"I am covered with fine gold," "you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor."

This line reflects a literal and metaphorical stripping of his identity. In the beginning, he is covered by gold and has sapphire eyes, which are a sign of addiction to his beauty. Still, he sacrifices himself for the people by giving all the assets that beautify him to the poor and loses his beauty in helping people experiencing poverty. As he is unable to strip gold and all the valuable materials, for these, he takes the help of the Swallow. At first, people admired him for his beauty, but as he lost his beauty, they melted his statue and also no longer memorized him.

"I will stay with you one longer night..... I will stay with you always."

These lines reflect the surrendering of the Swallow's autonomy to the Prince. At first, he was totally free, and now he will follow the Prince in what he wants to do. At first, Swallow loses his

freedom, and he cares more about the Prince, not of himself. In the end, he becomes part of the sacrifice of the Prince. Swallow's decision is both tragic and lovely—he loses himself but in a worthwhile way. The Swallow's transmutation is reflective of how compassion can overwhelm the self. His wings - designed to ride the continents - render themselves useless as he opts for stasis. Where he once identified with movement and freedom, he now identifies with immobility and service. His trajectory demonstrates how empathy, when carried too far, requires the stifling of one's very nature.

"The living always thinks that gold can make them happy."

In *The Happy Prince*, Oscar Wilde presents a heart-wrenching indictment of materialism in the statue's line, "The living always thinks that gold can make them happy." Said as the Prince is quite literally de-gilded, this remark is deeply ironic—just that gold that once represented his elite life becomes the money of his ethical awakening. Having moved from a sheltered human prince to an all-knowing statue, he now exists in a liminal position between life and death, whereby he may see through the emptiness of gold. Wilde juxtaposes the living's blind quest for wealth with the Prince's altruistic distribution of his material value, implying that value lies not in holding gold but in giving it away. The line highlights the core paradox of the story: The Prince can only become spiritually rich by impoverishing himself physically, leaf by leaf. His dismantling is a gesture of resistance against a culture that reveres surface beauty at the cost of human suffering. In doing so, Wilde subverts the Victorian fixation on appearances, suggesting that true happiness comes from empathy, not accumulation—a lesson that rings strongly in our own time of consumerism and disparity. The Prince's words remain as both a lament for the mispriorities of human kind and a silent rebuke to the systems that affirm such illusions.

The Fragmentation of Subjectivity refers to the breakdown of a person's self and identity. In both *The Hunger Artist* and *The Happy Prince*, the characters experience it in various ways. In *The Hunger Artist*, at first the hunger artist fasting as an art to take over his entire being. At first, he is proud of his art, but with time, he begins to lose a sense of who is behind his performance. He sacrifices himself for art, but no one understands him anymore. The artist's experience becomes disconnected from the audience, creating a split between how he sees himself and how others judge him.

In *The Happy Prince*, the statue is a hallmark of fragmented identity. During his era, he was surrounded by luxury and all other facilities, but after his death, he saw the poverty and suffering of others around him. Once, his statue was an example of beauty, but now, his appearance is not good enough to attract others.

In both stories, the characters face the fragmentation of subjectivity as one is misunderstood, and the other's identity shifts from a symbol of wealth to a symbol of sacrifice.

Language and the Limits of Communication

Language and the limits of communication are postmodern features that take a sceptical approach to language's ability to convey truth. Unlike modernism, which explores the fragmentation of meaning but still searches for relevance, postmodernism treats language itself as unreliable.

In Kafka's *The Hunger Artist*, language is portrayed as inadequate and unable to convey the message and ultimately powerless to convey the protagonist's inner truth. This reflects a postmodern concern that language cannot capture an authentic meaning. The hunger artist wants to understand his spiritual hunger, but they take it in the sense of mere performance. The hunger does not speak directly to the people; his thoughts are filtered through the impresario (a figure who

controls how the story of the artist is told). Throughout the story, language fails as a bridge between self and society, intention and interpretation and also truth and representation. In *A Hunger Artist*, Kafka represents language not as a vehicle of understanding but as a system of distortion, erasure, and alienation. The hunger artist dies and lives unheard, his real meaning lost in translation, and this very failure is a postmodern critique of the boundaries of communication in a commodified, spectacle-oriented universe.

"Because I couldn't find the food I liked."

Kafka's assertion, "Because I couldn't find the food I liked," is a potent instance of postmodern distrust in language's capacity to express truth or profundity. After a life of misinterpreted agony, the hunger artist's ultimate confession is appallingly mundane, deflating any hope of a dramatic, metaphysical revelation. The claim defers no resolution—its plainness resists interpretation even as it entices it. Is it literal? A metaphor for spiritual discontent? A deconstruction of audience expectation? Kafka offers no solid ground. Thus, the line illustrates a postmodern deconstruction of meaning: words, instead of explaining the hunger artist's intention, make it more opaque. The confession denies closure, compelling readers to recognize the failure of language to hold or convey inner truth. It is not only what is uttered but what lies behind the utterance, which is emptiness, that becomes the message.

"Try to explain to anyone the art of fasting! Anyone who has no feeling for it cannot be made to understand it."

The quote, "Try to explain to anyone the art of fasting! Anyone who has no feeling for it cannot be made to understand it", illustrates how difficult it is to really convey intimate personal experiences. The hunger artist explains that unless one already has a sense of what he does, they will never get it—even if he attempts to explicate. This is a grand idea in postmodernism: those words don't always work to make people understand one another. At times, words aren't sufficient to convey complicated feelings or inner realities. No matter how hard the artist works to represent him, people only see the surface, not the depth behind it. Eventually, his fasting becomes something others observe but never really comprehend—because proper comprehension can't always be put into words.

In *The Happy Prince*, beautiful but restrictive language is used. The Prince cannot speak to people himself in the statue form; he can only talk through the Swallow, who is his voice and assistant. This amounts to a sort of "broken" or indirect speech. The words of the Prince are full of kindness and passion, but he cannot address people with low incomes and townspeople himself. Instead, his words have to be delivered and performed by the bird. This demonstrates a postmodern notion that language tends to be filtered, indirect, and mediated by others. Also, the narrator alternates between profound moments with ironic or over-the-top language, so it is difficult to determine if anything is truly to be taken literally. Due to this, it's tricky to look for one definitive meaning in the story. As in most postmodern works, words in *The Happy Prince* do not speak complete truth—words are symbolic, emotional, and occasionally deceptive.

"I will stay with you always, said the swallow."

The statement "I will remain with you always," uttered by the Swallow, expresses immense love and devotion. The Swallow sacrifices his freedom and his opportunity to migrate to a hot country to remain with the Prince. But despite the fact that the Prince and the Swallow love one another, they can only serve others in actions, not merely words. The Prince cannot speak or move among

people directly—he must have the Swallow deliver his words and perform good deeds on his behalf. This illustrates a postmodern theme: words aren't sufficient to convey concern or to bring about change. Genuine communication in the tale occurs via action and self-sacrifice, not dialogue. Further, no one else senses or recognizes their relationship—their relationship is personal, nearly imperceptible to the outside world. This reminds us that language is finite, and sometimes, the most profound meanings are sensed, not spoken.

"But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. "It is very cold here," he said, "but I will stay with you for one night and be your messenger."

The Happy Prince looked very sad when the Swallow observed the environment and decided to stay one more night with him. The Prince looked very sad, so the Swallow felt that he was nothing without the Prince. Sometimes, words are not needed to convey a proper message; only gestures are enough. Through this, Wilde also shows that sometimes, communication is easier through actions. I mean, "Actions speak louder than words."

Language and the limits of communication are crucial in both stories, which show how language or communication fails to fully express the inner desires of characters.

In *The Hunger Artist*, the character tries to convey a deeper meaning through fasting but the audiences take it just a form of spectacle. The artist's attempt to explain his art is unsuccessful as he tries to explain that it is his form of art, but no one understands him and takes him only as a source of entertainment. In *The Happy Prince*, the Prince also faces it because he sees all the sufferings of others, but he is powerless to help except through the Swallow. The Prince's silence is communicated through his outward appearance, like sadness in his eyes, but others misunderstand him and take his appearance as a symbol of beauty. In both stories, how characters experience language and limits of communication, as the hunger artist is misinterpreted while the Happy Prince's sorrow is hidden behind his statue.

Discussion

This research deals with the postmodern comparative analysis of Franz Kafka's *The Hunger Artist* and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, focusing on how they reflect various postmodern features. Through proper investigation, multiple elements like the art and artist, alienation and isolation, the collapse of grand narratives, fragmentation of subjectivity, and language and limits of communication emerged prominently in both narratives, even with differing contexts and styles.

In both stories, the artist is shown as an alone figure whose art is to be ignored. As in *The Hunger Artist*, his strange art of fasting is not fully understood by people. His work shows how art is confusing and dynamic. In *The Happy Prince*, he gives away all his assets, like gold, to the needy. This also questions the old idea that art is for decoration or for rich people. Both characters show how art is personal and different from traditional rules.

Both characters feel alone and separated from others. The Hunger Artist is harsh even when people watch, but no one understands his feelings. In *The Happy Prince*, the statue and Swallow are so removed from society because they help the poor, but others ignore them. This reflects the postmodern world, where people are often disconnected from others.

Postmodernism also rejects the universal idea or moral rule for everyone. In *The Hunger Artist*, the sufferings and art of the central character are ignored, showing that ideas about fame and art are weak. In *The Happy Prince*, the mayor pretends to be moral and good, but they are selfish. God's angles value only the good actions of the statue and the Swallow, which questions society's grand moral values.

In both stories, characters show divided personalities. In *The Hunger Artist*, the character is in suspense between his personal beliefs and societal expectations. His authentic self is different from what people see. In *The Happy Prince*, his identity grows, and changes after death, and his identity is not fixed but changing.

Both stories express the problem of transferring their inner message to others. In *The Hunger Artist*, he cannot explain his art and pain, and people misunderstand him. In *The Happy Prince*, the good actions of the statue and the Swallow are ignored. This shows the postmodern feature that language often fails to express his inner sense in a true meaning.

To conclude this discussion, both Kafka and Wilde use their stories to show human relationships and societal values. *The Hunger Artist* leaves the message of hopelessness and misunderstanding, while *The Happy Prince* offers some hope through kindness and sacrifice. Both stories strongly support postmodern literature and still speak about the problems people face in modern society.

Conclusion

This research explored the postmodern comparative analysis of *The Hunger Artist* by Franz Kafka and *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde, focusing on various postmodern features but mainly the art and artist, alienation and isolation, collapse of grand narratives, fragmentation of subjectivity, and language and limits of communication. Through this study, it became clear that despite their belonging to different eras reflected postmodern concerns about society, human relationships, and identity. Both stories highlight the struggle of an individual who does not fit into culture and does not fully satisfy the demands of societal expectations. In *The Hunger Artist*, his life and death show the marginalization of those who follow their path while others fail to understand. In *The Happy Prince*, Wilde uses the statue and bird to show kindness in a world of selfishness. This research also shows that identity is unstable and changing, and also grand beliefs of society are weak or false.

Both have strong messages for modern readers. Kafka reminds us of the pain of loneliness and misunderstanding, while Wilde encourages kindness and sacrifice in spite of ignoring.

Overall, this research helped to understand how postmodernism questions traditional values and presents a world where people struggle to find meaning, identity, and true connections with others. Both Kafka and Wilde succeeded in portraying their postmodern concerns through their stories and memorable characters.

Summary of Key Findings

In this research paper, a postmodern combination analysis of Franz Kafka's *The Hunger Artist* and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* was made, with emphasis placed on five key postmodern aspects. Following a close textual examination, a number of key findings surfaced.

Both texts illustrate the postmodern idea of the self-imagined artist. In *The Hunger Artist*, society disregarded and forgot the main character's art and suffering, whereas, in *The Happy Prince*, the statue changes from a mere figure of decoration to one of charity, challenging the classic perception of art and its meaning.

Secondly, the research was able to identify an overwhelming sense of alienation and isolation in both pieces. *The Hunger Artist* exists in solitude, isolated from a society that cannot appreciate his art. Even the *Happy Prince* and the Swallow are subjected to emotional isolation from an egoistic and insensitive society, as they report instances of such a society's failure to acknowledge human suffering and benevolence.

Thirdly, both narratives demonstrate the downfall of grand narratives. In Kafka's narrative, the artist's hitherto revered art loses all meaning for the masses. Wilde's narrative reveals the hypocrisy of the ruling elite, exposing the frailty of grand social and moral assertions.

Fourth, the study confirmed the fragmentation of subjectivity. The Hunger Artist grapples between his internal self and the superficial public persona projected onto him. The statue in *The Happy Prince* experiences a change of viewpoint once dead, which corresponds to the postmodern concept of fragile and fluid identity.

Finally, the two stories illustrate the limitations of communication and language. In *The Hunger Artist*, the main character is unable to communicate his real feelings and message to other people. At the same time, in *The Happy Prince*, the statue and sacrifice of Swallow are not recognized by the world they are placed in. This is because postmodernism holds the ideology that language is most often incapable of representing human experience.

In summary, the research found that while Kafka and Wilde were writers from distinct periods and styles of literature, they shared similar postmodern issues regarding identity, society, art, and communication in their works. The comparison helped unveil new aspects regarding how both writers challenge classical values and bring emotional issues to the foreground in a dismembered, postmodern world.

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