

Kafka's the metamorphosis analytical essay

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



The Metamorphosis is one of the main novels by a famous Austrian writer Franz Kafka. In addition, it is one of the most bright and impressive works of modern literature. The main subject of the novel is the family relations and problem of a person's worthiness in the society. The main character of the story, Gregor Samsa, wakes up one morning and realizes that he transformed into a terrible bug.

This fantastic change of the main character is just an artistic mean which serves as a basis and background for other actions and other metamorphoses in his family and society that surrounds him.

Thus, the central motif of the story is the "metamorphosis" of a person and society. The Metamorphosis analysis essay shall examine the main topics of the short novel. The author explores and analyses such social problems as a person's worthiness and the ills of society, making use of a mixture of fantasy and reality, allegories, and analysis of the psychology of the society. The Metamorphosis provides a deep insight into the human soul and family relations in the middle-class Austrian family.

In the novel, the author emphasizes that society is hostile, and it does not need unproductive members. In order to show social-person relations, the author shows the relationships of the protagonist with his family. It is a typical and, at the same time, unique work of the modern period.

As has already been mentioned, the Metamorphosis is a work that contains all traits of modernist literature. It explores the ideas of individualism and contradiction of a person and society. The main subject of modernistic

literature is the problems of modern life and the role of the individual who faces these problems.

What does *The Metamorphosis* have in common with many other works of literature? The works of modernistic literature are marked with pessimism and a response to the emerging city life and its society. The stream of consciousness is the leading literary convention used to transfer the absurdness of life and an individual's attitude to the world.

Extensive use of comparisons, personifications, intertextuality, and psychoanalysis are the significant signs of modernism. *The Metamorphosis*, as a typical example of the modernistic literature, contains many symbols and metaphors, "Kafka often used a plainly described world of persecution in which one irrational element would be introduced to complete the narrative down an absurd path" (Childs 125).

This work can be challenging to analyze for the unprepared reader, and different readers can find different themes and meanings in this novel as there are plenty of them. However, the line, which every reader notices, is the line of changes that are discovered at different levels. The first change is a physical change of the protagonist "When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin." (Kafka 13).

The second change occurs with the mental state of the protagonist when he becomes aloof of the outer world, and "he was showing so little consideration for the others" (Kafka 22). Finally, the third line of changes

appears within his family and its attitude to the protagonist. All these changes appear in real and fantastic context and, "Kafka's ability to successfully join the fantastic and the real is often noted as being at the root of his genius" (Bloom 34).

The piece of writing has strict structure and develops in chronological order. The story opens with the scene when Gregor Samsa, a young man from a middle-class family, wakes up in the morning and discovers that he transformed into a terrible insect. The beginning of the story immediately provokes excitement and suspense. What is interesting is that Gregor does not feel worried about his transformation, but he is concerned about the fact that he will miss a train and will be late for a job. He had never missed even a day and, "in fifteen years of service Gregor had never once yet been ill." (Kafka 16).

The fact of transformation is a strong literary convention that helps the author to explore the main subjects in his work.

After having transformed into a terrible insect, Gregor preserves his human soul, and he is still worried about his family, and he needs help and support of his family. But he receives them neither from his parents nor from his sister. The only thing that concerns them is that their single "source of income" will not be able to bring money. The only things that Gregor receives from his family are anger, fear, and even aggression.

Even the fact that this insect is their son and brother cannot excite their understanding and compassion. In his turn, Gregor understands his family

members and makes everything possible not to bother them. Reading the novel, one realizes that behind the appearance of the bug, there is a kind and tender soul of a young man.

Gregor tries to bring fewer concerns to his parents and family, he does not leave his room not to frighten his mother and hides under the bed when his sister cleans the room. A tense atmosphere in the family grows. All family members are starting to hate Gregor, and they behave as if he is not a human anymore.

The breaking point for the story comes when Grete, Gregor's sister, declares that the insect in the room is not Gregor anymore and just a bug and they have to get rid of him:

" Things cannot go on any longer in this way. Maybe if you don't understand that, well, I do. I will not utter my brother's name in front of this monster, and thus I say only that we must try to get rid of it. We have tried what is humanly possible to take care of it and to be patient. I believe that no one can criticize us in the slightest." (Kafka, 137).

The same night Gregor dies, and nobody misses him.

The problem of the individual and person's worthiness appears though the text. When Gregor was still a human, he was discontent with his job but did it to pay the debts of his father. Thus, the author explores the conflict of society and human existence in it. Gregor's transformation in the insect was a logical continuation of his involuntary dependence and his unhappy human life. The allusion to the insect is not accidental.

The bug is unprotected in front of society, as well as Gregor's life was. After the transformation, the life in the family changed, " the house soon started to fall apart; the household was reduced more and more." (Kafka 111).

However, it was not for a long time.

Soon, a metamorphosis occurred to other members of the family as well. Gregor's father " turned from a lethargic, failed businessman to a productive, active member of the work force" (Bloom, 44). The family does not need Gregor anymore.

They have got money, and it is the only thing they wanted from Gregor. It may seem that family's attitude to Gregor changed after his metamorphosis. However, it is evident that this change only discovered the truth. Thus, Gregor was only a " machine" that brought money. It was his primary role in the family.

His family treats him as a working " bug." However, not only his family but also the society where he lived as well treat him this way. He discovers that he was not worthy of anything, and even if he dies, nobody will notice it.

Gregor lived as a bug, and he transformed into a bug. But, the readers are not horrified with the transformation, but with the terrible attitude to a poor young man. Even the view of the reader suffers changes. We feel compassion towards Gregor, and his family's behavior fills us with indignation. A terrible everyday life and attitude of parents to their son seem to be unacceptable. However, it is a terrible reality that depicts a real social structure.

In the character of Gregor Samsa, the author focused not only on the individual problem of one young man but the problem of the whole society. This novel is the brightest expression of the tragic perception of the world that was a characteristic feature of all Kafka's works.

The situation of transformation can be interpreted in different ways. It may concern a family and social alienation, the loneliness of a person capable of compassion and self-sacrifice, one's difference from others. Kafka depicts the protagonist's mental and spiritual isolation as a result of his metamorphosis.

The author shows the essence of society realistic and believable: you are a member of the community while you can perform your job and serve it. However, if you are not capable of doing it, society does not need you anymore and can even get rid of you.

Gregor is an unproductive individual, and his family is a symbol of the society which does not want to accept the one who does not bring any profit. In this novel. Kafka emphasizes the fact of human vulnerability in society. A person is just a powerless and helpless "toy" doomed to be lonely, even among the closest people, his/her family.

The Metamorphosis is an innovative work in the world of prose. It is full of symbolic and metaphorical images that emphasize the tragedy of a person's fate, the alienation of the personality, its helplessness in front of society. The novel depicts the hostile world. It is one of the stories that make people think about "questions of life."

It makes it one of the best modernistic works of literature and the most examined and criticized novels. As The Metamorphosis analysis essay evidences, different people can find different themes in this book. However, the dominant theme is the alienation of the person and its relations with society. Through the description of family relations in the Gregor's family, the author makes allusions to the relationships in modern society.

The author provides the idea that society is cruel, and it does not need unproductive people. This idea is closely interrelated with the social problem of a person's worthiness in the world. The author expresses his vision of the person's role in society, making use of the fantastic transformation of the protagonist in the bug.

Bloom, Harold. Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006.

Childs, Peter. Modernism. New York, Routledge, 2008.

Kafka, Franz. Metamorphosis. Delaware: Prestwick House Inc, 2005.