

Franz kafkas metamorphosis argumentative essay examples

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



Introduction

Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is a great novel which describes the way a human being is transformed into a gigantic insect very much in the manner of an actual vegetative state. One has to observe several factors in this transformation which can be linked to the way political activity becomes an intrinsic part of everyone's lives

Gregor's transformation into a vegetative state is an essential part of the novel. The surrealism of it all appears to be intrinsically bound into everything and the novel really has aspects of it which show that it is rather disturbing in that sense. The metamorphosis is actually an important part of the life cycle of an insect and in this sense everything comes together in a rather disturbing way. Kafka creates a world full of intrinsic magic and also demonstrates that everything can be transformed in the bat of an eyelid. Gregor's state also awakens feelings in his family which show that life can become a very lonely experience. This is actually demonstrated in the way the family turns upon Gregor as his state cannot seem to be understood by them. Everything seems to turn full circle in this conundrum which resembles a lunatic asylum where the sole character turns upon the others. Essentially what remains is the fact that once we have actually outlived our usefulness, there is no way back for us in the depths of horror and unhappiness.

Kafka's novel touches on a number of major aspects which include the theme of loneliness among them. This can be grueling and excruciating as it confirms the fact that man cannot live without friends or acquaintances. It is a brutal way of living and *Metamorphosis* also shows us that at the end of the day we are alone and will remain alone for a long time to come.

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Metamorphosis is a harrowing read on several counts but is also very revealing and matter of fact, an eye opener on a tragic situation which eventually makes good. But Kafka can also be quite satirical about the situation in which the main character finds himself in. Perhaps there is also an element of autobiography in the novel as it contains certain levels which are slightly different but also intrinsically the same in that sense.

The theme of loneliness recurs constantly in the novel which is also a character study of the transformation of the being into an insect which has to suffer to feel itself. The way Gregor is made to feel alone is an essential part of the novel which also has an ending that transcends humanity in its own way. Kafka constantly harps upon the theme of transformation as we are constantly transforming ourselves even in our own lives.

Gregor however remains a lump of inactivity although he does have plans for himself and his family. This however demonstrates that the same plans may not have a fruition target although everything comes together in a different way and manner. Notwithstanding all this, Gregor is in a constant vegetative state, he cannot bring himself to do things, he cannot bring himself even to get out of bed to carry out certain chores.

Kafka enjoys discussing the theme of loneliness and aversion to society even in other novels such as *The Castle*. Gregor is in this sense a test case for other happenings in society where everything turns out differently and where life cannot be seen in isolation. Solitude and loneliness remains an essential theme for everything Kafka discusses in this novel which is permeated by grief and unhealthiness.

The parallels with the transformation which takes place in an insect are also

rather instructive as these show that the human can very much seem like an insect in certain stages. The larvae and the pupae mutate into various different forms and this can be seen as an intriguing comparison with humans who also mutate and are variously involved in such stages. However in Gregor's case, the mutation stage is very different as he is degenerating and not improving and all this may seem to be quite disastrous. He cannot seem to be able to comprehend certain thoughts and issues while at the same time he is faced with huge dilemmas on how to protect and nurture his family which is suffering and continues to suffer.

Seeing him in this state also means that Gregor has become a burden to his family and not just psychologically. He means well and has plans for his family but his state cannot seem to alter and change as everything is becoming too much even for him to actually comprehend. Life moves on in this sense and as the humans around him feel that they are constantly changing, Gregor remains in a state of total oblivion and lethargy. Kafka also examines the concept of lethargy which may be seen as something interesting but which is also decadent in that sense. Naturally enough Kafka is preoccupied by the way Gregor lets himself go completely and succumbs to inaction and gross unhappiness which leaves him with absolutely no option but to slump and remain in this cathartic state. The link between what he is feeling in his mind and what he wants to do is completely severed as there is no real intrinsic future for him either. This complete cut off is quite interesting to analyze in detail as it shows us how far the human being will stoop if faced with such a problem. The link between the mental and physical states of the body are also rather interesting as these can be on

completely different levels and that is, in a sense what permeates the novel's main theme of Metamorphosis.

Gregor is also stuck in his current vegetative state for various other reasons. First of all he has lost all his ability to work and perform certain tasks which adds fuel to the fire of inactivity. Secondly his mind is transformed by dark thoughts of misapprehension, solitude and gross unhappiness which can only come together in one vast cocktail of impossibility. But principally Gregor is transformed in the sense that he no longer can fit in into the world in which he lives as he is almost an alien on another planet. This brings about certain subtle differences in his habits and his mannerism which only tend to shock and awe others who cannot actually comprehend what is intrinsically or essentially wrong with him.

Comparisons may seem to be slightly out of place here but one can compare Metamorphosis with James Joyce's 'Ulysses' where the same inner workings of a person are discussed. The ramblings and diversions of Leopold Bloom may seem to find a certain parallel with those of Gregor who is faced with similar dilemmas. The surrealistic nature of both stories is also intriguing and instructive as both come to some sort of conclusion that man is consistently changing even though he may seem to be in a static mode most of the time. All this appears to be quite thrilling at first glance but when one examines Gregor's problems, the sheer inaction of it all may seem to be rather shocking and horrifying if not downright revolting.

This quote from the novel makes for intriguing analysis:

“ But when after a repetition of the same efforts he lay in his former position again, sighing, and watched his little legs struggling against each other more wildly than ever, if that were possible, and saw no way of bringing any calm and order into this senseless confusion, he told himself again that it was impossible to stay in bed and that the most sensible course was to risk everything for the smallest hope of getting away from it. At the same time, however, he did not forget to remind himself occasionally that cool reflection, the coolest possible, was much better than desperate resolves”. Here one can observe the sheer inaction which is slowly taking hold of Gregor’s body which is something that cannot really be described properly. The nightmare scenarios Gregor is going through as he fights to get out of bed whilst at the same time staying in it is quite fascinating although one must also observe that the difficulty is rather self imposed in this sense. Naturally enough, Kafka is hugely observant of all that is going on at this stage but he is also pretty much circumspect on the actual issues of the character study.

Another quote shows the sheer inaction and immobility into which Gregor has now descended:

“ Yet Gregor hadn't the slightest intention of frightening anyone, least of all his sister. He had only begun to turn around in order to crawl back to his room, but it was certainly a startling operation to see, since because of his disabled condition he could not execute the difficult turning movements except by lifting his head and then bracing it against the floor over and over again. He paused and looked around. His good intentions seemed to have

been recognized; the alarm had only been momentary”.

Yet again the surrealism of the story is one which shocks us completely, here we are observing gregor crawling around the room with his family shocked and horrified at what is going on. This is probably the high point of the book as it shows us the sheer terror into which Gregor has descended with nobody else able to do anything about it, in fact they can be said to be absolutely powerless.

Conclusion: Kafka as a portendor of doom

Metamorphosis is certainly a novel into which doom is completely intermingled and mixed. Gregor’s terrible destiny is intermingled with hope that one day he will realize his family and those who wish him well and he will snap out of this terrifying vegetative state. Nothing is more terrible than his descent into the maelstrom of hatred and unhappiness and the whole novel focuses principally on this theme. It is indeed a powerful and strong statement which shocks one to the core.

Works Cited

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