

At on him for financial
and materialistic
support.

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At the turn of the nineteenth century, women began one of their largest and longest revolutions for equal rights. These rights consisted of voting, higher education opportunities, and the breaking of their social role- caretaker, cleaner, dependent in men. A handful of Modernist era authors portrayed these struggles of equal rights. Their novels confluenced or reversed the male and female gender roles or just heightened the female role. Franz Kafka is an example of one of these authors.

In his novel *Metamorphosis*, he uses Gregor's transformation and actions to empower Grete to conform to the male role-income for the family and independant. Dagmar Lorenz states, in *Kafka and Gender*, that "Kafka explores the full range of male gender stereotypes, including the unheroic, irresolute, and effeminate configuration" of men (176, Lorenz). Kafka usually had men as the protagonist in his novels and they were usually stereotyped and followed the male gender role. An example of this would be Gregor's mentality and pressure to conform to a male dominant society. When waking up only to see himself transformed into a large bug, Gregor worries more about his inability to work and earn money than him being a large insect. Also, Gregor had to supported his family's upper-class lifestyle, and was proud of his power and dominance in the Samsa household; stating that "he felt great pride for the fact that he had been able to provide such a life for his parents and sister in such a fine flat" (89, Kafka).

Gregor's nonchalance about his physical transformation and more worry for his family's dependence on him further shows Gregor's acceptance into the male gender role. Gregor's transformation also threatens his dominant role

as the 'breadwinner' of the family. Gregor's family, especially his sister, Grete, is dependent on him for financial and materialistic support.

Gregor understand their need and endeavours to meet those need. For instance, Gregor " had earned so much money that he was able to meet the expenses of the whole household and ... it was a secret plan of his that his sister, who loved music, should be sent next year to study at the Conservatorium"(96, Kafka). Gregor once again fits into the male gender role while Grete conforms to the female gender role. She depends on Gregor to conduct her future and leaves it completely dependent on Gregor's actions and income. But, Gregor's transformation removes him from this role and empowers Grete to dawn the mantle of the male gender role.

Gregor's transformation leaves him disabled and unable to support his family. Grete on the other hand, assumes the female role and is the caretaker for Gregor. Her female role demands of her to make Gregor's life as nice as possible, regardless of the burden on her. This can be seen with Gregor " wildly curious to know what she would bring" and only to " find out she brought him a whole selection of food, all set out on an old newspaper" (91, Kafka). Kafka expresses the female's domestic role as way to explain the nonsense in the demanded role of women.

This can be further backed up by Nina Straus quoting that " Kafka's language undermines such fixedly sexist habits of thought" created by men in that time period (130, Straus). The mother and father also regard Grete's acceptance of the domestic female role as a positive. Gregor " often heard his parents expressing their appreciation of his sister's activities"(99, Kafka).

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Not only does Gregor believe in the patriarchal society, but so does the mother and father.

They both believe in this society because their placement in society is in the domestic female role. But, as time passed along, Grete soon takes control of the male gender role and Gregor is forced into the female role. Grete fitting into role Grete's female dominance over the family is not a long lasting victory for her. After the death of Gregor, Mr. and Mrs. Samsa " became aware of their daughter's increasing vivacity " and that " she had bloomed into a pretty girl with a good figure... having come to the conclusion that it would soon be time to find a good husband for her"(132, Kafka). This is done because Grete's father, who is state as a " father in a feminine role of frail, homebound, and inactive"(185, Lorenz), had finally assumed the role of the dominant male and has evicted Grete from this role.

This action in-turn brings back the patriarchal society that was once present in the house. Grete is sent back to the female gender role and is seen a woman who is to be marry to a husband who can ' own' them. As the novel ends, Grete's rebellion against the patriarchal society ends with her being returned to the female gender role and thus ending her short-lived rebellion. Kafka's Metamorphosis depicts ideas that were revolutionary in the nineteen hundreds.

His writing of Gregor and Grete swapping gender roles emphasized the oppression and inequality women faced in that time period. Kafka was a strong believer in women's having the dominant gender role- evident in his other novel- and men being the lesser one to them. And although it may

seem ridiculous for Kafka sending Grete back to her female gender role, it may be possible that Kafka intended the reader to notice of the foolishness of a patriarchal society and to realize, in that time period, the inequality between men and women.