

Metamorphosis essay

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



Metamorphosis Essay In The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka, Gregor is used as an individual that struggles with humanity due to the alienation provided by his family. This is relevant to existential views of society by reflecting its cruelty towards others. Through this his struggles and feelings of loneliness are perceived and created through Kafka's strong use of pathos. Gregor, the outcast, was once thought of as the provider and he was in charge of his family's wellbeing. When he first realized he had transformed he was more worried about how he would continue providing for his family rather than the transformation itself. His family, however, was more worried about themselves instead of trying to help Gregor, much like most people react in our society. "...his hand against his open mouth and backing away slowly as if repelled by an invisible force" (16) both the clerk's and his family's reaction are a representation of society, when people are put into a situation they are not comfortable in they tend to react negatively and at times they are clueless as to how to react. When Gregor's transformation took place not only did it affect him but his family as well, and like others in our society they thought of how hard the transition would be on their comfortable lifestyle before they worried about what should be done to help Gregor. Their sincere reactions provided the story with a realistic element that helped make it more authentic. Existential ideals become apparent through Gregor's continuous struggle with his humanity by using conflicting beliefs of the individual as an indication. Gregor was once a man like everyone else and obeyed the rules of humanity making the right from wrong clear to him. Once he transformed however he began to adapt with his new body and things that felt wrong to his past self began to feel right. The first instance

where this becomes evident is when his preference of food begins to change. Gregor mentions that he loved milk as a human but after the metamorphosis milk no longer suits his needs and he prefers to eat rotten leftover food. This adds to Gregor's frustrations as he continues to fight to keep in touch with his human self. "...he could not otherwise explain to himself how he could have seriously wished to have his room cleared out" (31) his conflicting beliefs become more visible in this quote, it shows that they were causing him to have second thoughts and by this point his new instincts were becoming more noticeable while his humanity was getting weaker. He wanted to keep the humanity he had prior to the transformation but his new body required different things that made it very difficult for Gregor to do so. This creates for Gregor a struggle with humanity seen through existentialism. Alienation is established by both Gregor's family and himself. The family is a representation of society's cruelty and Kafka's use of pathos is most evident through this. The family's solution to Gregor's situation is by keeping him alienated from the world. "[T]he father furiously shaking his fists as if willing Gregor to go back to his room..." by isolating him they believe they are keeping him from dealing with society's cruelty when in reality they are causing him more harm than good. By doing this, they are causing Gregor to feel even more useless and he believes that by separating himself he can help them and alienates himself from everyone else. This is causing them to forget about the old Gregor and beginning to think of him as just a cockroach. "... [A]nything deemed useless for now was hastily hurled into Gregor's room by the charwoman" (42) Gregor by this time was just a burden on the family and by keeping him with the rest of their unwanted items they

are wasting away the little humanity he had left. Their alienation towards Gregor displays how his alienation from the world had an impact on his family's feelings for him. Gregor's alienation and rejection is an existential view on society. Throughout the story we see how his struggle with humanity and his alienation from the world affects the final outcome. His family continues to ignore him causing him to lose touch with his humanity, and eventually believe that the Gregor they once knew is gone. Through Kafka's use of pathos and symbolism we see how this can be applicable to existential ideals of society.