

Example of the setting of franz kafkas metamorphosis essay

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Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* is considered one of the greatest pieces of absurdist horror fiction in the 20th century, telling a horrific tale of dehumanization and philosophical malaise. Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman, suddenly finds himself having turned into a bug-like creature, the very nature of his self having been irrevocably altered. Of course, one of the most horrific aspects of the story itself is not the bug he becomes, but the setting he inhabits. The setting of the *Metamorphosis*, Samsa's room in his home, becomes symbolic for his deep and significant ennui about his own life and his feelings of entrapment.

The sheer absurdity of the transformation in the *Metamorphosis* is heightened by the presence of the bug-like creature in such a mundane, normal room. The room is simple enough - there are three doors and a window. The smallness and depressing nature of the room is akin to Gregor's own sad, sad life as a traveling salesman - he has little to no connections or anything to make him particularly special.

Gregor's connection to the place around him shows a dramatic disconnect between mind and body, extending that metaphor to show how the room is completely separate and not at all representative of the real world. When Grete starts to take away some of the furniture, she is doing it to benefit Gregor, but Gregor is immensely disturbed by this change. He does not want his room changed. To do so would strip him of the rest of his humanity, which he resists despite his growing accustomed to walking on the walls and ceiling.

Gregor's attempts to escape the room are ostensibly attempts to regain his humanity; every time, however, he manages to fail, or something else stops him. The first time, he cannot unlock the door, which is symbolic for his inability to feel human and empower himself. The second time, he gets out but is stymied by his father, who gravely injures him with an apple that becomes lodged in his back, showing that the rest of society wants him sequestered away. He is not wanted by anyone else, and so the room becomes both his home and his prison.

The effects of the room on Gregor's countenance are significant, most notably in the recurring occasions of resting and sleeping. Gregor's transformation happens to him while he sleeps, and afterwards he spends most of his time sleeping. In fact, death comes for Gregor because of his inability (or refusal) to go to sleep due to his illness. Sleep is shown to be an oppressive force, and a consequence of the dreariness of his life; Gregor would rather sleep it away in his dark room than make positive changes.

In conclusion, Kafka's *Metamorphosis* depends just as much on the setting of Gregor Samsa's transformation as it does on the transformation himself. One could argue that it is the room itself that is the problem, and not Gregor; his troubles would still be the same if he were human and confined to that space. The dreary, depressing nature of his room reflects the hopelessness he finds within himself; life has dehumanized him to the point where he may as well feel like an insect.

Works Cited

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1915. Print.