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Topic 1: Kafka

A story written during World War I, one that many American students study growing up, is *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. It is a truly powerful writing that pushes a narrative so contrary to the time it was written, that it was something only communicable as a hidden theme in a story. Obviously, the modern world is very progressive, actively fighting for more human rights regardless of race or religion. We have come a long way from where we were, it has already been over one hundred years since *The Metamorphosis* had even first come out. It underlines a feminist approach, something very uncommon from the time it was created. The power of women is demonstrated, and unlocked, but only by the absence of a providing male figure. Kafka goes against the societal norms that focus on man of the household type of philosophy and tries to bring an understanding to the importance of letting women enter more fields in the work force as we are all equal.

It may take a couple reads, but finding out that the story is not about Gregor really opens up the story. A metamorphosis means there is change, but Gregor never changes in the story. From the beginning he wakes up as a bug, cognitive that something has happened to him. His family does not know what to do with him, his father is scared, and his mother wants to care but can’t find how to. This leaves his younger sister to take care of him, somewhat showing how she is whimsically young and able to see something for what they represent than what they physically are. As time goes on, the financial stress from Gregor’s absence starts to come up. The family has to start tapping into money the father had to save until they can find a way to become independent from Gregor’s success as a traveling businessman. This pulls time away from the families care of Gregor. His sister started by cleaning his room almost every day, feeding him and taking really good care of him. She even tried to remove stuff from his room to give him more space so he can crawl around, but this was stopped by the mother who argued to keep everything as sentiment. The mother did not do anything to still progress her relationship with her son, instead she would try to preserve what of the past she still had of him. Over time, his sister does not feed him as much and does not clean his room as often. His room eventually is used as a storage closet, cramping him in with all this stuff. In time, Gregor’s sister got a sales job, and the mother began a sewing job of her own. Now older and independent, the sister brings action to Gregor’s situation, wanting to do something about him, as he is preventing them from progressing in life. Through pressing stress from the family, Gregor passes away, and allows for the family to move on in life. The story ends with everyone happy, making money working, living in a new home, all at the expensive of Gregor.

There are key elements of symbolism within this story that make Gregor a Christ Character. This is someone or something that resembles traits of Jesus Christ from the Christian faith. One of the physical traits seen is when the father throws an apple that sticks in Gregor’s side, injuring him severely. The stabbing is related to when Jesus is crucified, and to make sure he is really dead, he is stabbed in the side. An apple in itself holds a lot of religious symbolism regarding the story of Adam and Eve. Being a Christ figure, he shares the most important trait to Jesus, and that is sacrifice for the greater good. Gregor’s life is given up so that his family can grow and progress into a better life. At the time, Women did not hold important roles in society, they were mainly housewives that waited for their soldiers to return home. Gregor’s death pushed his sister to become more independent, getting her own job and becoming a better person. She is the one who goes through change in the story, not Gregor himself. The true metamorphosis is the feminist progression in the story.

Franz Kafka was obviously very intelligent, as he was a skilled and successful writer. He understood that by writing with an agenda, he could convey a message easier than just outspokenly telling someone else. This story may not have been a grand event that helped push women’s rights, but it shows that there have been progressive figures in the past that have helped. Slowly but surely, this reality became achievable through many gradual efforts to bring awareness to the inequality, and we are able to look back on it from today’s perspective.

Works Cited

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