Paul Bartlett

Professor Christopher Keep

Elizabeth Jinsun Song

ENG 1027F, Tutorial 009

18 October 2017

Setting – Electrical tram outside the city. The whole story they were inside his parents apartment where Gregor was because they were afraid to leave him alone. The story never specifies when the events occur, but based on the references in the story it would have likely taken place in the past (1900’s).

Characters – Gregor Samsa: Protagonist of the story. Was the financial support for his family after his father stopped working 5 years before. Never questioned why he was a bug and instead seemed to just accept it. He is a round character, although he does not seem to develop much through the story.

Grete Samsa: Only character who accepts Gregor after his transformation. Cares for Gregor throughout the story, to the point of getting angry with her mother when she tries to take over. They seem to be close based on parts of the story indicating how he appreciated her musical performances more than anyone else and even wanted to save money to get them tickets for a musical concert for Christmas.

Plot: About a man who gets turned into a dung beetle and how he adjusts to his new life until he eventually dies.

Diction: Denotative, precise, explains the bizarre world around him in a functional style.

Tone: Helpless, changes to hope

Narrative perspective: Moved outside of Gregor, now can see the family and the relief they feel in his death

This passage is important because it shows how much Gregor’s condition consumed the family in grief and misfortune, while in reality the family was doing well.

Thesis: Through an analysis of the story’s characters, plot, this essay will demonstrate how the final passage of The Metamorphosis is about how your response to your struggles define and shape who you are.

REDO: The Metamorphosis is a story about how lacking self-actualization(criticism) will lead to your own destruction

Franz Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis” reveals the pointlessness of human achievement. The contrast between his simple and denotative diction and the bizarre world creates a dark yet satirical style. A narrator guides us inside and outside the thoughts of Gregor through third-person in free indirect discourse, allowing Kafka to rationalize the unnatural events that occur to Gregor. The effect of this narrative style is to give the reader a sense of how the characters change after Gregor’s transformation. Kafka emphasizes how Gregor’s transformation causes misfortune for his entire family, however, in the final passage the tone of the text changes to one of hope. Through an analysis of the text’s characters, plot, and setting, this essay will demonstrate how the final passage of The Metamorphosis is about how your response to your struggles define and shape who you become.

Gregor’s struggles start at the beginning of the text when he wakes up and discovers that he has been turned into a monstrous verminous bug. It takes him a long time to finally understand that he can’t continue working due to his transformation. Although Gregor does become more comfortable with his new body, preferring to be in tighter spaces and climb on the walls, he still struggles with his past human self and even puts up a fight when his mother and sister are “taking away from him everything he cherished” (Kafka 46). In his selfishness to preserve his childhood belongings, he terrifies his mother who was previously excited to finally get to see him since his transformation. Gregor continues to cause problems for his family in his own selfishness and eventually dies being unable to adjust to his new struggles.

Grete is the first person in their family who manages to accept Gregor’s grotesque transformation. Although she is terrified of him at first, she ends up being the main caregiver and eventually adjusts to the routine of feeding him and cleaning his room. She does the job as her role in the family and even goes as far as to get angry at her mother for trying to intervene to spare her the pain of seeing her transformed son. This is much different than her life before Gregor’s transformation, which she was described as “a somewhat useless young woman” (Kafka 40). At the peak of conflict in the text, she ends up getting angry at Gregor and addresses him by name for the first time, showing authority. She continues caring for Gregor as a responsibility and ends up getting a part time job and studying to further her career. It is Grete who convinces her parents in a logical manner that it is time to get rid of Gregor. In the final passage with their family finally free of Gregor, her parents notice how much she has grown despite all the troubles she has faced. She manages to overcome the struggles of taking care of Gregor and supporting the family financially, and has promising prospects for the next stage of her life.

The events of The Metamorphosis mostly occur from the perspective of Gregor at the start of his transformation up until his death. The story shows how Gregor attempts to overcome his new struggles, but the plot indicates a deeper meaning to the events. In the final passage, the view has changed from mostly being on Gregor to being on his family. Each of the members of the family were now employed, while before they were all ungratefully relying on Gregor financially. The tone of the story has shifted from helplessness and tragedy to hope. Even though Gregor’s parents do not seem to improve throughout the story as much as Grete does, they still endure many sacrifices. Through their struggles with Gregor, working to support the family, and keeping the lodgers satisfied, they all managed to push through the hardships and plan new dreams for their futures.

Most of the text takes place in Gregor’s bedroom, and the setting doesn’t change until the final passage when they leave the house and ride the tram. The apartment was a place of confinement where they were stuck for months to endure Gregor because they were too afraid to leave him alone. The family considered their change in dwelling to be “the greatest improvement in their situation” (Kafka 77). This is symbolic to how a caterpillar is confined to a cocoon until the metamorphosis is complete and it emerges as a butterfly. Additionally, this is indicated at the end when “at the end of their journey the daughter first lifted herself up and stretched her young body” (Kafka 77). Grete manages to transform into a “beautiful and voluptuous young woman” after taking on new responsibilities after Gregor’s transformation.