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Global Literature II

Response Essay #6- Kafka & Woolf

The word “metamorphosis” connotes a process or at least the moment of change, but Kafka’s story does not portray that moment. Gregor simply wakes up as the bug. How would the story change if Kafka had shown the audience the process of transformation? Why didn’t he show the metamorphosis?

If the story Metamorphosis portrayed Gregor’s process of becoming a bug, the story would be completely different. I think the idea of Gregor being a bug had less to do with the physical state and more to do with his mental state. Gregor did not seem so shocked or angry or confused about his transformation. At the beginning of the story, he had more complaints about his job than he did his new insect body. I think his body symbolized his depression. It kept him trapped in a hard shell. It justified him not ever being capable of being loved, wanted, or successful. It made it hard to get out of bed. The simple task of taking the blanket off was exhausting. His words were limited out of fear of truly being heard for what he really sounded like. If the story had demonstrated the process of Gregor transforming into a bug, the point of the story would be completely different. It wasn’t about him being a bug, but about him feeling as though he was as worthless and burdensome as an insect.

Virginia Woolf chose to fictionalize a sister for Shakespeare, of all possible writers. Why is Shakespeare the most effective choice for Woolf’s argument?

In the essay, “A Room of One’s Own,” Virginia Woolf fictionalizes a sister for Shakespeare. She compares them as both having the same genius, and the same talent as one another. The difference is, Shakespeare’s sister could’ve never written the literature as he did. Not because she was a genius as he was, but because her mind and her life would be full of obstacles that Shakespeare would never have to

fight, suffer through, or experience. They could have lived in the same house as children but have completely different responsibilities. Shakespeare, being a male, would have had more freedom and even be praised for leaving his home to pursue his dreams. His sister would be beaten for even thinking such a thought or dreaming such a dream. She tells the story that she went and left the home anyway to pursue this dream. Unlike Shakespeare, she doesn't even get the opportunity to display what she is capable of. She will never get the platform she needs to show how incredibly genius she was, unlike Shakespeare. Women are to have babies, not be legendary writers. It was impossible for a woman to have written the literature of Shakespeare in the 1600's. To fictionalize a sister for Shakespeare was genius because she was able to compare a woman and a man with the same intellectual gifts in the same times. Life was not the same for the two and never could be.