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AP Literature and Composition

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Representation of Gregor

The character I chose for the “Artistic Character Representation” is Gregor from The Metamorphosis. I used a collage for the representation of Gregor to express his looks, personalities, what he does, etc. The basic looks of my collage is that it has three pictures and the rest are texts that describes Gregor.

The middle and largest picture with a bug lying on a bed shows an event that happened at the very beginning of The Metamorphosis. The story of The Metamorphosis starts off with “[one] morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin” (Kafka, 1). Since Gregor is a bug, he could not get out of his bed easily. Gregor extremely wanted to get out of bed to go to work, which his work is a traveling salesman. This is why I placed the text “Traveling Salesman” on my collage. I also put the word “Bug” on the collage, and a picture of a bug on the bottom right hand side of the collage.

Gregor’s family was in debt, which the reason is because Gregor’s father failed in his business; this led Gregor’s father into depression. Gregor’s father was a “tired man as used to be laying there entombed in his bed when Gregor came back from his business trips…who was hardly even able to stand up…” (Kafka, 34). So, Gregor felt obligations to pay off the debt and support his family. I used the texts “Debt,” “Responsibility,” and “Family” in my collage.

Since Gregor turned into a bug and looked hideous, his family feared Gregor. Gregor’s mother faints about every time she sees Gregor. Gregor’s mom “stepped to one side, saw the enormous brown patch against the flowers of the wallpaper, and before she even realized it was Gregor that she saw screamed; “Oh God, oh God!” Arms outstretched, she fell onto the couch as if she had given up everything and stayed there immobile” (Kafka, 33). I applied the words “Hideous” on the collage, and a picture of a woman fainting on the top left hand corner of the collage.

Gregor eventually learned how to adapt to living like a bug. He likes to eat molded foods rather than fresh vegetables. Gregor “got into the habit of crawling up and down the walls and ceiling” (Kafka, 29) of his room. Grete—Gregor’s sister—realized that Gregor likes to climb and crawl in his room, so she believed that removing all the furniture would benefit Gregor. Gregor lost his furniture, so his lifestyle changed; he is not living like a human anymore. Even if Gregor looked like a bug, he still had human emotions; he was very sad to lose his furniture. He wanted to protect a picture, so “[he] hurried up onto the picture and pressed himself against its glass, it held him firmly and felt good on his hot belly. This picture at least, now totally covered by Gregor, would certainly be taken away by no-one” (Kafka, 32). He was also feeling really depressed because he could not do his duties of working to provide for his family. He had to watch his family struggle on their financial status, which forced Gregor’s father to work at a banking institute. Gregor saw his father “standing up straight enough now; dressed in a smart blue uniform with gold buttons, the sort worn by the employees at the banking institute…under the bushy eyebrows, his piercing, dark eyes looked out fresh and alert; his normally unkempt white hair was combed down painfully close to his scalp” (Kafka, 34). So, it is clear that Gregor still has human emotions. I placed the texts “Adapt,” “Wall,” “Change,” “Lose Furniture,” “Crawl,” and “Human Emotions” on my collage.

Near the end of the story, Gregor thought that he was a burden to his family. Gregor believed he needed to go away from his family, which led to Gregor’s death. Gregor “felt that he must go away even more strongly than his sister. He remained in this state of empty and peaceful rumination until he heard the clock tower strike three in the morning…Then, without his willing it, his head sank down completely, and his last breath flowed weakly from his nostrils” (Kafka, 49). This is why I put the word “Death” on my collage.