ANALYSIS: FRANZ KAFTA’S THE METAMORPHOSIS

1. Identify the kinds of details Kafka uses to establish Gregor’s life before his metamorphosis into an insect. How do these familiar details and objects define Gregor’s character and life?

2. As soon as the chief clerk arrives in the Samsa apartment, Gregor reacts with alarm and fear. Explain why Gregor stands in such fear of this man, who seems to be nothing more than the chief’s messenger.

3. The relationship between Gregor and his father is at the core of the story. Describe this relationship both before and after Gregor’s metamorphosis.

4. During much of this part of the story, we learn a lot about Gregor’s inner life—his thoughts and feelings. Describe Gregor’s private thoughts and emotions, and explain how these thoughts and feelings express his attitude toward his family and the outside world.

5. Grete’s character undergoes a dramatic change in the novel. Trace the changes in her character in an essay that highlights the changes in her attitude, character, and personality.

6. Gregor’s furniture is very dear to him and he becomes very upset when Grete and her mother start to remove it from his room. Explain in detail why Gregor feels he cannot part with his furniture.

7. The picture of the woman wrapped in furs on Gregor’s wall is something that he refuses to part with. Analyze the importance of this picture in Gregor’s life and explain its symbolic meaning.

8. It is clear from the outset of Part 3 that Gregor is dying. Analyze how much of his physical decline is his own doing, and how much of it is caused by outside factors.

9. The three bearded lodgers who come into the story are intentionally made to be mysterious and anonymous. In a few paragraphs, analyze why these three are so vague. Why do they have no names, no distinguishing qualities or characteristics, no profession or background?

10. The theme of physical decay and illness is a prominent theme in the story. Trace Gregor’s physical decline from the beginning of Part 3, until his death.

11. Contrast Gregor’s state of mind at the beginning of Part 3 to right before his death. What incidents or events cause a change in Gregor’s attitude and thinking? Are Gregor’s thoughts rational and clear, or are they blurred and irrational?