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A.P. Literature and Composition

Unheard Messages

The only thing that sets humans apart from animals is communication.

Communication-- the use of words-- let's us connect with each other and makes us human. We need to communicate. Without it, how would we know things about each other, or anything? Communication is the key to humanity and without it, we would be ignorant and unconscious to so many things. In the short story, Metamorphosis, written by Franz Kafka, the lack of communication is the downfall of the protagonist, Gregor.

#1:

“Hearing these words from his mother made Gregor realise that the lack of any direct human communication, along with the monotonous life led by the family during these two months, must have made him confused-- he could think of no other way of explaining himself” (Kafka, 30).

In part II, Gregor has come to accept his *bugginess*, and is allowing his mother and sister to clear out his room so he will have more wall space to crawl around on. His

mother stated that moving out the last tangible things he had would make him forget that he was still human and she didn't want that. In the passage above, Gregor understands his mother's point, but without language, he has no way to express his feelings. He only had his physical being for communication. To protect his last form of human identity, Gregor "hurried up onto the picture and pressed himself against its glass... it would certainly be taken by no-one" (Kafka, 32). This act allowed Gregor's bug-body to cover his favorite picture that he did not want to go. Without communication, we was not able to simply say that he wanted the picture to stay, but without being able to explain himself, this act was considered frightening to the family; in the next passage, we will see how the lack of communication continues to affect Gregor and his sense of humanity.

#2:

"It was clear to Gregor that Grete had not said enough, and that his father took it to mean that something bad had happened, that he was responsible for some act of violence" (Kafka, 34).

The lack of communication does not only make Gregor less human, it also lets him get walked all over without a say. The narration shared above reveals that Gregor's father thought that Gregor did something terrible, while Gregor and his sister, Grete, knew that that was false. Not being able to speak let's us know a lot about him; he is walked all over without being able to stand up for himself, even though, he never stood

up for himself in the past (before he turned into a bug). Since he had turned into a bug and his communication was terminated, he “quickly forgot his past when he had still been a human” (Kafka, 31). Communication makes us human and without it, we are no better than a bug form of Gregor.