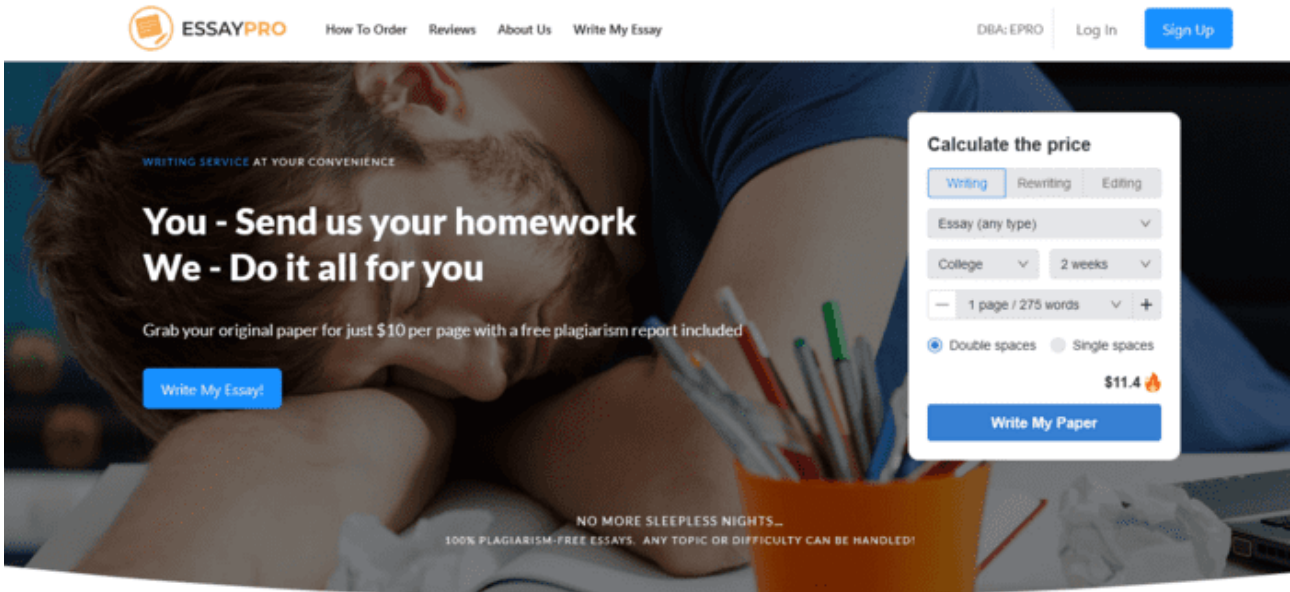


Kafka's Metamorphosis



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Kafka's Metamorphosis

"As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect" (Kafka 1757).

This opening is famous not only for its startling content but also for its calm, matter-of-fact style which then sets the tone for the rest of the story. Along with Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and Dante's Inferno, Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" has one of the most-memorized and most attention-catching opening lines.

[Gregor Samsa](#) feels that he has been treated as a lowly insect and comes to

feel that he is one; the story makes the leap from "I feel like an insect" to "I am an insect." Whatever the causes for Gregor [feeling](#) this way, these causes have led to his isolation and alienation (the feeling of being a stranger and an alien, even in those places where one should feel at home). Gregor has undergone an ultimate alienation: he is alienated from both his psychological and physical self.

Once Gregor's metamorphosis (change) has been accomplished, the story moves inevitably to his death. In many ways, the protagonist (main character) of "The Metamorphosis" and his dilemmas are...

... middle of paper ...

..., his company). We feel a chill to see the authoritarian control over Gregor and how it works itself out in the story. And those of us who know the history of Germany and Czechoslovakia are chilled to see how the events of the story find a parallel in the Nazi politics and the Holocaust that came soon after Kafka's death.

Work Cited

Kafka, Franz. "The Metamorphosis." Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces. Ed. Maynard Mack et al. 2 vols. Exp. ed. New York: Norton, 1995. Vol. 2. 1757-1791.

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