

Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy 110W

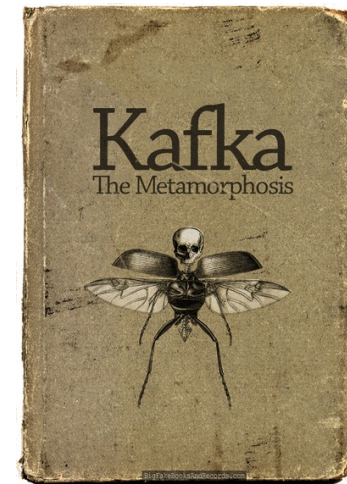
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Introduction to Personal Identity

Kafka's *Metamorphosis*



Who are We?

- What makes us the same people that we were when we were young?
- What makes us the same as we grow older?
- Is there a core set of properties that are consistent over our lives?
- Is there even something called the self, or are we just a bundle of properties, with no unifying thing?
- Haecceity: thisness

Bodies

- We could say that we are identical with our bodies.
- Our bodies are changing all the time.
 - ▶ skin
 - ▶ hair
 - ▶ cells
- Every seven years, all (or so) of the cells in our bodies are replaced.
- You are what you eat.
- The debtor's paradox

Problem of Material Constitution 1

- The ship of Theseus
 - ▶ Which one is Theseus's ship?
 - ▶ Both?
 - ▶ Then, the same material object can exist in two places at once.



Problem of Material Constitution 2

- Chrysippus's Dion and Theon
 - ▶ No two material objects can be in the same place.
 - ▶ If Dion remains, we violate the principle that one place can't house two different objects.



Problem of Material Constitution 3

- Lump and Joan
 - ▶ Is Joan different from the lump?
 - ▶ They were created at different times.
 - ▶ Lump isn't destroyed, when Joan is.
 - ▶ We might admit coincidental objects.



Metamorphosis

“Philosophers...should abstain from metaphors” (*De Motu* §3).

Questions on *Metamorphosis*

- Who is Gregor Samsa? What does he do?
- How does Gregor respond to his metamorphosis? (Initially, and long-term)
- How do the members of Gregor's family respond to his change?
- How and what does Gregor eat?
- What is life like outside the Samsas' apartment?
- How does Gregor's sister treat him differently from the way he is treated by his parents?
- Why doesn't Gregor want his furniture moved out? Why does he change his mind?
- Does Gregor's attitude toward his family change?
- What role do the roomers play in the story?
- How does Gregor die?
- How do his family members react when they hear that Gregor is dead?

More Questions about Metamorphosis

- What is Kafka's central theme?
- Why does Gregor change into a vermin?
- Is Gregor Samsa the same before and after the metamorphosis?
- Is there a deep meaning to the *Metamorphosis*, or is it just a story?







just over 3 feet long

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The Metamorphosis

2 2 1

AS GREGOR SAMSA awoke one morning from ^{a troubled} uneasy ^{visions} dream he found himself transformed in his bed into a ^{visions} gigantic insect. He was lying on his hard, as it were armor-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his dome-like brown belly divided into ^{stiff} ^{very hard} ^{stiff} segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, ^{he waved} ^{he waved} helplessly before his eyes.

What has happened to me? he thought. It was no dream. His room, a regular human bedroom, ^{the room} rather ~~too~~ small, lay quiet ^{within it} between the four familiar walls. Above the table on which a collection of cloth samples was unpacked and spread out—Samsa was a commercial traveler—hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady, with a fur cap on and a fur ~~coat~~ ^{very strange} ^{very strange} sitting ^{upright} and holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished!

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he had ~~deliberately~~ ^{made} the coat or with frame himself, of wood, good price

From Nabokov's lecture notes

