

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE METAMORPHOSIS BY FRANZ KAFKA: A MARXIST APPROACH

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana *The Metamorphosis* karya Franz Kafka mencerminkan perjuangan proletariat di bawah kondisi kapitalis serta menilai apakah metamorfosis Gregor Samsa berfungsi sebagai kritik terhadap eksploitasi ekonomi. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif yang berlandaskan metode close reading, penelitian ini menganalisis terjemahan Ian Johnston tahun 1999 dari novella tahun 1915 tersebut. Petikan-petikan terpilih yang menggambarkan kerja Gregor sebelum dan setelah transformasinya dikodekan secara tematik dan ditafsirkan melalui lensa Marxis, dengan fokus pada ketimpangan kekuasaan, dinamika keluarga, dan pereduksian nilai kemanusiaan menjadi produktivitas. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Kafka menyajikan alegori konflik kelas yang kuat: nilai Gregor ditentukan semata-mata oleh kemampuannya untuk bekerja; identitasnya runtuh menjadi fungsi ekonomi; dan sikap keluarga yang berubah-ubah terhadap dirinya mengungkap jangkauan ideologi kapitalis yang meresap. Adegan awal menggambarkan subordinasi Gregor kepada majikan yang otoriter, sedangkan episode berikutnya menampilkan bagaimana penyakit dan ketidakmampuannya mencabut kewenangan sosial dan ekonominya, menempatkannya sebagai beban. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *The Metamorphosis* mengajukan kritik berkelanjutan terhadap eksploitasi kapitalis dengan mendramatisasi penindasan sistemik yang dialami pekerja upahan dan menegaskan relevansi analisis Marxis untuk memahami representasi sastra tentang perjuangan kelas.

Kata Kunci: *The Metamorphosis*, Perjuangan Kelas, Kapitalis, Eksploitasi, Proletariat.

Abstract: This study investigates how Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* reflects the proletariat's struggle under capitalist conditions and evaluates whether Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis functions as a critique of economic exploitation. Employing a qualitative, descriptive approach grounded in close reading, the research analyzes Ian Johnston's 1999 translation of the 1915 novella. Selected passages that portray Gregor's labor before and after his transformation are coded thematically and interpreted through a Marxist lens, focusing on power imbalances, family dynamics, and the reduction of human worth to productivity. The findings demonstrate that Kafka stages a compelling allegory of class conflict: Gregor's value is defined solely by his capacity to work; his identity collapses into economic utility; and his family's shifting attitudes toward him reveal the pervasive reach of capitalist ideology. Early scenes depict his subordination to a domineering employer, while

later episodes show how illness and disability strip him of social and economic agency, casting him as a burden. The study concludes that The Metamorphosis offers a sustained critique of capitalist exploitation by dramatizing the systemic oppression faced by wage laborers and underscores the enduring relevance of Marxist analysis for understanding literary representations of class struggle.

Keywords: *The Metamorphosis, Class Struggle, Capitalist, Exploitation, Proletariat.*

INTRODUCTION

Literature has long served as both a mirror and a critique of its socio-economic context, revealing how individual choices are shaped by and sometimes resist the material conditions that frame human existence (Eagleton, 1976). Through depictions of characters' struggles, aspirations, and conflicts, literary texts illuminate the dialectical relationship between human agency and the "forces and relations of production" that constitute the economic base (Marx, 1867). Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* exemplifies this dynamic: by dramatizing Gregor Samsa's transformation into a grotesque insect, the narrative exposes how capitalist structures pit the working class against the ruling class, reducing human beings to expendable laborers valued only for their economic utility.

Previous study has examined Marxist readings of literary works to uncover embedded critiques of capitalism. Eagleton's seminal study argues that literature both reflects and interrogates the "forces and relations of production" that constitute the economic base (Eagleton, 1976). Subsequent analyses have applied Marxist theory to Kafka's writing, highlighting themes of alienation and dehumanization in *The Metamorphosis* the present article advances a focused Marxist interpretation of *The Metamorphosis* by concentrating exclusively on the proletariat's class struggle. This study asks: How does Kafka's narrative depict the conflict between Gregor Samsa and the bourgeois economic forces that exploit him? It is hypothesized that Gregor's true suffering lies not merely in his physical transformation but in the loss of social and economic agency and his forced alienation from labor and family. To explore this, the article will analyze representations of class struggle in Gregor's life before and after his metamorphosis, and articulate how Kafka's critique of capitalist ideology reveals the dehumanizing effects of economic exploitation on the working class.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore class struggle in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (Johnston, 1999). Qualitative research is suited to understanding

the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to social phenomena (Creswell, 2018, p. 50). Following Creswell's framework, the methodological section comprises four key elements: data source; methods and techniques of data collection; methods and techniques of data analysis; and methods and techniques of presenting the analysis. The primary data source is Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* (1915), as rendered in Ian Johnston's 1999 translation. This text provides the core material for a close reading of scenes that illustrate class tensions, focusing on Gregor Samsa's transformation, his interactions with family members, and the economic pressures reflected in those interactions. By concentrating on selected passages, dialogues, key narrative events, and symbolic details this research grounds its interpretations in direct textual evidence, ensuring robust linkage between empirical data and theoretical insights.

Data collection relies on the close-reading technique, which systematically examines character development, narrative structure, dialogue, and symbolism (Creswell, 2018). Passages depicting Gregor's labor before and after his metamorphosis are identified, documented, and organized thematically to reveal conflicts between proletariat and bourgeois forces. Data analysis follows Creswell's descriptive-qualitative procedure. First, gathered passages are coded according to their relevance to class struggle, annotated, and grouped. Next, a thematic analysis interprets character relationships and plot developments through a Marxist lens, highlighting moments where economic exploitation and power imbalances surface. Finally, the findings are synthesized into coherent arguments that articulate how Kafka critiques capitalist dynamics. All figures (e.g., thematic maps, coding tables) will include captions placed directly beneath each figure (figure captions), in accordance with standard academic practice (Sudaryanto, 1993).

The presentation of results employs an informal descriptive format, articulating findings in narrative form supported by quoted passages. Sections are organized around key themes of class struggle, each introduced with a brief theoretical overview, followed by textual evidence and interpretation. This structure ensures clarity and logical progression, guiding readers through the argument from empirical observation to theoretical conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* presents a profound allegory of the proletariat's struggle under capitalist oppression, with Gregor Samsa embodying the working-class

individual who is subjected to relentless exploitation and systemic alienation. This section examines how Gregor's metamorphosis into an insect serves as a metaphor for his declining status in both his own family and the capitalist labor system. In a number of scenes, Gregor is portrayed as the only provider whose worth is determined only by his ability to make money, highlighting the hardship and sacrifice placed on the working class. The story demonstrates how Gregor's identity becomes completely intertwined with his economic role through recurrent themes of debt, duty, labor, and sacrifice. As his ability to work decreases, the family's need for help becomes clear, and they are slowly forced to work for wages themselves, which keeps the same class-based dynamics that kept Gregor in check. The information in this chapter shows how class struggle works in complicated ways, changing and breaking up family ties in order to survive in a capitalist society.

Data 1:

“If I were to try that with my boss, I’d be thrown out on the spot. Still, who knows whether that mightn’t be really good for me. If I didn’t hold back for my parents’ sake, I’d have quit ages ago.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 5)

Gregor says this line early on in *The Metamorphosis*, right after he wakes up and sees that he has changed. He imagines going against his cruel boss: "If I tried that with my boss, I'd be thrown out right away" (Kafka, 1999, p. 5). but right away sees what will happen. Gregor is alone in his bedroom in this scene, thinking about how hard his job is even though he doesn't want to leave it. The quote shows how angry he is that his boss is "way up there" while Gregor has to work below. It also shows how Gregor is torn between his personal anger and his sense of duty: he says he keeps working "for my parents' sake," even though he is in debt. Thus the context highlights the power imbalance in Gregor's world, as he realizes that economic necessity and family debt forces him to endure his boss's authority.

This part shows what Marxist class conflict looks like. Marx and Engels famously said in 1848 that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This is a clear example of that conflict. Gregor's boss is like a rich person who owns capital and has complete control over it. Gregor, on the other hand, is like a worker who is at the mercy of capital. Gregor knows that going against the boss would cost him his job and his way of life. This is similar to what Marx said about workers: “no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live” (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 53). His

resignation—staying on to pay off debts—shows how capitalist exploitation makes people put their own wants behind their economic needs. This scenario also aligns with Eagleton’s view that capitalism compels workers to sacrifice their “essential needs” for the benefit of a few (Eagleton, 1976, p. 75–77). In Gregor’s case, his own need for freedom is sacrificed to maintain his family’s stability, illustrating the oppressive regime of capital over labor that Marxist theory describes.

Data 2:

“He was the boss’s minion, without backbone or intelligence...Gregor hadn’t been sick even once. The boss would certainly come with the doctor from the health insurance company and would reproach his parents for their lazy son.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 6)

Here, Gregor’s father speaks about how the boss will react to Gregor’s illness. After Gregor turns away the manager at the door, Mr. Samsa recounts that the boss will surely bring a doctor and will “reproach [the parents] for their lazy son” (Kafka, 1999, p. 6). While denouncing Gregor’s illness as work shirking, the father inwardly commends the boss’s “minion” (Gregor) for his diligence. When the manager unexpectedly visits the Samsa apartment, he discovers the door locked and departs, leaving Gregor’s family to worry about how he will respond. The boss’s ideological censure is triggered by Gregor’s illness and absence from work. The scene illustrates how the working class has been influenced by capitalist ideology: Gregor, who is now ill, is labeled as “lazy,” while the boss’s “minion” is idealized for loyalty and diligence. The worker’s precarious position, whose value is solely determined by his productivity, is highlighted by the contrast between Gregor’s health crisis and his father’s anxiety about the boss’s punishment.

The class dynamics in this passage are clarified by Marxist theory. Marx and Engels defined the bourgeoisie as owners of production and the proletariat as dispossessed laborers compelled to sell their work (1848, p. 54–60). Here, Gregor’s father adopts a bourgeois viewpoint. He has assimilated a capitalist value system that gauges human value by productivity by elevating the boss’s submissive “minion” and degrading Gregor as a “lazy son.” Marx’s criticism that capitalism produces a “phantom-objective” moral world in which individuals are evaluated solely on their output is reflected in this (Marx, 1867, p. 165 in *Capital*). Eagleton would note that the family’s perspective has been influenced by the ideology

of the ruling class; they view Gregor's illness as a moral failing rather than a human necessity (Eagleton, 1976, p. 75–77). Because the worker has internalized bourgeois values and now fears the manager's authority, even over the family, the situation dramatizes class consciousness in a distorted way. When Gregor becomes handicapped, he is publicly accused because the boss only valued his labor. This is a microcosm of Marx's capitalist class oppression: the employer punishes the worker by humiliating people around him, upholding the rule that a worker's social duty must always be fulfilled under capitalism.

Data 3:

“On the other hand, I must also say that we business people, luckily or unluckily, however one looks at it, very often simply have to overcome a slight indisposition for business reasons.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 13)

On the morning of Gregor's transformation, the manager visits the Samsas' apartment and says this. He firmly informs the family that after discovering the door barred and only hearing Gregor's distorted voice, “we business people... often simply have to overcome a slight indisposition for business reasons” (Kafka, 1999, p. 6). The manager has come to fire Gregor for not showing up, therefore this comment minimizes human frailty. He asserts that in order to fulfill business commitments, even illness must be put aside. The scene, which takes place in the living room and features the father apologizing and the mother fainting, demonstrates how the boss normalizes exploitation. Speaking on behalf of the bourgeois class, the manager claims that the demands of the company outweigh the health of the individual. His rhetoric, which emphasizes the ruling class's ability to define labor as before personal well-being, portrays illness as an undesirable excuse and normalizes the requirement that Gregor work despite his condition (“we business people... have to overcome a slight indisposition”).

This represents fundamental Marxist views on labor under capitalism. The manager's statements exemplify the capitalist philosophy that work (and profit) should always come first. Marx maintained that in capitalist society, the worker is “an appendage of the machine” (Marx & Engels, 1848, pp. 70-73) and is solely rewarded for production. Here, the management demonstrates reification of the worker by treating Gregor's illness as a “slight indisposition” to be endured rather than a human concern: Gregor is no longer a person but rather a tool of production, and every illness must be subservient to capital. Lukács would call this an extreme

kind of reification or "phantom-objectivity," in which human needs are obscured by the fetish of efficiency (Lukács, 1971, pp. 83-84). Ideologically, it demonstrates how the bourgeois class imposes its viewpoint on others: the boss speaks as if it were inevitable that business would never stop. Althusser's concept of ideology might be applied here: the manager acts as an agent of the capitalist system, instructing workers (and even their families) to view medical requirements through the prism of commercial demands. Thus, the phrase emphasizes class dominance: capitalists control even health policy in the interests of profit, strengthening Marx's critique of labor exploitation.

Data 4:

"He was in danger of losing his position, and because then his boss would badger his parents once again with the old demands." (Kafka, 1999, p. 13)

This line comes when Gregor considers the repercussions of missing work. After being late to work owing to his metamorphosis, Gregor considers, "He was in danger of losing his position, and because then his boss would badger his parents once again with the old demands" (Kafka, 1999, p. 13). The scenario depicts Gregor's mental monologue as he analyzes his family's debt to the boss; he is concerned that failing to keep his employment will allow the boss to hassle his parents about their overdue payments. The phrase emphasizes Gregor's vulnerability: unemployment looms as an existential threat, and even without it, the capitalist boss can use his leverage (family debt) against the entire household. This scene emphasizes class dominance: Gregor's worry is not only personal, but also of losing the only method by which his family can repay a bourgeois creditor. The word "old demands" refers to the father's earlier business debts, indicating how even past economic interactions keep the family trapped in capitalist servitude.

This sentence exemplifies Marxist ideas about economic exploitation through debt and dependency. According to Engels, capitalists frequently control workers through credit and debt as well as salaries. Here, the boss exploits the father's failed endeavor as leverage over Gregor's continuous labor: leaving his work means giving up his family's only chance of repaying creditors. Marx and Engels described the proletariat as individuals who must sell their labor to survive and frequently become indebted to the bourgeoisie, which is exactly Gregor's situation. His situation symbolizes class antagonism: the worker is caught between

economic need (paying off bourgeois loans) and the boss's power. Marx would claim the boss "torn away from the family its sentimental veil" (Engels, 1872) by reducing connections to money; certainly, Gregor's personal bonds are now centered on financial commitments. The "old demands" are a metaphor for capitalism's unavoidable load on workers - even after his metamorphosis, Gregor remains subject to the logic of capital. To summarize, the quote exemplifies how, in capitalist class relations, losing one's job results in not just personal destitution but also the collapse of the entire family's means, encapsulating Marx's description of the proletariat's precarious existence.

Data 5:

"Mr. Samsa... you are making serious troubles for your parents and neglecting your commercial duties in a truly unheard of manner. I am speaking here in the name of your parents and your employer." (Kafka, 1999, p. 14)

In this scene, the manager and the father confront Gregor about his recent actions. The manager harshly informs Gregor, "Mr. Samsa... you are making serious troubles for your parents and neglecting your commercial duties in a truly unheard-of manner. I am speaking in the name of your parents and your employer" (Kafka, 1999, p. 14). This public scolding, which occurs in front of Gregor's family when the manager requests to speak, brings together the interests of Gregor's employer and family. The manager accuses Gregor of endangering his parents' well-being by ignoring work, effectively holding him solely responsible for the family's loss. This demonstrates the capitalist requirement that the worker prioritize bourgeois profit over his own well-being: Gregor is blamed not as an individual with needs, but as the anchor of both family honor and commercial success. The supervisor speaks "in the name of" the family, implying that family responsibilities are subjugated beneath commercial considerations and viewing Gregor's work achievement as a source of family pride.

From a Marxist standpoint, this moment dramatizes class enforcement via ideology. It portrays the worker as a gear in the capitalist system, with no private space free of productivity constraints. According to Eagleton, capitalism portrays workers as instruments whose personal needs become irrelevant if production is at stake. The manager's scolding exemplifies this: Gregor's "commercial duties" trump even his familial ties. The line "making serious troubles for your parents" implies that Gregor's personal flaws are portrayed as social failures of the

working class, reflecting Marx's claim that under capitalism, family relations are reduced to money relations (Engels, 1884). Indeed, the manager's severe tone, which references both the enterprise and the family, demonstrates that bourgeois rules now govern even the patriarchal household. The scene emphasizes class antagonism by requiring Gregor's maximal production for the benefit of the firm (and using his parents' well-being as leverage). Individual and family needs are sacrificed in favor of capitalist goals. The manager's statement is a microcosm of how capitalism disciplined workers to serve bourgeois goals, which is compatible with Marxist theories of the economy's intrusive control over society.

Data 6:

“Your productivity has also been very unsatisfactory recently... There is no time of year for conducting no business, Mr. Samsa, and such a thing must never be.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 15)

This assertion was also made by the manager during his altercation with the Samsas. As the family begs for understanding of Gregor's condition, he insists, “Your productivity has also been very unsatisfactory recently... There is no time of year for conducting no business, Mr. Samsa, and such a thing must never be” (Kafka, 1999, p. 15). He vehemently opposes any excuse for reducing output; to him, work can never be paused. The scene remains in the living room, with Gregor's family present; the manager resumed his lecture following an intermission when Gregor's father collapsed. By claiming that "no time of year" justifies ceasing business, the manager basically declares that the capitalist corporation has no off-season - human factors such as illness or holidays are meaningless. This statement emphasizes the fetishization of labor: the management views productivity as an eternal imperative. Gregor is tacitly reduced to a machine that cannot stop; his emotional crises is discounted as a "unsatisfactory" drop in productivity. The requirement that Gregor work through any situation demonstrates the ruling class's belief that profit should never be compromised.

In Marxist words, this passage represents reification and the fetishization of labor. Marx observed that under capitalism, labor becomes an end in itself, with workers regarded only as producers (Marx, 1867, p. 678). The manager's speech is similar: he references abstract productivity statistics and prevents any pause in production. Lukács' concept of reification is relevant here: the manager speaks as if human demands have been "transformed into what

appear to be objective necessities" (Lukács, 1971, p. 85). Gregor's illness is immaterial to market demands; to the boss, Gregor is nothing more than an output unit. Furthermore, this incident demonstrates how capitalist ideology normalizes exploitation: by declaring that there is never a justification to close the business, the manager enforces an ideology of never-ending labor. Althusser would argue that the workplace and family have become ideological apparatuses for instilling in workers the capitalist value of perpetual productivity (Althusser, 1971). Thus, the remark expresses the Marxist perspective that capitalism forces workers to prioritize the company's profit, effectively hiding their human condition behind the fetish of endless work.

Data 7:

“At that point he’d started to work with a special intensity and from an assistant had become, almost overnight, a traveling salesman... which could be set out on the table at home in front of his astonished and delighted family.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 35)

This quote appears in a retrospective account of Gregor's career. An elder narrator describes Gregor's progress at work: “At that point he’d started to work with a special intensity and from an assistant had become, almost overnight, a traveling salesman... which could be set out on the table at home in front of his astonished and delighted family” (Kafka, 1999, p. 35). The setting is after Gregor's change, when the family remembers his previous life. It describes how Gregor "devoted everything" to reviving the family's faltering firm, working so hard that he immediately received a promotion. The phrase emphasizes Gregor's total devotion to capitalist labor: his "special intensity" is focused on translating his labor into concrete earnings (cash commissions), which he proudly presents to his family. His family's joy at seeing the money on the table demonstrates their view of his productivity as their salvation. In other words, Gregor's worth in the family is determined purely by the commodified outcome of his labor - the cash set out before them.

From a Marxist perspective, this demonstrates how labor is traded for capital and fetishized. Marx's thesis that under capitalism, human labor is realized through commodities, particularly money, as exemplified by the transformation of Gregor's effort into money ("cash commissions...set out on the table"; Marx, 1867, p. 50-52). The money on the table is treated almost as an independent reward, but its value is entirely due to Gregor's efforts (Marx, 1867).

Eagleton remarks that in capitalist society, such labor products become fetish items that mask the labor relations that underpin them (Eagleton, 1976, pp. 120-121). Here, the family's pleasure is dependent on seeing the money, not on Gregor. This is the family, a collective that formerly commanded a little amount of bourgeois wealth but today relies only on wage labor output. Gregor's sacrifice of personal ambition to serve his family's bourgeois recovery exemplifies class exploitation: he puts his own goals aside to act as the guarantor of his parents' standing. Marx would point out that the family's acceptance is mediated via money (a commodity), not human affection. Thus, the quote dramatizes class conflict by demonstrating how Gregor's identity and worth are subsumed under his role as producer; his individual desires are sacrificed to meet bourgeois economic needs, just as Marxist theory predicts in capitalist relations.

Data 8:

“The sister, who had taken on a job as a salesgirl, in the evening studied stenography and French, so as perhaps later to obtain a better position.” (Kafka, 1999, p. 54)

This line describes Gregor's sister Grete later in the story. The narrator notes that “The sister, who had taken on a job as a salesgirl, in the evening studied stenography and French, so as perhaps later to obtain a better position” (Kafka, 1999, p. 54). The setting is after Gregor has been concealed from the world; the family's funds are tight, and Grete has started working to help. This quote highlights Grete's dual effort: she works full-time while also educating herself to advance socially. The episode depicts a shift in the family's class dynamics: the daughter of a once bourgeois family is now training for lower-status work to support them. In Marxist terminology, Grete's acts embody the proletariat spirit of constant self-improvement merely for economic survival. Her willingness to “perhaps later obtain a better position” reflects the family's belief that even a worker's child must aspire to sell more of her labor (via skills like as stenography or French) in order to avoid poverty.

This shows the capitalist class's strain on labor. Engels stated that in industrial society, even mothers and children must work full-time to support their families (Engels, 1884, pp. 16-17). Grete's night studies in stenography and French reflect this: capitalism's ideology requires her to become more employable in the labor market. According to Marxist theory, her acts exemplify the false consciousness imposed by bourgeois society: she clings to bourgeois

education and talents in the hope of achieving upward mobility. This might also be interpreted as a form of reification by Lukács, who believed that individual effort (acquiring bourgeois cultural capital) could overcome class obstacles. In any case, her story demonstrates how the capitalist system forces even workers' children to see themselves primarily as labourers-in-training. In Marxist class terms, Grete now plays the role of a burgeoning proletarian, with her family's livelihood relying on selling her labor in the market, demonstrating how deeply capitalism ideology has infiltrated the family consciousness.

Data 9:

“She is right in a thousand ways,” said the father to himself (after Grete urges tossing out the “monster”). (Kafka, 1999, p. 68)

This thinking happens at a pivotal moment in the story, when Grete, Gregor's sister, demands that he be removed. The father secretly agrees, thinking, “She is right in a thousand ways” after Grete urges tossing out the “monster” (Kafka, 1999, p. 68). The backdrop is a family dispute in which Grete insists that Gregor, who is now fully grown, leave the residence. Though addressed privately, the father's agreement demonstrates a significant shift: he ceases protecting his son when Gregor is no longer able to work. This moment highlights his decision to prioritize "managerial logic" over parental attachment. Instead of safeguarding Gregor, the father supports his daughter's commercial rationale.

Engels remarked that under capitalism, family relationships diminish as economic reasons take precedence (Engels, 1872). Mr. Samsa's capitulation exemplifies that process. By thinking "She is right," he implicitly supports treating Gregor as an expendable worker rather than a suffering family member, emphasizing the supremacy of capitalist class principles over familial duty. According to Marxist critique, this is an example of internalized bourgeois conventions taking precedence over personal relationships. When Gregor stops being useful, the father no longer considers him a son, but rather a loss to the family's economic purpose. This exemplifies the Marxist view that in capitalism, even emotional ties are absorbed by market logic (Marx, 1867, pp. 53-58). The father's lack of compassion in supporting Grete's argument to remove Gregor reflects a class betrayal: the head of the household has become an agent of capitalist rationality, putting the family's future material stability ahead of love. Althusser would argue that the father, by his ideological position as family patriarch, now aids

capitalist interests by imposing the norm that even his own child must be abandoned if he fails to produce (Althusser, 1971). According to Lukács, the father has completely reified his son, viewing Gregor just as a "it" to be manipulated. This scene exemplifies class conflict since it exposes intraclass tension: Mr. Samsa, a former little capitalist, has adopted the views of the bourgeois oppressor class against a now-powerless member of the proletariat.

Data 10:

“We must try to get rid of it. We have tried what is humanly possible to take care of it... I say only that things cannot go on any longer in this way.” (Kafka, 1999, pp. 68)

Gregor's sister Grete announces that they must "get rid of" Gregor (now known as "it") because he has become unmanageable. Grete admits that they have done everything "humanly possible" to care for him, but asserts that "things cannot go on any longer in this way." The Samsa family has been dealing with Gregor's insect body for some time, and Grete's speech marks a turning point against him.

Grete's declaration represents a moment of severe class logic inside the family. She characterizes Gregor as an economic liability, "unprofitable" and no longer worth the family's time. From a Marxist standpoint, this speech exemplifies the dominance of capitalist imperatives even in the private realm. The family, now reduced to semi-proletarian status, band together to preserve what few resources they have. Marxist critics point out that in capitalism, an individual's value is equated with their output and "exchange value," and when they can no longer labor, they are effectively cast out. Grete literally reduced her sibling to a "it" that had to be discarded. This exemplifies Lukács' claim that capitalist consciousness reifies human relationships: Gregor's worth as a person has vanished, leaving only his capitalistic burdens to calculate. Eagleton would say that such rhetoric demonstrates ideology trumps compassion: Gregor has become totally a "thing" to be rid of. In short, Grete's speech crystallizes the household's internal class struggle: once the family's former provider stops to provide, the family's collective self-preservation (now acting as bourgeois managers of their limited resources) necessitates his removal.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study seeks to determine how Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* reflects the proletariat's class struggle and whether Gregor Samsa's transformation serves as a critique of capitalist exploitation. The analysis validates Kafka's narrative as a strong allegory of class conflict: Gregor's value is solely based on his labor, his identity collapses into economic utility, and his family's shifting sentiments reveal the broad reach of capitalist ideology. Early chapters depict his hatred toward an employer who wields complete control over his livelihood, whilst later sequences show how disease and disability reduce him to the role of burden. Kafka's work highlights the systemic oppression of wage-laborers, who are only valued based on production.

This research aims to examine how Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* depicts the proletariat's class struggle and whether Gregor Samsa's transformation serves as a critique of capitalist exploitation. The analysis confirms Kafka's narrative as a powerful allegory of class conflict: Gregor's worth is exclusively determined by his labor, his identity dissolves into economic function, and his family's changeable moods demonstrate the broad reach of capitalist ideology. Early chapters demonstrate his hate for a boss who has entire control over his livelihood, while later sequences reveal how disease and incapacity reduce him to the status

of burden. Kafka's work highlights the systemic oppression of wage workers, who are only valued based on their productivity.

Future research could include comparative examinations of class struggle in other Kafka works, as well as an examination of how contemporary texts rework Kafka's critique of modern working circumstances. Furthermore, additional research should look at the interconnections of class, gender, and race in Kafka's fiction to gain a more comprehensive understanding of systemic oppression. Such extensions would build on the current findings, illuminating Marxist analysis's long-term relevance in literary studies.

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