

**EXPLOITATION AS THE REAL IMPLIED THEME OF FRANZ KAFKA'S NOVELLA,
'THE METAMORPHOSIS'**

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Abstract

Deep analysis of the novella, *The Metamorphosis*, reveals that although it makes appeal to people of all ages on account of its interesting story, yet between the lines, it relates a very serious and somber account of the constant exploitation of the poor class at the hands of the upper class, under the Capitalist system. The researcher aimed at bringing to light that implied message of the story on which, in the eyes of the researchers, is based the real worth of the novella. The novella has very exquisitely demonstrated the physical and mental deterioration caused by the exploitative system of capitalism. The story shows the slaughtering of the central figure from the poor class, Gregor, and his innocent wishes, at the altar of Capitalism. Under the story of Gregor, who one night gets transformed into a bug, Kafka tells us that for Gregor, the point of concern is not his transformation into an insect but rather the fear of the consequent loss of his job and the consequent failure of earning bread and butter for himself and his family. The overriding concern of a person in the materialistic and extremely hostile anti-social environment ensuing from capitalism is to ensure one's mere survival against odds. The height of tragedy is reached when the family for which Gregor had been so much concerned could not put up with him in his jobless condition, as it hampered their own race for survival, and wished to get rid of him. The society becomes so much bereft of social values in Capitalism that it cannot afford to establish selfless social relationships. Kafka has been successful in showing that all this turmoil, moral degradation, social depravity, un-ending labour and fragile social bonding in the lives of individuals can be attributed to the existence of this hideous factor of exploitation, operative under Capitalism.

Key Terms: Exploitation, Capitalism, Marxism, Survival, Vicious circle

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Introduction

The Metamorphosis, is written by Franz Kafka, a reputed existentialist, whose stories are allegorical in nature and their themes are based on the stark realities of the modern-day life. The trend of expounding philosophies in literary form has been very effective and impressive. Just as *The Animal farm* is a literary piece by George Orwell, expounding the intricacies of Socialism and is an incisive and stark critique of socialism, *The Metamorphosis*, on the contrary, is a similar type of scorching criticism over Capitalism. Despite being fictional, Franz Kafka's works reflect the temperament, mode, values and tendencies of his age. The experience of his own miserable life finds a place in his various stories and novellas, says Julian Preece (2002: 13); one such example is *The Metamorphose is*, in the events of which, every present-day person finds a reflection of their own lives and related complexities. *The Metamorphosis* tells about the transformation of the major human character, Gregor, into a gigantic bug. Symbolically it offers different things, like the mechanical life of a person who remains busy monotonously in earning money and closes eyes to the constantly occurring changes and beauty of life; it also refers to the miseries of poor-class people, the class-conflict, the manipulation of the resources by the upper class and exploitation of the poor at the hands of the upper class.

Many critics have evaluated *The Metamorphosis* from various angles. This work is so pregnant with interpretations that various types of information can be deduced from it. The aim of this research is to explore inside this novella the exploitation of the labour class at the hands of the elite class, operative inside a capitalist system. A capitalist society always offers a tug-of-war scene between the upper and the lower classes. The upper class always sits at the helm of affairs and controls the means of production, due to which the lower class is manipulated and rendered to a position of mere working animals, serving the ends of the industrialists and the rich class. This study analyzes the story through the lens of Marxism, which is an umbrella term used for highlighting class struggle and the resultant exploitation in this novella. According to Marx, an environment of struggle exists in societies on constant basis, but it would lead to destruction and moral depravity when it would exist inside a capitalist society. In capitalism, the elite class is free to amass as much wealth as it likes, even at the cost of plundering the minimal and decent livelihood the poor. The luxurious life-style of the capitalists is dependent on the toils of the labour class and their manipulation. Consequently, no positive progress is possible in this system.

Literature Review

Exploitation, without being uniquely associated with capitalism, has remained concomitant to all class societies where one class was forced to produce and the other class expropriated. Karl Marx's work in 1800s, served as the womb, giving birth to the idea of exploitation of workers under capitalism. Reuten (2002) says that according to Karl Marx, capitalism is a system of "forced labor- no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement"

The historical institution of slavery used to extract labor forcefully through cruel masters; feudalism used to do it with explicit force via its agents like the landlord or his henchman; whereas, contrarily, in capitalism, the "dull compulsion of economic relations "enforces the extraction and "[d]irect force, outside economic conditions is used only ... exceptionally"(C, I, p. 737; III, pp. 791-92). Hence, Karl Marx declares the "transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation "as a "change of form" of the laborer's servitude (C, I, p. 715). Human history, according to him, is nothing short of a succession of slavery, because it has been a series of exploitative social systems that forced some of its population to produce for the few others without compensation.

"In the case of labor power, its value includes the necessities of life not only for the worker, but also for the worker's family, so as to ensure the future supply of labor power" (Holmstrom, 1977: p. 356). According to Reiman, J. (1987) an argument was put forward by G.A. Cohen, that a few capitalist societies offer more possibilities to its members from the poor class to make their escape good into the petite bourgeoisie, as compared to the workers who try to escape; but, then he puts forward reservations that the workers might not be ready to avail the opportunities to make escape into the petite bourgeoisie due to their personal deficiencies in the shape of the absence of skills or suitable attitudes. In case these deficiencies happen to be the result of capitalism itself, then it would be synonymous to bogging them down forcefully to hinder their escape. With these costs and risks of failure being linked to the alternative of escape, the alternative would stand rejected and thus the workers would be forced to stay where they were previously.

Nancy Holmstrom, takes the "features common to exploitation "to be "that it involves forced, surplus, and unpaid labor, the product of which is not under the producers' control" (1977:359). As all the means of production are owned by the capitalists, the workers are bound to do the forced unpaid labor for their capitalist bosses, if they choose to have a chance for making a living or a chance to survive at all. Unlike the force wielded by the masters in classical slavery, the force

wielded by capitalism is very elusive; despite being the highest exploitative lot, capitalists are normally prohibited to use physical violence against their workers.

The theory of exploitation presented by Marx makes it clear that since the capitalists thrive only and only upon the unpaid labor of the working class, the consequent clash is between diametrically opposed interests of the opposing classes and hence the gap between the two can never be bridged amicably. The only possibility of putting an end to the exploitation of the exploited class, according to Marx, is when workers themselves gain control over the means of production in their better interests.

Jesse Cohn says in the same context that “Kafka’s writings tend to insist on literal, the public, the everyday meaning of words” (2011: 300). The major character is a poor person who works from dawn till late at night. He is a kind of money-producing machine. Dan Mann in *The Capitalist Metamorphosis* states that “this capitalist society only values peoples’ ability to work.” According to this stance, human being has lost their very humanistic existence in capitalist society. Everyone is measured through the parameters of his/her income. The one having more money is more valued while one with zero income can have no respect at all. Marxism is against this philosophy. It states that the economy should not be in the hands of few aristocrats rather everyone should have equal chances of earning money.

Malcolm Warner (2007) calls *The Metamorphosis* an epitome of “alienation” (Warner 13). He opines that Gregor’s job has separated and limited him. He feels meaningless and a figure like “an insect” (13). This work has close relations to Kafka’s autobiography where he is in conflict with various aspects of his life i.e. “his health, his work, and the societal context in which he found himself” (13). Kafka feels disgusting in the society where he lives because he cannot cope with the standards of the society. The character of Gregor is vis-à-vis to Kafka’s personal life.

Salena Williams (2013) praises *The Metamorphosis* in a different way. For her, the transformation has very significant value. She says that “you must be mad to be normal” so one would easily come to know about the weakness of oneself and of others as well (Williams, 2013, p. 62). According to this view, if we take the transformation just a dream, Gregor must have come to know his own value, his aide to his family, the family’s love for him and the basic bond between them. It is clear from the story that the bond between them is only money. When money is there the bond exists, but if no money, then vice versa. The critic says that if a person is mad, he makes

logical statements out of his own logic. One can say that artificial madness is a parameter to judge one's own self and one's society as well.

Hamedreza Kohzadi et al.(2012) is of the view that this work needs to be studied as an allegory and not as a real one (Kohzadi 1600). The story of the work can be interpreted in various ways. According to the critic, this work depicts a lot of elements i.e. existentialist, Marxist and psychological ones. One of the dominant aspects in existentialism is alienation. The story starts in specific Kafkaesque style. The major character, Gregor Samsa, is transformed into a big beetle. In reality such a transformation is not possible so the story needs to be studied as an allegorical work. Gregor feels astonished and he does not feel the physical transformation but it is "no dream" (1601). This change results in a guilt, which arises from original sin. The story has some allusions to The Bible. As original sin is not in control of any human being, according to The Bible, in the same way, Gregor feels guilty as he has no control over this transformation. This guilt leads to existentialism.

The story has Freudian interpretation but in a different way. When Gregor's father drags him, he thinks that his father has some unlimited power and strength as he is dragging his gigantic body so easily. He considers his father as god and his family members as angels who helped god to throw "Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden" (Kohzadiet. Al 1602). The same was the case with Gregor –as he was limited to his room only – and deprived of liberty. He has no power to resist his father because now his father has some divine power and authority which are unquestionable. The critic explains division of human self by Freud: the conscious and the unconscious. He applies that on Gregor and concludes that "Gregor's feeling is rooted in the collapse of his nature between impersonal self (outside) and I (inner self)" (1603). Shortly, Gregor's transformation is more psychological than physical. The same happens to many people though everyone does not recognize it.

Kafka has a specific mind while creating his characters. His characters are away from the real world but the message they convey is at least in practice of every person. His characters need to be studied at deeper and allegorical levels. A. Kianena Kordela and Dimitris Vardoulakis (2011) state that the major characters (heroes) of Kafka are most of the time disoriented having no clue to reality, and bewilder that whether this would happen even in future or not (Kordela and Vardoulakis 30). These critics criticize Kafka's characterization on word level; connotatively, The

Metamorphosis is not more than a humorous story, but deeply, it has hidden treasure of interpretations.

Mahum Qureshi (2011) in a Marxist Interpretation of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* gives reference mainly to three aspects: allegorical level of the story, the text itself, and the biography of the author. She tries to cover many perspectives through this single article. She says that the major themes of the story are "alienated laborer and exercise of power through mind control (Qureshi 1). Further, she is of the opinion that human, when they are labors, are used like a part of a machine that helps to continue monotonous function in effective manner. Human being loses his very value of humanity. She says that it is true that laborers are given money for their services, but still it is a reality that they are deprived of their own manufactured things. This deprivation produces alienation. Further, she talks about the psychological aspects and calls *The Metamorphosis* as the separation of Gregor's self from his real being.

The Metamorphosis is a story of application of power where Gregor is the powerless on whom power and authority is practiced. She writes that "power cannot define itself without the powerless" and a character like Gregor was necessary for the completion of the story (3). From here onward, she deviates from her main topic. She discusses the techniques used in penning down the story like "magical realism", etc. She talks about minor literature as well. Next, she talks about the author –Franz Kafka. She explains political influences upon Kafka.

There are many answers for this single question that does this article cope the Marxist perspective of *The Metamorphosis* and that there is no need for further research on this topic? The first answer for this question is a big "No!" There are many reasons for this negation. There is a clear-cut gap in the topic and in the main body. The main body does not talk about Marxism but other aspects like psychological, existentialistic, and the technique of writing as well. She, also, does not focus on one point: jumping from one aspect of Marxism to another and at times explaining something from very different aspect. Her article does not stick to one target – rather she mixes the text, the author's biography, and the essence of the work. Though she talks about Marxism but she fails to focus on any single aspect and she gives no subtle arguments to prove her stance.

Azadeh Davachi (2009) points out, in the continuation of the same context, that Kafka applies existentialism to check the confused mind-set of human beings in the present world (Davachi 3). The critic in his article compares Kafka and Hedayat. He says that *The Metamorphosis* shows that most of our atrocities are due to very little love and caring in our families (3). Their consequences

are the break-up of relations. If the world is a suitable living place, it is because of the relation among human beings that they take great care of one another. He mentions Soren Kierkegaard as the first existentialist philosopher (4). Kierkegaard calls a person best to himself if he gets some superfluous time for recreational activities. Existentialism has a great effect on many philosophers, the German author Franz Kafka is one of them (2).

He creates “alienated characters” (2). These characters try to fight with the perplexity of the world and themselves (2). The critic’s view is that Marxism and existentialism develop the perspectives of “alienation” (2). There is a disastrous condition of Man in the contemporary times as He even does not belong to himself. This stance means that nowadays people are not living with or for themselves. They are not loyal to themselves. Modern people block the sources what can bring them greater happiness, they turn their faces from that facts of life and are too much materialistic in their approach. Rightly has the critic stated that they and their relations are hollower and shallower (2). In short, materialism is a threat to all human relations.

Most of the critics focus on the theme of alienation. Though, there are other interpretations as well but the alienation aspect is the dominant one. Another aspect that is more discussed is absurdity. Both of the things are too vivid and part of at least every person. Eliot Stegall (2008) discusses that his (Gregor) uncertainty is due to his not believing in “death” which is a thing not in control of any human being (Stegall 2). This perplexity causes him great pain. The pain “grows” till his “health” lose the resistance (2). In a capitalist system, a labor works more than his capacity to earn money and this does injustice to his own self. The critic further says that in “aristocratic” society a person does not work according to his needs and capacities rather he works to have status quo in society. For him fame and a rich person is everything while he forgets the true meaning in life (2). There are two characters, Gregor and Ivan – who the critic discusses in his article. Though the works and authors are different but the life history, presentation, and treatment of Gregor and Ivon are the same. So what is said about Gregor fits Ivan and vice versa. Further, they have the same “physical” atrocity, mental torture and spirituality decline (4). The change of them has an effect of extreme dehumanization and they shock everyone who intentionally or accidentally see them (4). According to the critic, Gregor needs to be sympathized with as he was working throughout his life to support his family before the metamorphosis. But whatever happened to him, he has neither control over it nor was this his choice (4). “Death” can be called an action for a new life but this is not the case with Gregor (5). His death is not a heroic one. No one is sad after him. His death is

good news for the family and a spring for Grete, Gregor's sister as she is going to marry now. The only hurdle in her marriage was the big beetle-Gregor, of whom she is now emancipated.

Richard A. Posner (1986) in his article replies to a professor named Prof. West. He says that Prof. West does not state the greatest story of *The Metamorphosis*. Posner narrates the transformation story of Gregor. He says: "within this grotesque and repulsive form, Gregor is unchanged" (Posner 1986). He acts and gets reaction that of an insect. The attitude of the family changes towards him, particularly of his father. On the other hand, Gregor was "dutiful, considerate, docile, and devoted to his parents and sister ..." (1437). He is not treated the same when he needed them to be. Posner states that "money" is the focus of the story. Further, we all share the same problem as Gregor is in, he says. To conclude, Gregor gets love and care from his family only when he is able to earn money.

The Metamorphosis is interpreted on many levels. There are some themes that are particularly mentioned by many critics. Arthur Krober (1983) is of the view that this story is not presented in real scenario but the purpose it conveys is perfect the same, as in the story, is the practice of current days (Krober 194). This means that the experiences of Kafka's Gregor are of the modern age as well. The story is real but not at word level rather beyond the word level. Further he says that we are declining though the society is gaining power, control, and authority and what we are losing are sympathy, humane feelings, and emotions (195). He argues that the language of Kafka is metaphorical and that is a plus point because everyone can interpret it on many levels as it has no peculiar meaning. His symbols, words, and narrative are too suggestive that is why it is new and fresh for every new research as we can say that the big beetle is just a "sign" that shows that how in this age of technology, a person's body would be transformed into various parts of machine- we are moving towards the most extreme level of inhumanity (196). This metaphoric commentary means that man will just be like a machine without any human wishes and desires.

These are the various critics who analyze *The Metamorphosis* from different perspectives. Only one of the critique is somewhat related to the thesis statement. Mahum's article is on Marxist elements in *The Metamorphosis* but she does not focus on Marxist points only; it is already explained in the earlier part. The research focus is mainly on Marxism and analyzes the story with two aspects of Marxism: class difference and exploitation of labor. There is not a single work written on the research's mentioned topic, hence, this will be a new addition to the overall criticism

of the story. This study covers the analysis of the story from two fixed areas which will make the story a firm claim against capitalism.

Exploitation of Labor

One should not misunderstand Marx. He is not against “development”. He wants progress but a positive one where no one suffers through the hands of others and all have the same opportunities of improvement. Slavery, a Marxist sense, is inevitable for social progress. It does not mean that there should be slavery so that the society moves forward, rather, this is a problem without a solution. In modern age, there are no more slaves in chains but they are controlled through their economy: income and wages.

Salome lee (2011) talks about Marx’s “racialized slavery” (Lee 1). There is strong connection in “racialized slavery” and “wage slavery” (1). To the slave-owner, slaves are not more than animals. He deals in slaves like dealing in horses. “If he loses his slave, he loses capital” (1). In capitalism, money decides whether a person is alive or not because a “worker is not recognized as a living laborer, but as a dead labor” (2). This death is not physical. It means that when one is not productive or cannot help others in any respect, one is no more than a dead person who is totally dependent on others. In short, a person who does not earn or work cannot be called a living being.

Raman Selden (1985) calls “Marxist criticism” as twentieth century phenomenon (Selden; 5, 82). He adds that a person cannot build his being consciously, rather ‘his social being determines his consciousness (5, 82). Philosophies interpret the world in different methods and manners; their focus is “to change it”. Marxism tries to put people back in “reverse gear”. People, in a capitalist society, are made to acknowledge that their ideology, culture, court system, and religious affairs were the product of “human and Divine reason” which should not be questioned (83).

Though this competition is from the beginning of the human history but the dilemma of exploitation of labor is the outcome of Industrial Revolution. This revolution has made people money-making machines. People are deprived of their humane feelings; they live and work monotonously like machines. Cottage industry lowered to zero because of industrialism. Now a worker or labor cannot sell his products to the customers directly. Jon Masin-Peters (2013) opines in the same context that a labor cannot gain the due value and money that he deserves of his own-made products as “the capitalist buys the commodities in order to create a product that will come out of the production process with a greater value” (Peters 5). This deprivation is of two kinds: one is when a labor works in a factory where he gets only wages and does not get a penny out of

the products that he manufactures, the other kind of deprivation is when a labor sells his products in lower prices. Further, capitalism takes as much labor as possible on lowest prices, Masin-Peter argues. Marx and suggests that the labor has no other choice except to sell their manufactured things because the “sale has become a question of life and death not only for him” (Marx 1942: p.39) but for all his family and future. If he does not sell, he will starve to death. This is the specific feature that “sufficiently differentiates capitalist society from all other existent form of social life” (8), Peters writes. On behalf of the above sayings of critics, one can say that capitalism is one of the inhuman systems that unluckily prevails in the present world.

In short, Marxism is the opposite of capitalism. The former focuses on the benefit and prosperity of the whole society while the latter only favors the few. Marxism seeks humanity and understands human weaknesses while capitalism brings nothing under consideration as Marxism. There is a vivid class struggle in every society where the labor class tries to get liberty from their owners and masters who try to keep them suppressed. Further, in every field there is exploitation of the labor class. In response to their day and night struggle in preparation of facilitative goods for the society, capitalism persists to keep them down. Labors are deprived of the due wages and respect that they deserve, because, in modern society, only those are valued and respected who earn huge amount of money. So, Marxism stands with such miserable people and fights against capitalism.

Analysis and Discussion

a) Exploitation of labor

The very start of the story shows that preparations of Gregor's transformation are completed. He loses organs that are meant only for human beings as he observes his body that his “abdomen divided up into rigid bow like sections” (3). This is the first clue he gets that he is no abler to perform the actions that a normal human being does because he has “sections” in his body instead of “organs”. He thinks that afterwards he cannot go and run after his business tasks. He does not worry about his transformation but about his job since “Samsa was a travelling salesman” (3). In this frame of body, he is unable to travel and earn something. He is aware that if he remains in the bed for even two or three days, no one can guarantee his job. There are strict rules and no one can go absent without a solid reason, so the thing that he is mostly distressed about is “because he was in danger of losing his position” (16). There is no relaxation for being absent from duty no matter how much in problem he is. This is the reason that he is unaware of his physical change and thinks about his “position” only. Just after few minutes that he lies in his bed, his manager comes and

gives him threat that if he does not open the door and reach to his place in time, his “position is not at all the most secure” (17). This is the last option with the family and the manager with which they can force Gregor to open the door.

As stated earlier that class struggle and exploitation of labor are inter-related, one can say that the earlier one is the cause and the latter one is the effect. To elaborate, when there is struggle between different social classes, then there occurs the exploitation of a lower class or the labor class. Labor is that part of our society that tends to build our society, and we are persistent to keep him suppressed and deteriorated. Though they work hard but they are not given due value and honor that they deserve. Every person, at least, who earns more than this labor class, he looks down upon the other class. Laszek Kolakowski says that production is the parameter for valuing a person in a capitalist society (trans. by Falla 495). This is the reason that they are exploited at each and every stage of life. The story of Gregor in the metamorphosis is the example of such exploitation. Gregor, the major character of the metamorphosis by Kafka, is a salesman who sells things by travelling. He is bored of his job. He thinks “what a demanding job I’ve chosen! Day in, day out on the road” (4). There seems to be no sports activity in his schedule. He says, “If I didn’t hold back for my parents’ sake, I would’ve quit ages ago” (5). This is just his dream that he cannot fulfil because he has “to pay off his parents’ debt to him (the manager)” (5). The manager gives no relaxation in duty hours. He thinks of the labors that they are above human weaknesses; “for him everyone was completely healthy but really lazy about work” (6). He thinks that the labors only pretend that they are ill. The labors are demanded to be on time and if they go late even a second, they are not given any relaxation and are welcomed with harsh words and unhuman attitude. That is the reason that Gregor is so conscious about time. He observes the window and says, “Already seven o’clock and still such a fog” (11). He watches the time again and again “because the office will open before seven o’clock” and he must be there before the opening time. At home, the only activity of Gregor is arrangement of his business. His mother says; “he sits with us at the table and reads the newspaper quietly or studies his travel schedules” (15). This is his life at home that he cannot enjoy even few moments with his family.

When a labor makes any single mistake, the owner forgets all of his goodness and he is labeled as lazy and every other weakness is related to him. In the story, the manager talks about Gregor’s performance; “Your (Gregor’s) has also been very unsatisfactory recently” (18). The manager does not seek every moment struggle and disrespects him in front of his family. Even if Gregor say

thousand times sorry for his being late or low performance, “no request of Gregor’s was of any use; no request would even be understood” (30). Once he commits any mistake, he loses the chance to be forgiven. The labor lights a lamp for the society but he himself cannot have any help out of it and remains in darkness all the time. Gregor’s condition is described as “the shine of the electric streetlights lay pale here and there on the ceiling and on the higher parts of the furniture, but underneath around Gregor it was dark” (33). Gregor is limited to his dark room while the outside world is bright. This also means that only Gregor’s life is in trouble, otherwise his family and his owners enjoy their lives, and only for him there is no cricket.

The treatment of the society and one’s owner compels a person to develop a negative psyche. He loses interest in everything like Gregor, who rejects the “favorite drink and which his sister has certainly placed there for that reason, did not appeal to him at all” (p. 34). This is the effect of hopelessness, when a person is dejected time and again then nothing good appeals to him and, at least, everything seems negative to him. His life is in such a tempest and “what a quiet life the family leads” (34). His family is happy as he works hard and earns money but the same family turns negative when he is no abler to earn money for them. He is a member of the family when he has money-making power. Due to his sweat and blood sacrifice, he is “able to provide such a life in a beautiful apartment like this for his parents and his sister” (34). It means that Gregor is used in the family just as a facility-provider; but when he left this work, he is thrown like a garbage. When the family throws him aside and treats him badly, he has no other option except to “keep calm and with the patience and greatest consideration for his family tolerate the troubles which in his present condition he was now forced to cause them” (36). He causes them trouble in a sense that now he is dependent upon them and cannot help them financially.

Gregor, who made them a respectable family and because of him all of them enjoy, he was entertained with food where “there were old half-rotten vegetables, bones from the evening meal, covered with a white sauce which had almost solidified” (38). The one-time benefactor of the family now becomes the miser of the family. Like a company owner, who gives wages to labors only to earn food and no extra facility, in the same way Gregor’s family gives him that much which is needed and “certainly they would not have wanted Gregor to starve to death” (40). As Gregor stands for every suppressed labor, so the above quotation means that the labor is allowed to live hand to mouth only.

Financial problems draw out every member of the family to fulfil its needs. Child labor is the best example of such problems where a kid of five, six, or seven years works out for a whole day to earn two or three hundred rupees and keep the kitchen alive. In the story, “his (Gregor) old mother now may be work for money” (46). At times, she was the princess of the home, but the misshapen of Gregor changes her into a labor. Gregor thinks about his sister; “Should his sister earn money, a girl who was still seventeen years old child” (46). This thought kills him emotionally that now his sister goes out of the house for work where hundreds of dangers are waiting for her. This is the real exploitation of the labor class.

Gregor tried to facilitate his family by every mean. He quits every rest and facility of the house for the purpose to have greater amount of money. He wants to fulfil some of the dreams about his sister but the transformation did not let him to make into practice his thoughts. He is sorry for the change but now he is helpless;

“When it came about talking about this need to earn money, at first Gregor went away from the door and threw himself on the cool leather sofe beside the door, for he was quite hot from shame and sorrow” (46). Now his dreams are only dreams and their realization is not possible. Gregor “had been accustomed to the room furnishings for a long time and in empty room would thus feel himself abandoned” (53). His dwelling alters all of his dreams and goals. This is the description of the room as well as the social world of Gregor where he lives.

He is physically and mentally devastated person who can act or think nothing good. Everything for him is fixed and scheduled. He cannot cross the limits that are set for him because he is a labor and in a capitalist society he has no value. So, he has a limited world. This is a kind of slavery imposed upon him by his capitalist society as Phillip McMichael writes: “Capitalism and modern slavery have often been associated with one another,” (McMichael 321). Both of them cages a labor in their clutches. There is a fantabulous quotation from the story:

Gregor realized that the lake of all immediate human contact, together with the monotonous life surrounded by the family over the course of these two months must have confused his understanding, because otherwise he couldn’t explain to himself that he in all seriousness could’ve been so keen to have him room emptied. Was he really eager to let the warm room, comfortably furnished with pieces he had inherited, be turn into a cavern in which he would, of course, then be able to crawl about in all directions without disturbance, but at the same time with a quick and complete forgetting of his human past as well? (54)

This is the most miserable condition of Gregor, because, before that, he was working to help his family, while now he himself needs help and cannot act out for the betterment of his family. His past taunts him again and again when he was young and was helping the family. Now everything has changed upside down and this change has taken all of his rest away from him. The sad accident increases responsibilities upon other family members. All of them try to settle the situations in their own ways. The mother advises the sister not to worry too much about family matters and that she should not do hard work, otherwise “she would strain herself” (53). But such struggle by the sister is inevitable now. Most of the times when a person is in problems, he loses consciousness and does not know how to deal the situation. Such is the case with Gregor as “in his listlessness he had no notion at all of any escape other than by running and had almost already forgotten that the walls were available to him” (63), he is perplexed what to do and what not. This is not the solution to shut eyes to the reality and bear it no matter how much harsh it is, because, the oppressor will have no mercy on the oppressed one until he resists.

As Gregor is not able to resist so “his father had decided to bombard him” (64). Once a person is dominated, he becomes an easy prey to other dangers. He thinks that his every struggle will result out in nothing. He considers himself in chains both physically and mentally. This was the case with Gregor when he “wanted to drag himself off, as if the unexpected and incredible pain would go away if he changed his position. But he felt as if he was nailed in place and lay stretched out completely confused in all his senses” (64). This is the condition of mental captivity where Gregor is physically free but still he thinks of himself to be in chains. In modern society, people, especially labors, are controlled psychologically in this way. His family did not help him and they did not think that “Gregor was a member of the family, something one should not treat as an enemy” (66). They rather worsened the last days of Gregor. He was “lying down in the darkness of his room, could see the entire family at the illuminated table and listen to their conversation,” (66). This means that he is totally isolated from the company of his family when he is transformed. Before the transformation, he spent very little time with his family as he would remain busy in his business. This is the bad luck of him that he finds very little chance to spend and enjoy with his family.

Poverty drags away every happiness and facility when it comes in a family. The jolly sphere of Gregor’s family shrinks down with the sad event. They abandon all luxurious things by and by, “various pieces of family jewelry... were sold” (69), though “they could not leave this apartment”

(69). All of the family members are in great trouble including the worker-woman. Gregor wants to change the behavior of the family towards him so he “positioned himself in a particularly filthy corner in order with this posture to make something of a protest” (72), but the sister “perceived the dirt as much as he did, but she had decided just to let it stay” (72). His protest now cannot help him. He is an obsolete thing for the family now, so, no one cares about him. Poor people feel no hesitation in doing any kind of job. They are fearless as well, because they have nothing to lose so they act out wholeheartedly without any delusion in their hearts. In the story, as the author says, “this old widow, who in her long life must have managed to survive the worst with the help of her bony frame, had no real horror of Gregor” (73). He was no more in human frame but a cockroach of which much thought is nauseastic to women but the old lady is habituated with such creatures. This also means that she is able to face any kind of worst situations as her experience of life is full of betterment, that’s why nothing like Gregor can irritate her.

She and Gregor, like other suppressed people, are kept in such tormented conditions that they neither continue to endure nor can put a full stop to it. Food is used as a symbol in the next quotation from the text; “Take a bit into his mouth, hold it there for hours, and generally spit it out again” (75). The exploited ones are compelled to live in this way, the way Gregor is now in. They live in the company of men like “forbidden women”. They are not allowed to mix with the outer world the way Gregor is jailed, “the common living room, the door to the living room stayed shut on many evenings” (76). Here Gregor is limited to his room only and his family does not want to have him in its company. This is the attitude with the exploited labors as well where elite people keep separate and degraded places for them. The labors are not treated on equality bases because they are considered inferior to those who are rich or landlords. At times they are not considered as that they are humans, rather they are measured with with the parameters that how much they have assets and bank-balance. The one having more wealth is placed the most noble and the most humane in a capitalist society.

Like many other people, Gregor has some wishes but they seem to him impossible to be fulfilled. Again “food” is used here which is symbolic for all the needs that a poor person has. Gregor utters with himself; “I really do have an appetite, Gregor said to himself sorrowfully, but not for these things” (78). It means that he is not content with the things that are already available to him because they are not of his choice and are forced upon him. He wishes the availability of the facilities that the upper class people enjoy. But he is not eligible for such enjoyment as “on his back and his

sides he carted around with him dust, threads, hair, and remnants of food” (79). This quotation is full of symbols where the author wants to convey both denotative and connotative meanings.

On one hand, he develops the plot, on the other hand, the story tickles with the aspect of exploitation of labor. The above excerpt means that his history, family, social upbraiding, class, and his physical appearance are not up to the level where he can join the company of high class people. That was the reason wherever he went, “no one paid him any attention” (80). Now he thinks about all the incidents where he is ignored. Though, the outer world treats him so badly but he was not expecting that from his own family. Like Gregor every labor is “accused of heartless indifference to the suffering propertyless classes, and of compromising with social injustice” (Lifshitz 19), writes Mikhail Lifshitz. His expectations shatter down when he becomes dependent on his family.

In the story, exploitation of labor is too vivid in the occasion of playing violin by the sister. The three lodgers consider themselves as from upper class as they pay to Gregor’s family. They are not interested in listening to the music, rather, they time and again try to “to tug at her dress and to indicate to her in this way that she might still come with her violin into his room” (81). They are interested in the physique of the sister that is why they remind her to go to their room and play over there. Shortly, it means that she is harassed during playing violin and this happens with labors all over the world.

Most of the times females and children become the victim of such harassment. When the high class people are not succeeded in their black deeds or not get their goals, they simply say ‘no’ to any further continuation of the activity as one of the lodgers announce that “I immediately cancel my room. I will, of course, pay nothing at all for the days which I have lived here” (83). This is the last option left with them because they know that these poor people can do nothing harmful to them. They just pretend that they have a creature like Gregor in their family with whom they do not want to stay. The family loses an income source due to Gregor’s interference. Gregor is a silent listener here because he knows that he is responsible for all this troublesome. He can act nothing positive even if he wants now. He wait for the outcome of the deterioration of which he is the cause; “He was certainly afraid that a general disaster would break over him at any moment, and he waited” (84). He is afraid of the authority, the father, and is waiting for the saddest consequences.

Gregor remained all the day long out for his business deals. There was bitter life out of home but his bad luck is that he never felt relaxed at home. Now this is the fate of other members of his family i.e. “When people have to work as hard as we all do; they cannot also tolerate this endless torment at home” (85). Though these are the words of Gregor’s family members as they all work now, but in general, it becomes very difficult to go on with job and family problems together. In the case of Gregor, he is not only a trouble for the family but a hurdle in their way of income as well. So, they are now bored of taking his care.

There comes a question that what is the net result of the whole life hard work? Its answer is in the words of Gregor that “at any rate he still saw that behind him nothing had changed” (88). The whole life of a labor goes into nothingness. Karl Marx (1859) is of the opinion that “wages must be equal to the product of labor. But in fact the opposite is true” (Marx 3). This is the reason that a labor cannot yield something great in his whole life struggle (Marx, 1859, pp. 299-302). Gregor dies, but up to his last breath, he wants the family to be happy and prosperous. The outcome of his love comes out into hatred and ignorance. Every labor dies with the same death, working to earn money for his family. The last scene of Gregor’s story is so pathetic where the family members do not even touch his body with their hands, rather, “poked Gregor’s body with the broom a considerable distance more to the side” (p. 91). Instead of mourning, they are happy that they have got rid of a troublesome thing. They forget that once he was their sweet brother and benefactor who sacrificed his rest and sports to feed them nicely. This is the end of Gregor as an exploited labor.

Modern capitalism has destroyed humanity and peace of mind. Now, one person tries to capture another and he does not even know about that. To summarize it in the words of Straus; “human power may be exchanged and utilized by converting man into a slave. Men had barely started to engage in exchange when they themselves were exchanged. The active became a passive whether he wanted that or not” (Straus 654). This means that development and competition blind our eyes to the very basic facts of life. Shift to lit review

Conclusion

This research study used the lens of Marxism for analyzing this novella. Fair competition is the soul of progress but the cruel struggle operative inside a capitalistic society is suffocating for the poor individuals that do not see a ray of hope for themselves, despite the fact that it is their work on which is built the edifice of the rich. Modern capitalism has destroyed humanity and peace of

mind. Gregor stands for every labor and a person who is kept suppressed. There was bitter life out of home but his bad luck is that he never felt relaxed at home. What is said of Gregor can be said of another such person as well, who leads hi/ hers life like him. He worked throughout his life to support his family and endures many hardships, which shows that every laborer faces many such problems when he earns a few pennies. The inhuman behavior of the owners and all other oppressive authorities is also portrayed who do not accept the illness or any other grave problem of laborers.

Under capitalism, the elite class is free to amass as much wealth as it likes, even at the cost of plundering the minimal and decent livelihood of the poor. The luxurious life-style of the capitalists is dependent on the toils of the labour class and their manipulation. When such is the case of the class struggle, then the elite class would never let the lower class to rise or change its status, because by doing so, the poor are likely to deprive the rich of their luxuries and subject them to hard work instead. So, the labour class is deliberately kept ignorant and kept busy on minimal wages, so that they can be kept under control. They are assigned such roles in society that despite hard work there is no chance of their gaining propriety and, therefore, there is no hope of their crossing their class boundaries. The poor are subjected to a donkey work of 12 to 16 hours daily; they can neither make any sense of the job assigned to them, nor become master of any specific skill. They earn for their masters and just get minimal share out of the profit they have made for their employers. The pricing authority is the capitalist class and the determinant of the working conditions also is the same capitalist class. The working class can neither object to the conditions nor refuse to work as they have no other option of earning and income open to them. They cannot afford to protest and miss their wages of the day to remain hungry. Consequently, no positive progress is possible in this system. As a result, the true spirit of a human society is lost and all the high values of life are replaced by materialistic values. In short, *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka is the best description of exploitation of labor where he laments over this negative aspect of modern society.

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