

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Alienation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Philip Roth's *The Breast*: A
Comparative Marxist Reading**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in English**

By

Umesh Subedi

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Alienation in Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* and Philip Roth’s *The Breast: A comparative Marxist Reading*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Umesh Subedi, has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

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Abstract

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* highlights the predicament of an alienated hero named Gregor Samsa who had to suffer in the hand of exploitative and dehumanizing system called institutionalized capitalism. By the same token, David Kepesh, in Philip Roth's *The Breast*, is a pathetic but assertive prey of wretched impact of capitalist ideology who chooses extreme life as a safe refuge in the descent of capitalistic void. Both the novels put forward alienated life of both the characters. In their power to tolerate alienated life, there is a kind of decent heroism and human greatness. In their power to suffer, there is a spirit of resistance. Since this spirit is darted against capitalism, their alienation is Marxist in nature.

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I. Introduction

The present research work aims at having comparative study of Marxist alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Roth's *The Breast*. The author of novella respectively portrays the protagonist Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* and David Kepesh in *The Breast* as an alienated man in the social, moral and institutional values and framework of bourgeois capitalistic society. Their alienation is generated out of capitalists' imposition on them to work within confinement, helplessness and their obligation to sell their self-potentiality for capitalist mode of production. The vision of human beings entrapped in a helpless world never leaves authors' writing and which is vividly presented in *The Metamorphosis* and *The Breast*.

In *The Metamorphosis* the main character Gregor Samsa, a salesman, wakes up being transformed into a giant insect. He is made unable to work by circumstances beyond his control. The result of the metamorphosis creates Gregor's status as an unproductive member of the capitalist system makes him insignificant and obsolete. Like Gregor, when David Kepesh, a professor of literature, awakes finds that he has metamorphosed into a six foot mammary gland, the existential question of identity as human being becomes painfully centered on his physical condition indicate the dehumanization of man in capitalist society. He is treated as bodily as other – an alienated person in his own society. Both texts uncover their desperate desire to find that the individuality, which most clearly represents the subject as a 'being' to the world, can affirm the possibility of an irreducible self depicts that they are alone.

Roth's text *The Breast* makes no attempt to disguise its indebtedness to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. A professor of comparative literature is familiar by trade with Gregor's transformation into a gigantic insect. David Kepesh concludes that he

has, with his own transformation “out- kafkaed Kafka” (Shostak318). As Roth remarked to Hemione Lee “my hero has to be in a state of vivid transformation or radical displacement” (Lee 182) Gregor and Kepesh feel an extremity of dislocation because their body is in catastrophe. The interest of the novellas lies in the conflict between sameness and otherness, I versus they- in exploring, that is, the definition and stability of identity. Kepesh’s acceptance that the problem of identity, is manifested in the personal pronoun having declared that “I am a breast”(15). ‘I’ the sign of subjectivity, has become an object, a thing defined by its materiality, and dismembered or excluded from the society means both are alienated and dehumanized. The authors, in both novellas, present a world in which the main characters are burdened with guilt; isolation and anxiety make a futile search for personal identity.

Alienation, in society, is to be withdrawn or detached as from one’s society – where the human being finds himself or herself as an isolated consciously. It has historical relationship with mode of production. Alienation as Robert Blauner characterizes as “a general syndrome made up of a number of objective conditions and subjective feeling states” which result from the interaction of the individual with his socio-technical environment. (Blauner15).

Basically, Alienation syndrome consists of powerlessness, meaninglessness and lack of intrinsic reward in labour. Powerlessness refers to “the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes or reinforcements he seeks” (Seeman 784).The feeling that one’s destiny is not under one’s own control but is determined by external agents, fate, luck or institutional arrangements. In this sense Powerlessness may relate to anything from the immediate job setting, which may involve production line

processes over which the worker literally has no control, to the broader economic and political processes of society, which the individual may perceive to be controlled by an “establishment” or “power elite” whose actions are beyond the influence of ordinary people.

In contrast to powerlessness, meaninglessness refers to an inability to perceive a coherent pattern of cause-effect relationships in the environment. This deprives the individual of minimum standards of clarity in decision making, so that it becomes difficult for him to organize his behaviour intelligently.

Absence of intrinsic reward in labor is an aspect of alienation which is “natural” for man to engage in labour as an act of creative self-expression, so that the wage labour, working for rewards external to the work process, is less than “truly human”. Alienation in this sense of estrangement from the “species” or the true self is particularly emphasized in the early writings of Marx.

So, man feels alienated under the bourgeois capitalist system. Man experiences fragmentation through the division of labour, mechanization, exploitation, miseries etc. The longing for unity with one’s self, with one’s kind, with nature from which he has alienated never comes to reality in bourgeois capitalist society. According to Philip J. Kain: “Alienation occurs when individuals engage in activity that gives rise to a product, result or institution that then escapes the control of the individuals involved” (Kain122). The results of human activity appear to take on an abstract life and dynamic of their own. They appear independent and autonomous, begin to turn upon these individuals and come to control, dominate and oppress them. Moreover, alienated individuals are either unaware of domination and oppression or at least do not understand how it arose. And which situation can be found in *The Metamorphosis* and *The Breast*.

This is why; this research will be analyzed in the light of Marxist perspective. Marxism analyzes everything within the framework of ideology. Ideology consists of certain definite forms of social consciousness (political, religious, ethical, aesthetic and so on), which is Marxism designates as “ideology”. The function of ideology, is to legitimate the power of ruling class in the society, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class.

Hence, Art itself is for Marxism the part of superstructure of society. It is part of a society’s ideology-an element in that complex structure of social perception which ensures that the situation in which one social class has power over the others is either seen by most members of the society as ‘natural’ or not seen at all. To understand literature, then, means understanding the total social process of which it is part. As the Russian Marxist critic Georgy Plekhanov put it: “The social mentality of an age is conditioned by that age’s social relations. This is no where quite as evident as in the history of art and literature” (7). Literary works are not mysteriously inspired, or explicable simply in terms of their authors’ psychology. They are forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world, and as such they have a relation to that dominant way of seeing the world which is the ‘social mentality’ or ‘ideology’ of an age. That ideology, in turn, is the product of the concrete social relations into which men enter at a particular time and place, it is the way those class- relations are experienced, legitimized and perpetuated. Moreover, men are not free to choose their social relations; they are constrained into them by material necessity – by nature and stage of development of their mode of economic production.

To understand literary text, Marxist reading does more than interpret their symbolism, study their literary history and add footnotes about sociological facts which enter into them. It is first of all to understand the complex, indirect relations

between those works and the ideological worlds they inhabit – relation which emerge not just in themes and preoccupations, but in style, rhythm, image quality and form. The precise relations between different classes in society and their relation to the mode of production, is analyzed.

However, both these novellas have received wide critical acclaim. Critics have observed *The Metamorphosis* and *The Breast* from different perspectives. About *The Metamorphosis* a conversation with Gustav Janouch, Franz Kafka has said, " *The Metamorphosis* is not a confession, although it – an indiscretion" (75). Though Kafka denies the personal overtones in the novella, it nevertheless is an overt expression of human situation in general.

Observing *The Metamorphosis*, Walfer H. Sokel gives his opinion:

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* conforms, in an almost exemplary manner to both aspects of the modernist assault on reader. The transformation of a human being into a giant specimen of vermin shocks and disgusts the reader the-initial event of the story could and has been used as a textbook case of modernist alienation effect. (27)

In that sense, *The Metamorphosis* stands as a specimen of modernist literature in which alienation of Gregor is expected by his transformation into vermin that deconstructs the conventional expectation of the reader in a radically new manner.

Furthermore, Nina Pelican Straus comments on the basis of gender role relations. She writes:

The Metamorphosis reflects a different image for a feminist; it is because the ambiguities of Kafka's language effect a tension between culturally sanctioned attitudes toward women and transforms these attitudes by presenting Grete and mother Samsa in the role of Gregor's

caretaker and feeders and then revealing their rebellion against these roles. (126)

At the deep level, the female characters contribute their role to highlight the condition of Gregor. On the other hand it suggests to a change in the nature of patriarchal power and authority. Kafka's characters suffer from uncertainties, unworthiness and futility and but never in harmonious mentality. In the words of Heinz Politzer:

Gregor is never offered and alternative to his fate. He is given neither a choice between good and evil nor a genuine opportunity to repent or atone for his absorption in the superficial realities of his existence. He is condemned without accusations and judgments and ultimately he remains in the dark without the reasons of his punishment. (79)

Kafka has recorded the predicament of modern man in this novel. The level of human suffering is at climax level.

On the other hand, for many critics, *The Breast* is flawed as literary work, a text that proves how immature, impotent and whimsical a character Kepesh depicts of early 1970s. About *The Breast* Louis Harap comments that "Roth's obsession with sex and his satirical proclivities are fused in *The Breast*" (143). It is, in a sense, a fine combination of sex and satire. Similarly, Mikkonen, Kai interprets *The Breast* from psychoanalytical perspective. He states, "The narrative implies that Kepesh entertains ideas about impotence, bisexuality, wish-fulfillment, childhood deprivation, madness, hallucination, oversensitive imagination, escapism, unconscious obsessions, and dreaming" (29). Roth's character is suffering from impotence, loneliness and destitute. Furthermore, Debra Shostak views that "*The Breast* deserves a second look because it challenges some of the most deeply held oppositions – human versus nonhuman, masculine versus feminine subject versus object, inside versus outside that

structure our thinking about the self” (317). To put simply, the novella exposes the parlous condition of the character, a man whose life is seemed to be split personality.

In this way, both novellas express the anxieties and alienation of 20th century man. Implicitly the writers have expressed their status. As a Jew Kafka was isolated from the German community in Prague but as a modern intellectual he was also alienated from his own Jewish heritage. Like Kafka, Roth is also a Jewish writer in America searching his Jewish identity.

However, the variety and power of novellas are debatable. They reject the orthodoxy of modernism by their humanistic concern for characters and the depiction of contemporary society. Their novellas are unique and typical in terms of style, characters, theme, form and meaning. In these novellas, the writers present their protagonists Gregor's and Kepesh's alienation as a revolutionary spirit ultimately to battle against capitalistic values. Gregor and Kepesh believe that the capitalistic values, which generated their alienation, can be dissolved only by their revolution against alienation itself.

In this way, this research work tries to carry out the cause and effect of character's alienation taking recourse to Marxist theory. So the issue chosen by the present researcher deserves research work. In order to prove above mentioned hypothesis, the present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction to the research elaborated on the subsequent chapters; it gives brief outline to hypothesis, statement of problem, methodology, critical review of literature and claims why it is researchable. The second chapter briefly explains what Marxist alienation is. It mainly highlights the alienation of wage labour in capitalistic society. On the basis of theoretical modality developed in the second chapter, the third chapter presents the textual analysis to prove the hypothesis. The

fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research work. It concludes the explanation and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters. It shows how Kafka and Roth apply the Marxist elements in these novellas and visualize the predicament of proletariat in the bourgeois capitalistic society. This, on the whole, indicates how the wage labour gets him alienated how he tries to defy it.

II. Methodology

Marxist Criticism

Marxist criticism, in its diverse forms, grounds its theory and practice on the economic and cultural theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The three basic points that Marx has raised are: the material production of the society largely determines the evolving history of humanity, of the social relations, of its institutions, and of its ways of thinking, the second human consciousness is constituted by an ideology-that is the beliefs, values ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by recourse to which they explain, what they take to be reality, and the third historical changes in the fundamental mode of material production effect changes in the class structure of a society which establishes dominant and subordinate classes in each era that engage in a struggle for economic, political and social advantage.

Hence, The Marxist literary criticism is best expressed in their works like *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx brings forth a model of history in which economic and political conditions determine social conditions. In the words of Marx the product of ideas, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life.

Marxist criticism, in this sense, a type of criticism in which literary texts are viewed as the product of work and whose practitioners emphasize the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate and even challenge the prevailing social order. In the light of the rapid reform of Soviet- style communism in the former USSR and through out Eastern Europe, one might suppose that Marxist literary criticism would have become anachronism in a world turning toward market capitalism. In fact,

however, Marxist criticism has not disappeared. It is, after all, a phenomenon distinct from Soviet and Eastern European communism. Marxist literary analysis originated nearly eighty years before the Bolshevik revolution. Furthermore, since the 1940s, the approach has thrived mainly in the west-not as a form of communist propaganda rather as a form of critique “a discourse for interrogating all societies and their texts in terms of certain specific issues” (Bedford 245). Those issues including race, class and the attitudes shared within a given culture- are as timely as ever not only in contemporary Russia but also in the United states.

Marxist criticism may even have been strengthened by the collapse of Soviet-style communism. At one time, few self-respecting Anglo-American journals would use Marxist terms or models, however, illuminating to analyze western issues or problems.

To analyze the issues or problems, according to Marxist critic Pierre Machery, “the text from its own silences by coaxing it into giving up its true, latent, or hidden meaning” (245). Marxist critics, however, do not seek to unearth “hidden” meanings in texts, for that they see silences as evidence of what the text fails to say, what the text cannot say because of its particular ideology. Rather than viewing texts as repositories for hidden meanings, they view texts as material products to be understood in broadly historical terms.

In short, literary works are viewed as products of work bounded by certain ideology. Because “ideology...signifies the way men live out their roles in class-society, the values, ideas and images which tie them to their social functions and so prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole” (Eagleton15).

Marxist critics have examined the way in which literary works to identifiable work of their own-work that usually enforces and reinforces the prevailing ideology, the

network of conventions, values and opinions to which the majority of people uncritically subscribe.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels discussed the relationship the arts politics and basic economic reality in terms of a general social theory. Economics they argued provides the base or the infrastructure of society, from which a superstructure consisting of law, politics, philosophy, religion and art emerges. Although, Marx later modified his view of the interplay between 'base and superstructure' admitting that changes in economics may not be reflected by immediate changes in ethics or literature and that gaps sometimes open up between economic forms and those produced by the creative mind, he retained his emphasis on economics and its relationship to super structural elements of society.

However, Marx and Engels believed the alienation of the worker in industrialized, capitalist societies had grave consequences for the 'arts'. Mechanized and assembly line production not only resulted in mass produced, identical products bearing no relation to the people who produced them, but also to reify those producers. Marx and Engels wondered how such workers could possibly be expected to recognize, produce or even consume things of beauty. And they worried that the shortage of consumers would result in a shortage of producers, especially in an age in which production (even of literature) meant mass production.

Central to Marxism and Marxist literary criticism was and is the following materialist insight: super structural elements such as art owe their existence to consciousness, but consciousness is the product rather than the source of social forms and economic conditions. Bertolt Brecht argues that art to be viewed as a field of production, not as a container of content. Antonio Gramsci, who discussed the relationship between ideology and hegemony, the pervasive system of assumptions

and values, that shapes the perception of reality for people in a given culture. Like Gramsci, Louis Althusser viewed literary works primarily in terms of their relationship to ideology, the function of which, he argued, is to re (produce) the existing relations of production in a given society and, hence, to ensure that the proletariat remains-subordinate to the dominant class. Althusser conceded that “working class people have some freedom to struggle against ideology” (Bedford250). That ideology was riven with contradictions that works of literature sometimes expose and that literature like all social forms has some degree of autonomy. But he followed Marx and Gramsci in suggesting that literature must be seen in relation to ideology.

Pierre Machery, who in *A Theory of Literary Production* developed Althusser’s concept of the relationship between literature and ideology, a realistic novelist, he argues, attempts to produce a unified, coherent text, but instead ends up producing a work containing lapses, omissions, and gaps because within any ideology there are subjects that cannot be covered, things that cannot be said, contradictory.

In *Criticism and Ideology* Terry Eagleton proposed an elaborate theory about how history- in the form of general, authorial, and aesthetic ideology- enters texts, which in turn may revivify, open up, or critique those same ideologies, setting in motion a process that may alter history. He showed how texts by the writers address conflicts at the heart of the ideologies behind them: conflicts between morality and individualism, individualism and social organism and utilitarianism.

On the other hand, the Hungarian thinker Georg Lukacs, the most widely influential of Marxist critics, represents a flexible view of the role of ideology. He proposed that each great work of literature creates “its own world” which is unique and seemingly distinct form “everyday reality”. But realism in the novel:

By bringing to life the greatest possible richness of the objective conditions of life and by creating 'typical' characters who manifest to an extreme the essential tendencies and determinants of their epoch, succeed- often in opposition to (the author's) own conscious: ideology. (149)

In producing a fictional world which is a reflection life in the greatest concreteness and clarity and with all its motivating contradiction that is, the fictional world of such writers accord with the Marxist conception of the real world as constituted by class conflict, economic and social contradictions and the alienation of the individual under capitalism

Concept of Alienation

Marxism today has been capable of influencing the whole world by furnishing strong ideological basis for political movements as well as for analyzing the contemporary society. In society, Man is a communal being. The community requires to him for the sake of flourishing out a free individual. Individual who behaves as if s/he was independent is in real fact conditioned by the whole social development but also by language, tradition, cultural, upbringing etc his personality is conditioned and determined by quite definite social relationship.

As Marx states:

It is not only the material of my activity such as language itself which the thinker uses- which is given to me as a social product. My own existence is a social activity. For this reason, what I myself produce I produce of society, and with the consciousness of acting as a social being. (130)

Hence, the essence is the social nature of individual. His/her existence lies in the social interaction between individual and society. It determines the person's personality. In this sense man and society are co-related aspects of the society. However, man is an individual but represents the society, too.

To put simply, man and society interact for the real existence. Meanwhile labour is away through which he interacts with the society. Therefore, the man is as the result of his own labour. It is an act of self-creation. Besides, man makes his activity itself an object of his will and consciousnesses a creative labour. As a result, man proves himself as species being in his work- labour is conceived as whole, as species nature.

But when labour is destructive, not creative, undertaken under coercion, not as free play of force, not sprouting man's physical and intellectual potential, when labour is divided, then labour is denial of its own principle, it becomes alienated labour. Then alienated centered on the effects of the division of labour. David Levy provides the following characteristic quotation from J. B. Say:

A man, whose whole life is devoted to the execution of a single operation, will most assuredly acquire the faculty of executing it better and quicker than others, but he will, at the same, be rendered less fit for every other occupation, corporeal or intellectual, his other faculties will be gradually blunted or extinguished, and the man, as an individual will degenerate in consequence. (38)

A man as a labour when works in a certain institution, will degenerate his potentialities, strength and his interest because within some limits he will accept as the premises of his behaviour orders and instructions supplied to him by the organization. From this analysis, it follows that Marx was at least partially justified in

contending that the employee's labour is "not voluntary, but coerced, it is forced labour" (Manuscript 111). For if coercion occurs, as F.A. Hayek puts it, when "one man's actions are made to serve another man's will" or when "the essential data of an individual's action" are controlled by another then wage labour is forced labour (Hayek 133).

Therefore, labour gets himself alienated and loses the principle of man. In the words of Philip J. Cain "Marxist alienation loss is based on the loss of human value in the process of dehumanizing labour" (449). Furthermore, for Marx, loss takes place in the reality of capital's production then loss refers to an estrangement. So man loses his unity. As per Terry Eagleton: "In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukacs follows Hegel in seeing the novel as the 'bourgeois epic'...unlike its classical counterpart reveals the homelessness and alienation of man in modern society"(25). He further elaborates: "the novel arises when that harmonious integration of man and his world is shattered; the hero of fiction is now in search of a totality, estranged from a world either too large or too narrow to give shape to his desires" (25-26). In short, in a society, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the 'alienation'.

Thus, division of labour "not only destroyed unity: by introducing inequality among the various occupations it created and reinforced social inequality. Labour was not, and still is not divided up into equal parts, but is divided for the profit of the stronger and the disadvantage of the weaker" States Ernst Fischer (Marx in his words 37). Such kind of division of labour creates class in society – haves and have not, bourgeoisies and proletariats. This is why, in Marx's word "Private property is therefore the product, the necessary result of alienated labour" (Manuscript 105-106)). Consequently, Marx argues individuals must labour upon the material world; they must transform it into products that can satisfy their needs. In doing so, workers

objectify themselves in their products. They pour their lives into them. Despite that the products is the objectification, the manifestation, the expression of the worker's powers, capacities and ideas workers do not control their products- their products do not belong to them then arose alienation, labour is alienated. The more the workers produce the poorer they become and the richer this independent, autonomous realm of products becomes. And thus, the workers "come to be dominated by these products that they very definitely need but do not control" (Marx 74).

And when labour is alienated the workers do not even control their own activity in the process of production these products. The work is not voluntary, but coerced. It is not work to directly satisfy the needs or serve the aims of the workers themselves. Kain views that "In capitalist society, labour power is reduced to a commodity; it is bought and sold on the market like any other commodity" (130) The workers' activities belong to, are controlled by, and produce a product for another. And thus the worker in itself is not satisfying- it is only engaged in as a means to gain a wage.

These two form of alienation, alienation from the product and alienation in the process of production, produce alienation from the species. This, for Marx, is the key form of alienation. To say that workers are alienated from the species is to say that they are unable to work for the benefit of the species. If they do not control their own activity and if they do not control their product, they will hardly be able to direct these for the benefit of the species. Moreover, when they cannot control their product or their activity, then individuals will get benefit in opposition to the rest of the species. Their product will benefit the owner of the product-the capitalist. And their activity will gain them a wage "their work becomes a more means to serve the particular interests of individuals as a whole" (Marx 276). Alienation as a normative concept, as

an instrument for criticizing the established state of affairs in the light of some standard based on human nature, natural law or moral principle. Moreover Marx and Marxian theorists insisted upon alienation as an objective condition quite independent of individual consciousness – hence, one can be alienated at work irrespective of one’s feelings about the work experience. So that alienation is, in social sciences, the state of feeling estranged or separated from one’s milieu, products of work, or self.

The labour is only as a escape-goat to fulfill others’ certain interest though the object labour is, the objectification of man’s species-life for he duplicates himself not only as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore sees himself in a world he has created. But in tearing away from man the object of his production, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his species-life.

Thus, alienated labour turns the life of man into alien being, and into a means for his individual existence. It alienates from man his won body, external nature, his mental life and his human life. Furthermore, men’s alienation from his species life alienates man from other man. Marx remarks that “what is true of man’s relationship to his work to the work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationships to other men”(Manuscripts 103).

Now it is needless to say that, alienation is the root cause of human being’s suffering. Alienation of labour ultimately dehumanizes man. It dismisses man as an individual, makes physically weak, mentally confused and mystified, isolated and virtually powerless. It splits unity of man. Man loses his human being ness, product, productive activity, self etc. Thus, alienation itself results from the loss of individuality in the workplace and the community. When man has become aware of his loss, of his alienation, as a universal nonhuman situation, it will be possible for him to proceed to a radical transformation of his situation by a revolution.

Hence, to emancipate from alienated labour, there must be creative labour. One must have freedom to work as his willing and interest. As per Marx in *The communist Manifesto*: “The free development of each is the condition of the development of all” (33). In the place of old bourgeois society with its classes and its class antagonisms, there will be an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. Such free development of individual is possible in socialism only. That is why, the revolution for socialism is necessary to emancipate human beings from every suffering. No doubt, labour is the highest human activity. As Philip J. Kain concludes “It transforms, develops, and realizes the external world as well as the power, capacities, and needs of the human species”. Otherwise he further says “if labour is alienated it creates the greatest slavery and oppression (127).

In this way, as per Marxian theorists, essentially man is free, but the freedom that constituted his nature could only achieve fulfillment through a process of struggle of overcoming obstacles that were themselves the expression of his own activity, it is in this sense Hegel claimed that spirit was “at war with itself” so “it has to overcome itself as its most formidable obstacle” (62). In concrete terms, this meant that historical advance did not proceed through a series of smooth transitions. Once the potentialities of a particular society had been realized in the certain mode of life, its historical role was over, its members became aware of its inadequacies and the laws and institutions they had previously accepted unquestioningly were now experienced as fetters, inhibiting further development and no longer reflecting their deepest aspirations. Thus, each phase of historical process could be said to contain the seeds of its own destruction and to ‘negate’ itself, the consequence was the emergence of a fresh society, representing another stage in a progression whose final outcome was the

formation of a rationally ordered community with which each citizen could consciously identify himself and in which therefore no longer exist any sense of alienation.

III. Textual Analysis

Alienation in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Roth's *The Breast*

Alienation as a widespread problematic under the system called capitalism is equally traceable in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and Philip Roth's *The Breast*. In Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* the central character Gregor Samsa undergoes a metamorphosis. An aspiring and enthusiastic Gregor Samsa was involved in the profession called salesman. As an employee with remarkable punctuality and commitment to his salesmanship, Gregor expects a lot from the capitalistic system to which he was existentially and economically attached. A sole member to shoulder any kind of family responsibility; Gregor was seriously responsible in his family too. Since his family, including his sister and parents, heavily depend upon him, Gregor's anticipation from the system called capitalism was formidable. He not only thought about brightening his life but the lives of his other family members as well. Instead, the society too expects a lot from Gregor. Gregor was, in time to come, simply at a loss to assist his sister in getting trained in music classes. With meagre wage Gregor did his level best to satisfy anticipations aplenty. Utterly unable to satisfy these anticipations and obligations, Gregor surrenders to his own aspiring self. As a consequence, Gregor, one night, finds himself changed into a monstrous insect. The root cause behind Gregor's metamorphosis is his failure and inability to present himself in keeping with demands of capitalistic society. The capitalistic system, the highly bureaucratized administration and institutionalization of capitalistic organization collectively demands individuals to present themselves in consonance with the demands and expectations of the system. When an individual is compelled to yield to the denuding and dehumanizing impact of such a highly institutionalized system, what can he or she do than getting alienated. Gregor undergoes

metamorphosis in the form of an insect owing to his alienation resulting from the failure of his life to measure up to the expectations entertained by the capitalist.

In Philip Roth's *The Breast* the main character named Mr. David Kepesh suddenly finds himself changed into a breast. His transformation into breast cuts him off from the social standard of normality. Those who treat him and take care of him tell him that he is none other than a lump of breast. He denies this bitter and new fact. After Kepesh's metamorphosis into a breast, he reacts in a language of odd sensations and perverted sexuality. This metamorphosis of Kepesh intensifies his perverted sexual desire to fuck on the cunt of his former sex-partner Claire with his recently swollen nipple. Prior to his metamorphosis, Kepesh is obsessively involved in a mad game of experimenting with perverted sexuality. Even after his metamorphosis his intense desire to fuck Claire with his swollen breast persisted relentlessly. Having been a man well-versed in modernist literature and scholarship, Mr. Kepesh failed to explore that kind of his sexual nature which is in keeping with a standard of sexuality set up by capitalism. Capitalism is guilty of commoditizing sexuality. The system treats sexuality just as goods. Sexuality is denuded of its innocence and natural charm, which is fruitful to the enrichment of human life and existence. Sexuality is so exploited, and sex organs are so sensual that even non-sexual organs are sexualized. Individuals are simply judged on the basis of how much their sexual organs are sexualized. Similarly individuals under capitalism are encouraged to exploit their sexuality to that level which marks the highest level of commoditization and consumption of sexuality as commodity. Kepesh puts himself on the path of exploring and experimenting an unknown corner of the territory of sex-gratification. The perverted standard of commoditized sex established by the capitalist system is too high for Kepesh to reach. Kepesh tried his utmost to reach that

tormenting level of perverted and commoditized sexuality. But his attempt did not turn out to be fruitful. In the marathon race of sexual commoditization and hyper experimentation with sexuality, Kepesh miserably lagged behind. He found himself backward in coming forward actively to grasp the lofty fruit of commoditized sexuality. At his failed attempt to measure up to the expectation of the history of capitalist sexuality, he felt estranged and alienated. In this way Kepesh's alienation emerges.

Upon closer analysis, the researcher has noticed a commonality of problematic called alienated in the lives of both character Gregor and Kepesh. Both Gregor and Kepesh undergo metamorphosis. Both fell prey to the alienation resulting from the centralization of power in institutions under capitalism. Gregor was so low paid that he declined to live that kind of life rigorously demanded by socio-historic-economic climate of the time. For the beastly and degraded of full of Gregor from his decent human self, the oppressive, dehumanizing and institutionalizing forces of capitalism are directly responsible. By the same token, Kepesh in *The Breast*, fell victims to alienation resulting from his failed attempt to follow on the footsteps of perverted sexual neurosis. In Philip Roth's *The Breast* Kepesh is entangled in a maelstrom of sexual depravity, impotence, obsessive onrush of uncertainty of existence, insecurity of individual non-conformist life and bizarre experience of bisexuality. Because Kepesh was afflicted with all these set-backs and oddities, he can't come in terms with the way he is expected. But here a query arises- who is responsible for the eruption of all those queer oddities and aberrations? The short-cut answer is capitalistic ideology.

Having foregrounded the problematic of alienation developing in parallel in both the novels, the researcher enumerates some of the relevant textual elements to reinforce the proposed hypothesis.

Kafka's protagonist in *The Metamorphosis* is an employee in one of the capitalist organizations. He is a salesman. He feels like a cog in a machine in his daily work. He felt coerced to work in this domineering and threatening circumstance. His job of salesman creates extreme nausea and exasperation in him. He is totally dissatisfied with the institution he is involved as an employee. The following citation from the text *The Metamorphosis* is illustrative of the afore-mentioned claim.

Oh God, he thought, what an exhausting job I've picked on! Traveling about day in, day out. It's much more irritating work than doing the actual business in the office, and on top of that there's the trouble of constant traveling, of worrying about train connection, the bed and irregular meals casual acquaintances that are always new and never become intimate fiends. Let me just try that with my chief; I'd be sacked on the spot. Anyhow, that might be quite a good thing for me, who can tell." If I did not have to hold my hand because of my parents I'd have given notice long ago, I'd have gone to the chief and told him exactly what I think of him. (4)

Gregor Samsa was working as a salesman under the constant threat of being dismissed from his occupation. His occupation was at his boss's mercies, inclinations and whims. Haunted constantly by the fear of being dismissed from his job, moreover he lived constantly with an utmost abomination to the work he had been doing. That he was extremely dissatisfied with the job he had been doing is obviously clear from the above-mentioned abstract. So it is evident that the root cause behind Gregor

Samsa's extreme exhaustion resulting from his involvement in work is purely economic, institutional and administrative pressure.

Similarly the main character Kepesh is always equally disenchanted and disillusioned with his profession of teaching. He teaches literature in University College. He is fed-up with what he teaches in University. He, like Kafka's Gregor, feels terribly alienated from the occupation of teaching and he is doomed to do that. He realized that giving continuity to the profession he does mean robbing oneself of one's own potential talent for exploring different dimensions of self and subjectivity. The following citation from the text *The Breast* exemplifies the fear-stricken predicament of Kepesh.

I fear a repetition of my experience with Arthur Schonbrunn; it is not irrepressible laughter I'm somebody with a new idea of how I should go about living this life. What I am afraid of now is that a visitor will arrive who will tell me that I am out of my mind to lie here in a hammock in this state, being a good brave fellow about it all, listening to records, talking to my analyst, and having thirty minutes per day of some well-bread, well-behaved school teacher is idea of hot sex. (106)

In *The Breast* Philip Roth's protagonist Kepesh entertains a terrific monotony and sterile detachment to his professions of teaching. He simply regards literature as a commoditized by-product of capitalism. A kind of terrific burden to continue teaching literature has looted his spontaneous longing for natural freedom and right. The academic institution developed under capitalism expects Kepesh to present himself in a mechanical and robotic way, but Kepesh declines to present himself in this way. As a result, Kepesh fell prey victim to fatal monotony. Both Gregor of *The Metamorphosis* and Kepesh of *The Breast* happened to meet the monotonous terror

with their two different professions. The institutional constraints and harrowing work conditions are largely responsible for the psychic disintegration of them. In *The Metamorphosis* Gregor Samsa is a young man who worked in a capitalist institution. There was tight professional ethics. Any delay to reach in office, and any stoppage in punctuality means a terrific fear of getting a sack. Besides managing a provision for self-survival, Gregor had to create equally provision for his sister and parents too. His parents, his sister and he himself were dependent upon his income. He had been shouldering onerous economic burden. As a responsible youth with an utmost dedication and determination, he had to present himself in accordance with the demand of society. His parents were chronic invalid. Their chronic illness created further economic stress on his limited income of Gregor. Despite that Samsa is proud of keeping his parents and sister on such a nice and comfortable flat. As he expected by social obligations and social standard, he succeeded in living that kind of life. Even amidst such a nightmarish working condition troubled by a fear of getting a sack, he managed to a decent and comfortable living condition. The following extract from the text helps to elucidate Gregor's pride in his occupational success.

But there was the same silence all around, although the flat was certainly not empty of occupants; what a quiet life our family has been leading, said Gregor to himself, and as he sat there motionless staring into the darkness he felt great pride in the fact that he had been able to provide such a fine flat. But what if all the quiet, the comfort, the contentment were now to end in horror? To keep himself from being lost in such thoughts Gregor took refuge in movement and crawled up and down the room. (16)

Gregor asserted an utmost pride in the work he had been doing. He feels successful in taking an apartment to keep his parents and family members. Moreover, he also feels proud of running that kind of lives which a man is expected to live. Despite the pervasive fear of dismissal and countless profession constraints Gregor left no stone unturned in coming in terms with social life standardized by capitalism.

In addition to this professional plight and personal pride of Gregor Samsa, he appears to be that kind of man to whom life is work and work is life. This conviction of Gregor betokens a fact that capitalist doctrine of life and work had penetrated every core and corpus of Gregor. It also refers to how much ready he was to succumb to the way capitalism formidably coerces individual to live. The following paragraph, which is cited from Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, is illustrative of Gregor's immersion in the capitalist doctrine of life and work.

Now, sir, you see I'm not stubborn and I'm willing to work; traveling is a hardship, but without it I could not live. Where are you going, sir? To the office? Yes? Will you give an honest report of everything? A man might find for a moment that he was unable to work, but that's exactly the right time to remember his past accomplishments and to consider that later on, when the obstacle has been removed, he's bound to work all the harder and more efficiently. I'm under so many obligations to the head of the firm, as you know very well. (13)

It exemplifies the extent to which, Gregor was immersed in the life-enriching and life-enhancing power of work. He was habituated to look at life from an angle of work. That means Gregor was hell-bent upon struggling to live in keeping with the way he is expected to live. At the same time it is also seen what a strong will power Gregor had in his battle against the idle principle of life.

Having noticed Gregor fervent passion to equate life and work, the researcher realizes a necessity to throw an analytical glance to the precarious nature of his job. By the time Kafka was writing *The Metamorphosis* there arose a tremendous problem of administrative bureaucratization and coercive institutionalization. As a result individual working persons lost their distinct professional identities. They turn out to be utterly helpless. This precarious and intimidating nature of his profession is represented in *The Metamorphosis*. The following citation stands as a brilliant example of Gregor's terrible professional precariousness.

He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone. What if he were to say he was sick? But that would be extremely embarrassing and suspicious because during his five years with the firm Gregor had not been sick even once. The boss would be sure to couple with the health-insurance doctor, blame his parents for their lazy son, and cut off all excuses by quoting the health-insurance doctor for whom the world consisted of people who were completely healthy but afraid to work. And, besides, in this case would he be so very wrong? (5)

This extract is suggestive of how precarious was the job of Gregor. From one moment to the next Gregor's professional career was constantly dogged by sudden fear of an inadvertent dismissal. In the face of such a mounting fear and anxiety he managed to carve a bit pride out of his hellish working condition. Occupational helplessness of Gregor is a dire outcome of the institutionalization and centralization of administrative and bureaucratic forces that exercise formidable authority in the system of social and capitalistic production. Behind Gregor's professional helplessness, the exploitative, bullying and dehumanizing nature of capitalist system is immensely responsible.

In addition to Gregor's professional hazard, risky work experience and intimidating response from the side of administrative authority, the researcher has also come across several evidences as to the miserable plight of Kepesh in Philip Roth's *The Breast*. In *The Breast* the protagonist is loath to say yes to the degrading and dehumanizing forms of existing realities. His Professional burden is to continue teaching literature, which is nothing other than by-product of capitalistic deception. Besides this Kepesh is too nauseous to accept the wretched and worsened forms of realities. When Kepesh saw, with his own eyes, the rampant form of the commoditization of sex, he developed extreme distaste towards it. The opposing standpoint and anti-capitalist voice of Kepesh is transparently revealed in the following stanza.

Why is that too grotesque! What do any of you know about grotesque!
What is more grotesque any way, but to be denied my little pleasure in
the midst of this relentless nightmare! Why should not I be rubbed and
oiled and massaged and sucked and licked and fucked, too, if I want it!
Why should not I have anything and everything I can think of every
single minute of the day if that can transport me from this miserable
hell! Tell me, why that should not be! Instead you torture me! Instead
you prevent me from having what I want! Instead I lie here being
sensible! There's the madness, Doctor, being sensible. (52)

This extract describes about one of the seemingly humorous but at heart meaningful idea: Kepesh has arrived at such a condition in what he says it is better to be mad rather than being sensible. Kepesh's preference for madness at the cost of sensibility is itself a critique of existing mode of bourgeois realism regarding to sexuality and intellectuality. Mr. Kepesh had to take recourse to the grotesque. At the mental level

he compared the motion of bourgeois sanity and sensibility with the grotesque and the gawky. He, as a result, happened to realize that even the grotesque was far more sensible than the so-called sane and the sensible.

It has become evident that Kepesh's inclination and total immersion to and in the grotesque is indirectly a critique of capitalistic mode of alienating individuals who decline to come in terms with the existing capitalistic status quo. At a direct and plain level, this aspect of anti-capitalist viewpoint does not arise. But upon closer analysis it becomes obviously clear. The real is so distorted that it has become no longer acceptable. The real has become very, very difficult for general acceptance. As a comfortable alternative to the horrible reality, Kepesh has turned toward the grotesque. It is the system that has made Kepesh alienated.

Kepesh is not a man who is silently shouldering the burden of estranged and alienated self. He gives a forceful and strong expression to the suppressed alienation and estrangement. Threatened frequently by a corroding and crippling effects of dehumanizing capitalism, Kepesh feels as though his own objective and humane existence is compelled to verge on annihilation. The following extract expresses dramatically delivered Kepesh's terrific concern with the imminent hazard of self annihilation.

I suspect it's a little late for that, and so it is not with such hope for that, and so it is not with such hope beating eternally in the breast that the breast continues to want to exist. Human, I insist, I am but not that human. And it is not that human. And it is not that I am willing to live how because I am able, because the worst is over; I'm not at all sure that's the case. For all my 'equilibrium' and the seeming objectivity that permits me to narrate the history of my disaster, I sometimes think

the worst is yet to come. It is this then having been terrified of death since I was two; I have become entrenched in my hatred of it. (29)

At first, Kepesh's hatred is directed towards the existing capitalist institution drowned in ravages of dehumanization and exploitation. For not getting an inspiring platform to cultivate his individual self and subjectivity, Kepesh feels extremely alienated from the ongoing standard of so-called normalcy and sanity.

Both Kepesh and Gregor are victims of denuding, depriving and dehumanizing impact of the corrupted ideology of capitalism. Gregor is a salesman. He has to carry several goods as showpiece to different markets. Most of the time, Gregor is seen restless. He seems extremely exhausted and fed-up with his work. Yet he does not lose hope to survive. His dream of changing the economic status of his family remains a far-fetched dream. His dream of prosperity and economic security and certainty is bound to remain unaccomplished. Even an ironic fact is that it has become a formidably challenging for him to save his job in the midst of institutional regime and other administrative constraints. Instead, there are numerous elements in *The Metamorphosis* to conclude that the wage Gregor was paid is not commensurate with the physical and mental exertion he did in his job.

In parallel to Gregor, Kepesh is also equally frustrated with his profession of teaching fictions and literatures in college. He takes his work as a source of monotony. To him, his profession of teaching has brought him nearer to the point of futility. He felt stifled to continue teaching. For Kepesh modernist literature too is an indirect means of exploiting individuals. Those, who are appointed to teach modernist literatures in University and college, are compelled to lose natural innocence, charm, spontaneity, and vigorous commitment to the constant cultivation of knowledge. Circumstances allowed Kepesh to dig the mine of sex. Kepesh was compelled to

come in terms to the standardized notion of sexuality. Capitalism sexualizes every non-sexual organs of human bodies. Kepesh was somehow or other tempted to succumb to it. But finally he resists, this attempt to resist turned out to be fruitless. As a result he turned into a lump of swollen breast.

Gregor fell prey to a terrific plight of alienation not only in his working condition but also in his family. Gregor's feeling of alienation is obviously noticeable. Most of the time, Gregor is seen silent. The language of his silence which pervades that post metamorphosis period is evocative of his misery and alienation. Even at the time when Gregor was earning a lot his parents were not happy at loss. His parents were slightly estranged and isolated. Only his sister was close to him. The following extract illustrates the language of pregnant silence evocative of pathetic alienation.

And yet his sister was playing so beautifully. Her face was inclined to one side, sadly and probingly her eyes followed the lines of music. Gregor crawled a little farther forward and lowered his head to the ground so that it might be possible for his eyes to meet hers. Was he an animal, that music had such an effect upon him? He felt as if the way were opening before him to the unknown nourishment he craved. He was determined to push at her skirt and so let her know that she was to come into his room with her violin for no one here appreciated her playing as he would appreciate it (36).

Though he is human being he is questioned about his being ness. Immediately after metamorphosis, Gregor felt reluctant to resume his former relationship with his family members and kith and kin. He still clings to the old idea that he is a human being, a son of his parents and a brother of sister. Contrary to his expectation, he fell victim to parental disinterestedness. Other family members of his tended to ignore him. During

the painful period of metamorphosis Gregor expected to receive equal treatment, affection and recognition. But to his uttermost disappointment, he had to endure the set-back of alienation.

When Gregor was earning a lot from his job, his parents too were hesitatingly frank and factual to him. In the institution in which Gregor worked, he is the only personnel to get promotion within a short period of time. Following his promotion Gregor's income increased gradually. Gregor was happy at his promotion and gradual increase in income. He soon reached in a position to save a certain portion of his income. Despite his gradual increase in income, his parents remained aloof to him. Why did not his parents present themselves frankly and openly to him? This question struck the chord of Gregor's psyche. The following extract reveals the aloofness of Gregor's parents.

And so Gregor did not leave the floor, for he feared that his father might take as a piece of peculiar wickedness any excursion of his over the walls or the ceiling. All the same, he could not stay this course much longer, for while his father took one step he had to carry out a whole series of movements. He was already beginning to feel breathless, just as in his former life his lungs has not been very dependable. (22)

Gregor's professional success had not fully satisfied his parents. He left no stone unturned in uplifting the economic status of his family. Despite his restless endeavor, he was still unable to accomplish that leave economic security which his parents strongly demanded. The existing society expected a lot from him. He strongly wanted to live the way he was expected to live by society. The menacing and precarious work experience and unconsciously active feeling of frustration jointly drive Gregor to the

path of alienation. Utterly helpless to live and act the way he was expected, Kafka's Gregor rather liked to be changed into a monstrous insect. Gregor's metamorphosis symbolically stands as terrific trouble of alienation.

Excluding Gregor, Kepesh has also fallen victims to the similar plight. This alienation takes the form of obsession with a perverted part of sexuality. The analysis of his relationship with his beloved Claire indicates an unusual side of his sexual orientation. Kepesh's hyper-obsession with sexuality is escape from the perversion of degradation of the capitalist cult of fetishism and commoditization of sexuality. Being extremely unable to conform to the fetishized cult of sexuality, Kepesh does not conform to the established cult of perverted sexuality. His metamorphosis into a beast reveals his non-conformist standpoint. The following extract, which is cited below from the text of Roth, exemplifies hidden non-conformist stand in the guise of obsession with sexual grotesqueries.

Those times I felt I simply could not endure these sensations any longer, I nearly cried from the pleasure, and when I came I took Claire's ear in my mouth and licked it like a dog. I liked her hair. I found myself, painting, licking my own shoulder. During the final week of my incubation period, I was on her like an animal in perpetual heat. Having lain indifferently beside her for nearly a year, I was entering now upon some new compensatory phase of erotic susceptibility and fleshly release akin to nothing I had ever known or so I reasoned. "Is this what is meant by debauchery"? (12)

From this above citation it is crystal clear that Kepesh's psyche was torn between debauchery and startling experience of sexual adventurism. He tried to overcome his

torn psyche. From his side efforts were undertaken to put an end to such a rift in his psychic make up.

Following his metamorphosis into a breast Kepesh was affected by a bunch of chaotic feelings. He sinks below the anarchy of feeling. In the face of metamorphosis he gives expression to his scream. At the gradual fading away of human qualities Kepesh screams with terror. The following citation offers the best evidence to his horror at the gradual emergence of abnormality.

My face? Where is my face! Where are my arms! My legs! Where is my mouth! What happened to me! Now Dr. Gordon spoke “You’re in Lenox hill hospital, David. You’re in a private room on the seventh floor. You have been here ten days. I’ve been to see you every day in the morning and again at night. You are getting excellent care and continental attention. Right now you’re just being wished with a sponge and some warm soapy water. (20)

The expression of horror of the gradual disintegrating of human qualities poses along with it a kind of alienation. Horror at normalcy, hatred against the system and detestation towards the capitalistic institution – offer a strong ground to maintain that Kepesh’s standpoint is Marxist in nature. Having occupied Marxist standpoint which runs counter to the capitalistic institution.

Oppressed constantly by the dehumanizing ideology of capitalism, Kepesh rather wanted to be a lump of breast than to be an individual de-personalized by the corrupted and harrowing working conditions. Kepesh, the miserable protagonist of *The Breast* is disillusioned and disappointed by the slovenly and mechanical life of a lecturer who is none other than a cog in a machine.

Kepesh's anti-capitalist conviction is also justified by his anti-artistic stand. According to Kepesh art is too important to breed offspring of resistance towards the rigorous and rampantly dehumanizing and debilitating mode of capitalist. Entire gamut of art is denounced by him. His denunciation of art is indirectly evocative of Marxist resistance in the guise alienation. The extract is cited below, best sums up the essence.

Did fiction do this to me? How could it, Mr Kepesh? Dr. Klinger asks.
No, hormones are hormones and art is art. I did not get this way from falling too strongly under the influence of the great imaginations.
"But", I say, "It might be my way of being a Kafka, being a Gogol, being Swift. They could envision those marvelous transformations- they were artists. They had the language and those obsessive fictional brains. I did not. So I had to live the thing. "Had to?" to achieve my art (104).

Kepesh claims that the so-called normalcy under capitalism is degrading and corrupted. He can't accept it. Hence he develops an extreme. In literature he turned extreme. In sex he turned extreme. In life he turned realistic by becoming an extremist. The extremity in taste, in life and extremity in thought are, according to Kepesh, a proper alternative to the degrading view point of capitalism.

Like Kepesh, Gregor is also a victim of dehumanizing ideology. Unlike Kepesh, Gregor tries his utmost to come in terms to the exploitative and alienation framework of institution. He cherishes a dream also. Amidst the chaos and confusion he continued to propagate a passion for order, desire for dignity, longing for status and prestige, and finally yearning for conformist mode of existence. In spite of his fervent passion of systematic and symmetric realm for dignity, he is still doomed to

fail. Affected by an imminent sense of failure, Gregor's consciousness is self isolated. At the isolation of his self, he happens to develop a terrific trait of animal creature. The following extract is illustrative of this side.

Attracted by the playing, Gregor had dared to come out a little further and already had his head in the living room. It hardly surprised him that lately he was showing so little consideration for the others; once such consideration had been his greatest pride. And yet he would never have had better reason to keep hidden, for now, because of the dust which lay all over his room and around at the slightest movement. (34)

Afflicted and tortured with the burden of alienation, Kafka's Gregor develops a kind of liking for music. His sister plays a violin The Sonority of music attracted Gregor. He goes nearer to his sister. Music, passion for order and aesthetic detachment collectively poses a kind of alternative to the debilitating and dehumanizing impact of institutionalization.

Kafka's Gregor takes shelter in his passion for music and order. His emerging passion for spontaneity and musicality is a counterweight to the rampant degradation which has ravaged capitalism. Similarly Kepesh also takes shelter in extremity. He has the conviction that a reality under capitalism is distorted. He can no longer live in such realities. That is why he chooses extremity. Kepesh's frantic and maddening obsession with the extremity is a bold counter-weight to the perverted standard of decent scholarship and rational cultivation of sexuality. The extract cited below is illustrative of this kind of alternative choice of capitalism.

Unable to follow along with a text while the play is being spoken, I miss the meaning of an unfamiliar word, or my mind will wander, and when I return I find that for lines on end I am at sea in the syntax and

the sense. I make every effort not to lose my place, as it were, but despite that effort- that effort! Always that effort! To keep myself firmly fixed on the plight of Shakespeare's heroes, I do continue to consider my own more than I should live. (101)

It discloses Kepesh's budding inclination for the bizarre and the extreme. Sometimes, he also felt handicapped to survive in his self-chosen world of extremity. That is why; he often affirmed his continual longing for his genuine individual selfhood. When others described him as a lump of breast, he continued to insist that he is a human being still.

Both Kepesh and Gregor are prey of pernicious and punitive ideology of capitalism. Then a query arises – if both Gregor Samsa and David Kepesh are victims of capitalist ideology, where is the voice of resistance. Kepesh affirms his human qualities even in the midst of despair and alienation resulting from his inability to come to terms with capitalism. By the same token, Gregor is also still concerned with who is to improve the worsening economic condition of the house. He is patient enough to look forward to see real transformation in the economic condition of the house. In Gregor's suffering there is a spirit of resistance. In Kepesh's fervent passion for the extreme, there is a strong sense of resistance against the crippling and dismantling impact of capitalism. In these regards both are victims of capitalism and its dehumanizing ideology. Confronted with an ugly ideology of capitalism, Kepesh reacts by showing crazy interest in the extreme and the grotesque. On the other hand, Gregor resists and responds by suffering.

IV. Conclusion

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* projects a miserable quandary of modern man. It narrates about how helpless and precarious is the position of modern man. By the same token, the novel also narrates about the constant danger of degenerating into animality and humanity confronted with plenty of stumbling blocks and set-backs. The resisting spirit of the novel *Metamorphosis* is directed against capitalism. The core and crux of the novel is that capitalism is a system which thrives on exploitation. What makes the system called capitalism survive and thrive is its domineering and dehumanizing ideology. Under capitalism, workers, proletarians and those live on by selling their labours are not treated as human beings. They are simply considered as tools under capitalism. Individuals are not judged on the basis of their human qualities. Apart from this kind of problems, there are numerous evils which are likely to generate under capitalism. The rapid development of capitalism leads to the centralization of forces. Established organizations and institutions moved towards the process of administrative bureaucratization. The constraints and restrictions of institutionalized capitalism posed constant threat and menace to individuals. Individuals turned out to be utterly helpless in the face of rigorous institutionalization of capitalism. Instead, it expected individuals to come in terms with a mechanical and dehumanized way of living Gregor Samsa produced every impression of being a sincere worker and struggler. But faced with the dangerous rigors and restraints, he had to surrender. Circumstances pressurized him to yield to the tyranny and sovereignty of institutionalized capitalism. As a result, Kafka's Gregor suffered.

Philip Roth's *The Breast* also foregrounds the crippling effect of capitalism. Under the capitalistic system Kepesh got a job to teach an English literature including some of the renowned literatures produced throughout the European Peninsula. As a

teacher in college, Kepesh found himself a cog in a machine. The system in which he is involved as a working personnel is not conducive enough for the cultivation of his individual self and subjectivity. He expected to become that kind of individual who could cultivate his individual selfhood. The prevailing professional ethics and attitudes, the overpowering constraints and unacceptable working condition made him disenchanted and disillusioned. The resulting disillusionment pushed Kepesh to give utterance to the voice of resistance. Though he was opposed to the life-denying and life-crippling effect of capitalism, he remains silent to its exploitative nature. On the one hand, his voice of resistance was in full swing. On the other hand, he realizes that single most resistance was incapable of effecting change in the life-denying ideology of capitalism. He chooses the path of excess to the palace of wisdom. He chooses the path of extremity. He let his interest and affinity rise to the level of abnormality and extremity. Even in the gratification of his sexuality, Kepesh turned out to be extreme. The extremity of Kepesh's life and interest is not abstract in its purpose. It has political importance. At the back of Kepesh's excessive affinity, there is a strong detestation and abomination to the apparent ideology of capitalism. The resistance is darted towards the dehumanizing ideology of capitalism.

Both Gregor and Kepesh felt victims to the precarious and sterile working conditions. The threatening and dry working condition evokes extreme detestation towards the chillingly dehumanizing of capitalism. The way Kepesh and Gregor react is Marxist in tone and characteristics. There is a strong sense of protest in their suffering and isolation against what has often been called dehumanizing ideology of capitalism. That is why there seems to be a Marxist spirit within the structure of strong expostulation against the anti-life stand of institutionalized capitalism.

Both *The Metamorphosis* and *The Breast* dramatize alienation to which both Gregor and Kepesh fall victims. They are forced to fall to the lowest level of alienation because of their inability to meet the institutionalized standard of normalcy. Why both Kepesh and Gregor resisted against domination, exploitation and dehumanization? Answer is they tried to define their human quality and individuality even in the midst of alienation resulting from the dehumanization of humanity by capitalism.

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