THE STRUGGLE OF GREGOR AGAINST ALIENATION IN FRANZ KAFKA'S *THE METAMORPHOSIS*

THESIS

Written by

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS JEMBER
2018

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Submitted to English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Sarjana Sastra degree in English Studies

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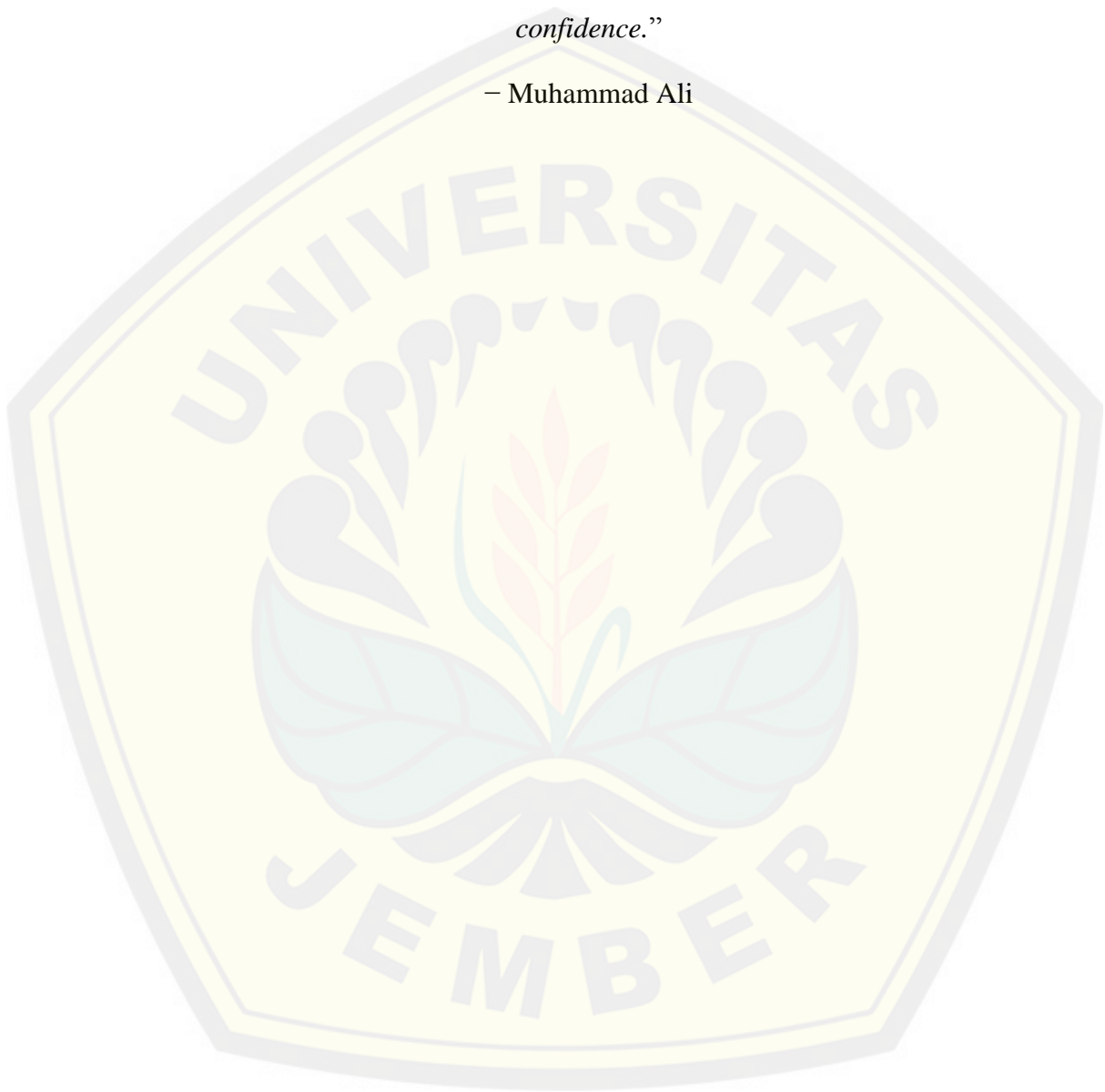**2018**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved mother and father, Misdani and Samuriyanto, my brother and sister, and all my close friends, for all the supports, prayers and never ending love they have given to me. And my Almamater

MOTTO

"*The only thing that makes people run away from the challenge is lack of confidence.*"

− Muhammad Ali

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DECLARATION

I hereby state that this thesis entitled "***The Struggle of Gregor against Alienation in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis***" is an original piece of writing. I state that the analysis and the research described in this thesis have never been submitted for any other degree or any publications.

I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any helps received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, 22nd March 2018

The Writer,

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Alhamdulillahi rabbilalamin be to Allah SWT for every blessing given to me. I realize that this thesis is not completely good and perfect. However it would not be completed without the precious assistance and participation of many people. For that reason, I would like to convey my gratitude and regards to the following people who have assisted me in writing this thesis:

1. Prof. Dr. Akhmad Sofyan, M. Hum.,.as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Jember University;

2. Drs. Imam Basuki, M.Hum, as my first advisor, and L. Dyah Purwita Wardani S W W, S. S., M. A., as my second advisor, who have guided and helped me in conducting this research;

3. Dr. Eko Suwargono, M. Hum., and Dra. Supiastutik, M. Pd., my examiners for suggestions and advices to improve my thesis;

4. All lecturers of English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University, for everything that they have taught me since the beginning of my time in this faculty;

5. The librarians of Faculty of Humanities and Central Library of Jember University;

6. All staffs of English Department;

7. My big family in Lumajang, for loves and supports;

8. My close friends, Naufal, Marwan, Krisna, Bayu, Arif, and Mahendra for the time, laugh, experience and many things we shared together;

9. All of my friends in English Department who have helped me to complete this thesis.

Jember, 22nd March 2018

Mahmud Dian Zuhri

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SUMMARY

The Struggle of Gregor against Alienation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis***;** Mahmud Dian Zuhri, 120110101049, 43 pages; English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember.

The Metamorphosis tells a transformation of a man into an insect. That man is Gregor Samsa. He has to struggle against alienation from people around him until he finally meets his tragic death. The story begins when one morning Gregor who works as a cloth salesman, found his body turned into a giant insect when he woke up. He thought it might be a dream. But as time passes and his human form does not come back, Gregor finally believes that what he experienced is not only a hallucination. Until the end, Gregor could no longer do his activities as usual. Gregor's family who felt that Gregor is now nothing but a burden, then they abandon Gregor just like that, make Gregor struggling alone to live his new life until he died because he could not stand the injury and the pressure he felt.

This research uses qualitative method to find and analyze the data in the novel. The data are collected using the documentary method. There are primary data and secondary data. The primary data of the research are collected from the novel written by Franz Kafka entitled *The Metamorphosis*. They are in the form of facts and information about the alienation of Gregor presented in the novel. The secondary data are the information that is out of the novel such as the real socio-cultural condition of Prague in the early twentieth century and the life of the author. They are taken from the various sources for instance books, journals, literary work reviews, internets and the other sources to support the analysis. To find the ideological implication of class struggle as the structure of the text in *The Metamorphosis*, this research describes about the socio-cultural condition of Prague that must have an influence to Kafka in taking alienation as his theme of the story. Analyzing the structure of the novel and the real society of Prague will lead the writer to know the worldview of the author. By knowing the world view
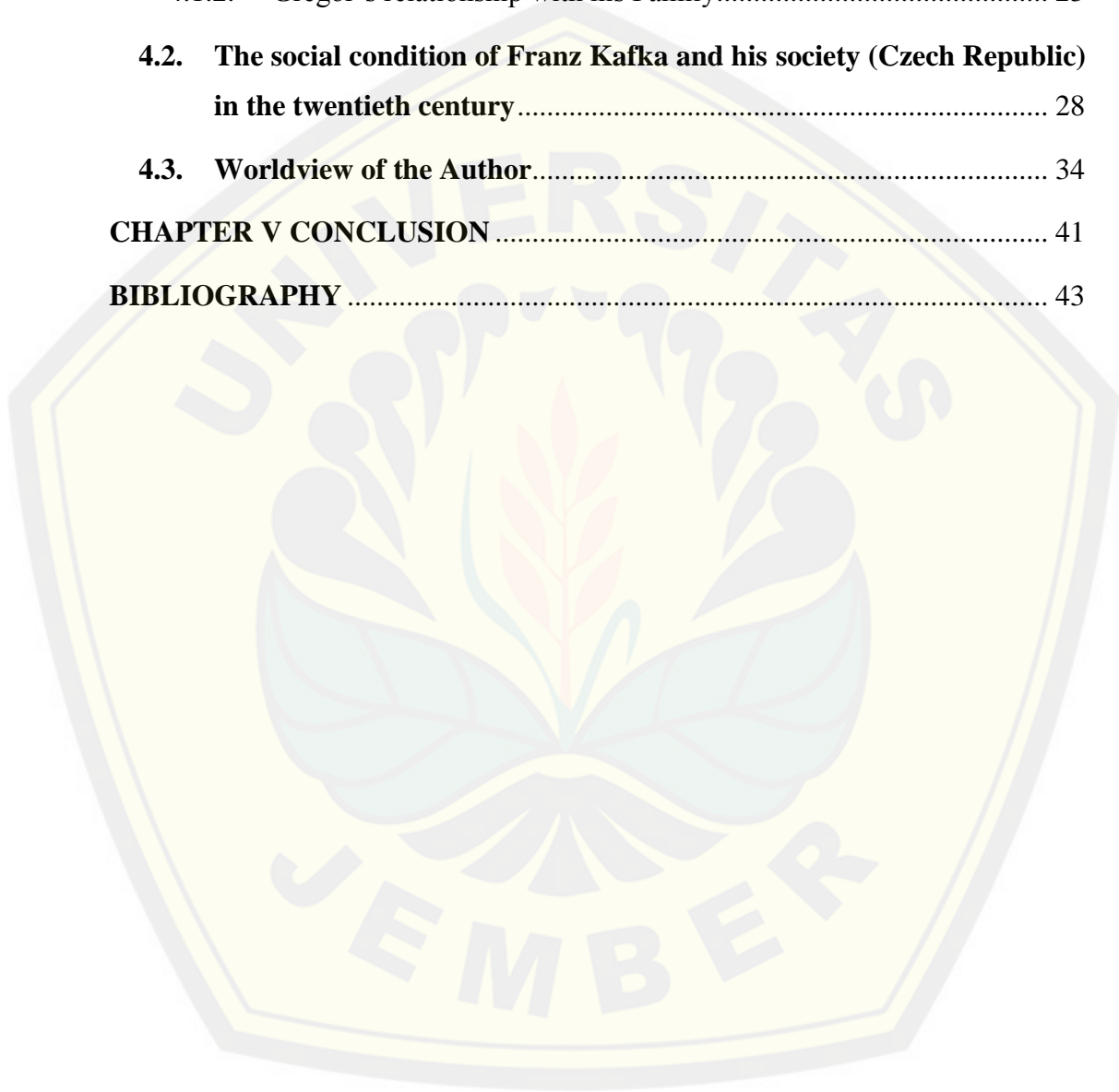
of the author, then the ideology and the reason of the author in creating *The Metamorphosis* can be understood.

The result of this research shows (1) Gregor is alienated from people around him, his father, sister, mother, and his manager where he works. And after struggle with his miserable condition, he meets his death. His death could be the only way to free him from his alienation. (2) The social and cultural background of the people living in the novel of *The Metamorphosis* are reflected to the condition of society that was trapped within the slavery of capitalism caused by industrialization that was developing in Europe at that time. In addition, the alienation by most European citizens against the Jews was also the portrayal of social conditions in the story. (3) The author's worldview in *The Metamorphosis* is a thinking that believes that human existence is very important

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of study. The background of study elaborates the basic problem dealing with the topic. Thus, to take a straight step-forward, this chapter conducts the research questions, and the purposes of study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Literary work is an art which is in form of written language. In literary work, we can find a portrayal of human life and action through the characters. By the characters' words and action, there is message that is conveyed for the purpose of education, information, and entertainment. What the author did is bringing up an event that happens in real life into fiction. According to Eagleton (1983: 1), "literature can be defined as 'imaginative' writing in the sense of fiction." The literary work which is written by the author is not merely a result of his idea and his imagination, but it is influenced by some factors such as cultural, economy, social, and politics. Thus, literary work is not only a reflection of a society, but it also can lead the society to a positive change.

This research analyzes a novel entitled *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. He is a German-Jewish writer whose name skyrocketed in the early 20th century. Franz Kafka himself actually is not a native German. He was born on July 3, 1883 in Prague. Although born and raised in Prague (now Czech Republic), Kafka spoke German well because his mother had taught him. Besides being a writer, Kafka also had time to work as an insurance employee and had also received educational training as a lawyer. Kafka began to love writing since at he was young. His name began to be known in the early 20th century.

The Metamorphosis was first published in 1915. This novel is said to be one of Franz Kafka's masterpiece of literature. It depicts the hardship of being alienated from people around and the struggle for getting support of others in a time of need. It is like an autobiographical novel. This novel reflects to Kafka's alienation in his real life. The relationship between Gregor and his father in this novel is in many ways similar to Franz and his own father.

The Metamorphosis tells a character named Gregor Samsa who one morning suddenly turned into a giant insect when he awoke from sleep. Kafka, in this case does not describe exactly what kind of insect describes the physical appearance of Gregor Samsa. There are those who argue that Gregor Samsa turned into fleas, cockroaches, and much more. In this novel is also told that Gregor Samsa lives with both his parents and his younger sister. Gregor Samsa was working as a traveling salesman and a bread-winner of the family as well, but he was abandoned by his family after his physical changes. Depressed with his new condition, Gregor Samsa finally died.

Many people think that this novel is a form social protest that is part of Kafka's world view which he expressed based on his own personal experience. Although he was not experiencing extreme physical changes like Gregor Samsa, Kafka was known to feel depressed by the treatment of his family against him. This can be found in other Kafka writings such as Brief an der Vater. In that writing it is clearly revealed that Kafka hates his father who has put his life under control. In the novel *The Metamorphosis*, it is said that Kafka was illustrating his world view that is not agree with the capitalism system that was followed by the society at that time. Kafka raised the theme of an irrational story precisely in an era in which society has put forward a logical mindset.

After reading the novel, I find a problem that is interesting to be analyzed. First, it is the change of Gregor's family and his manager's attitude toward Gregor after his metamorphosis. Gregor has been accepting his hardships without complaints. When his father's business failed, he is ready to accept his new role as the money-earner in the family. Although it means taking a job he dislikes a travelling salesman. However, people around him started to change their attitude toward Gregor after his transformation into an insect, which causes him unable to work anymore. His family, who once seems so loving and caring, soon becomes indifferent to a Gregor. Not only his family, but Gregor also gets an unpleasant treatment from his manager. These cause Gregor feels alienated from the world outside. He remains in his room all day long without getting communication from

people around him. Second, the issue that is portrayed in the novel is happening nowadays in our society. Many people do not feel comfortable with the work they have chosen, but that is their duty as the bread-winner. As time passes, they will feel alienated from people around them and even from themselves.

In this case, I apply the theory of Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism to conduct a research related to Gregor's alienation since there is a relation between the structure of the text and the structure in the real society where the novel was written. Genetic structuralism analyzes the structural elements and the contextual background of the novel to know the worldview of the author. Therefore, I, as the writer of this thesis, encourage myself to give a title "The Struggle of Gregor against Alienation in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*"

1.2. Research Question

1. How is Gregor's alienation described in the novel?
2. How is the social condition of the author and his society (Czech Republic) in the twentieth century?
3. How is the worldview constructed in the novel?

1.3. The Goals of Study

There are some purposes trying to be achieved by the writer in conducting this research. They put as follows:

1. To describe the alienation of the main character Gregor presented in the novel;
2. To analyze the social condition of the author and his society (Czech Republic) in the twentieth century as the contextual background of the novel;
3. To expose the worldview constructed in the novel.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature review will help the researcher in analyzing the topic. It may be a previous research or theoretical framework. In this section, the researcher uses two previous researches and some related and compatible theories by experts.

This chapter presents previous researches and the theory which are used to analyze the data briefly. The previous researches provide the important contribution in writing this thesis. It also gives the information related to the problem discussion. By clarifying the previous researches, the originality of the research will be shown that this research is different from the previous one. Then theoretical framework gives a clear definition on how the theory is applied. It is crucial for critical discussion in the fourth chapter. This thesis uses Genetic Structuralism theory by Lucian Goldmann.

2.1. Previous Research

Previous research is an important framework in conducting a research. Its function is to determine the gap of the analysis between the research that will be conducted and the previous ones. Blaxter (2006:122) the ability to carry out a competent literature review is an important skill for the researcher. It helps to place your work in the context of what has already been done, allowing comparisons to be made and providing a framework for further research. Therefore, the literature review in this research is offered. It consists of the previous researches and the theory.

The first previous research is from Diah Anggesti Pratiwi's *The Psychological Effect of Alienation Experienced by Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis* (2017). This research aims to gain an understanding about what are the effects of alienation experiencd by Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*. She uses Erich Fromm's (1942) theory to conduct this research. The result of the analysis shows that the alienation experienced by Gregor was influenced by the family and society around him especially his father. Gregor uses Conformity, one of the three mechanisms of escape (Authoritarianism,

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Destructiveness, and Conformity) from Erich Fromm to solve his psychological probem.

The second previous research is Nugrahaningrum Desinta's *Consumerism in Early 21th Century Women's Lifestyle in Sophie Kinsella's Mini Shopaholic* (2014). This research is focused on the consumerism analysis of postmodern women, the way of thinking, and lifestyle in London society as a reflection through the novel of *Mini Shopaholic*. All of the female characters represent the people in 2000s that express their love toward branded products and tend to possess the branded product because consumerism internalizes their way of thinking. She uses genetic structuralism by Lucien Goldmann in conducting this research. She analyzes the worldview of the writer and London social structure. The result of the analysis is that the women's lifestyle is the effect of consumerism has possessed in their mind. It causes them to love branded products.

By reviewing both researches, I can learn how to analyze the alienation that is constructed in the novel from the first previous research, and the second one contributes in giving the way to use the theory and to find out the worldview that is constructed in the novel. *The Metamorphosis* will be used as valid and primary data. To support this research, books, journals, articles, and other related sources are used as the secondary data.

2.2. Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism

Genetic structuralism was developed as a rejection to the analysis of structuralism that only analyzes the intrinsic elements. This theory was discovered by Lucien Goldmann, a Romanian-French philosopher and sociologist. Genetic structuralism starts from the concept of human fact. The subject of human fact includes individual subject and collective subject. The author is an individual subject that becomes member of the collective subject. In writing the literary work, he represents the ideas and aspirations of the society. From the explanation

above, genetic structuralism affirms that there is a relationship between literature and the society through the worldview expressed by the author.

Genetic structuralism is a theory which deals with the structure of the text, the author, and also the cultural condition in the society. It is a combination between intrinsic elements of a novel and extrinsic element (reality). According to genetic structuralism, literary work is a significant structure. Thus, genetic structuralism tries to find out a structure in the novel and a structure in the society. It also tries to find out when and why the novel is written and what represents the novel

The literary work is a structure which is related to historical subjects. Historical subject is a part of extrinsic elements of literary work, including the author and the society. Analyzing a literary work using genetic structuralism means the author and the socio cultural condition of the author must be analyzed as well, besides analyzing the structure of the text itself. If literature is only understood from the intrinsic elements, the literature can be considered apart from its social context. Literature should always relate to society and history surrounding the creation of literary works.

Genetic Structuralism is a theory that combines Marxism philosophy and the structuralism analysis as the literary devices. Genetic structuralism was born from a French sociologist Lucien Goldmann. The appearance of genetic structuralism was caused by the dissatisfaction against structuralism, which only focuses on the intrinsic elements without considering the extrinsic elements of literary works.

Genetic structuralism is trying to fix weaknesses of structuralism approach by inserting genetic factors in understanding literature. Genetic structuralism often referred to historical structuralism, which considers the typical literary work is analyzed in terms of the historical. Goldmann intends to bridge the gap between the approaches of structuralism (intrinsic) and sociological approaches (extrinsic).

Goldmann believes in the existence of homology between the structure of a literary work with the structure of society because both are products in the same

structuration. Homology means that the structure in the literary work has the same structure in the real life. The difference is laid on the contents in the literary work does not imitate directly with the real life.

To support his theory, Goldmann builds coherent set of categories to one another which he calls the genetic structuralism. The categories are a human fact, the collective subject, significant structure, and world view.

2.2.1. Human Fact

Human fact means similar to human behavior, as what Faruk says that human fact means all human activities and behaviors, both the verbal and the physical ones, which sciences try to understand (Faruk, 2015:57).

Human fact refers to all human behavior that is proper to human need. Everything that human need in the social life is delivered in hope, suggestions, or critiques in order to change social condition. Indirectly, the change of social condition in reality will influence the social condition in literary work. It means social structure and literary structure will change.

Human fact has close relation with worldview. Individual subject can change social condition if it becomes collective subject, afterwards it will reform worldview. An author is an individual subject that turns into collective subject because he or she represents a group of people. Human thought forms human social structure as the respond of collective subject to social condition in society. Human fact builds the equivalence between human life and the world around them.

Goldmann (1970, as cited in Faruk, 2015: 58) said human fact grows in response from collective or individual subjects to the situations and conditions that exist within and around them, the development of experiments from the subject to change the situation that exist to fit the aspirations of the subject. In other words, these facts are the result of human effort to achieve a better balance in relation to the world around them.

Every time human beings do something. In doing that activities they face a problem and try to solve it, then they try to think what the most suitable action that can solve the problem is. In this case, human beings tend to create the structures of thought, behavior, and feeling that are more or less significant and coherent. In this perspective, the cultural activities in their various forms, including literary works, are significant and coherent structures.

The subject of human fact is divided two kinds, they are individual fact and social fact. Individual fact is an activity of the individual subject to get a better life. Therefore, individual fact only happens in individual activity. On the other hand, social fact is human's social activity in their society that serves the purpose to create balance between themselves and the world around them

It means that human facts refer to the human need in the form of hope, suggestion, or critique to change the condition in social history. The changing of the condition in social history also influences the social condition of the literary work. Therefore, the structure of socio-history and literary structure are also going to change.

2.2.2. The Collective Subject

Collective subject is a social community. Human facts arise because of human activity as the subject. The author is a subject that is in the middle of society. An author writes a literary work as individual subject, but his writing represents a certain social group. Faruk "said that collective subject is a concept that is still blurred. Collective subjects can be in the form of relatives groups, working groups, territorial groups, etc" (2015:63).

Literary works are created by the author. Thus the literary work is a duplication of the real event that has been mixed by the author's creativity. All ideas can be regarded as a representative author of a social group. Therefore, assessment of the literature cannot be separated with the author to get a thorough sense.

Collective subject is a collection of individuals who form a single unit and its activities. Goldmann (1970, as cited in Faruk , 2015:63) specified them as a social class in the Marxist sense, because that's the group that is proven in history as the group that has created a complete and comprehensive view of the life and that has influenced the development of human history

2.2.3. Significant Structure

Goldmann in his essay entitled *The Epistemology of Sociology* expressed two opinions about literary work in general. First, literary work is an expression of an imaginary worldview of the author. Second, in expressing that worldview, the author creates world, characters, objects, and relations in form of imaginary (Faruk, 2015:71).

Goldmann believes there is a homology in the structure of a literary work and the structure of the society since both are the products of the same structuration activity. The concept of homology is different with the concept of reflection. Understanding literary works as a reflection means assuming that the imaginary world portrayed in literary works are identical to the world contained in reality. Whereas, as has been proven in the history of literature throughout the world, most literary works are not realistic, but rather imaginative and even fantastic so that the world pictured in it looks like it has nothing to do with the real life or human society (Faruk, 2015:64-65). Significant structure is how socio-history is portrayed in a form of literary work. The socio-history is reformed by human through continually process from time to time. Even though the content of literary work is different from reality, but both have the same structure.

According to genetic structuralism, the significant structure focuses on analyzing the relation between the character and the other characters and the character with their environment. Thus, the relation between each character and their environment creates meaning that implies in the literary work. I apply this concept to analyze the relationship between the structure and the social structure of the novel that is constructed by Franz Kafka. The different characters in *The*

Metamorphosis will create the different point of view. It is called the binary opposition where the main characters and the society have their own ideology in giving a judgement for each other. The different opinions are also influenced by their social structure.

2.2.4. Worldview

Goldmann also developed the concept of a world view that can be manifested in literature and philosophy. According to him, the categorical structure which is a whole complex of ideas, aspirations, and feelings, which links together the members of a particular social group called worldview (Faruk, 2015: 65-66).

Understanding the literary work is an attempt to understand the mix of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The author was not acting as individual but represents a class society. Historical background, age and social condition helped in the creation of literary works.

Faruk said that the structure of literary work is not homolog with the structure of the society, but it is homolog with the worldview that develops within the society (2015:65). The author inserts his opinions and point of view within his work as the response to the social condition in his environment. In the literary work, worldview is seen as the author's perspective that represents the collective subject of the author's social structure. Literary works are considered as coherent worlds that can be made the same as worldview because literary works are the products of interaction between collective subjects and the situation around them. Through the literary work created by an author as an individual who directly gets in touch with his or her social group, we can see clearly the worldview of the social group in question because the social group will not be able to or it is very difficult for the social group to realize their own aspiration without any intervention from the creative individual.

Analyzing the literary work using genetic structuralism theory means analyzing the structure of the literary work and the structure of the society, since

both have the same structure. The structure of the literary work and the structure of the society cannot be separated from the world view. It is because worldview is the medium in connecting the structure of the literary work and the structure of a certain social class in society. In genetic structuralism, worldview is defined as the result of a certain group's thought and aspiration that creates the distinction between the other social classes. In literary work, worldview is seen as the author's point of view that represents the collective subject of the author's social structure.

Genetic structuralism does not look novel as a work of literature that only has intrinsic structure because the author also gets intervention of other factors (social factors) in the process of its creation. He becomes the representation of the social group where he belongs.

Based on the concept explained above, Genetic Structuralism considers the quality of a literary work is determined by its coherency. It means that a literary work is considered significant if the work is the result of intense interaction or interrelation between the subject who creates the work and his or her environment. Therefore, the study of literary works cannot be separated from the totality of the social life and its social-historical relation.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The chapter describes how the research is conducted. Some steps mentioned here are the suitable ways of processing the data. It tells the reader the type of the research, how the data are collected, how the data are processed and how the data are analyzed

3.1. Type of Research

Research method is needed in order to conduct a good and valid research. There are two types of research method. They are Qualitative research, if the data is in the form of words and sentences, and Quantitative research, if the data is in the form of number or numeric data. The writer analyzes a novel. The data is in the form of words and sentences. Therefore, qualitative research method is used in conducting this research.

Qualitative research does not use numeric data, its data is in form of sentence. The main field as the medium is taken from library research. By doing library research, the researcher can choose the methods, approaches, theoretical frameworks and finishing concepts which are connected to the data. In this research, textual narrative is used to investigate the main discussion in the novel. Finally, the analysis will be explained and concluded in sentences.

The texts are taken from variety of documents which is related to the topic. The data that is needed in this qualitative research is in the narrative form. Qualitative research can be analyzed through description and interpretation. In other words, the data from the novel *The Metamorphosis* is selected and collected as quotations.

3.2. Data Collection

Blaxter et al (2006:154) stated that there are four methods of data collection. They are interview, observation, questionnaire, and documentary method.

1. Interview is questioning or discussing issues with your sample to people
2. Observation is collecting data through watching or engaging in activities
3. Questionnaires is gathering information through written questions
4. Documentary method is using written materials as a basis for your research

The source data of this research is a novel. It is in the form of written material. Therefore, this research applies documentary method in collecting the data. The data in this research is divided into two types: primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from *The Metamorphosis* as the object of the study. The data that are collected is in the form of narrations and sentences which are related to the topic.

The first is about the characterization which is constructed in the novel. I will find the data about the characters, including the main characters and the supporting characters in the novel. The daily activity of those characters and the relationship between each character will also be taken as data in order to find out about the alienation of the main character Gregor. Second, I will find the data about the socio-cultural condition of Prague when the novel was written. The last, I will find the data about when and where the author lives. I will also collect the data related to the society of the author. Therefore, I will get the information about the worldview of the author.

The secondary data is needed in order to continue the research in more detail. The secondary data can be taken from literature journals, essays, articles, relevant books and e-sources that can support this analysis. Blaxter said,

> Researchers who base their studies on documents may make considerable use of secondary data; that is, data which has already been collected, and possibly also analyzed, by somebody else (2006:170).

3.3.   Data Processing and Analysis

The data processing and data analysis begin with the analysis of the novel and concern with genetic structuralism analysis of *The Metamorphosis* novel. I

use Goldmann's theory to support my analysis about alienation constructed in *The Metamorphosis*. There are several steps to do in the way of processing the data.

The first one is close reading. It means I have to read the material more than once. It can be many times. This will ensure the understanding the whole parts of the novel. The data are collected from the novel Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Books, journals, articles, and other related sources are applied as the secondary data or supporting data.

Secondly, it is classifying the data. The purpose is to classify the data which have close relation to the research questions. There are three research questions that have been made. This activity will help the writer in the process of answering the research questions since the data have been divided.

When the collected data have been categorized, the next step is to operate them. This process involves a serious and deep understanding of the material. I will begin with analyzing the structural elements of this novel since genetic structuralism is the combination between text and context or between intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements.

I will analyze the characterization constructed in the novel. It is an important step before analyzing the alienation of Gregor. By knowing each character, I will get information related to their relationship with Gregor. In this process, I use the concept of significant structure to analyze the relationship between the character with the other character, and the character with their environment. Through this process, the information about the problems that arise between the characters will be exposed.

Then I will try to find out the class structure that is constructed in the novel. I analyze the class structure because Gregor's alienation has a close relation with money and his work. Once the class structure and the relationship of Gregor with each character have been found out, it will help me in revealing their alienation toward Gregor.

The next step is analyzing the socio-cultural condition of Prague in 1915 when the novel was written. The social condition of the author always has relation with the novel. From this activity, I will discover the information related to the problem in the novel that the author faces in reality at that time.

The last, I will analyze the worldview. Worldview is the author's perspective that represents the society of the author's social structure. I will analyze the life of the author in order to find out his social group structure and the reason of writing the novel. I will also analyze the background social group where the writer lives because he is a part of that social group. From this activity, I will get the information related to social group ideology and the class position of the author.
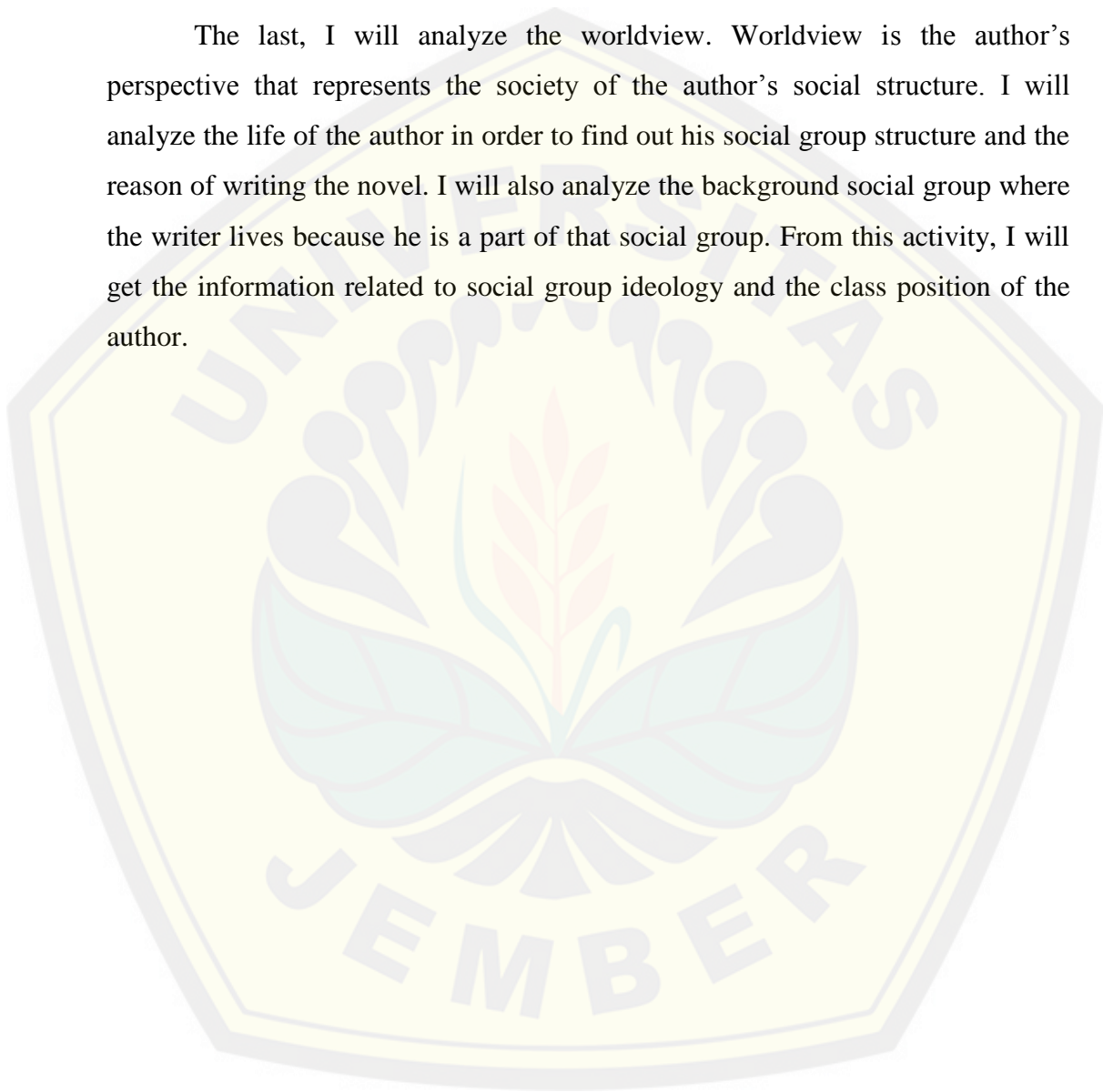
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

The Metamorphosis was written by Kafka in 1912. In this novel there are 4 main characters namely Gregor Samsa, Herr Samsa (Gregor's father), Frau Samsa (Mrs. Gregor) and Grete (Gregor's sister). In addition, in this novel, there are also additional characters such as Gregor's manager, Room Charterer, and Samsa's servant, who helped enliven some of the conflicts in the story. Alienation happens because Gregor is no longer needed, but he cannot escape from them. He still has a feeling that he has to help his sister enter a conservatoire. He also still has responsible to pay off his father's debt. Meanwhile, his family think that Gregor in no longer a human. Therefore they see him as a burden and start rejecting his existence. After struggle with his miserable condition, he meets his death. His death could be the only way to free him from his alienation.

The social and cultural background of the people living in the novel of *The Metamorphosis* are reflected to the condition of society that was trapped within the slavery of capitalism caused by industrialization that was developing in Europe at that time. Jews that was being isolated in Europe (in particular Austria-Hungary) at the time the work was created. Staying right in the middle of Germany and the Soviet Union territory that was not in a good relation at that time, it can be imagined that Austrian-Hungarians live their routine with anxiety and worry. It is portrayed in Gregor's experience being alienated from people around him. The other social and cultural life that influence the author in creating *The Metamorphosis* is the desire to die due to the distress of the authoritarian and ill-treatment that he gets from his surroundings especially his father.

The Metamorphosis shows how the protagonist is being estranged from the people around them because of the physical appearance of the individual, which is his physical appearance. However, the source of alienation is actually the inner part of the individual himself. Gregor realizes that his family no longer need him, but he still has a feeling to struggle to help them. That feeling eventually leads to alienation. As depicted in the novel, being estranged from others, Gregor

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gradually loses his will to live and then he died. Thus, it implies that humans have a subconscious need for connecting with others and that the existence of others has an impact on an individual's existence. The author's worldview in *The Metamorphosis* is existentialism. A thinking that believes that human existence is very important.
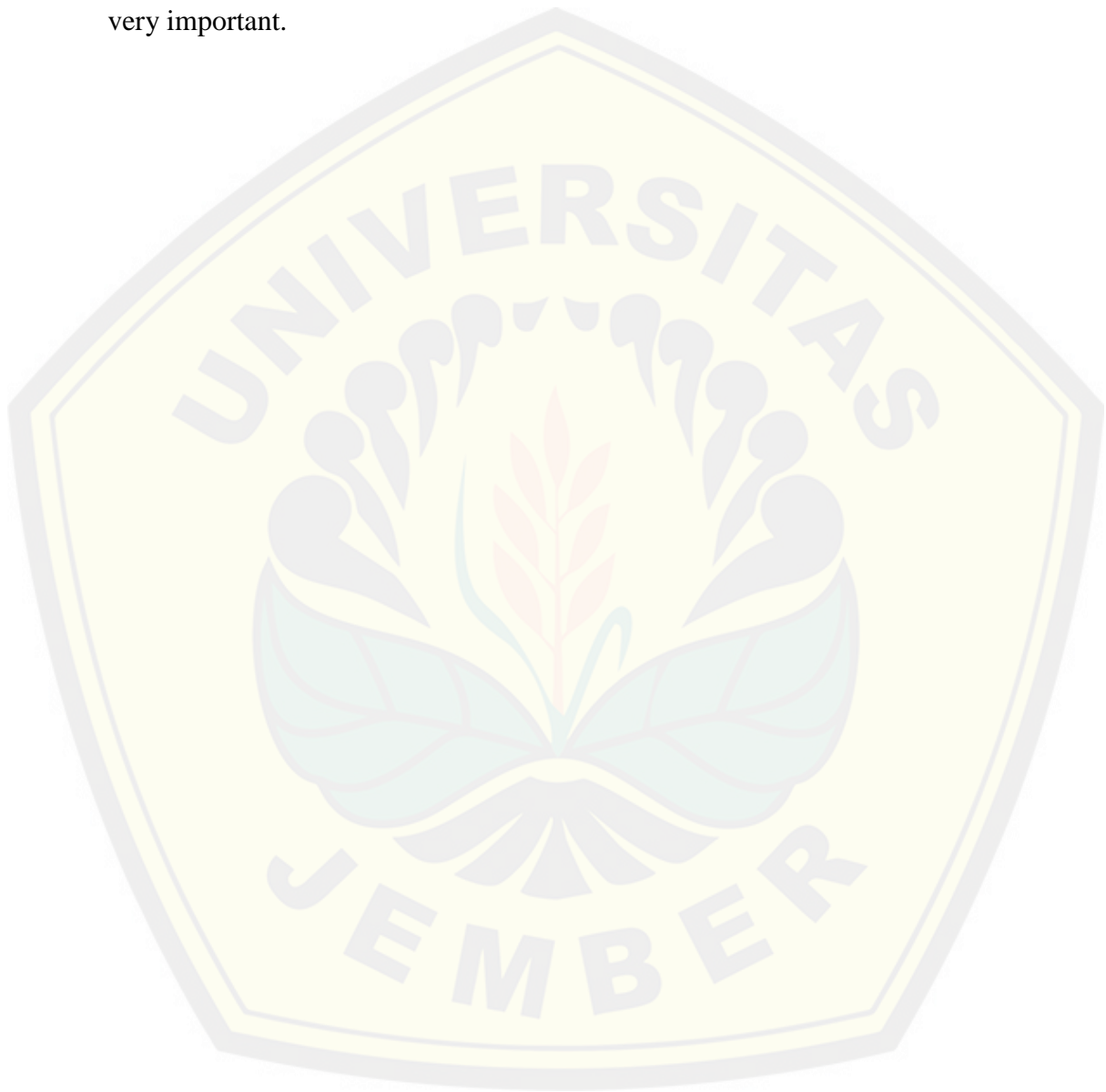
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