

(Although most cultures cannot be generalized with certain behaviours, however, certain Japanese traditions and values are common to all their people and is taught to them from a very early age. The practice of having the son of a family to look after his parents, as mentioned later, is common to both Japanese and Chinese cultures.)

In our studies of European literature, we can see that patriarchy, that is, the supremacy of the father in a family and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line, plays a major part in family life. However, the institution of patriarchy is not just limited to European cultures. In this essay, we will examine the instances of patriarchy in "The Metamorphosis" and compare it to instances in Japan.

In the beginning of "The Metamorphosis," we can tell from the way Gregor's family is organized that Gregor is the 'father figure,' in that he is the primary breadwinner and the one who makes most of the decisions for his family. On page 1781, we can see Gregor thinking that he would "take charge of the family's affairs again," hence showing that before he turned into a bug, he was the dominant person in the family. He is the only person in the family who actually goes out to earn money. His father has already retired, while his mother and sister, following the standards of that time, do not go out and work. Gregor is the only one who goes out as a traveling salesman, and is responsible for earning money for the whole family. His father stays at home and only "lies wearily buried in bed"(1778) while Gregor goes out on business trips. From this, we can see that Gregor has taken over his father's responsibilities as head of the household. He is earning money and supporting the family while his father has retired and only stays at home, doing nothing. This conforms with the practice of patriarchy in that the son, Gregor in this case, inherits the position and responsibilities as head of this household from his father.

In Japan, the son of a family is expected to take over the responsibilities of taking care of his family when his father retires, similar to how Gregor takes over in his family. The son is also expected to look after his parents after they grow old and retire, similar to how Gregor looks after his retired father and mother. If he does not look after his parents, he is thought of as being 'unfilial' and seen as a bad person. In contrast, daughters are expected to go out and find a good husband and get married, similar to Grete at the end of "The Metamorphosis."

Another aspect of patriarchy is the supremacy of the father in the family, that is, the 'father figure' is the most dominant person in the family. In "The Metamorphosis," we see this in Gregor when he mentions casually that he had "declared inedible"(1769) a piece of cheese that Grete brought in for him. Although this seems to be a minor point, but the fact that special mention is given to this fact emphasizes Gregor's dominance in

his family, especially since there is no other reason for mentioning this. That he had "declared" the cheese inedible makes it seem like there is no question of his declaration, no matter what the rest of his family thinks.

Another example of the dominance of the father is in part 3 of "The Metamorphosis" where we can see Grete begging her father to get rid of Gregor. Although she wants to get rid of him, she still has to convince and beg her father to make the decision. Even though Grete is the one who initiates the notion of getting rid of Gregor, she still has to get her father's approval, hence showing that the father is the one who is supreme and makes decisions in this household.

Comparing the role of the father in these texts to that in an Japanese society, we find similarities even to the modern Japanese family. For example, in an average Japanese family, it is expected for the father to go out and earn money for the household and become a "salariman" while the mother stays at home and looks after their children. Also, generally, whatever the father decides usually becomes law, just like how Gregor's father's decision about Gregor and Orgon's decision for his daughter to marry Tartuffe are final.

Patriarchy is a major part of Western culture, and can be seen in "The Metamorphosis." However, it is also a major part of Japanese culture as well, and the way that patriarchy is practiced is similar to what is illustrated in the texts we have read.

