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Episode of "Drive Thru"

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# Oppressions in Popular Culture's *SpongeBob SquarePants* Episode of "Drive Thru"

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**Abstract:** This article is a development of the research done for an undergraduate study, which has the objectives to find the oppressions exercised by Mr. Krabs in USA's "Drive Thru" episode of *SpongeBob SquarePants* cartoon TV series. Using Karl Marx's theory in the study, it is revealed that the episode represents the oppressions by the Bourgeoisie capitalist towards the Proletariat. The data were discussed by using descriptive explanation and were analyzed and interpreted with the finding that the Bourgeoisie treated Proletariat rudely when it comes about money. As a development of the study, this article adds into the discussion on the explanation of Mr. Krabs actions based on the concept of Popular Culture's strategies of making profit at the expense of the Proletariat.

**Key words:** popular culture, cartoon, oppression, Marxism, profit making

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini merupakan pengembangan dari penelitian yang dilakukan sebagai bagian dari studi S1, yang bertujuan untuk menemukan penindasan yang dilakukan oleh Tuan. Krabs pada episode "Drive Thru" dari serial kartun televisi *SpongeBob SquarePants*. Menggunakan teori Karl Marx terungkap bahwa episode tersebut merepresentasikan penindasan kaum kapitalis Borjuis terhadap kaum Proletar. Data yang ada dibahas dengan menggunakan penjelasan deskriptif dan dianalisa serta ditafsirkan dengan temuan bahwa kaum borjuis memperlakukan kaum proletar secara kasar dalam hal uang. Sebagai kelanjutan dari studi tersebut, artikel ini menambahkan

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*penjelasan tentang perbuatan yang dilakukan tuan Krabs berdasarkan konsep strategi budaya populer yang mencari keuntungan dengan mengorbankan kaum proletar.*

**Kata kunci:** karya sastra populer, kartun, penindasan, Marxism

## INTRODUCTION

*SpongeBob SquarePants* is a cartoon film created by an animator Stephen Hillenburg, which has been televised since 1979 when it was owned by Viacom (Tarr & Brown, 2013, p. 21). When it was broadcasted for the first time, this cartoon was created for kids. However, since the second season, the stories have changed its target for all ages, as seen in the episodes such as “Rock Bottom, Ugh, Patrick’s Staycation, Plankton’s Robotic Revenge”, and “Drive Thru”.

In brief, the episode, “Drive Thru”, starts with a scene at the Krusty Krab where SpongeBob is wondering why Mr. Krabs is filling a hole in the wall with a toothpaste. Unfortunately, the toothpaste starts dribbling and causes the hole to crack, making an even greater crack in the wall. A fish and his children then come to the Krusty Krab and orders from the hole, as they thought it was a drive through window. This incident gives Mr. Krabs a thought to establish a Krusty Krab drive through. To start the drive through, SpongeBob brings in equipment from the diner, but Mr. Krabs ignores SpongeBob’s attempt and simply write down the menu ordered on napkins and use tin cans for the microphone. Another customer soon orders also from the drive through but SpongeBob has trouble getting the food out of the window. To enlarge the hole, Mr. Krabs forcibly breaks another section of the wall again.

In another occasion, Larry, the Lobster who is addicted to body-building and lifting weight, comes with his S.U.B. (Sports Utility Boat). At that time, SpongeBob has trouble getting the food to him since Larry’s S.U.B’s window is so high above the drive through hole. The problem forms a long line of customers through the entire town. To speed the service, Mr. Krabs makes a second drive through by breaking the other side of the wall. As a result, SpongeBob and Squidward desperately try to give food to all of the customers at both sides. Mr. Krabs breaks another hole and says "More money!" out of greed, so the whole Krusty Krab diner cracks and falls apart into a pile of dirt. SpongeBob jokingly attempts to fix the diner with toothpaste while telling Mr.

Krabs that they may need to buy more. The episode ends with Mr. Krabs crying ([https://SpongeBob.fandom.com/wiki/Drive\\_Thru](https://SpongeBob.fandom.com/wiki/Drive_Thru)).

The "Drive Thru" episode is fascinating to focus on because it portrays of Mr. Krabs, who is exploiting his employees; a practice that is commonly done in a capitalistic industry. By understanding Mr. Krabs as a capitalist, who makes his employees work harder than ever to get money for his own good, it is thus, interesting to find out how the story adheres with D'Amato's definition of capitalism.

D'Amato, (1999 p. 30) states that "Capitalism is a society based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Because it is founded on massive inequality, it requires various means to oppress and keep down the working class and the poor." This means that in a capitalistic society, the owner of the capital or people of the rich are the ones that control the working class, who are the laborers, by means of oppressions.

With regards to the definition of oppression, Coulter (2004, p. 335) states that "Oppressions enables those in charge to have access to control resources and choices while making those labelled as inferior vulnerable to poverty, violence and early death," so, the idea of oppression is central to the capitalistic industry. In the field of literature, the relationship between the capitalist and oppression is discussed within Karl Marx's framework, which allows for gender inequality.

The discussion of how the capitalist exploited the working class has been discussed in a number of undergraduate thesis. However, the condition of why such a relationship is being shown in the film can be also be explained by the condition of Mr. Krabs's position who wanted to popularize his product quickly to gain profit. For this reason, this article will discuss how Popular Culture helps explain the reason for the conditions of Marxism in the film's plot.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, *SpongeBob SquarePants* film was originally shown to the public as a kinetoscope media. It was mute and colorless, and was invented by Thomas Alfa Edison for individual audiences. Ever since then, it developed into a colored, speaking cartoon film, which according to Albornoz (2016, p. 28), became "the most-viewed feature films in theatres globally during 2012

and 2013.” Its popularity among others was shown by the various T-Shirts sold with SpongeBob and his friends’ cartoons on it. Doll miniatures that look like SpongeBob, Patrick and Mr. Krabs have also helped boost up the popularity to children and young adults. Pillar (2011, p. 73) mentioned that the cartoon film has even been translated in 25 languages and had amused 170 countries, with Brazil being the highest in audience ratings.

Pillar’s (2011) *Cartoon and Gender: Masculinities in SpongeBob*, showed how the male gender was constituted in *SpongeBob SquarePants*. By analyzing three episodes, Pillar sought to understand the effects of meaning related to masculinity and how this signification was constructed in the interplay between visual and sound systems. Pillar saw that both the cartoon episodes and the children’s interpretations were analyzed based on the discursive semiotics theory which sought to understand the process of the constitution of the effects of meaning in texts and practices. The results indicated that in discussing the school, what was portrayed was how genders were represented as a way of denaturalizing the process of men and women’s constitution of our culture.

Marxist analysis has been used in another study. In his research, *Class Conflict in “Step Up Revolution” Film* Prayuda (2019) found that there were two main classes in the film, proletariat and bourgeoisie, which were represented by two major characters in the film. According to Prayuda, the film under study was basically telling about the difference between several classes in the city of *Bikini Bottom*. In the film, it was described that the Mob and the resident of Spring Garden district were the proletariats, while Bill Anderson and his company were the bourgeois. Prayuda’s study found that the protest done by the proletariats successfully got a lot of support from social networks because of their help for the poor, who revolted against the capitalist.

Suwandi’s (2020) recent undergraduate research also dealt with how Marxism was exercised in *SpongeBob SquarePants* film, but the focus is in only one episode, ie. “Drive Thru”. He found that Mr. Krabs was the representative of the Capitalist, and SpongeBob with his friend Squidward were representatives of the Proletariats.

In addition to Marxism, the study on *SpongeBob SquarePants* has been related to the American Dream ideology by Tarr & Brown (2013). They say, the episodes of “Help Wanted”, “Tea at the TreeDome”, “Sweet and Sour Squid”, and “The Googly Artiste” are picturing the American landscape. The landscapes reveals that there are real people who would have the “happy-go-

lucky SpongeBob" who is always in smiles to of "getting hired in a new job", the meeting with the "self-centered Mr Krabs", the "loyal Friend" Patrick or Squid the neighbor who "just do not see eye-to-eye" (Tarr & Brown, 2013, p. 28). There has not been any article, however, that sees SpongeBob from a popular culture viewpoint that is combined with Marxism ideology.

Based on the information that various T-Shirts and doll miniatures with SpongeBob and his friends' caricatures on it have been sold to boost up the popularity to children and young adults; this phenomenon is adhering with the Popular Culture theory that to increase popularity popular culture producers would mass produce things. The mass production is not only to increase its popularity but also to make possible that it can be bought cheaply by people from all social class (Dukut, 2018).

The cartoon film *SpongeBob SquarePants* is a popular film. It has maintained itself as a product of USA's Popular Culture by having 56.1 million monthly viewers (Tarr & Brown, 2013, p. 21). Not only in the USA, the film had successfully amused 170 countries, with 25 language translations. This condition adheres with the criteria that Popular Culture products are usually projected to be widely spread. In more detail, Dukut informs that Popular Culture products also (1) make consumers feel satisfied, (2) are easily accessible, (3) reflect a society's era, (4) reflect a society's daily life, (5) are manipulative, (6) are non-sustainable, (7) are concerned with profit making (2018, pp. 11-21)

## METHOD

The method used for the analysis is qualitative method. In analyzing *SpongeBob SquarePants* film, the oppressions exercised by Mr. Krabs, the powerful owner, who is representing the capitalistic, bourgeoisie, is compared with SpongeBob and Squidward, the proletariat. In framing the Marxism analysis of oppressions in a capitalist industry, however, the background of Popular Culture profit making conditions are also used as support for Mr. Krabs' actions and decision making. In collecting the data, the library research is used. Blaxter, Hughes & Tight explains:

There is no doubt that the opportunities for searching information via the internet are enormous. Indeed, the accessibility if this information makes it a very attractive source for research...using the internet needs to be systematic and carefully

manages, and requires you to keep an eye on the quality of the information you are accessing (2016, p. 107).

In the library research, books and pdf articles from journals available in the internet are also used to complete the data analysis of the research. The primary research data, which is the cartoon film *SpongeBob SquarePants*; “Drive Thru” is taken from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_hDvWCuOOJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hDvWCuOOJM), [http://en.spongepedia.org/index.php?title=Drive\\_Thru](http://en.spongepedia.org/index.php?title=Drive_Thru) (Episode), [https://SpongeBob.fandom.com/wiki/Squid\\_on\\_Strike/transcript](https://SpongeBob.fandom.com/wiki/Squid_on_Strike/transcript), <https://subscene.com/subtitles/SpongeBob-SquarePants-eighth-season>, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5746wp>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. Oppressions brought by Mr. Krabs’ Popular Culture’s thinking cap

Oppression is a belief system done by one group who has power to control to make the lower class feel less than the upper class. The oppression exercised by Mr. Krabs towards his employees starts when Mr. Krabs discovers the “Drive Thru” unintentionally in his diner when he fixes a little hole with a toothpaste. Dialog 1 shows the conversation Mr. Krabs has with a customer, who comes and sees through the little hole and assumes that Krusty Krab diner is putting in a drive through.

#### Dialog 1

Frank : Hey, you guys put in a drive thru!  
Mr. Krabs : [confused] We did?  
Frank : Great, I'll have three large Krabby Patties, Krabby Fries, a Krabby Cola, and 2 extra-large orders of Krabby Rings. [Sniffs] Is this toothpaste?



**Figure 1:**

**A customer assumes that Krusty Krab is putting in a drive through**

Although initially Mr. Krabs does not intend to make a drive through as proven by his reply, "We did?" when answering the customer's inquiry, the consumer's initiation provides Mr. Krabs with the idea to diversify his business. In a Popular Culture's viewpoint, the customer's reaction to the hole that Mr. Krabs accidentally made is a genius strategy to popularize the business. It gives the opportunity for customers to choose from either dining inside the Krusty Krabs diner, or just buying food products through the window. This buying through the window is adhering to the concept that a Popular Culture product is easily accessible and gives satisfaction to customers, who prefer to just buy something quick without sitting for a long time, while waiting for the waiter to finally serve the customers with the food ordered. A drive through is usually available in fast-food diners. This drive through facility is usually made to meet a society's expectations of the food service, which offers convenience, rapidity and easiness in obtaining the food ordered. Because customers would often be sitting in their car waiting for their food to be delivered in an instant. With this condition, customers are also expecting some kind of practical packaging, so they can eat-on-the-go.

Blešić et al. (2018) argue that the trend of eating in fast-food outlets is influenced by modernization and the fast pace of life by shortening the time it takes to prepare food. Customers who choose fast-food are usually expecting "good service staff, prices, menus, ambiance, and comfort" (Blešić et al., 2018, p. 258). This is why Mr. Krabs feels he has the right to manipulate his employees to work harder, in order to give some kind of fast delivery service to comfort his customers who are eagerly waiting for the food ordered.

Unfortunately, Mr. Krabs forgot the fact that his same employees are also the ones giving service to his dine-in customers. This is why Mr. Krabs' announcement that he wants to open a drive through is responded differently, by SpongeBob and Squidward. While SpongeBob only says, "A drive-- woah!"; in an astonished voice, Squidward, who is always the skeptical one, has sensed the brimming of a problem. Squidward is foreseeing that the drive through will create extra work for the employees. With only one waiter to deal with customers in the diner, he cannot imagine that the same waiter, i.e. SpongeBob will have the hands to deal with hungry lurking drive through customers, who are asking for a quick service due to a possible queue of other hungry-in-the-car customers. To voice his concern, therefore, Squidward responds to Mr. Krabs by stating directly that Mr. Krabs' plan will result in an extra work for him:



Dialog 2

- Squidward : Sounds like a lot of extra work to me.  
Mr. Krabs : You mean *for you*.  
Squidward : [pounds cash register] It'll cost you money.  
Mr. Krabs : Oh nonsense, we'll build it for free!

Viewing from a Marxism perspective, the Dialog obviously shows the occurrence of oppression of labor in terms of working hours by Mr. Krabs to his employees. Squidward realizes the extra work he has to do when Mr. Krabs opens the drive through. However, he cannot do anything but accept the decision since he is only an employee. Squidward foresees that he will not only becomes a cashier but also the man who delivers the fast-food to his newly drive through customers. Meanwhile, SpongeBob SquarePants is not realizing yet that he will be doubling his duty as a cook and waiter for the customers.

Knowing that the drive through initiative can increase his profit-making business, Mr. Krabs actually also realizes that the drive through will definitely prolong his employees' working hour but as the owner of the capital, he does not care about it, as proven by his saying, "You mean *for you*" in response to Squidward's statement, "Sounds like a lot of extra work for me."



**Figure 2:**  
**Squidward does not want to accept this new “drive thru”**

Mr. Krabs' ignorance of his employees' working hour is the sign of his oppression as the capital owner who has power to his employee who is powerless. Figure 2 shows how obvious Mr. Krabs is in exploiting his employees.

Forcing the employee(s) to work hard is a typical oppression in capitalism. In Dialog 1, Squidward who initially has already opposed to the potential of extra work, expresses openly that he hates his present job because

it is too complicated and tiring for him. Squidward's complaint is actually reasonable because the accidental drive through necessitates him to run back and forth from his cash register boat to the drive through service window, which is the hole in the wall. He knows for sure that Mr. Krabs will not compensate extra pay for his extra work. Moreover, he also knows that his waiter friend, SpongeBob will certainly have no time in dealing with the waiter business and also by being the only cook in the diner, too. However, Mr. Krabs ignores Squidward's complaint. He even reprimands Squidward in Dialog 3 below, by yelling "Ahoy, Squidward" when he thinks that Squidward was not serving his customers fast enough. He knows that his customers would be satisfied only if there is faster service.

#### Dialog 3

Squidward : SpongeBob, two large, two medium. I hate my job.  
Dale : Excuse me, I like to place an order. [Squidward walks]  
Mr. Krabs : Ahoy, Squidward.  
Squidward : Mr. Krabs, I am getting really tired of running back and forth. I find it both exhausting and time consuming.

Meanwhile, Dialog 4 shows another evidence of oppression. Here, the oppression is on the negligence to provide a safe working condition for the employee. The safe working condition can be interpreted as a comfortable working space. This condition is adhering also with Popular Culture's way of increasing customers' satisfaction, whereby, a popular place needs to provide a comfortable area, either to enjoy eating the meals provided or as a place to rest for awhile and have a different surrounding as an exchange for the usual kind of home dining. Unfortunately, Dialog 4 shows off a greedy Mr. Krabs, who deliberately sets up his business in a way that can bring him more profit by neglecting to provide better equipment for the work load his staff are doing. Instead of investing in new equipment for the drive through to increase the popularity of his diner, Mr. Krabs tells SpongeBob that he uses napkins to write the menu, tin cans for microphones, and noodles to make a sign.

#### Dialog 4

SpongeBob : Hi, Mr. Krabs.  
Mr. Krabs : Ahoy, SpongeBob. What's with all the booty?

SpongeBob : I got this new microphone system which everybody hears, The sign with a menu on it, and a colorful arrow from the Krusty Krab. It even lights up, see?  
[Light goes on]

Mr. Krabs : OK, but I got something better. A menu made with napkins and tape, a microphone system made of tin cans, and this sign... I made it from an old noodle.

Maximizing the gain of profit to a business is usually done by increasing a number of equipment to result in a fast-making product that are in a mass, and thus can be sold cheaply. However, in this case, Mr. Krabs did not want to take any money out of his business as a modal for better money making. He instead chose to use whatever equipment and facilities he already has, by neglecting his employees' work comfort. Mr. Krabs' willingness to sacrifice his employees as long as he does not have to spend extra money, is no doubt a sign of oppression.

Though judged cruelly by his employees, Mr. Krabs is making ways to manipulate whatever he has to gain as many profits as he can without sacrificing the need to buy additional kitchen equipment. This condition is shown in Dialog 5 below where Mr. Krabs is only focusing on free things that do not necessitate him to use any of the money, he has already collected from his customers and staff's forcible, and underpaid work:

#### Dialog 5

SpongeBob : I don't get it, Mr. Krabs. How is this stuff better than what I bought?

Mr. Krabs : I'm sorry, what?

SpongeBob : How is this stuff better?

Mr. Krabs : Because it was... [Shakes microphone] Free!

The oppression to his staff is continually seen in Dialog 6 where instead of listening to Squidward's complaint and refitting the work place, Mr. Krabs rearranges the place to fit his goal of producing profit.

#### Dialog 6

Mr. Krabs : [Pushes the cash register boat beside the hole in the wall, then pushes the grill along with SpongeBob

- into his office, and finally pushes his chair into the kitchen. Then walks back to Squidward]
- Squidward : [Sarcastically] Oh, wonderful. Peachy. Now how am I supposed to get to SpongeBob, so I can hand them these order tickets here?
- Mr. Krabs : [Smashes a hole to his office revealing SpongeBob] Problem solved!
- SpongeBob : Squidward! Hi!
- Squidward : Oh, it's days like this that make me wish I had gone back to college.

Squidward in Dialog 6 voices his disagreement with the condition of the working space by stating that he wishes to be somewhere else, ie. the college to be precise. But again, Mr. Krabs does not pay attention to Squidward's implied complaint because he was very much focused on the potential for profit. The inability to listen to an employee's problem and follow his own way to gain profit is not only an example of oppression, but it is a show of how Mr. Krab is not patient enough in achieving the American Dream of getting rich quickly without sacrificing to many of Mr. Krab's already earned savings.

The fact that Mr. Krabs only thinks about his financial gain while neglecting the employee's working condition is once again shown in the Dialog 7. It is when Squidward sarcastically gives a bill to Mr. Krabs to pay for his surgery. Squidward claims that he has to undergo an ear surgery because of the bad working condition, where he has to force his ears into listening to a tin can microphone, which is not clear and definitely not a suitable equipment to substitute for a real microphone.

#### Dialog 7

- Mr. Krabs : A bill?! And what is this for?
- Squidward : It's for my ear-replacement surgery! We need a real microphone and speaker!
- Mr. Krabs : Do you have any idea what a real microphone and speaker costs?!
- Squidward : How much?
- Mr. Krabs : Well...they cost as much as...as uh...as a... real microphone and... speaker.

In Dialog 7, Mr. Krabs is seen to avoid taking the responsibility and insist to use the old existing equipment. His confusion to answer Squidward's question on the price of the equipment proves that Mr. Krabs does not even try to check on the price of the equipment, let alone to buy new ones. Mr. Krabs' stinginess is not only on the case of new equipment for his employee. It goes further to the customer who is supposed to be served well.

Mr. Krabs's negligence toward the customer's needs is shown by the scene when Frankie Billy asks Mr. Krabs to compensate his dry-cleaning bill because SpongeBob spilled the food onto him as result of a too narrow drive-through window, and the realization of Mr. Krabs' order to serve his customers quickly. Yet, in reply, Mr. Krabs refuses to give the money to Frankie Billy; instead, he breaks the window to make the hole wider.

#### Dialog 8

Mr. Krabs : [Billy walks by] Can I help you? [Billy gives Mr. Krabs a bill] What?! A bill?! What's this for?

Frankie Billy : It's for my dry cleaning. Your drive-through window is getting smaller now. Size-wise, I mean.

Mr. Krabs : [Crashed the drive-through window with a mallet] There, problem solved. [Smiling]

As shown in Dialog 8, Mr. Krabs' love for money even goes worse by asking his customer to compensate him with money because the customer breaks an inadequate equipment.



**Figure 3:**

**Mr. Krabs crashes the little hole with hammer to create a big hole.**

The form of the capitalist's oppression exists in the form of exploitation to the proletariat. Mr. Krabs as the owner of the drive through exploits not only the

employee by giving them bad conditioned working space, but also the customer by charging them for the damage (read Dialog 9). It is obvious here that Mr. Krabs, the capitalist, is always finding the opportunity to get money even from the small mistake that someone makes.

Dialog 9

Larry : Woah woah. Whoopsy!  
Mr. Krabs : [Notices the can fall of] Hey! You delinquent!  
Squidward : Now you have to replace it.  
Mr. Krabs : Replace what?  
Squidward : The microphone!  
Mr. Krabs : What do I look like? Am I made out of tin cans?  
Squidward : No but that pile of tin cans over there is [Points to a pile of tin cans].  
Mr. Krabs : Good thing we have you around to always point out the obvious!  
Squidward : Good thing you're around to never notice the obvious!  
Larry : [Watches Mr. Krabs fix the microphone] Sorry about that dude.  
Mr. Krabs : Well, that's nice! I'm still billing you for the damages.

From a Popular Culture point of view, the oppression carried out by Mr. Krabs is not good for the longevity of his business. In order to maintain a constant popularity, Mr. Krabs should have found ways not only to satisfy his customers but also his employees. Although at first, Mr. Krabs may have to take money out from his savings to purchase the correct equipment to make his business going, the money he used for his capital assets could have returned quickly with the right way of promoting his products. Additionally, although, as a consequence, he may have to hire more people, the salary he may have to give to the staff may well be quickly returned when the same staff could successfully promote the business by having many customers come and purchase many of the products produced by Krusty Krab.

In Popular Culture's terms, massed produced products from many staff will have produced cheaper products. These same cheap products will eventually help cover up the expenses already paid for running the business. Unfortunately, in Mr. Krabs case, he is willing to get financial gain, only when

he can get his employees and customers to sacrifice for him rather than he sacrificing first for the future success of his business.

### **B. Social Class Representations in *SpongeBob SquarePants* “Drive Thru”**

In this cartoon film, two social classes are being portrayed. The first one is the bourgeoisie represented by Mr. Krabs and the proletariat is represented by Squidward and SpongeBob. Mr. Krabs, the bourgeoisie is the owner of capital, who dominates production, and who often oppresses weaker classes. As stated earlier also, the bourgeoisie is the owner of capital who dominates production and who often oppresses weaker class (Ritzer, p. 60). Mr. Krabs has been consistently shown as a capitalist. He practices exploitative ways to make the money flows smoothly with his workers suffering from their low salary, which did not compensate for their hard work, like exemplified in Dialog 10 below.

#### Dialog 10

Mr. Krabs : Hmm? SpongeBob! I ain't paying you to play dress up! [Squidward becomes exasperated, and sighs deeply] Breathe on your own time. I don't pay you to breathe.

Squidward : You hardly pay us at all.

Mr. Krabs : Oh, that reminds me. I got something for you.  
[He hands his employees envelopes.]

Squidward : What is this!! You're making me pay you to stand at the cash register? What is the meaning of this? Have you gone off the deep end.

In the bill, it is shown that Squidward as an employee has to ridiculously pay up \$1 for breathing, \$5 for talking, \$10 for standing, etc. which is making Squidward angry. This Dialog blows up how Mr. Krabs, the bourgeoisie, is taking advantage of others for the desire to expand the business, in addition to financial gain.

As mentioned, the bourgeoisie or capitalist is on the need to generate money. The bourgeoisie makes the lower class do their works and get the benefits. The bourgeoisie is indeed as the one to do the exploitation. They are the owner of the property and they are the one who makes the rules.

Figure 4 shows the natural characteristic of the bourgeoisie, who always try to expand the market through all nations (Habib, 2005, p. 528). This is

why Mr. Krabs is showing no mercy to laborers who does not want to work for him by his rules.



**Figure 4:**  
Mr. Krabs showing no mercy for the laborers

In a Marxist viewpoint, it is ordinary to find a bourgeois, whose nature is always to extend, enlarge, and develop their wings throughout the world. This is because, it is their natural desire to expand the market. To a businessman who understands the strategy of popular culture, having his products globalized will make ways for gaining profit.

As a proletariat, the working class, or also known as the minority class, SpongeBob and Squidward have no capital. Although often oppressed, unfortunately, they can only sell their own labor in order to survive because there is nothing else, they can sell (Habib, 2005, p. 528).

Squidward, SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star's neighbor, works as the cashier of the Krusty Krab diner. As SpongeBob SquarePants' co-worker, he is an exceptionally critical, and stick-in-the-mud kind of person. Squidward (see Figure 5) would often complain to Mr. Krabs because he believes that as employees, he and SpongeBob should have some kind of rights to be fought for and seized.

However, the fact that Squidward is the laborer, the working class, the proletariat, makes him unable to get the justice he fights for. Mr. Krabs', who unwillingly listens to him nor make any fixations to the working place's condition. It is a typical fate that Squidward should be suffering as a



proletariat, the powerless class. Because of that, he always loses a fight because he is not the owner of the capital.



**Figure 5:**  
**Squidward the cashier**

Meanwhile, SpongeBob (see Figure 6), the other character that belongs to the proletariat class is a different person from Squidward. Being a childish and blissful sea-sponge who lives comfortably in a pineapple with his pet Gary the snail within the city of Bikini Bottom, SpongeBob with his good-natured, always cheerful self; never shows his disappointment to Mr. Krabs. It is not because he does not experience any suffering, yet it is because he does not know that he is being suffered or oppressed by Mr. Krabs. As a broil cook in Krusty Krab diner, who doubles his work as a waiter for customers, SpongeBob always sees himself as a talented cook that is being appreciated by Mr. Krabs.



**Figure 6:**  
**SpongeBob SquarePants**

In real life, there are in fact two kinds of Proletariates. One who knows that he is being oppressed by the capitalist, and one who does not know, or pretends to not know that he is being oppressed, in so far as he gets the pay he needs for a living. These pretending-not-to-know proletariates do not want to protest because they do not want any trouble. The explanation for this, is most likely because, they had a hard time in finding a job and, therefore, do not want to be fired just because they protested to their boss. For these proletariats, so long as they get their wage earnings, they will keep quiet and work as happily as they can be.

## CONCLUSION

Many things in Popular Culture can be taken as an object of a research study such as the study of comics, and graphics novel, yet this study proves that the cartoon film, *SpongeBob Square Pan's* episode of "Drive Thru" is a product of Popular Culture that can be analyzed in a serious way. By using Marxism, this study finds that the relationship of the bourgeoisie and proletariat can represent a true society. As shown in the discussion, *SpongeBob SquarePant's* episode of "Drive Thru" shows the relationship between the bourgeoisie, Mr. Krabs and the proletariat, Squidward and SpongeBob, who are Mr. Krabs' employees. As proletariats, both of the employees have sold their labors to the owner of the capital. Although found oppressed, Squidward and SpongeBob have no choice but to do extra work to give Mr. Krabs the profit he needs.

The reason for Mr. Krabs's oppression to his employees is among others wanting to fulfill the characteristics of popular culture, which is providing good service to customers who would feel relaxed and comfortable with the place. Popular Culture businessmen believes that one of the ways in giving satisfaction to customers is being able to produce mass produced products, which can ensure a cheap price to the vast range of menu that customers can easily choose from a diner like Krusty Krab. For this reason, Squidward expresses that there should have been modern kitchen equipment to ease the work load of the employees. Unfortunately, Mr. Krabs did not want to provide any additional equipment in his kitchen as it means he would need to take out his savings to purchase them. This is why, he labored SpongeBob to make as many foods at a rapid time. Although transformed to an employee, who suddenly have hundreds of hands working to mass produce the ordered food,

SpongeBob stays quiet because he cannot find any other job than being in Krusty Krab diner. Squidward, however, protested at the beginning, but at the end also stayed quiet. The quietness from both, however, have made the place in chaos due to overworked employees and improper business facility management.

Mr. Krabs exercise of using his full power is a form of greed for a Marxist power. He probably knows it is wrong to do so, but he does not care because he aims for a popular Krusty Krab that is globally successful with the minimal means of investment. In the end, however, Mr. Krabs can only cry at the downfall of his cherished Krusty Krab.

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