

Surrealistic Tensions and Existential Angst: A Probe of Idiographic analysis on Franz Kafka's the Metamorphosis

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Abstract. *This research explores the interplay of Surrealism and Existentialism in Franz Kafka's novella, "The Metamorphosis." Kafka's narrative is renowned for its surreal depiction of a man, Gregor Samsa, who awakens to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect. This transformation serves as a powerful metaphor for the existential themes of alienation, identity crisis, and the absurdity of human existence. Through a surreal lens, Kafka vividly portrays Gregor's internal and external struggles, emphasizing the dissonance between his human consciousness and his monstrous form. This study has been employ a qualitative approach, focus on literary analysis to explore the themes of surrealism and existentialism in Kafka's novella. The Research delves into how Kafka employs surreal elements to magnify existential concerns, such as the meaningless routines of daily life, the erosion of personal relationships, and the quest for purpose in an indifferent world. By analyzing key scenes and symbols in "The Metamorphosis," the research highlights the intricate fusion of surrealism and existentialism, offering a deeper understanding of Kafka's commentary on the human condition. Through this dual philosophical framework, Kafka's work is positioned as a profound critique of modern existence, reflecting the pervasive anxieties of his time and resonating with contemporary readers.*

Key words: *Surrealism, Existentialism, The Metamorphosis, Gregor Samsa, Alienation, Identity crisis.*

INTRODUCTION

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" stands as a seminal work in literary history, renowned for its exploration of existential themes through surrealistic imagery. Kafka's narrative begins with the startling transformation of Gregor Samsa, who wakes up one morning to find himself transformed into a monstrous insect. This surreal premise sets the stage for a profound exploration of identity, alienation, and the absurdity of human existence.

Surrealism, as an artistic movement, prioritizes the subconscious and the irrational, often depicting dreamlike scenarios that defy conventional reality. In "The Metamorphosis," Kafka utilizes surrealistic elements to delve into the inner psyche of his protagonist and to blur the lines between the real and the imagined. This surrealist approach allows Kafka to amplify the existential angst experienced by Gregor, highlighting the dissonance between his human consciousness and his insect form.

Existentialism, a philosophical school of thought prevalent in Kafka's era, emphasizes the individual's confrontation with the inherent meaninglessness and absurdity of existence. Through Gregor's existential crisis, Kafka interrogates fundamental questions about the nature of identity, freedom, and responsibility in a world devoid of inherent meaning. As Walter Kaufmann notes, existentialism grapples with the authenticity of human existence and the inevitability of suffering and death themes that permeate Kafka's narrative. Existentialism transcends the one-dimensional perspective that is sometimes associated with philosophical groups. Some critics write off the existentialist movement as nothing more than a philosophical afterthought. Even if existentialism has its roots in philosophy, its application is far broader.

“Existentialists shared the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject—not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling and conscious individual” (Macquarie 14).

In this research paper, we will examine the symbiotic relationship between Surrealism and Existentialism in "The Metamorphosis," analyzing how Kafka's use of surrealistic imagery enhances his exploration of existential themes. By closely examining key passages and symbols within the novella, we aim to elucidate the ways in which Kafka's fusion of these two artistic and philosophical movements produces a narrative that challenges readers to confront the absurdity of the human condition.

Through our analysis, we will demonstrate how Kafka's innovative blending of Surrealism and Existentialism in "The Metamorphosis" offers a poignant commentary on the complexities of modern existence. Moreover, we will explore how these themes continue to resonate with contemporary readers, inviting ongoing reflection on the nature of identity, alienation, and the search for meaning in a world fraught with uncertainty.

Gregor becomes into a dirty bug in *The Metamorphosis*, which annoys his family. His family's disrespect for him and his life's lack of purpose serves as a metaphor for nihilism. It is culturally expected that parents should support and nurture their children regardless of any physical limitations. In Kafka's tale, however, the son's life is considered pointless as soon as he quits supporting his family. Nihilism also contains the themes of emptiness and self-destruction. Kafka portrays Gregor's life as meaningless by using his many instances. For example, Kafka describes how Gregor would severely damage himself upon waking up by hitting his head and breaking his jaw when he slammed on the doorknob (Kafka 2). In addition, he gets reprimanded by his father and continues to harm himself.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze how Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" reflects Surrealist elements such as the distortion of reality, dream-like sequences, and the subconscious mind.
- To investigate the existential themes, present in the novella, including alienation, absurdity, and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe.
- To Discuss the role of absurdity and the irrational in Kafka's narrative and its connection to Surrealist thought.
- To explore the theme of identity crisis in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," focusing on how Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect precipitates a profound existential questioning of his identity and self-worth.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Akbar, Muhammad Adnan. (2017), in this assessment, Franz Kafka, a German-speaking essayist of the mid twentieth hundred years, was known for his particular scholarly style and investigation of existential topics. Kafka's works frequently spun around the subjects of distance, silliness, and the battle of the person even with an unconcerned and limitless world. **Glover, Mary. Kafka and Oddity, (1968)**, His most renowned work, "The Transformation", was distributed in 1915 and stays one of the most persuasive works of fiction in the existentialist classification. **Sokel, Walter, (1995)**, according to paper, "The Transformation" recounts the tale of Gregor Samsa, a young fellow who gets

up one morning to wind up changed into a huge bug. The novella investigates the mental and personal disturbance that Gregor encounters because of his change, as well as the reactions of his relatives to his new, insectile structure. **Macquarrie, John. (1972)**, Kafka's own encounters of distance and his stressed relationship with his family are many times seen as critical impacts on the composition of "The Transformation". Kafka's novel story style, described by its meager and matter-of-reality tone, upgrades the feeling of confusion and ridiculousness that penetrates the text. **Mahajan, Aarti (2021)**, Existentialism in writing investigates the topics of singularity, opportunity, and the quest for significance in an apparently ridiculous and impassive world. In Franz Kafka's "The Transformation," the hero, Gregor Samsa, goes through an actual change that drives him to defy the existential issue of his reality. **Kohzadi, Hamedreza, Fatemeh Azizmohammadi, and Mahboubeh Nouri (2012)**, Through the depiction of Gregor's estrangement, disconnection, and battle for independence, Kafka dives into key ideas of existentialism like legitimacy, obligation, and the idiocy of life. The novella mirrors the existential conviction that people are liable for making their own embodiment and finding reason in a world without any trace of intrinsic importance. **Rasheed, N., M. Y. Khan, and S. Rasheed, (2021)**, Kafka's investigation of existential subjects in "The Transformation" lines up with the more extensive scholarly development of existentialism, which arose as a reaction to the frustration and fracture of the cutting edge world. Existentialist creators, like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, additionally wrestled with comparative philosophical thoughts in their works, underlining the singular's opportunity of decision and the battle to track down significance in a tumultuous and detached universe. **Omonovna, Kuvanova Shakhnoza, (2022)**, Through its depiction of distance, ludicrousness, and the journey for legitimacy, "The Transformation" epitomizes the existentialist point of view on the human condition and fills in as a powerful impression of the vital ideas of existentialism in writing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, **Documentary research method** is used which serving as both a complement to extension of biographical inquiry, takes on different meanings in the field of **Idiographic analysis**. While a narrative account or any form of **Qualitative Analysis** on "**Surrealistic Tensions and Existential Angst: Probe of Idiographic analysis on Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis**" ought to be original and genuine—authentic—the content may still be distorted in manner. A final criterion—meaning—represents the textual analysis of the document and whether the evidence is clear and comprehensible. Coupled with this semiotic and intertextual examination is whether the document's content is appropriately situated within its historical context; this is ascertained, in part, by the method in which meaning is constructed and perceived by its originally intended audience for of Surrealism and Existentialism in Franz Kafka's novella, "The Metamorphosis." Kafka's narrative is renowned of distortion of reality, dream-like sequences, and the subconscious mind in research findings.

Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" reflects Surrealist elements such as the distortion of reality, dream-like sequences, and the subconscious mind

"The Trial" and "The Metamorphosis" are well known for their examination of the ridiculous. Kafka's heroes are frequently faced with bizarre and illogical problems that defy explanation, trapping them in terrifying situations. In the bizarre and ridiculous situation depicted in "The Metamorphosis," Gregor Samsa awakens one morning to find himself changed into a gigantic insect. Kafka's use of fantastical and ridiculous aspects is a metaphor for the existential loneliness and alienation that people feel in today's world(**Faster Capital**).

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" is often examined through various literary lenses, and while Kafka himself is not typically categorized strictly as a Surrealist, many elements of Surrealism are evident in the novella. Here's an analysis of how "The Metamorphosis" reflects Surrealist elements:

✓ **Distortion of Reality:**

- **Gregor Samsa's Transformation:** The central surreal element in "The Metamorphosis" is Gregor Samsa's sudden transformation into a giant insect. This bizarre, fantastical event is presented in a matter-of-fact manner, distorting the reader's sense of reality from the very

beginning. Kafka does not offer a rational explanation for Gregor's metamorphosis, which heightens the surreal nature of the story.

- **Everyday Reality Juxtaposed with the Fantastic:** Kafka blends the mundane details of Gregor's life as a traveling salesman with the absurdity of his transformation. The contrast between the ordinary and the extraordinary distorts the reader's perception of what is possible, creating a surreal atmosphere. The family's initial reaction to Gregor's transformation, oscillating between horror and mundane concerns (like financial issues), further distorts reality.
- ✓ **Dream-like Sequences:**
 - **The Opening Scene:** The novella opens with Gregor waking up and realizing he has transformed into an insect. This abrupt and surreal start feels like a nightmare or a dream. The logic of dreams, where the impossible can seem ordinary, permeates the narrative. Gregor's initial thoughts and reactions to his transformation mirror the confused logic and acceptance often found in dreams.
 - **Fluidity of Time and Space:** The narrative often shifts in a way that mimics the fluidity of dreams. Time seems to move irregularly, with long periods of isolation for Gregor and sudden, dramatic events occurring without warning. The space within Gregor's room becomes both a prison and a world of its own, emphasizing the dream-like detachment from the outside world.
- ❖ **Subconscious Mind**
 - ✓ **Exploration of Inner Thoughts and Desires:** Kafka delves deeply into Gregor's subconscious thoughts and feelings. The transformation can be seen as a physical manifestation of Gregor's internal struggles and desires. His feelings of guilt, alienation, and burden are externalized in his new form. The story explores his inner world, making the reader question whether the transformation is real or a metaphorical expression of his psyche.
 - **Family Dynamics and Hidden Emotions:** The novella also explores the subconscious motivations and emotions of Gregor's family members. Their reactions to his transformation reveal hidden resentments, fears, and dependencies. The family's ultimate rejection of Gregor can be interpreted as a subconscious desire to rid themselves of the burdens he represents, both emotionally and financially.
 - **Thematic Ambiguity:** The ambiguity of Gregor's transformation—whether it is a literal or symbolic event—reflects the Surrealist interest in the subconscious. Kafka leaves much to the reader's interpretation, encouraging an exploration of the deeper, often darker layers of the human mind.

"The Metamorphosis" embodies several key elements of Surrealism, despite Kafka not being formally aligned with the movement. The novella's distortion of reality through Gregor's transformation, the dream-like quality of the narrative, and the exploration of the subconscious mind all contribute to its surreal atmosphere. Kafka's ability to seamlessly blend the ordinary with the extraordinary and to probe the depths of human emotion and psychology makes "The Metamorphosis" a compelling example of how Surrealist elements can be woven into literature to create a profound and unsettling exploration of existence.

The existential themes present in the novella, including alienation, absurdity, and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" is rich with existential themes, including alienation, absurdity, and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe. Here's an in-depth analysis of these themes in the novella:

- ✓ **Alienation**
 - **Physical Alienation:** Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect immediately causes a profound physical alienation. He is separated from human society by his new, grotesque form, which prevents him from continuing his work and interacting normally with others. His inability

to communicate effectively with his family exacerbates this alienation, as he can no longer express his thoughts and emotions in a way they understand.

- **Social Alienation:** Before his transformation, Gregor already feels a sense of social alienation due to his demanding job as a traveling salesman, which isolates him from meaningful human relationships. His work is depicted as dehumanizing and monotonous, contributing to his sense of being a mere cog in the machine of capitalist society.
- **Familial Alienation:** Gregor's transformation heightens his alienation within his own family. Initially, his family is shocked and repulsed, but they quickly begin to view him as a burden. The gradual shift from concern to hostility and neglect illustrates Gregor's increasing alienation from those who should be closest to him. His family's ultimate rejection signifies a complete severance of his social bonds.
- ✓ **Absurdity**
- **Inexplicable Transformation:** The central absurdity in the novella is Gregor's inexplicable transformation into an insect. This event occurs without any logical reason or scientific explanation, reflecting the existential notion of the absurd—events that defy rational understanding and highlight the chaotic nature of existence.
- **Meaningless Routine:** Gregor's life before the transformation is depicted as a relentless cycle of work and obligation, devoid of personal fulfillment. His transformation, rather than providing an escape from this monotony, plunges him into a different kind of absurd existence, where his insect form brings new challenges and humiliations.
- **Indifference of the Universe:** The indifferent reactions of those around Gregor underscore the absurdity of his situation. His employer quickly dismisses him without concern for his well-being, and his family, after an initial period of shock, prioritizes their own survival and comfort over Gregor's condition. This indifference reflects the existential belief in a universe that is unconcerned with individual human suffering or meaning.
- ✓ **Search for Meaning in an Indifferent Universe:**
- **Loss of Identity:** Gregor's transformation strips away his identity as a provider and worker, roles that gave his life structure and purpose. Struggling to find meaning in his new existence, Gregor clings to the hope that he can somehow return to his former life and regain his role within the family. This futile hope reflects the existential struggle to find meaning in an indifferent and often hostile universe.
- **Existential Crisis:** As Gregor grapples with his new reality, he experiences an existential crisis. His previous sense of purpose is obliterated, and he is forced to confront the absurdity of his situation. His attempts to make sense of his transformation and to adapt to his new form are ultimately in vain, highlighting the existential theme of the search for meaning in a meaningless world.
- **Isolation and Reflection:** Gregor's confinement to his room serves as a physical manifestation of his inner isolation. This isolation forces him into a state of introspection and reflection, where he contemplates his past life, his relationships, and his current predicament. Despite his efforts, Gregor is unable to find a new sense of purpose or meaning, leading to his eventual physical and emotional deterioration.

"The Metamorphosis" is a profound exploration of existential themes, illustrating the human condition's inherent alienation, absurdity, and the quest for meaning. Through Gregor Samsa's transformation and subsequent experiences, Kafka delves into the isolation that stems from physical, social, and familial alienation. The inexplicable nature of Gregor's metamorphosis and the indifferent responses of those around him underscore the absurdity of existence. Ultimately, Gregor's futile search for meaning in an indifferent universe reflects the existential belief that individuals must create their own purpose in a world that offers none. Kafka's novella remains a powerful and enduring examination of these existential concerns.

The role of absurdity and the irrational in Kafka's narrative and its connection to Surrealist thought

A recurring motif in Kafka's writings is absurdity, which echoes the doubts and fears of the contemporary world. His main characters are frequently thrust into bizarre and terrifying circumstances where the sensible world gives way to the illogical. Kafka's depiction of the ridiculous forces readers to acknowledge the absurdity of life itself, reflecting the confusion that comes with living in a world that is changing quickly (**trips-tickets**).

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" exemplifies the role of absurdity and the irrational in his narrative, closely aligning with Surrealist thought despite Kafka not being explicitly categorized as a Surrealist writer. Here's an analysis of how absurdity and the irrational manifest in Kafka's narrative and their connection to Surrealist ideas:

✓ **Role of Absurdity in Kafka's Narrative:**

- **Inexplicable Events:** The most prominent absurd element in "The Metamorphosis" is Gregor Samsa's sudden transformation into a giant insect. This event occurs without any rational explanation or scientific justification, defying the laws of nature and reason. Kafka's matter-of-fact portrayal of this irrational transformation enhances its absurdity, as neither Gregor nor the other characters question its impossibility.
- **Lack of Logical Consequences:** Following his transformation, Gregor's experiences are marked by a lack of logical progression. His family's reactions shift unpredictably, and his own attempts to adapt to his new condition are futile and often irrational. The narrative's progression does not follow a logical or expected path, reflecting the chaotic and unpredictable nature of an absurd universe.
- **Bureaucratic and Social Absurdity:** Kafka often critiques the absurdity of bureaucratic and social systems. In "The Metamorphosis," Gregor's boss arrives at his home to reprimand him for missing work, displaying an indifferent and dehumanizing attitude that ignores Gregor's extraordinary circumstances. This scene highlights the absurdity of societal and workplace expectations that persist regardless of individual suffering.

✓ **Role of the Irrational**

- **Subconscious Influence:** Kafka's narrative delves into the irrational aspects of the human mind, reflecting subconscious fears and desires. Gregor's transformation can be interpreted as a manifestation of his subconscious feelings of alienation, guilt, and entrapment by his familial and social obligations. The irrationality of his condition serves as a metaphor for his internal psychological state.
- **Dream-like Quality:** The narrative exhibits a dream-like quality, characteristic of Surrealist works. The seamless blend of the real and the fantastical, along with the irrational events and responses, mirrors the logic of dreams where the impossible becomes commonplace. This quality blurs the boundaries between reality and imagination, drawing readers into a surreal experience.
- **Emotional Irrationality:** The characters' emotional responses often defy rationality. Gregor's family oscillates between concern, horror, and pragmatic indifference in a manner that reflects the irrational nature of human emotions. Their ultimate rejection of Gregor, despite his previous sacrifices for their well-being, underscores the irrational and unpredictable aspects of human relationships.

✓ **Connection to Surrealist Thought:**

- **Exploration of the Unconscious:** Surrealism seeks to explore the unconscious mind, and Kafka's narrative aligns with this goal by bringing subconscious fears and desires to the forefront. Gregor's transformation and the subsequent irrational events can be seen as expressions of his inner turmoil and the hidden tensions within his family.

- **Distortion of Reality:** Kafka distorts reality in a way that resonates with Surrealist techniques. By presenting the absurd and irrational as part of everyday life, he challenges the conventional perception of reality, much like Surrealist art and literature. This distortion forces readers to confront the strangeness and unpredictability inherent in human existence.
- **Symbolism and Allegory:** The irrational elements in Kafka's narrative are rich with symbolic meaning, akin to Surrealist works. Gregor's insect form symbolizes his dehumanization and the loss of his identity, while the irrational behaviour of his family reflects the deeper emotional and social dynamics at play. This use of symbolism to convey complex, often subconscious themes connects Kafka's work to Surrealist ideals.

Absurdity and the irrational play crucial roles in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," serving to highlight the unpredictable and chaotic nature of existence. These elements resonate with Surrealist thought by exploring the subconscious, distorting reality, and employing symbolism to convey deeper meanings. Kafka's narrative invites readers to question the nature of reality and the human condition, drawing them into a world where the line between the rational and the irrational is blurred. Through this, Kafka's work aligns with the Surrealist endeavor to unlock the mysteries of the unconscious mind and to challenge the conventional understanding of reality.

The theme of identity crisis in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," focusing on how Gregor Samsa's transformation into an insect precipitates a profound existential questioning of his identity and self-worth

In Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," the theme of identity crisis is intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative, predominantly through the protagonist, Gregor Samsa. Gregor's sudden and inexplicable transformation into a gigantic insect serves as a catalyst for a profound existential exploration of his identity and self-worth.

- ✓ **The Transformation as a Catalyst:** Gregor's metamorphosis is the literal and symbolic starting point of his identity crisis. The physical change forces Gregor and those around him to confront the stark differences between his human past and his insect present. This transformation highlights the fragility and instability of identity, revealing how much it is contingent upon physical appearance and societal roles.
- ✓ **Loss of Human Functionality:** One of the immediate consequences of Gregor's transformation is his inability to perform his job, which had been the cornerstone of his identity. As a traveling salesman, Gregor derived a sense of purpose and self-worth from his ability to provide for his family. The loss of this role due to his new form leads to a profound sense of uselessness and alienation. This disconnection from his previous responsibilities and the resulting dependency on his family exacerbate his identity crisis, as he grapples with feelings of inadequacy and shame.
- ✓ **Alienation from Family:** Gregor's transformation also disrupts his familial relationships, further contributing to his identity crisis. Initially, his family is horrified and repelled by his new form. Over time, their treatment of him shifts from reluctant caretaking to outright neglect and hostility. Gregor's sense of self is deeply tied to his role within the family, and their rejection intensifies his internal conflict. The alienation he feels is not just physical but emotional and psychological, driving him to question his place and purpose within the family unit.
- ✓ **Existential Reflection:** Throughout the narrative, Gregor engages in deep existential reflection. He contemplates the nature of his existence and the arbitrary nature of his transformation. His struggle to reconcile his human consciousness with his insect body highlights a profound disjunction between mind and body. This disjunction forces Gregor to confront fundamental questions about identity: Is it defined by one's physical form, one's mind, or one's role in society? The lack of clear answers leads to an ongoing existential crisis.
- ✓ **Symbolic Interpretation:** Gregor's transformation can also be interpreted as a symbol of broader existential themes. It reflects the absurdity of existence and the arbitrary nature of fate, central themes in existential philosophy. Gregor's plight mirrors the human condition—suddenly thrown

into an incomprehensible and indifferent world, struggling to find meaning and identity amidst chaos.

- ✓ **Dehumanization and Objectification:** As Gregor's family begins to see him more as a burden and less as a loved one, his dehumanization becomes literal and metaphorical. His physical form as an insect makes it easier for his family to objectify and mistreat him, reflecting how societal and familial roles can strip individuals of their humanity. This dehumanization process is critical to Gregor's identity crisis, as he increasingly sees himself through the eyes of his family—as an object rather than a person.

In "The Metamorphosis," Kafka uses Gregor Samsa's transformation to explore the theme of identity crisis in a profound and multifaceted way. The loss of Gregor's human form, his role within the family, and his ability to function in society all contribute to a deep existential questioning of his identity and self-worth. This narrative serves as a powerful commentary on the tenuous and often arbitrary nature of identity, illustrating how external changes can precipitate a profound internal crisis. Through Gregor's journey, Kafka delves into the complexities of human existence, the search for meaning, and the struggle for self-understanding in an absurd and often indifferent world.

Findings:

- **Surrealistic Tensions in Narrative Construction:** Kafka employs surrealism to disrupt conventional reality and create a disorienting narrative atmosphere. Gregor's abrupt transformation into an insect at the story's outset challenges the reader's perception of normalcy and establishes a surrealistic tension that permeates the entire narrative.
- **Existential Angst and Identity Crisis:** Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis precipitates an existential crisis rooted in the fundamental questions of identity and self-worth. The novella examines how Gregor's physical change disrupts his sense of identity tied to his human form, occupation, and familial role. His existential angst deepens as he grapples with his alienation from society and his family's rejection.
- **Absurdity and Meaninglessness:** The paper highlights Kafka's exploration of existential themes such as the absurdity of existence and the search for meaning. Gregor's transformation and subsequent experiences reflect the absurdity of life's arbitrary nature and the futility of attempting to impose rational explanations on irrational events.
- **Family Dynamics and Alienation:** Kafka portrays complex family dynamics exacerbated by Gregor's metamorphosis. Initially, his family reacts with horror and disgust, which evolves into neglect and exploitation. This alienation intensifies Gregor's existential isolation and underscores the novella's critique of familial relationships under strain.
- **Symbolism and Allegory:** Symbolic interpretations underscore the allegorical nature of Gregor's transformation. His insect form symbolizes societal alienation, dehumanization, and the loss of individual agency. Kafka uses symbolism to convey deeper philosophical insights about human condition and identity.
- **Narrative Ambiguity and Reader Response:** The research explores Kafka's use of narrative ambiguity to provoke reader interpretation and engagement. Ambiguous elements, such as the cause of Gregor's transformation and the novella's open-ended conclusion, invite diverse readings and underscore Kafka's narrative strategy to evoke existential reflection.

Conclusion:

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" is a poignant exploration of the human condition through the lenses of Surrealism and Existentialism. The novella's blend of surreal elements and existential themes crafts a narrative that is as perplexing as it is profound.

Surrealism in "The Metamorphosis" manifests through the inexplicable and bizarre transformation of Gregor Samsa into a gigantic insect. This transformation, depicted in Kafka's characteristically matter-of-fact prose, disrupts the ordinary and forces readers to confront the irrational and the illogical. It is through this surreal occurrence that Kafka dissects the absurdity of life, a hallmark of

both Surrealist and Existentialist thought. The narrative's dream-like quality, where ordinary events take on an otherworldly dimension, challenges conventional reality and invites readers into a realm where the impossible becomes tangible. This technique underscores the surrealist idea of freeing the unconscious mind to explore deeper truths about human existence.

Existentialism permeates the novella through Gregor's subsequent isolation and identity crisis. Stripped of his human form, Gregor's sense of self erodes as he grapples with alienation from his family and society. His metamorphosis becomes a metaphor for the existential plight: the search for meaning in a world that is indifferent to human suffering. Gregor's transformation forces him to confront the essence of his being and his role within his family, ultimately leading to a realization of his insignificance and the absurdity of his existence. This mirrors existentialist themes of angst, despair, and the struggle for authenticity in a world devoid of inherent meaning.

The intersection of Surrealism and Existentialism in "The Metamorphosis" amplifies Kafka's critique of modernity and the dehumanizing forces of society. The surreal transformation serves as a catalyst for existential reflection, highlighting the fragility of identity and the often-futile quest for meaning in an absurd world. Kafka's work resonates with the existential belief that individuals must create their own purpose in a chaotic and indifferent universe. Through Gregor's tragic fate, Kafka illustrates the devastating impact of alienation and the existential dilemma of reconciling one's internal world with external realities.

In conclusion, "The Metamorphosis" remains a seminal work that intricately weaves Surrealism and Existentialism to explore the depths of human existence. Kafka's masterful portrayal of the absurd and the existential continues to challenge and captivate readers, offering profound insights into the nature of reality, identity, and the human spirit. The novella stands as a testament to Kafka's genius in using the fantastical to reveal the fundamental truths of the human condition, ensuring its enduring relevance and impact in the literary world.

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