

# Research on the rationality and irrationality of Kafka

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**Abstract:** For a long time, the relationship between rationality and irrationality has occupied Kafka's philosophical thinking. He opposes absolute rationality, but at the same time has concerns about pure irrationality. The analysis of Kafka's creative thought and text world from the Angle of the relationship between rationality and irrationality can provide us with a new way to study Kafka. This paper explores Kafka's creative idea in the text world of the harmony of rationality and irrationality, the interweaving of reality and dream.

**Key words:** Kafka; Rationality; Irrationality; contradiction

In Kafka's textual world, we can see his opposition to absolute rationality, such as his so-called real winners to arrange tragic ending, but we can also find Kafka's fear of pure irrationality, in his works, those artists who are intoxicated with their own world and pursue non-secularization ultimately do not get what they seek. In Kafka's works, rationality and irrationality are in a game of chess, as if life is full of absurdity. Studying this kind of antagonism gives us some surprises and makes us gain more from Kafka's works.

## 1. The contrast between the absurd and bizarre story setting and real life

Kafka's texts often have some seemingly absurd Settings, but these Settings appear inexplicably, and this paper will not give a reasonable explanation for these Settings, which makes Kafka's texts full of darkness. For example, Joseph K committed a crime, but this paper does not explain what crime he committed, the high-flying man lost two swings and wept bitterly, why the two swings are so important, the text does not explain. These absurd Settings have no reason and no result. When readers read them, they feel a sense of tension. They don't know what causes the characters and stories in the text to become like this, and they don't know what direction the story will go in the next step.

This kind of inner desire can not be satisfied, or even can not understand what the inner desire is, which makes the contradiction between rationality and irrationality extremely fierce. From the analysis of the text, we find that Kafka's inner world seems to be separated from the outer real world. His thinking in the inner world is full of rationality and objective, but the outer world always fails to meet his inner needs. This separation makes Kafka's texts show deep loneliness, fear, anxiety, self-examination and desire. The so-called "light of reason" can never penetrate the eternal darkness of existence. It seems appropriate to use this sentence to describe Kafka. His thinking of the world surpasses the real world, which leads to the close relationship between reason and irrationality. In Kafka's texts, characters wake up accused of something they didn't do, open their eyes as a giant beetle, or fill their lives with tragedy by devoting their lives to the pursuit of something that isn't real. The Trial tells the story of the bizarre experience of Joseph K, the protagonist, who was arrested without reason and executed without reason. Its performance is full of absurdity and absurdity, highlighting the spirit of black humor everywhere, and highlighting the artistic characteristics of horror and comical integration. The ambiguity of the text makes the characters in the story seem to have no way out, as if there is no way out in real life. The sense of belonging created by ambiguity and blank space makes the world full of unspeakable pain and darkness.

## 2. The contradiction between the close to life details and the bizarre plot

Kafka excelled at using absurdity to express truth. As Nietzsche said, "truth is a lie." This idea runs through Kafka's work. He wrote absurd plots in a calm state of mind, and this absurdity exactly reflects the real world. The indifference, cruelty and darkness of the real world are explained in such a nonchalant and simple way, which is the fundamental reason why Kafka's works are constantly studied by people. Standing between dream and reality, Kafka created a text that is not clear whether it is the story of the real world or the story in the dream, leaving people with infinite reverie and speculation. It is in the dream that people have a moment to reflect on the darkness of reality, and it is the reality reflected in the dream that makes the dream seem absurd. Real details create absurd events, while absurd events create real feelings; It is at this level of perception of the soul and of thought that one can face Kafka so intimately.

In Kafka's texts, life details are always used to reflect the story. For example, the place of the story is an ordinary bedroom, the hero of the story may be an ordinary salesman, but there are also common animals such as dogs and moles. However, these ordinary people and things in life have absurd stories, which reflects Kafka's pure thinking about life and the profound confrontation between the rational thinking and the irrational reality. Both realistic and non-realistic, neither logical nor realistic, this contradiction allows readers to carry on profound and profound thinking in plain and simple language. Kafka is good at inducing reflection, and his works often only use a simple declarative sentence to bring readers into the absurd text world. For example, "You listen, I sentence you to drown in a river." "One morning Gregor Samsa awoke from restless dreams to find himself transformed in his bed into a giant beetle." Such a declarative sentence on how to describe the simplest things in life makes the reader forget to doubt its veracity. Kafka also makes the absurdity surprising with plenty of detail, such as Gregor's careful examination of his own figure: "When he raised his head a little, he saw his domed brown belly divided into so many curved films that the quilts could hardly hold on to the tips of his belly and were about to fall off completely." Gregor goes to look at a painting: "The picture is of a lady in a leather hat and a fur scarf, sitting upright and offering to the viewer a leather muff that

covers her entire forearm.” This real-life scene makes the story seem perfectly normal. But it is these perfectly normal details that express the irony of the real world. When appreciating the portrait, Gregor not only saw his own situation, he even saw the universal existence of the whole human meaningless state, no matter the upper class noblewoman, or the middle and lower class workers can not escape this inhuman existence, in the extremely realistic scene to express people can not control their own fate sadness. Most of his works are dominated by absurd symbols and expression techniques, reflecting one artistic world after another. Kafka expressed his thoughts on the real world in this absurdity.

What the book *Metamorphosis* wants to express is not only the metamorphosis of “people into beetles”, but also the reflection of the author’s distorted moral concepts, values, life attitudes and personal emotions. This absurd plot seems to reflect the family relations in real life more deeply. After becoming a Beetle, Gregor’s feelings and love for his family have not changed. On the contrary, the other three members of his family have undergone tremendous transformation during the whole process. The author uses the visible “transformation” to reflect the invisible transformation, which makes the whole story full of philosophy, profound allegory and naked irony. *Metamorphosis* is regarded as the pinnacle of Kafka. In addition to *Metamorphosis*, *The Trial* and *The Castle* are two representative works of Kafka, both of which reflect the chess game between rationality and irrationality in Kafka’s works.

### 3. The contradiction between rationality and irrationality in the interpretation of the works

When analyzing the content of Kafka’s texts and his creative ideas, we can’t tell whether he describes our real world or not. When interpreting Kafka’s works, we can only use the same contradictory statement to represent him. In Kafka’s text world, the center is dark and the edge is fuzzy; From this perspective, Kafka is unexplainable. In studying Kafka, we do not know whether we are studying the real Kafka or another Kafka in our own minds. It is as if any attempt to explain Kafka’s text and his ideas is in itself absurd and futile; The researcher’s attempt to enter Kafka’s dream is as futile as Kafka’s K. zigzagging his way to the castle.

For the short story “The Gate of Law”, countless researchers have interpreted it. Some people say that the gate of law is explained by “blind people touching the elephant”, some people think that the gate of law symbolizes the strict hierarchy, and some people think that the gate of law does not have so many things to explore. Behind the door of the Fa is we who recognize a disposition that the rational self standing in front of the door cannot enter. Kafka used literature to explain the contradiction between human irrationality and rationality. There is only a door between them, but we have never broken through the barrier between the two. The guard of the door did not forcibly prevent the country people from entering the door, and he even hinted the possibility of the country people entering the door in language; The real problem is that people do not have confidence in their true selves, do not dare to grow up to be their true selves, and there is a fear of them. The self behind the door is a place where country folk can never get to. Kafka used these country people to explain the bewilderment and lack of self in the modern mind.

The *Judgment* also reflects Kafka’s thoughts on rationality and irrationality. Kafka’s blank space in the novel keeps the reader wondering who sentenced Georg to death. Or what was Georg really thinking when he threw himself into the water? Was it his ambiguous relationship with his father? Did he blame himself for his father’s unreasonable accusations? Did he see the promise of himself in his father? This contradictory relationship between father and son is also a chess match between Kafka’s fear of the real world and his inner rational thinking. In this novel, Kafka expresses his inner fear in a closed and narrow environment. For example, Kafka describes his father’s room as a small room reached through a narrow passage with closed Windows and unbearable darkness. This environment seems to be what Kafka feared in his heart. He was afraid of the real world where he could not see the direction clearly in the dark, and of the confrontation between his highly rational thinking and irrationality in his heart. Because the lonely friend far away in Russia was the “other son of the father”, he was Kafka’s true self, an irrational self with vivid experience, the one Georg or Kafka wanted to live as, the sadness, jealousy, hatred that made him single-handed to crush Georg’s letter, To shatter his false illusions about the world in this way, and to entrust his father with the judgment of Georg, the ultimate judgment on his soul-betraying flesh, a judgment that is also a game of chess between reason and irrationality.

The ever-existing contradiction between reason and irrationality is Kafka’s thinking about the world, about himself and about human nature. He reflects this thinking in literature, and this contradiction also interferes with readers’ interpretation of his text. Kafka presented his works and described the world as he understood it, but this world was not believed by others, and he described the world in a calm and ordinary way. When others interpreted the world described by Kafka, it was just like Kafka yawning, some people said he had a cold, some people said he was sleepy, some people said he was tired. And he says, sheepishly, I was just careless. Kafka’s works let us know that some things in the world are unexplainable and need not be taken seriously. Keeping an open and humorous attitude to look at the world is also a good attitude towards life.

### Peroration

The purpose of explaining Kafka’s works from the Angle of rationality and irrationality is not to identify whether Kafka’s performance is the real world, but to find new possibilities for the study of Kafka’s works. Excessive interpretation may lead to the wrong path and lose sight of the prospect. With an open attitude, we can see both rationality and irrationality in Kafka’s works, less interpretation of the text level and more subjective perception of humanity level, which may make us gain more harvest in studying Kafka and his works.

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This paper is a scientific research project funded by the Education Department of Hunan Province in 2021: A Study on the Characteristics and Influencing Factors of Kafka's Literary Creation: A Case Study of Kafka's Four Works (Project No. : 21C0558) Achievement paper.