Dialogue in the Works of Franz Kafka

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Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis examines the dialogue in the fictional prose of Franz Kafka. The word dialogue is taken to mean the exchange of words between the figures, but of necessity other attendant forms of communication, gestures, sounds, etc., are taken into consideration. The discussion of dialogue also leads quite naturally to a discussion of the relationship between Kafka's protagonist and the world around him. After focusing on the author's concept of community and the role communication plays in the protagonist's relationship to it, the study isolates specific aspects of the conversational situation and dialogue itself. The final and largest segment of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of the dialogue in the novel Der Prozeß, showing how the protagonist is worn down by an accumulation of defeats in verbal encounters. In addition, this section also includes a biographical digression, giving new information about Kafka's role as an entrepreneur as well as about possible sources for his novel Der Verschollene.

Abstrait

Le but de cette thèse est une analyse du dialogue de la prose de Franz Kafka. Le mot dialogue exprime l'échange des mots, la conversation, entre les participants. Nécessairement les autres formes d'expression, commes les gestes, les sons, etc. doivent également être considérés. En analysant le dialogue on est également concerné avec les relations du protagoniste de Kafka et ses alentours. Premièrement la thèse examine les opinions générales de l'auteur concernant l'ensemble de la société, ensuite entre la société et le protagoniste. L'étude démontre certains aspects spécifiques des conditions dans lesquelles les conversations ont lieu ainsi que le dialogue même. La partie principale de la thèse se concerne avec une analyse du dialogue dans le roman Der Prozeß. Le protagoniste est écrasé par une série de défaites verbaux. Dans ce chapitre on touche à la biographie de l'auteur. On trace l'origine possible des personnages dans son roman Der Verschollene et on dévoile même quelques nouveaux aspects de Kafka en tant que homme d'affaires.

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Introduction

Today, fifty years after Franz Kafka's death, the volume of secondary literature on the author and his work had expanded to such a degree that one cannot hope to master it all. This statement is itself outdated; it is the standard phrase that opens most theses. In a recent review of yet another book on Kafka, Hans Reiss depicts the scholar's plight and only hope: "The plethora of Kafka-criticism confronts any critic or editor of Kafka with an unpalatable choice, either he has to read the lot, probably cluttering up his mind with misleading speculations and wild surmises in the process, or he has to thrust his way boldy through the thicket of secondary literature, taking note of a few works chosen more or less at random."[1] The second alternative is sound advice which I intend to follow although the inclusion of ideas of other critics in my discussion does not rest on pure chance. A complete history of the secondary literature on Kafka is not necessary. Good accounts of Kafka-criticism can be found in several reports which have appeared in past years.[2] In the following I propose to mention only those areas and problems of investigation that, in my view, have bearing on the topic of this thesis. No attempt can be made to provide definite answers to questions raised by differing views. It is more a matter of stating my position on the results of previous work and explaining how it can be related to this thesis.

Generally speaking the secondary literature dealing with Kafka's literary work concentrates on that familiar pair, form and content, on one of the two alone or both together. The former field includes discussions of characteristics of Kafka's style, his syntax, use of metaphor, patterns that can be discerned in his plots or his re-occurring use of certain words, as well as the applicability of standard literary terms to describe his prose.[3] To explain content, that is, to explain what the author is saying in a work like the novel Der Prozeß, critics have used the author's biography, religion, philosophy, and psychology to name only some major avenues of approach. They have resorted to one of these means or a combination.[4] The great failing here has often been, that the methods of interpretation are applied to rigorously.[5] Everything must be explained in terms of the framework which has

been chosen.

Again speaking generally, much of western European criticism relies heavily on abstract terms when explaining what Kafka's work means. Max Brod finds it in Kafka's primal experience, the absolute, which is ununderstandable to humans.[6] The novels and stories show man's quarreling with God.[7] For Wilhelm Emrich it is what he terms "das Universelle," the totality of all existence, that has become ununderstandable in our modern time.[8] Heinz Politzer, on the other hand, goes further by suggesting that for Kafka "hidden depths of existence and powers holding sway beyond man's life" may exist, but they are too obscure for man to grasp.[9] The author pronounces " . . . the insoluble paradox of human existence by using this paradox as the message of his parable."[10] Finally, Walter Sokel finds that Kafka's complete work tells of a double struggle, the struggle of the ego with itself and the struggle of the ego with an overwhelming power, " . . . die die Wirklichkeit der Erzählungen beherrscht, weil sie wirkt, während der bewußte Wille des Ichs mit ganz wenigen Ausnahmen immer wirkungslos bleibt."[11] Sokel and, to a much greater extent, Dieter Hasselblatt have renounced trying to find out what Kafka's figures and pictures mean in favor of determining their function in the work.[12] Hasselblatt even questions whether we must understand fiction to experience its intensity.[13] In all this we notice a move toward caution in explaining Kafka. His perfect ambiguity has forced the interpreters of his work to hedge their bets or refrain from committing themselves.

The eastern European school of interpretation has by no means neglected the style of Kafka's prose.[14] The critics are more united when they speak of what Kafka portrays in his work. With the precepts of socialist realism in mind, they see Kafka as depicting the reality of the socio-economic world he experienced. As Helmut Richter claims: "Ein adäquates Verständnis seiner Kafka's Werke ist nur möglich, wenn man sie als Widerspiegelung der Wirklichkeit und als Auseinandersetzung mit dieser begreift. . . . Kafkas Werke spiegeln seine Stellung zum Menschen und zur Gesellschaft des imperialistischen Zeitalters wider."[15] Richter continues by saying that Kafka finds himself in a world whose

problems he cannot recognize in their causality nor depict as soluble.[16] This experience of reality leads to a singular artistic formation. The same critic describes it this way: "Die intensiv aufgenommene Umwelt wird von Kafka nicht als Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung zu einem Bild verarbeitet, in dem Mensch und Welt lebendig miteinander verbunden sind, das Unbewältigte steht vielmehr dem einzelnen schroff und fremd gegenüber."[17] The representation of undigested reality becomes difficult to accomplish. Richter continues:

> Kafka sucht Bildelemente und Vorstellungsreihen, mit denen er eine adäquate Gestaltung seines spezifischen Erlebnis erreichen kann. Dabei verfährt er ohne Rücksicht auf Erfahrung und Realitätsmöglichkeit; er schafft sich eine eigene Wirklichkeit, in der er sein Bild der Welt zu objektivieren und damit sich selbst zu bestätigen vermag. Kafkas künstlerische Wirklichkeit ist also weder unabhängig von der Wirklichkeit des Lebens noch ein Ausweichen vor ihr, sondern ein eigentümlicher Ausdruck des Inhalts und der Form von Kafkas Umweltsverhältnis. Sie ist bildhafte Umsetzung intensiv erlebter und empfundener Realität, sie ist daher auch nur dann richtig zu interpretieren, wenn man von dem Realitätsgehalt der Bilder ausgeht und sich die Frage stellt, welches Erlebnis und welche Empfindung vorausgesetzt werden müssen, damit die gegebene Bildgestaltung realisiert werden konnte.[18]

This statement comes closest to my view of Kafka's art. We must keep in mind what Richter (and indeed other Marxist critics) considers to be the reality that is portrayed. Marxist ideology dictates that the only reality that counts is a socio-economic reality, which in the period of late decadent capitalism means the reality of the economic sugjugation of the masses by the entrepreneurial class. The task for a Marxist critic becomes that of finding in what way Kafka describes this socio-economic state. This too is where their evaluation of Kafka's work must of necessity find fault, for at best they can discover only few outright instances of proletarian subjugation. (Amerika seems to offer the most examples.) Kafka represents the confused critic of capitalism, who can only offer a vague and very ambiguous hope for a better future. The way in which Kafka presents reality is, according to stringent precepts of social realism, a typical late capitalistic flight into formalism, although a critic like Helmut Richter, trying to do

justice to Kafka's great artistry comes to the almost apologetic pronouncement: "Die Überhöhung der unmittelbaren Wirklichkeit und das Verlassen der Erfahrungsgrenzen sind legitime Mittel der künstlerischen Gestaltung, sofern sie der intensiven Darstellung wesentlicher realistischer Inhalte dienen."[19]

The reality Kafka describes is not necessarily that of economic sugjugation of the masses, although there are scenes which show the inhumanity of the industrial world. The world presented to the reader is, quite simply, Kafka's representation (his metaphor, one could say) of the social community. This social world is not presented for its own sake. Kafka does not want to give a panorama of society and its mores. The people surrounding the protagonist only have significance in that the protagonist tries to find his way among them. In short, Kafka shows his protagonist first and foremost as a social being. He is a stranger, a marked individual who stands out in an integrated community. Kafka, of course, was always well aware of his failure as a member of the human race and his singular position in society because of that failure. In a letter to Max Brod he sums it up by saying: "Ich habe in der Stadt, in der Familie, dem Beruf, der Gesellschaft, der Liebesbeziehung (setz sie, wenn Du willst, an die erste Stelle), der bestehenden oder zu erstrebenden Volksgemeinschaft, in der allen habe ich mich nicht bewährt und dies in solcher Weise, wie -- hier habe ich scharf beobachtet -- niemandem rings um mich geschehen ist."[20] In the case of his protagonists Kafka has sometimes left the reason for their being singled out obscure (hence the critics' diverging views on his guilt). The letter also does not speak of a facet that Kafka's work contains: the role the human environment plays in making the protagonist aware of his unique and uncomfortable position.

Communication between the protagonist and the individuals of the community will, of course, reflect the relationship between the two. Although there have been many studies on individual aspects that Kafka's work encompasses, no one has made a thorough investigation of dialogue in his fiction. It is sometimes given passing mention.[21] In addition, to support points they wish to make, critics quote the words spoken by one character to another

or excerpt phrases that describe certain features, a dangerous practice, since it assumes that what a character states is absolute truth.[22] The process of dialogue, the momentary back and forth between figures, especially the disastrous effect on the protagonist of what others tell him, these things have not been investigated in any detail. This is surprising when one considers that in his letters and diary Kafka makes many references to specific conversations or to communication generally. Usually he despairs of being able to conduct a meaningful conversation.[23] The neglect of dialogue is also surprising because so many of Kafka's novels and stories are built up on a collection of scenes, which in turn consist mostly of dialogue. The protagonist engaged in verbal battle with the world around him, this is the social reality Kafka presents to his reader, this is the reality this thesis will examine. Before going further with an explanation of the route my examination will take and its aims, I wish to examine two problems that the reality Kafka depicts poses.

The world of people and objects in Kafka's fiction has its peculiar aspects. Undoubtedly, the reader of a work by Kafka, the novel Der Prozeß, for example, will admit that there is a certain amount of distortion of reality as he knows or experiences it and as he assumes others know and experience it. This usually occurs in such a way, that an otherwise very plausible setting is disturbed by an implausible, unreal and sometimes even terrifying occurrence. One must also admit, on the other hand, that the basis of the work in question is generally a world very similar to ours, allowing for slight variations due to culture and time. Thus we do not question elementary physical facts, let us say, that Josef K. resembles living beings as we know them, with a body, a head, two arms, and two legs. That he may be out of the ordinary emotionally, is a possibility one must concede. However, even there one would arrive at any conclusion only with a concept of what is normal in the back of one's mind. (That this concept might be lacking is, of course, also possible.) We do not question other physical features such as K.'s room having four walls, or that the city in which he lives resembles a city as we might know it, with houses, streets, and traffic. Exceptions can be found; in

Der Verschollene, for example. Distortions of static physical objects tend to be more quantitative than qualitative.

Thus generally speaking we are not dealing with a physical world radically different from ours, a world Paul Scheerbart introduces his readers to in Lesabendio, for example: "Violett war der Himmel. Und grün waren die Sterne. Und auch die Sonne war grün. Lesabendio machte seinen Saugfuß ganz breit und klemmte ihn fest um die sehr steil abfallende zackige Steinwand und reckte sich dann mit seinem ganzen Körper, der eigentlich nur aus einem gummiartigen Röhrenbein mit Saugfuß bestand, über fünfzig Meter hoch in die violette Atmosphäre hinein."[24] Even in this situation we notice that the author must explain the world of physically new formation and colours in the terms that we know. And when Kafka resorts to phenomena contrary to reality, talking dogs, a lecturing monkey, or a singing mouse, he is doing something which is familiar to us in fables. Situations and events to a much lesser degree resemble those one would expect to meet in every day life. This is, of course, what gives Kafka his uniqueness and brought him popular notoriety as a writer of the eccentric even ghoulish variety. Metamorphosis of man to insect, a trial by a mysterious court, a curious bedside call by a doctor in a sleigh with magic horses, these are not occurrences which match the average reader's daily experiences (although when everyday life took on aspects depicted in Der Prozeß, in the Nazi-era, people began to speak of Kafka as a prophet of future reality). The public that pretends to be more serious looks for the meaning behind the occurrences. Naturalistic reproduction of daily life is obviously not Kafka's objective, if the events he depicts deviate so radically from the norm, although one cannot disassociate him from naturalistic tendencies altogether.[25]

There exists a further explanation for the distorted view of the reality within the narrative. It is to be found in a theory which is central in Kafka-studies. The name Friedrich Beissner has become synonymous with the observation that in Kafka's third person narratives (just as in his first person narratives) everything is seen through the eyes of the protagonist. This is what he calls "Einsinnigkeit der Darstellung". Franz Stanzel's term

"personale Erzählform", which means the same thing, is perhaps more familiar.[26] Beissner's pupils, too, have not failed to reiterate their teacher's stand, which he has himself described again in a recent publication. He attacks Heinz Politzer's comment that the cases of Josef K. in Der Prozeß and K. in Das Schloß are seen from the viewpoint of the main characters and their antogonists. He says:

> Ich begreife nicht, wie man die 'Einsinnigkeit' in Kafkas Stil so von Grund aus verkennen kann. Alles, was geschieht, das tut, erleidet, erfährt der Held. Nichts geschieht ohne sein Zutun, nichts bleibt ihm unbekannt -- ja, es ist in Kafkas Stil niemand da, der einen Irrtum, dem die K-Gestalt erlegen wäre, nachträglich und von außen aufzuklären vermöchte. Der Leser erfährt alles, aber auch nur das, was K. erfährt und indem K. es erfährt. Da ist nirgends ein Loch oder eine Lücke als Durchlaß oder gar Ansiedlungsmöglichkeit für drunterhinein nachgeschobene Weisheiten und angeknüpfte Reflexionen. Und darin liegt das Geheimnis der bannenden Wirkung dieses Stils: in dieser unerhörten Geschlossenheit der Darstellung eines traumhaften innern Lebens.[27]

In the same study, from which the quote above was taken, however, Beissner excuses his failure to mention exceptions in the limited perspective in earlier studies and his failure to elucidate such passages which seemed to go contrary to this general characteristic of Kafka's style.[28] He is very willing to admit to "Mitteilungen an den Leser", informative statements by an narrator, who remains faceless and neutral.[29] This undoubtedly represents a concession to those scholars who have pointed out sections in Kafka's third person narrative in which a narratorial medium is noticeable, especially when larger expanses of experience in the past are reviewed.[30] Indeed any piece of fictional prose told in the third person becomes almost impossible without someone to set the scene. All in all, however, one must still adhere to the opinion that Kafka generally presents the action through the eyes of one of the characters in the story, almost always the protagonist.

The "Einsinnigkeit" that Friedrich Beissner observes is indisputable and one must devote some attention to its ramifications.

Everything is seen through the eyes of the protagonist. This could be somewhat misleading, for it allows for, yes even suggests, considerable subjective distortion of all those things experienced through the medium of the protagonist. "Seen through the eyes of the protagonist" allows us to say that our reception via him can be falsified through additions or deletions. There may be things Josef K., for example, wants to see although he does not actually see them, and things that he does not want to see although they are fully visible to him. This leads to complete despair of the reader's obtaining an "objective" picture.

I prefer a more cautious description of "Einsinnigkeit" which reads as follows: In scenic presentation the reader sees the events of the novel from the same physical vantage point as the protagonist with no unannounced subjective distortion on his part. Any distortion of the real situation is due only to the limited physical perspective and usually this limitation is alluded to in phrases such as: "es schien him," "offensichtlich" or by giving alternative interpretations of ambiguous action. Usually no covert willful alteration of reality by the protagonist, whose viewpoint we depend on, takes place. (This must remain an arbitrary assumption on my part, of course.)

I have devoted space to the discussion of the limited perspective not only because it is a topic which has always provoked comment but because, taken in its extreme, it could mean that determining the "truth" of what the protagonist experiences is more difficult than one thinks. As far as dialogue is concerned, for example, the question also arises whether the conversations in the third person narratives are experienced through the protagonist. Does the reader hear everything through his ears, just as we see everything through his eyes? Jörgen Kobs believes we do, but maintains that there is no reason to believe that utterances by characters in the novel do not possess empirical reality.[31] Carl Wellington Langguth states: "Conversation in particular should usually be taken at face value; no matter whom we identify with in reading it, it is almost always to be considered as a phenomenon which has actually occurred and which therefore must be accepted as objective fact."[32] I agree with this statement.

Therefore one can discount subjective influence and assume that K. neither adds words that are not there nor leaves out anything that is said. Dialogue as such is therefore objective reality (within the framework of a fictional novel, of course). That opinions expressed in the dialogue, on the other hand, may be completely without foundation, that they may indeed be lies, is a possibility that goes without saying. It is this fact that becomes so important in Der Prozeß as I will show later.

As the title of this thesis states, the dialogue in the fiction of Franz Kafka is to be examined. The word dialogue means the exchange of words between two or more persons. Since I will, however, also refer to gestures, noises, or facial expressions which accompany the exchange of words, it might be more appropriate at times to use the word communication instead of dialogue. The investigation of the exchange of words will naturally involve or lead to a discussion of the relationship between the persons speaking to each other. There are several observations one must make about communication at the outset. Not all communication is necessarily voluntary, that is, sometimes a character is not aware that he is transmitting a message or, if he is aware of it, he is not conscious exactly what message he is conveying. Since the action of a Kafka novel or short piece of prose is usually seen through the eyes of the protagonist, we, like the protagonist himself, are often left wondering in what spirit utterances are delivered. Sometimes Kafka indicates how the protagonist interprets or how he reacts to what is said, other times the words are just left to work on the reader by themselves. In these cases it is even allowable to assume that the protagonist reacts to the words the way the reader does.[33] We must remember, too, that what could be called the "three dimensionality" of verbal communication is lacking in written prose. A person involved in or observing an actual conversation may experience such things as tone of voice, inflection, facial and body gestures, in addition to sensing the attitude of his partner at the moment of the conversation. He can also experience all these simultaneously. A dialogue printed on a page may not contain any of these qualities unless the author sees fit to mention them separately or construct

his dialogue in such a way that things like tone of voice are detectable in the words themselves. Kafka is a master at doing the latter, but he also is a master in the use of the poverty of the printed word to his advantage by leaving spoken statements ambiguous. Where in oral conversation the tone of the voice would have to have given the speaker's attitude away, in written conversation one can be left to wonder how it was said.

To any casual reader of Kafka the protagonist of many of his works seems to be a victim of a conspiracy against him. To him there is no apparent reason why he has been placed in the situation he is in. The literary critics of Kafka, however, have been quick to point out that the protagonist is in some way guilty. This can be deduced from the author's biography. Kafka's diaries and even letters contain numerous confessions of guilt. He felt guilty for not being able to live up to what was expected of him, for his inability to integrate into the community. There are passages which perhaps also suggest that he considered his guilt in a religious or even existential context. In the analysis of Kafka's work therefore the first task of critics is to find where the protagonist's guilt lies. Here, too, the scope of possibilities ranges widely. He is guilty in an existential sense or in a religious sense, or because he lacks the human qualities of love and compassion.[34] His (tragic) flaw is to be found in his impatience, his haste, his pride, or his dogged adherence to rationality.[35] All these observations may be true; however, in the rush to examine the guilt of the protagonist, the true role of the surrounding world has been overlooked. Upon closer scrutiny of the majority of Kafka's works we are struck by the fact that the protagonist's downfall is, if not caused, then accelerated, by those persons he comes in contact with. It may be perfectly true that he has some intrinsic fault, yet he cannot find anyone with whom he can take up a meaningful dialogue. Meaningful dialogue sometimes signifies a discussion of the protagonist's situation <u>on his terms</u>, something very difficult for the opposing side to accept. (In the story "Forschungen eines Hundes" such a discussion might even mean the destruction of the community.) Above and beyond the refusal to discuss the protagonist's situation on

his terms with him, the surrounding world subjects him to different forms of verbal torture. The motives for this are purposely left out by the author. It is not certain that this torture is accomplished out of inhumanly cruel malice or inadvertently. The limited perspective, from which one witnesses the action in most works, does not allow one to know the thoughts of anyone other than the main figure.

Since the section of this thesis dealing with the novel Der Prozeß will include a digression on aspects of the author's biography which have hitherto received almost no attention, it is necessary to say a few words about biography as a tool of interpretation and about the biographical material which has appeared to date. In his important book on Kafka, Martin Walser makes the following disparaging remarks about the necessity of biography in explaining a good author's work:

> Je vollkommener die Dichtung ist, desto weniger verweist sie auf den Dichter. Bei der nicht vollkommenen Dichtung ist der Dichter zum Verständnis nötig; dann ist das Werk nicht unabhängig geworden von der Biographie des Dichters. Leben und Werk bedürfen der Vergleichung, weil das eine auf das andere verweist.
>
> Franz Kafka ist ein Dichter, der seine Erfahrung so vollkommen bewältigt hat, daß der Rückgriff auf das Biographische überflüssig ist. Er hat die Verwandlung der Wirklichkeit schon vor dem Werk vollzogen, indem er seine bürgerlich-biographische Persönlichkeit reduziert, ja zerstört, um einer Ausbildung willen, die die Persönlichkeit als Dichter zum Ziel hat; diese dichterische Persönlichkeit, die "poetica personalita" fundiert die Form. Ihre Ausbildung gilt es kurz zu umreißen.[36]

These pronouncements sound very definite, but are not really borne out by examples.[37] "Je vollkommener die Dichtung ist, desto weniger verweist sie auf den Dichter. Bei der nicht vollkommenen Dichtung ist der Dichter zum Verständnis nötig . . . " -- certainly, in the case of an outstanding work of fiction there is enough in the work to catch the critic's eye. He will probably be able to make many penetrating observations without using the biography of the author. The poverty of a bad piece of fiction would make the critic try to explain its deficiencies not only in the light of its position in the history of literature. To do this he might

want to refer to the biography of the author, especially his motivations for writing the book or the particular views which he incorporated in it. Putting it in a larger context gives the work some significance which it does not possess alone. One might question whether it would be necessary to have biographical facts to discuss a bad novel, a novel by Friedrich Spielhagen, for example. On the other hand, one might ask if a novel like Sturmflut, which is very imperfect, points to the author. The reader would have little information about Spielhagen, other than that he writes atrocious novels from a nineteenth-century German bourgeois, liberal (and actually very conservative) standpoint.

Walser is correct in saying that Kafka consciously destroyed his personal life in favor of writing. However, this occurred only to a varying degree. There can be no doubt that after it had been established that he was incurably ill, the author sealed himself off more and more from the outside world, breaking off or diminishing contacts which contributed to his former life. Whether the younger Kafka was able to do this even if he wanted to is highly questionable. The young Kafka's disaffection with the world, although it might have contained the germ of his incompatibility with the social community, was definitely less severe than his later isolation. In retrospect it may have seemed to him as if he had consciously destroyed his contacts with the world; he may have tried to reduce his biographical personality, but even Walser cannot avoid the fact that Kafka did have a "public" life. It would be foolhardy to claim that his experiences did not have bearing on his work. Kafka himself undertakes an accounting of biographical elements in "Das Urteil" in a diary entry of February 11 and 12, 1913 (T.212-213). He reiterates his observations in a letter to Felice Bauer and mentions other possible connections (Br.a.F.394,435). One must guard against assuming that incidents in the author's life are duplicated in his work. The relationship between life and work must be seen as very loose. Individual facets of the daily routine, fragments of experience, as well as significant factors in the relationship with other people are taken into the fictional world and are, of course, adapted to the requirements of that world. The author's environment obviously provides

material from which the author consciously or intuitively takes his inspiration or the material to fashion his story or novel; as trite as the observation may sound, it remains true nonetheless. The question of what America meant for Kafka, for example, is enhanced by the knowledge that he had many American "connections", among others two cousins who emigrated to the United States to seek their fortune before his writing of Der Verschollene. Knowledge of Kafka's attempt to become a businessman alerts the reader to the importance of the world of business in many of his fictional works (the competitive aspect and business pressure.) These biographical facts become important in explaining the literature, although they by no means provide the final key. (Both the above-mentioned aspects of Kafka's life will be dealt with briefly in Section III of this thesis and represent facts hitherto unpublished.)

Aside from Kafka's autobiographical statements written in his diary and in the "Brief an den Vater" and aside from short biographical sections in various works of secondary literature, there are only four biographies of Kafka, each with its merits, each with its deficiencies. As an intimate friend of the author, Max Brod was able to give a revealing account of his life. Klaus Wagenbach has pointed out quite correctly, however, that Brod can only really speak about the latter part of Kafka's life, from 1908 on, since before that time he did not know him.[38] One should add, too, that even in the time he did know Kafka, Brod saw him from a somewhat limited perspective. A glance at the letters and diary shows that Kafka often met Brod outside his family's home. Consequently Brod has little to offer when it comes to this part of Kafka's biography. He himself states, for example, that he made the acquaintance of Alfred Löwy, Kafka's uncle living in Madrid, only once and retained only a vague memory of him.[39] As the author's letters and diary prove, Löwy visited his relatives in Prague on several occasions and was in contact with his nephew by letter. He is one of the more important figures in Franz Kafka's life who has not been thoroughly researched. Brod does not minimize the importance of this man, but since Löwy was part of Kafka's private sphere and since he had no extended contact with him, he does not hold a prominent place in Brod's biography.

He has little more to offer the reader than what the latter could deduce from the author's letters.

Klaus Wagenbach's Franz Kafka: Eine Biographie seiner Jugend, 1883-1912 undertakes to fill in the big gap in the early portion of Kafka's life that Brod could not speak about from first hand knowledge.[40] Wagenbach's monograph, Franz Kafka in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten, written subsequently, covers the author's entire life.[41] In both books there is little about the early years. The biographer gives good background material about Prague at the turn of the century and a discussion of the type of school the author attended, but is somewhat weak on concrete facts about the young Kafka. He presents us with a fairly detailed picture of the intellectual atmosphere Kafka enjoyed, but again, like Brod, and with far less reason than Brod, he has underestimated the importance of the whole Kafka-clan. From the letters to Felice, which admittedly were not published until after Wagenbach's biography came out, one can readily see that the whole family network, parents, sisters, uncles, cousins, brothers-in-law, played a great role in Kafka's life. A thorough study of the relationship to his relatives would show, for example, that Kafka expected to live up to the success many of his contemporaries within the family had attained. His father represents only the "tip of the iceberg" in this group of persons. Documentary material undiscovered by Wagenbach (or perhaps unavailable to him) is continuing to surface and possibly more lies yet to be uncovered in archives in Europe and America.[42] Even all those who knew Kafka have not been heard from.[43]

Finally we have the recent biography by Deborah Crawford.[44] It gives us essentially a repetition of some of the facts that Brod and Wagenbach provided, augmented by new bits of information. Miss Crawford has elected to use a novelistic style, describing scenes of Franz Kafka's life and speaking of her subject in a personal manner. Unfortunately there seem to be some inaccuracies and omissions in the book.[45] Nothing she presents has been substantiated in footnotes; her speculation that Kafka wrote to his uncle Josef Löwy, a trader in the Congo, in 1907, a time when he wanted employment in a far-away country, is plausible, but it would be interesting to know the source of her statement.[46] It

certainly would be of value to know more about Josef Löwy himself. In this manner the new biography, like the older ones, merely remains on the threshold of what might prove to be an important discovery.

To return to the larger topic of dialogue, my study of dialogue, or as I indicated, the larger area of communication, is divided into three sections. In the first we will approach the general topic of interpersonal relationships through a discussion of Kafka's picture of community and the protagonist's relationship to it. How Kafka sees the community and his protagonist's place in it will be determined by a close interpretation of two works, the short piece "Gemeinschaft" and the more lengthy fragment "Forschungen eines Hundes". The second section will then focus on several aspects attendant upon, or evident in, dialogue between protagonist and other individual characters. Once again texts provide the basis for bringing out these individual aspects. In each of the various chosen texts the particular aspect under discussion is central to the piece or at least prominent in it. Of course, the larger role of communication in these short works is also discussed. Finally, the third section will look at one major work, Der Prozeß, in order to examine the protagonist's dealings with each of the figures in the novel. This will be accomplished by dissecting his conversations with the people who surround him. These people have been divided into different groups, which can be found in other of the author's works too. It is noped that by looking at this novel from the standpoint of communication a new interpretation of this most important work can be arrived at.

[1] Hans Reiss, rev. of Franz Kafka: Der Prozeß, ed. H. F. Brookes and C. E. Gawne-Caine, GLL, 25 (1971-72), 188.

[2] Among others there are the following: Heinz Politzer, "Problematik und Probleme der Kafka-Forschung," MDU, 42 (1950), 273-280; H. S. Reiss, "Recent Kafka Criticism (1944-1955) -- A Survey," Kafka: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Ronald Gray, Twentieth Century Views (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 163-177; Hans Mayer, "Kafka und kein Ende? Zur heutigen Lage der Kafka-Forschung," Ansichten, by Hans Mayer (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Verlag Rowohlt, 1962), pp. 54-70; Paul K. Kurz, "Standorte der Kafka-Deutung," in Über moderne Literatur by Paul K. Kurz, (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht Verlag, 1967), pp. 38-71.

[3] Almost all the standard survey works on Kafka discuss his style and technique, works such as: H. S. Reiss, Franz Kafka: Eine Betrachtung seines Werkes (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1956); Wilhelm Emrich, Franz Kafka, 6th ed. (Frankfurt am Main/Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1960); Walter H. Sokel, Franz Kafka -- Tragik und Ironie (München/Wien: Albert Langen-Georg Müller Verlag, 1964); Heinz Politzer, Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox, rev. and expaned, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966). Of course it is difficult to separate form and content. There are those that would say that in the case of Kafka form is content. (Politzer tends in that direction, for example.) Many of the works that devote themselves to form problems, of course, relate the aspect they treat to what they consider Kafka's message. Some of the more useful studies are: Fritz Schaufelberger, "Kafkas Prosafragmente," Trivium, 7, No. 1 (1949), 1-15; Wolfgang Rohner, "Franz Kafkas Werkgestaltung," Diss. Freiburg 1950; Friedrich Beissner, Der Erzähler Franz Kafka (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1952); Martin Walser, Beschreibung einer Form: Versuch über Franz Kafka, 3rd ed., Literatur als Kunst (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1968); Roman S. Struc, "Food, Air, and Ground: A study of Basic Symbols in Franz Kafka's Short Stories," Diss. University of Washington 1962; Heinz Hillmann, Franz Kafka Dichtungstheorie und Dichtungsgestalt, Bonner Arbeiten zur deutschen Literatur, No. 9 (Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co. Verlag, 1964); Dieter Hasselblatt, Zauber und Logik: Eine Kafka-Studie (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1964); Hartmut Binder, Motiv und Gestaltung bei Franz Kafka, Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft, 37 (Bonn: H. Bouvier und Co. Verlag, 1966).

[4] Walter Sokel, for example, who uses a psychological and philosophical approach at times.

[5] Hellmuth Kaiser's psychological interpretation is perhaps one of the extreme examples of a method applied too rigorously. Hellmuth Kaiser, "Franz Kafkas Inferno: Psychologische Deutung seiner Strafphantasie," Imago, Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften, 17, No. 1 (1931), 41-103. In the years following 1931 psychological and psychoanalytical examinations of Kafka's work became more frequent. As Politzer states they have "celebrated real orgies," Politzer, Problematik, 277. Even Sokel uses a psychological approach from time to time.

[6] Max Brod, Franz Kafka: Eine Biographie (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1963), p. 184.

[7] Brod, Biographie, p. 186.

[8] Emrich, pp. 13-30.

[9] Politzer, p. 21.

[10] Politzer, p. 22.

[11] Sokel, pp. 28-29.

[12] Sokel, p. 27; Hasselblatt, p. 30.

[13] Hasselblatt, p. 30.

[14] For a report on some of the eastern European secondary literature see Hasselblatt, pp. 13-26, and Sigfrid Hoefert, "Kafka in der DDR: Ein Bericht," Seminar, 2, No. 2 (1966), 43-52.

[15] Helmut Richter, Franz Kafka: Werk und Gestaltung (Berlin: Rütten und Loenig, 1962), p. 287.

[16] Richter, p. 291.

[17] Richter, p. 291.

[18] Richter, p. 293.

[19] Richter, p. 298.

[20] Franz Kafka, Briefe: 1902-1924, ed. Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1958), pp. 194-195. Hereafter all quotations from this book or references to it will be followed by the abbreviation Br. and the page number in parenthesis immediately following the quotation or reference. Other primary texts will be referred to in the same manner. The texts are the following (their abbreviations given in parenthesis): (E.) Sämtliche Erzählungen, ed. Paul Raabe (Frankfurt am Main und Hamburg: Fischer Bücherei, 1970); (A.) Amerika, ed. Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1946); (P.) Der Prozeß, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1951); (S.) Das Schloß, ed. Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1946); (B.) Beschreibung eines Kampfes: Novellen, Skizzen, Aphorismen aus dem Nachlaß, ed. Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1946); (Er.) Erzählungen, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1946); (H.) Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1966); (T.) 1910-1923, Tagebücher, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1967); (M.) Briefe an Milena, ed. Willy Haas (Frankfurt am Main und Hamburg, 1966); (Br. a. F.) Briefe and Felice und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit, ed. Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1970).

[21] Rohner, 37; Helmut Heuer, "Die Amerikavision bei William Blake und Franz Kafka," Diss. München 1959, 110-111; Reiss, p. 171. There is a 160 page study by John Albert Dahl, "Das Problem der Verständigung im Werk von Franz Kafka," Diss. University of Utah, 1972. According to his description in Dissertation Abstracts, 32 (1972), 1164A, he approaches the topic of communication by looking at certain problems; simple language difficulties, complex problems of conflict of interest, suppression of truth, dishonesty, lack of confidence, problems involving various forms of confusion, of ignorance and misunderstanding. In the dialogue between figures in Kafka's fiction I find different characteristics.

[22] No less a critic than Wilhelm Emrich takes words that various figures direct at the protagonist to substantiate his points. When he defines the "oberste Gericht" in Der Prozeß, for example, he uses Hulds words, Emrich, p. 265. The reader may very well ask whether Huld's description represents the truth. Klaus Kühnke has noted the same danger: " . . . nicht wenige Fehlinterpretationen sind darauf zurückzuführen, daß subjektive Aussagen für objektive Wahrheiten gehalten wurden," "Das Gericht und die Helfer: Untersuchungen zu Kafkas Roman Der Prozeß," Acta Germanica 5 (1970), 179.

[23] In a letter to Felice Bauer, for instance, Kafka writes: "Ich glaube wirklich, ich bin für den menschlichen Verkehr verloren. Ein fortgesetztes, lebendig sich aufbauendes Gespräch mit einem einzelnen zu führen bin ich gänzlich außerstande, einzelne ausnahmsweise, schrecklich ausnahmsweise Zeiten abgerechnet" (Br. a. F. 401). Some of the other references to conversation and Kafka's inability to communicate can be found in: Br. a. F. 457,470,559; T. 145,168,175.

[24] Paul Scheerbart, Dichterische Hauptwerke (Stuttgart: Henry Goverts Verlag, 1962) p.523.

[25] See Jörg Thalmann, Wege zu Kafka: Eine Interpretation des Amerikaromans (Frauenfeld und Stuttgart: Verlag Huber, 1966), pp. 70-76.

[26] Franz Stanzel, Typische Ergählsituationen im Roman (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller Verlag, 1965).

[27] Friedrich Beissner, Kafkas Darstellung des "traumhaften innern Lebens". Ein Vortrag (Bebenhausen: Verlag Lothar Rotsch, 1972), pp. 34-35.

[28] Beissner, p. 36.

[29] Beissner, p. 37.

[30] See Winfried Kudszus, "Erzählperspektive und Erzählgeschehen in Kafkas 'Prozeß'," DVLG, 44, No. 2 (1970), 307. Kudszus also mentions critics who have modified Beissner's view, Kudszus, 306.

[31] Jörgen Kobs, Kafka: Untersuchungen zu Bewußtsein und Sprache seiner Gestalten, ed. Ursula Brech (Bad Homburg v. d. H.: Athenäum Verlag, 1970), p. 135.

[32] Carl Wellington Langguth, "Narrative Perspective and Consciousness in Franz Kafka's Trial," Diss. Stanford University 1968, 46.

[33] See Friedrich Beissner, Kafka der Dichter (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1958), p. 12.

[34] For a religo-existential interpretation see Bernhard Bröckerhoff, "Seinserfahrung und Weltverständnis des Dichters Franz Kafka," Diss. Bonn 1957.

[35] For this type of interpretation see Sokel and Reiss.

[36] Walser, p. 11.

[37] Dieter Hasselblatt, too, argues against Walser's view, Hasselblatt, pp. 162-163.

[38] Klaus Wagenbach, Franz Kafka: Eine Biographie seiner Jugend: 1883-1912 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1958), p. 7.

[39] Brod, Biographie, p. 11.

[40] Although Wagenbach's biography of Kafka extends to the year 1912, he does not include Kafka's involvement in the "Prager Asbestwerke Hermann und Co.". (See Section III.)

[41] Klaus Wagenbach, Franz Kafka in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten, Rowohlts Monographien (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1964).

[42] In addition to archives in Prague a search of archives in Vienna, Madrid, and Paris might be rewarding.

[43] Hugo Hecht, a schoolfriend of the author, for example, has written nineteen essays which are due to appear as a book. See Klaus-Peter Hinze, "Neue Aspekte zum Kafka-Bild: Bericht über ein noch unveröffentlichtes Manuskript," Modern Austrian Literature, 5, No. 3/4 (1972), 83-92.

[44] Deborah Crawford, Franz Kafka: Man Out of Step (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973).

[45] Miss Crowford too has nothing to say about Kafka's relatives and nothing about his partnership in the "Prager Asbestwerke".

[46] Crawford, p. 55.

Section I

The Community

A. Introduction

The topic of this study is the interpersonal relationship between the protagonist and the world around him as expressed in their communication with each other. As I have already noted, this will entail analyzing conversations the protagonist in various works of Kafka has with other individuals. One soon comes to the realization, however, that these other individuals are part of a larger group. In the momentary conversational situation the protagonist may be faced with one single antagonist, but the antagonist invariably has the support of a larger community of kindred spirits to fall back on, whereas the protagonist stands alone. For this reason a discussion of some of the characteristics of community and the protagonist's relationship to it will prove fruitful before looking at individual elements of dialogue and dialogue between the protagonist and individual persons in Der Prozeß.

The word "community" must be taken in its loosest possible meaning as a collection of individuals whose number may be large or small. What constitutes a community, what gives the group identity, to phrase it differently, cannot be summed up in one word. In fact, to preempt conclusions that will be arrived at later, what binds the group together is highly suspect as is the fact that genuine "togetherness" really exists. Critics have focused on the ethnic bond in interpreting a story like "Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse", which obviously deals with the problem of artist versus the community. The mouse folk to them represent the Jews.[1] In this interpretation they, of course, fall back on the author's biography, the fact that Kafka grew up and spent most of his life in the Jewish community of Prague, part of the "triple ghetto" as Heinz Politzer calls it.[2] A common religion or a common nationality, however, is not the sole unifying factor. In the case of the mouse folk, for example, there is the more obvious common denominator of "species". In addition, the communal unit can be much smaller, held together by something more individual, something that the members themselves have laid down as the binding element

rather than a mere cohesion because they have been placed in a certain group by birth. Therefore one must also consider the fact of a community within a larger community, a community of kindred spirits, friends, let us say, within the community of mankind.

B. The Basic Elements of Community: "Gemeinschaft"

The prose piece, which Max Brod entitled "Gemeinschaft" and which Kafka probably wrote in 1922, will serve to exemplify a few of the initial points about community and the individual versus the community.[3]

GEMEINSCHAFT

Wir sind fünf Freunde, wir sind einmal hintereinander aus einem Haus gekommen, zuerst kam der eine und stellte sich neben das Tor, dann kam oder vielmehr glitt, so leicht wie ein Quecksilberkügelchen gleitet, der zweite aus dem Tor und stellte sich unweit vom ersten auf, dann der dritte, dann der vierte, dann der fünfte. Schließlich standen wir alle in einer Reihe. Die Leute wurden auf uns aufmerksam, zeigten auf uns und sagten: "Die fünf sind jetzt aus diesem Haus gekommen." Seitdem leben wir zusammen, es wäre ein friedliches Leben, wenn sich nicht immerfort ein sechster einmischen würde. Er tut uns nichts, aber er ist uns lästig, das ist genug getan; warum drängt er sich ein, wo man ihn nicht haben will? Wir kennen ihn nicht und wollen ihn nicht bei uns aufnehmen. Wir fünf haben früher einander auch nicht gekannt, und wenn man will, kennen wir einander auch jetzt nicht, aber was bei uns fünf möglich ist und geduldet wird, ist bei jenem sechsten nicht möglich und wird nicht geduldet. Außerdem sind wir fünf und wir wollen nicht sechs sein. Und was soll überhaupt dieses fortwährende Beisammensein für einen Sinn haben, auch bei uns fünf hat es keinen Sinn, aber nun sind wir schon beisammen und bleiben es, aber eine neue Vereinigung wollen wir nicht, eben auf Grund unserer Erfahrungen. Wie soll man aber das alles dem sechsten beibringen, lange Erklärungen würden schon fast eine Aufnahme in unsern Kreis bedeuten, wir erklären lieber nichts und nehmen ihn nicht auf. Mag er noch so sehr die Lippen aufwerfen, wir stoßen ihn mit dem Ellbogen weg, aber mögen wir ihn noch so sehr wegstoßen, er kommt wieder. (E.308-309)

The narrator opens with an unequivocal statement. The reader,

of course, does not know anything about the group of friends he is speaking for. There could be a full stop after this first sentence, but Kafka lets his narrator continue without pause indicating perhaps that this friendship is so closely connected with the way it came about that it can only be understood in terms of its history. We see, however, that only a haphazard action brings them together -- their exit from a house one after the other. It happens mechanically; each exits individually. They are not bound together in their action. It is said of the second friend that he glides out as effortlessly as a little ball of mercury, a simile suggesting self-containment. There is no apparent reason why these five people line up together, nor is there any hint that they were united inside the house. (Later we learn that they did not know each other earlier.) Although they form a noticeable group, they themselves do not seem to be aware of it. The real unifying factor comes when they are identified as a group by people who see them. It is this one incident of being defined as a group which gives them reason for staying together, and it is from this time on that their existence as a unit dates.

The narrator now moves on to the disturbance of the communal living of these friends by a sixth. We note again that there is no pause, no description of the life the friends led together, only the supposition that life would now be peaceful if there were no disturbance. Whereas the other five are five friends, the intruder is just called the "sixth". He certainly cannot be considered the sixth friend and he is not called anything else. And yet, although he is not a part of the group, he only has identity in relationship to the group, being the last member in a series of six. It is as if he had only one function, that of trying to be accepted, trying to be the sixth friend. No real reason is given why this person cannot be admitted to the community of friends. The narrator concedes that he does not harm them other than being an annoyance. They just do not want him. This is the first time the narrator has indicated that anything other than their being together binds them. They have their annoyance in common and share the wish not to have

the intruder among them. In fact, the word "wollen" appears twice.

While giving the only real reason why the group of five friends does not want to accept the "sixth" -- they do not know him -- the narrator reflects once more on the relationship of the members of the group, admitting that they formerly did not know each other and do not know each other now. Indeed, he even questions such a relationship based on ignorance and asks whether the community of these five people was allowable. (Something that is tolerated is something that would do better not to exist.) The narrator's argument for exclusion does not gain one ounce of credibility; he merely repeats the group's wish not to include a sixth member, which again suggests that its present cohesion might arise solely from this negative function of excluding someone.

Once having begun his musing about the relationship the narrator does not let the topic die, although he seems uncomfortable talking about it. There is noticeable impatience in the words "Und was soll überhaupt...", as he asks for the deeper meaning of being together per se. The intruder has therefore done more than just annoy the community superficially. He disturbs it in a very fundamental way by inducing it to reflect on itself, to reflect on what really keeps it together. This must inevitably lead to a questioning of the value of community in general. The speaker admits that there is no sense in the union of the five either. The only real reason for remaining together in the end is that they have been this way for some time now. Excluding the sixth takes on the aspect of a favor; experience has been such that these persons do not want to go through another union, therefore, one must infer, it is fortunate that the intruder is not forced to go through what the friends have. Thus, unobtrusively, a very negative valuation of community has been suggested to the reader.

At this point communication with the sixth is brought into the discussion. Explanation might persuade him to desist and yet the fact of explaining would mean acceptance. We see that the narrator fully recognizes the importance of communication.

On the one hand by being rejected the man is saved from entering a meaningless relationship, on the other hand he remains bound up in fruitless endeavor because he cannot be informed. From his point of view -- and we see that this problem can play a role in the most minor of Kafka's works -- from his point of view the rejection will appear cruel. He comes up against a unified front of people, who elbow him away. The only thing that remains unexplained is the persistence of the sixth person that urges him to renew his attempt despite the signs that he is unwanted.

This short work has shown us an aspect of Kafka's work which returns in varied form. Different figures unite to ostracize the protagonist. He becomes painfully aware that he faces the world alone. Since the reader usually experiences this ostracism through the eyes of the protagonist, it is hardly as clear as it is in "Gemeinschaft" that the community he wishes to be accepted by is valueless. In many cases the protagonist's primary goal may not lie in finding a place in the community. He merely becomes aware of people acting against him as an unified group. The novel Der Prozeß, which will be discussed in detail later on, presents the reader with many examples of this. In addition the protagonist often tries to find others who will unite with him against the hostility of the greater group. When K. in Das Schloß first meets and interviews his two helpers, Artur and Jeremias, he says: "'Ihr dürft mit niemandem ohne meine Erlaubnis sprechen. Ich bin hier ein Fremder, und wenn ihr meine alten Gehilfen seid, dann seid auch ihr Fremde. Wir drei Fremden müssen deshalb zusammenhalten, reicht mir daraufhin eure Hände'" (S.31). This quotation, like the prose passage "Gemeinschaft", again indicates the importance of communication in defining the group and giving it unity. For the helpers to speak to anyone else would mean opening a fissure in the closed front of the group. This becomes evident in a later scene in chapter four when the innkeeper's wife expresses her dismay at finding out that K. has been visiting with the family of Barnabas. She grasps the hand of one of the "Gehilfen" as if she needed support and enlists their approval of her reproach to K.. He in turn asks her not to

speak to them and threatens to forbid them to speak to her. (S.75).

The passage "Gemeinschaft" was told from the perspective of one of the group. The "sixth" has no voice. In the story we are about to discuss everything is seen from the position of the outsider, although this term does not describe his position that accurately, for, like the "sixth", he exists on the periphery of the group. He is not a full-fledged member because he questions the very fibre of community, but paradoxically wants so dearly to be considered part of the whole. Contrary to the intruder in "Gemeinschaft" he is not able to make the group question itself, although he continually tries.

C. Isolation of the Questioner: "Forschungen eines Hundes"

One of Kafka's great "seekers" is the dog in "Forschungen eines Hundes". As the title itself suggests the dog investigates, he asks questions. The story represents a review of the most important stages of his life, embodied in single experiences and experiments. The now-aging dog looks back on his long life of searching which began in early childhood and concentrates on four topics: 1. a meeting in his adolescence with a group of musical dogs 2. his efforts to determine where the earth obtains food for dogs 3. a discussion of the strange "air dogs" 4. an encounter with the "hunting dog" during a food experiment. Interspersed between these different topics lies a generous amount of musing, for his questions engender an even more important problem: The questionability of his posing questions. This in turn focuses attention on the already familiar problem of the individual's relationship to the community of beings among whom he is living. This is what really concerns the narrator, his existence as a dog among dogs.

The opening lines of narration draw the reader's attention to this fact immediately, for instead of launching into a discussion of his investigations the dog talks about his life in general:

> Wie sich mein Leben verändert hat und wie es sich doch nicht verändert hat im Grunde! Wenn ich jetzt zurückdenke und die Zeiten mir zurückrufe, da ich noch inmitten der Hundeschaft lebte, teilnahm an allem, was

> sie bekümmert, ein Hund unter Hunden, finde ich bei näherem Zusehen doch, daß hier seit jeher etwas nicht stimmte, eine kleine Bruchstelle vorhanden war, ein leichtes Unbehagen inmitten der ehrwürdigsten volklichen Veranstaltungen mich befiel, ja manchmal selbst im vertrauten Kreise, nein, nicht manchmal, sondern sehr oft, der bloße Anblick eines mir lieben Mithundes, der bloße Anblick, irgendwie neu gesehen, mich verlegen, erschrocken, hilflos, ja mich verzweifelt machte. (E.323-324).

The first topic he takes up is his relationship to the other dogs. In characteristic style Kafka allows his narrator to start in an ebullient mood, expressing wonderment at his own life and above all dwelling upon his harmonious existence as a dog among dogs. The positive attitude soon wanes, doubt is injected when he talks of the slight gap between himself and the rest; this grows to discomfiture in assemblies of other dogs and ends with his complete despair at the mere sight of another dog. He wants to see himself as part of the group and yet the more he ruminates the more the great gap between him and the community shows.

Preoccupation with his status does not diminish after the opening lines as the next few pages in the story prove. The reader learns of the dog's depressing present existence when he describes himself as withdrawn, lonely, occupied only with his hopeless investigations, which are, however, so necessary to him. He does not wish to admit total defeat, though, and tries to look at the brighter side. He professes not to have lost the view of his "people" as a whole. He points to the respect, which is shown to him, and he observes, reasserting his membership in the dog race: "Man darf eben nicht außer acht lassen, daß ich trotz meinen Sonderbarkeiten, die offen zutage liegen, doch bei weitem nicht völlig aus der Art schlage" (E.324). His esteem for the "dog-race" ("Hundeschaft") expresses his desire to belong. A comparison between dogs and other creatures points out the dogs' sense of togetherness: "Alle in einem Haufen! Es drängt uns zueinander und nichts kann uns hindern, diesem Drängen genugzutun, alle unsere Gesetze und Einrichtungen, die wenigen, die ich noch kenne und die zahllosen, die ich vergessen habe, gehen zurück auf die Sehnsucht nach dem größten Glück, dessen wir fähig sind, dem warmen Beisammensein" (E.325). But the other side of the coin

the dog says, presents a different picture -- dogs living dispersed, differentiated by classes, species, occupations governed by rules that are not their own. (John Winkelman interprets these rules as the leash in the hands of unseen human masters.[4]) Their unity is therefore perhaps more wishful thinking than reality.

All these things have to do with the existence of the dogs and the narrating dog is drawn to examine them and to ponder them, at the same time admitting that these are things better left alone. For it is his questioning which makes him odd and places him outside the group. He knows this and points to it, by asking: "Warum tue ich es nicht wie die anderen, lebe einträchtig mit meinem Volke und nehme das, was die Eintracht stört, stillschweigend hin, vernachlässige es als kleinen Fehler in der großen Rechnung, und bleibe immer zugekehrt dem, was glücklich bindet, nicht dem, was, freilich immer wieder unwiderstehlich, uns aus dem Volkskreis zerrt" (E.325). Here the reader is faced by the narrator's dichotomous attitude. He is addicted to these difficult things and yet he fully understands that one should leave them unmentioned (gloss over them as the others do). This second viewpoint, which he understands better than his own, crops up repeatedly in the narrative. He belittles his efforts as a way of reaffirming his membership in the race of dogs.

The narrator now turns to his experience with the musical dogs. No introductory words specify its significance, but coming right after his musings about things that disturb the unity of dogs one may assume that this is such an incident. There are two things we must direct our attention to: 1. the incident and the narrator's perception of it 2. his attempts to get others to speak about it. We will see that his semi-isolation inside the community dates from this incident.

The encounter with the musical dogs takes place in the narrator's youth. They consist of a group of seven dogs, who, not by talking nor by singing, but by their graceful, harmonious body movements conjur up a beautiful music. For Wilhelm Emrich it is clear that these dogs are an hallucination brought on by the narrating dog's questions and investigations.[5] Of their music he says: "Es kann kein Zweifel sein, daß in dieser 'Von-

allen Seiten' 'überall her kommenden' lärmenden Musik die Totalität alles Seienden sich verdichtet, die auf keine Frage mehr eine einzelne Antwort geben kann und darf, weil sie selbst die Antwort aller Fragen darstellt und zugleich das seither geltende Gesetz aufhebt, die Natur und die gewohnte Welt 'verkehrt' und außer Kraft setzt".[6] With a view to his theory that the dog is talking about dogs without knowledge of their unseen human masters, John Winkelman identifies the seven dogs as trained terriers performing tricks on a mobile illuminated float to the accompaniment of a brass band.[7] The latter explanation is plausible; however, one must stress much more how the "Musikhunde" appear to the dog in order to derive their significance. Emrich's explanation, too, does not discuss the total experience the dog has. He concentrates on the acoustic alone without inclusion of the visual picture, which points to the origin of the music. The dogs do not talk, they do not sing, but are completely silent: " . . . . aber aus dem leeren Raum zauberten sie die Musik empor" (E.326). There are two things here: the dance and the Music. The music may very well represent the "totality of all existence". Music is all pervading, and its deeper origins may be more mysterious than the narrator realizes. He might be mistaken in his assumption that it emanates from the dance. And yet we are still faced with the problem of interpreting their harmonious movements <u>within the totality of existence</u>, i.e. their dancing along with the music. To do this and give an interpretation of the entire incident we must go back to its beginning.

Before the young investigator sees the group of dogs he is rambling along in the dark, blind and deaf to everything, filled only with a vague longing (E.326). Suddenly, as if engendered by this longing, everything around him becomes light and he feels that he is in the right spot. This would be indicative of the hallucinatory state Emrich refers to (see above). And yet one can also say that it is merely a state of extreme awareness. In this state he witnesses the dance of the musical dogs, which has already been mentioned. Extreme awareness lets the young dog see an otherwise normal occurrence, seven dogs together, in a new way as a dance. Music had been until then an everyday thing, unnoticed

by the young dog: " . . . hatte mich doch die Musik schon seit meiner Säuglingszeit umgeben als ein mir selbstverständliches, unentbehrliches Lebenselement, welches von meinem sonstigen Leben zu sondern nichts mich zwang . . . " (E.326). Since his infancy music surrounded the dog as an element necessary for life, like air. This means the "totality of all existence", as Emrich terms it, accompanies life; and although the other dogs may know of it, the young dog does not until he enters his new awareness enabling him to experience the musical dogs. Their dance, in my view, represents the way the young dog in this one moment of special insight experiences the community of dogs. That is to say, in one fleeting moment he is given a view of the existence of dogs together in the race of dogs.

At first the dance represents a dance of togetherness. The movements express the unity of the group. The description of their dance makes it very clear (E.326). The dogs form links with each other and take up positions in precise relation to each other. The young dog stands appart from them and observes. In this ultra-receptive state he can see what they are but it seems he cannot become one of them, he cannot take up contact with them, because their music overpowers him, engulfs, and nearly destroys him. However, we must realize what is <u>actually</u> happening. The music is described as "taking the listener into the middle of it", an important phrase (E.327). It means that the dog is forced to dance along. He becomes one of the group and as such loses his awareness of the group. Only because he grows too weak to hear the music the dog is released from his dance back into a position of observation. When he repeats his approach the cycle begins again. As he puts it.

> . . . . man . . . sah die sieben kleinen Hunde ihre Prozessionen führen, ihre Sprünge tun, man wollte sie, so ablehnend sie aussahen, anrufen, um Belehrung bitten, sie fragen, was sie denn hier machten -- ich war ein Kind und glaubte immer und jeden fragen zu dürfen -- , aber kaum setzte ich an, kaum fühlte ich die gute, vertraute, hündische Verbindung mit den sieben, war wieder ihre Musik da, machte mich besinnungslos, drehte mich im Kreise herum, als sei ich selbst einer der Musikanten, während ich doch nur ihr Opfer war . . . . (E.327).

The last few words are very telling. The dog, caught up in the music, becomes "unconscious", that is, he loses the perception he had. And this time he says explicitly that it seems as if he had become one of the group. Thus this incident represents not only the narrator's first traumatic experience of the dance of life together, but also the first experience of his being set apart as an observer, an investigator. What he experiences here (metaphorically) is that these two spheres cannot be reconciled. One is either caught up in the dance with the others or one stands back and observes it. Any questions which might bridge the gap will remain unanswered.

We return to the scene of this frightening but revealing episode. The dog is finally pushed into a pile of wood from where he can again observe the dancers. Now he notices that they perform, not with ease but in great tenseness and with fear. Their legs twitch and they look at each other with a fixed look of despair, letting their tongues hang from their mouths (E.327). This is the other, negative side of community, of the dance of togetherness. It is a revelation to the young dog that the race of dogs is held together by some powerful and fear-inspiring force. In addition, the dogs' positions become a disgusting display. They walk on their hind legs and expose themselves indecently. Of course the young dog's inclination leads him again to call out his questions, not merely to satisfy his inquisitiveness, but also to help this tormented group: "Und ich konnte mich nicht mehr zurückhalten, besonders da sie mir jetzt so unverständlich hilfsbedürftig erschienen, und so rief ich durch allen Lärm meine Fragen laut und fordernd hinaus. Sie aber -- unbegreiflich! unbegreiflich! -- sie antworteten nicht, taten, als wäre ich nicht da" (E.327-328). From his child's perspective he cannot see the impossibility of entering into dialogue about matters concerning existing together on this earth. He fails to see that one stands either in the community or outside. What he experiences at this moment, although he does not realize it, is that he is on the outside looking in. It is a position he will continue to occupy throughout his life, although he will not experience the insight into "togetherness" on an every day basis

with the same terrible impact as he does in this one incident.

The other experience the dog undergoes in this incident of the "Musikhunde" is another situation that he will encounter again and again throughout his life: the inability to receive an answer to his questions, to his: "What are you doing here?". This, in fact, becomes the more important problem for the dog as he later admits (E.353). Like the seven dogs, the whole dog race sticks together. They cohere of their own free will or because of some unseen master; in either case they must dance together. In their daily life they work with each other, but their state does not allow them to communicate with an "outsider" asking questions about their union. Good manners and the law of the dogs require that they answer, but such laws are suspended when the essence of the race of dogs is being questioned.

The narrator now comes back to the present to judge his experience in the light of the wisdom of his old age (E.329). From this vantage point he belittles his youthful ignorance, which let him exaggerate its significance. It now becomes just an everyday occurrence. This attitude represents an attempt by the narrator to reaffirm his membership in the community. Rather than insist that the episode was a revelation which laid bare the essence of being together -- a phenomenon which could involve the community in endless dialogue -- rather than insist on this, the narrator glosses over it, sweeps it under the rug. But he does so with a bad conscience, for he recognizes that one can talk something into insignificance: "'verreden'" is the commonly used term, he declares (E.329). He may be correct in saying that he did not understand the childhood episode fully, but his present scepticism about its significance represents cowardice. In a characteristic burst of positive thinking he finds his state of excitement childish but normal. And that is what he wants to be regarded as above all -- normal.

The narrator follows up his remarks with more description of his childish behaviour. The endeavour to dissect and discuss such an occurrence in all types of society is a sign of a childlike nature, which he has retained into his old age. We must see, though, that what the dog actually means by childlike nature

is his determination to follow through with an investigation, " . . . um den Blick endlich wieder freizubekommen für das gewöhnliche, ruhige, glückliche Leben des Tages" (E.330). Rather than ignore any barrier between him and the quiet unproblematic life, he must dissolve them by his investigations. with the awakening of his unnatural inquisitiveness, which he dates from this childhood event, the dog has lost his childhood before he has had a chance to taste it. The loss of childhood means the loss of an unburdened, carefree life. By saying: "Es gibt wichtigere Dinge als die Kindheit" the narrator merely tries to swallow his disappointment. Old age, he says, might bring him childlike happiness. This might be an allusion to approaching senility which would mean an end to all questioning; " . . . den unruhigen Fragen widersteht immer mehr die Ruhe des Alters," he says later (E.335).

In order to disparage his youthful persistence the narrator has called it childish. He is speaking, as we have said, with the attitude of the "normal", unreflecting, unproblematical dog that he would liketo consider himself at times. The child, of course, occupies a different position in the community than an adult. He is accepted and even loved by the world around him. He is more readily excused for his faults and foolish actions and is considered educatable. Not being a full-fledged member of the community, he takes up a position on the periphery of society -- similar to that of the narrator. In other of Kafka's works the protagonist is called a child when his behaviour does not conform to that expected of an adult in his situation. It represents a way of encouraging the protagonist to desist in his endeavours. In the opening pages of Der Prozeß, for example, when Josef K. persists in finding out who the men are that have arrested him, they call out in exasperation: "Sie führen sich ärger auf als ein Kind" (P.14). (There are other instances.) When K. in the novel Das Schloß insists on finding a way to see the castle official Klamm, he is called "trotzig und kindlich" (S.73). In a conversation after K.'s unsuccessful attempt to surprise Klamm in his sleigh, the wife of the innkeeper of the "Herrenhof" shouts: "'Wenn Sie nur nicht immer . . . wie ein

Kind alles gleich in eßbarer Form dargeboten haben wollten!'" (S.156).[8] Last but not least there is Josefine in "Josefine, die Sängerin oder das Volk der Mäuse", who is humoured like a child by the mouse folk.

The musical dogs initiate the narrator's career as an investigator. The first investigation he enters into is one aimed at determining how the dogs nourish themselves, specifically, what actions or rites dogs must perform to make the earth bring forth food. He reports with glee that his views on some aspects of this matter (which need not be reproduced here), agree with those generally held (E.331). A further question which haunts him is where the earth obtains nourishment. Here he runs into difficulty with those around him. It is a question, " . . . die man im allgemeinen nicht zu verstehen vorgibt und auf die man mir bestenfalls antwortet: 'Hast du nicht genug zu essen, werden wir dir von dem unseren geben'" (E.331). It is, in other words, an uncomfortable question, which the community tries to disregard, offering a consolation prize -- food. The other dogs of course never give him any food; the words are just a manner of speaking, a jest. And yet the narrator notices that in his case his fellow dogs seem seriously to give him preferential treatment. On second thought he is certain of it. Why? This interests him primarily and he goes on to ask himself: "Waren es also meine Fragen, über die man sich freute, die man für besonders klug ansah?" and he answers: "Nein, man freute sich nicht und hielt sie alle für dumm. Und doch konnten es nur die Fragen sein, die mir die Aufmerksamkeit erwarben. Es war, als wolle man lieber das Ungeheuerliche tun, mir den Mund mit Essen zustopfen -- man tat es nicht, aber man wollte es -- , als meine Fragen dulden" (E.332). He has discovered the community's plot to make him desist in his questioning. The other dogs do not want to banish him because of his questions: they want to reform him, lull his inquisitiveness to sleep, bring him back into the group by friendly persuasion.

Ostracism occurs in a more subtle fashion than in the passage "Gemeinschaft". The narrator places himself outside the group whenever he begins his questioning -- his questioning,

that is, which deviates (which goes deeper) than usual dog-research. This he must do, as we have heard in the beginning, because of his hyper-sensitivity to matters relating to the existence of dogs. The dogs on the other hand are willing to associate with him on their terms, bu· will not be enticed to discuss philosophical problems. We find a description of such a refusal:

> Man umschleicht den Mithund, man schäumt vor Begierde, man prügelt sich selbst mit dem eigenen Schwanz, man fragt, man bittet, man heult, man beißt und erreicht -- und erreicht das, was man auch ohne jede Anstrengung erreichen würde: liebevolles Anhören, freundliche Berührung, ehrenvolle Beschnupperungen, innige Umarmungen, mein und dein Heulen mischt sich in eines, alles ist darauf gerichtet, ein Entzücken, Vergessen und Finden, aber das eine, was man vor allem erreichen wollte:Eingeständnis des Wissens, das bleibt versagt. Auf diese Bitte, ob stumm, ob laut, antworten bestenfalls, wenn man die Verlockung schon aufs äußerste getrieben hat, nur stumpfe Mienen, schiefe Blicke, verhängte, trübe Augen. Es ist nicht viel anders, als es damals war, da ich als Kind die Musikhunde anrief und sie schwiegen. (E.333)

"Eingestehen des Wissens" -- an acknowledgement that they know of the problems of existing together, this is all the narrator wants. It would mean a beginning; from there one could entice the dog community to reflect on itself and enter into meaningful dialogue. His narration conveys the tension of expectation and the air of defeat, the tired disappointment which is noticeable in the text after the dash and the repetition of "erreicht". Looking at what the dog does achieve one might ask why he is disappointed. There is communication; the narrator lists all the familiar signs of friendship he experiences from his fellow dog. And yet we know he has not achieved what he wants. The dogs do not want to admit to the knowledge. Their denial, however, can be interpreted as an admission of a guilty conscience about their silence. Their looks, especially their eyes, which are dull, removing their feeling from scrutiny, are strong indications of their guilt-ridden prevarication. Thus their reluctance to speak becomes an indication of the topic's unpleasantness to them. In a later incident we will find a similar situation.

The original object of the dog's investigations (where the

earth gets the dogs' food) becomes secondary. The "Forschungen" of the investigator turn again and again to the topic much more vital to him: his relationship to the community. This in turn leads him repeatedly to a discussion of his nature and the nature of the dogs individually and as a race. He delves into the latter topic, however, only with regard to their willingness to answer or enter into discussion. The repetition of these two topics conforms to the general pattern of Kafka's works -- a situation or confrontation between people and ideas is stated and restated in varied form. At this point in his story, for example, the narrator comes back to the question of his behaviour as a dog (E.333-334). He finds in himself the same reluctance to answer which he complains about in others. This reluctance stems from fear. We must remember that the investigator tries very hard to see himself as part of the group. He therefore thinks that he can experience the way they do an innate uneasiness with the recognition of what he is doing: "Sehe ich die Fundamente unseres Lebens, ahne ich ihre Tiefe, sehe die Arbeiter beim Bau, bei ihrem finstern Werk, und erwarte noch immer, daß auf meine Fragen hin alles dies beendigt, zerstört, verlassen wird? Nein, das erwarte ich wahrhaftig nicht mehr" (E.334). This is a metaphor depicting the community of dogs as workers building an edifice, their life, that is, their existence together. We note that this work is termed "finster", which could mean a variety of things: mysterious, somber, or even sinister. Thinking back to the fear-inspired dance of the musical dogs, one could see that the latter reading is justified. This activity cannot be discussed, for it would mean an interruption of construction, a halt to the progress of dog civilization.

In another metaphor immediately after this one the narrator makes his destructive role more pronounced. It depicts the enormity of what the investigating dog desires (although the narrator himself terms his picture "übertrieben"). Knowledge (the answers to all his philosophical questions) is contained in an iron bone, which can only be cracked with the combined effort of all the dog-teeth together (E.334). His investigations are meant to prod them into doing this. But this activity is far

from being a great communal project, for, as the narrator admits, once the dogs have helped him to open the bone he alone would slurp up the marrow. "Das klingt ungeheuerlich," he comments, "ist fast so, als wollte ich mich nicht vom Mark eines Knochens nur, sondern vom Mark der Hundeschaft selbst nähren" (E.334). The metaphor is very much in keeping with the experiment that originally launched this discussion. We remember that the investigator wanted to determine where the earth gets the dogs' food, The dogs wanted to stuff his mouth with food to shut him up. The food that would actually satisfy him comes from the very core of the community. This is why, in a sudden reversal, the marrow is not called food but poison. Eat up the life-essence of the community and one destroys it. This means the narrator destroys himself too, for he is also a dog.

The third topic the narrator takes up are the "Lufthunde". Dogs that float in the air, talking garrulously about philosophical ideas and observations they make from on high (E.337). They have no function in the community, but they are tolerated and their actually valueless verbal contributions are not placed in doubt. The "Lufthunde" represent the world of the artist.[9] The narrator does not in any way feel close to them. He, in fact, has not even seen one (E.336). However, they serve as an example to him, an example that there are other singular creatures in the race of dogs. If these curious dogs can be found in a group within the community, then the narrator too should be able to find dogs that have a nature similar to his (E.338). This wish to find kindred spirits has been mentioned before in this section in the discussion of a short passage from Das Schloß (see pages 6-7). If the protagonist cannot find acceptance in the group he tries to form his own. This is exactly what the narrator does.

Finding his "Artgenossen" presents a problem. They are not to be found among the young "questioners". Perhaps, he muses, his neighbor, a mangy, lame old dog, is his companion (E.339-340). He cannot be certain; in their conversations, which just touch on "local questions", he does not betray anything that would suggest companionship. To speak with him about the dogs

and their propensity to silence is an impossibility, because he runs into the usual problem -- silence, the very thing he would discuss. An imaginary meeting between the two dogs shows the impasse the two reach. Referring to his own musings on the nature of the dogs, the narrator says:

> Über jene Dinge mit ihm zu reden wäre sinnlos, auch mit jedem anderen. Ich weiß, wie das Gespräch verlaufen würde. Er hätte einige kleine Einwände hie und da, schließlich würde er zustimmen -- Zustimmung ist die beste Waffe -- und die Sache wäre begraben, warum sie aber überhaupt erst aus ihrem Grab bemühen? Und trotz allem, es gibt doch vielleicht eine über bloße Worte hinausgehende tiefere Übereinstimmung mit meinem Nachbarn . . . "Bist du doch vielleicht mein Genosse auf deine Art? Und schämst dich, weil dir alles mißlungen ist? Sieh, mir ist es ebenso gegangen. Wenn ich allein bin, heule ich darüber, komm, zu zweit ist es süßer", so denke ich manchmal und sehe ihn dabei fest an. Er senkt dann den Blick nicht, aber auch zu entnehmen ist ihm nichts, stumpf sieht er mich an und wundert sich, warum ich schweige und unsere Unterhaltung unterbrochen habe. Aber vielleicht ist gerade dieser Blick seine Art zu fragen, und ich enttäusche ihn, so wie er mich enttäuscht. (E.342)

Again we note resignation in the narrator's voice as he visulizes the topic being buried under indifferent agreement. He would like to stimulate his companion to exciting debate about the nature of dogs, but must realize, even before he begins, that his attempts would be futile. For a moment he deludes himself with the possibility of communication beyond words, which cannot be uttered. This companionship would be based not on mutual understanding about philosophical questions, but on mutual recognition of their failure. The two would form their own small community of misfits. In the end, though, the narrator cannot be sure of a companion in misery. The eyes do not give a definite answer. This lack of response drives the investigator more and more into his own shell. He plans to hide from his friend when he next comes to visit in order that he will not have to speak to him (E.343).

The narrator has given many examples of the dogs' taciturn nature as he has experienced it in the present. There is a section in which he looks at the problem historically. He goes

back into the past of the community in order to determine the origins of the conspiracy of silence that he experiences in his everyday life of investigating. This represents the pendant to his deliberation about when he made the deciding mistake in his life history (E.335). First, he discounts the idea that the dog-race is progressing. It is merely getting older (E.340). In the earlier stages of the dogs' development it would have been easier to make them speak. At that time dogs were not so "doggish": " . . . die Hunde waren, ich kann es nicht anders ausdrücken, noch nicht so hündisch wie heute . . . " (E.341). Being a dog is something negative the narrator appears to conclude. (The reader, of course, can also think of the negative connotation of "hündisch".) What makes the dogs so "doggish" is their silence. At one time they could have changed their nature as a whole: " . . . das wahre Wort hätte damals noch eingreifen, den Bau bestimmen, umstimmen, nach jedem Wunsche ändern, in sein Gegenteil verkehren können . . . " (E.341). The dogs' ancestors bear the guilt: they erred into the dog-life enticed by its carefree, unquestioning aspects. They strayed down this path with light heart because the crossroad was still in view, that is, they still saw that they could reverse their move. But they did not realize before it was too late that they had irrevocably committed themselves to being what they are at present. They are cursed with their doggish nature; they must be the way they are. The reader perhaps thinks back to the dance the narrator observed as a child. It too had not only a beautiful harmonious aspect about it but also a terrible one. The dogs were forced to dance together. They were prisoners in their existence together.

We now come to the last major experience the dog tells of. It is his meeting with the hunting dog in the days when he was a young dog investigating where the earth obtains food. This meeting comes about during an experiment he has devised. By refusing to snatch food as it descends from above, the narrator hopes to demonstrate that not the ground but he attracts the food. He hopes it will follow him and "knock at his jaws" (E.346). The accomplishment of this is designed not so much to prove

dog-science wrong but to win him the applause of the dog-race. He admits that this is his intention and speaks of the positive signs that he observes among his fellow dogs in earlier stages of his investigations (E.343,345-346,346). During his hunger-experiment he dozes and characteristically dreams of being recognized by science and taken into the fold: " . . . ich würde, während ich mich bisher im Innersten ausgestoßen fühlte und die Mauern meines Volkes berannte wie ein Wilder, in großen Ehren aufgenommen werden, die ersehnte Wärme versammelter Hundeleiber würde mich umströmen, hochgezwungen würde ich auf den Schultern meines Volkes schwanken" (E.348). To be carried on the shoulders of the dogs indicates not only his wish to be recognized but also to be placed above others. Acceptance into the community is actually called his "reward" (E.348).

Towards the end of his self-imposed ordeal, when these pleasant daydreams no longer subdue his hunger and he sees himself dying, it is as if it were not because of starvation but because of abandonment, total isolation (E.350). On the other hand he must recognize this abandonment as something he desired, not in order to end his life on earth, but in order to attain the realm of truth after having left the world of lies, " . . . wo sich niemand findet, von dem man Wahrheit erfahren kann, auch von mir nicht, eingeborenem Bürger der Lüge" (E.350-351). He includes himself in the group of liars and sees that he wills his isolation in order to overcome that part in him which strives to be a normal dog. We have many examples of this attitude.

The dog's fast is ended abruptly when the hunting dog appears and tells him that he must leave this place. He embodies the call to life as Roman Struc says, who also points to the ironic contrast between this fact and his profession -- hunting.[10] Hunting represents a magnified form of the will to live.[11] One must keep in mind that the life, to which the hunter calls and which he embodies, is the normal, unreflecting dog-life. For the first time, however, we find a verbal exchange, which does not just end in silence, when the inquisitive dog presses for an answer. The following passage shows how the latter part of the dialogue between the two dogs develops:

> "Wer bist du?" fragte ich. "Ich bin ein Jäger", sagte er. "Und warum willst du mich nicht hier lassen?" fragte ich. "Du störst mich", sagte er, "ich kann nicht jagen, wenn du hier bist." "Versuche es", sagte ich, "vielleicht wirst du noch jagen können." "Nein", sagte er, "es tut mir leid, aber du mußt fort." "Laß heute das Jagen!" bat ich. "Nein", sagte er, "ich muß jagen." "Ich muß fortgehen, du mußt jagen", sagte ich, "lauter Müssen. Verstehst du es, warum wir müssen?" "Nein", sagte er, "es ist daran aber auch nichts zu verstehen, es sind selbstverständliche, natürliche Dinge." "Doch nicht", sagte ich, "es tut dir ja leid, daß du mich verjagen mußt, und dennoch tust du es." "So ist es", sagte er. "So ist es", wiederholte ich ärgerlich, "das ist keine Antwort. Welcher Verzicht fiele dir leichter, der Verzicht auf die Jagd oder darauf, mich wegzutreiben?" "Der Verzicht auf die Jagd", sagte er ohne Zögern. "Nun also", sagte ich, "hier ist doch ein Widerspruch." "Was für ein Widerspruch denn?" sagte er, "du lieber kleiner Hund, verstehst du denn wirklich nicht, daß ich muß? Verstehst du denn das Selbstverständliche nicht?" (E.352)

The narrator is obviously trying to get the hunter to question his nature as a dog -- something he has continually attempted with the rest of the dog race, as we have seen. The point in question is the reason why the dog race in general is compelled to act the way it does. (The pronoun "wir" goes beyond just these two.) Compulsion is the key word in the dog community. Going back to the experience of the dance, one remembers that, on second look, this appeared to be the unifying factor. The narrator's question then, too, was: "Wer zwang sie denn zu tun, was sie hier taten?" (E.327). The narrator's manner resembles that of a teacher, of a socratic philosopher. He wants his partner in dialogue to define his action and thereby make a discovery about himself. The hunter seems to follow along naively giving simple, straightforward, honest answers and not reflecting on any of the ramifications they might point to. One cannot fail to notice the narrator's pent up frustration at not being able to have the other dog delve a little deeper into his actions. Repetitions of the word "müssen" and the word "ärgerlich" give proof of his exasperation. Finally, he seems to have pressed his opponent into a corner by detecting a contradiction.

Then comes a startling reversal. We notice the hunter

suddenly condescending to the narrator with the paternalistic "du lieber kleiner Hund," demonstrating mild impatience on his part at the latter's lack of understanding the "self-evident". (The impatience lies primarily in the word "denn", which appears twice.) This sudden new attitude indicates that his naivete, evinced before, was affected. He plays dumb until the point when the narrator becomes too insistent. The contradiction, the narrator thinks he has detected, lies in the fact that the hunter must drive away this nuisance in order to hunt and yet would rather renounce hunting than renounce chasing the dog away. We are dealing with two irreconcilable levels within the hunting dog. On the one level there is what he wishes to do, on the other there is the much stronger drive to do what his dog-nature dictates. It does not represent a contradiction for the hunter, however. For him it is obvious that compulsion overrides any wish that may contradict it. The dogs' nature is that way; it is self-evident; it cannot be dissected and explained. This conversation represents the only time in his life that the narrator has come close to receiving an answer from one of the community. His attempts at initiating a dialogue have been rejected, but they have been rejected more openly, with words, not merely by "stumpfe Mienen, schiefe Blicke, verhängte, trübe Augen" (E.333).

At this point the narrator ceases to press his question because he detects that the hunting dog is about to begin singing. We note that while a new feeling of life surges through him, this feeling of life is born of terror (E.352). His acute perception senses what is going to happen before it actually does. The melody of the song seems to float through the air according to its own laws (E.352). We know from the earlier experience of the musical dogs, of course, that music represents the "totality of all existence". It is not, therefore, the hunting dog's music, but a universal music that chooses the hunter as a medium to present itself. The narrator's acute perseption is the result of his ascetic fasting. It is similar to the state of hyper-awareness that allowed him to observe the dance of the musical dogs. Whether the hunter sees his singing as his own or as part

of a greater music, cannot be determined.

The melody creates a small miracle. The dog who is extremely weak from his long fast would normally be considered too ill to move, but he cannot withstand the music. He describes its effect on him in the following way:

> . . . der Melodie . . . konnte ich nicht widerstehen. Immer stärker wurde sie: ihr Wachsen hatte vielleicht keine Grenzen und schon jetzt sprengte sie mir fast das Gehör. Das Schlimmste aber war, daß sie nur meinetwegen vorhanden zu sein schien, diese Stimme, vor deren Erhabenheit der Wald verstummte, nur meinetwegen; wer war ich, der ich noch immer hier zu bleiben wagte und mich vor ihr breitmachte in meinem Schmutz und Blut? Schlotternd erhob ich mich, sah an mir hinab; so etwas wird doch nicht laufen, dachte ich noch, aber schon flog ich, von der Melodie gejagd, in den herrlichsten Sprüngen dahin. (E.352-353)

The phrase "in den herrlichsten Sprüngen" might suggest exhilaration or enthusiasm, but there are too many other indications that the narrator sees the dance negatively or at least ambiguously. The song is not so much a call to life, as a prod. The intensity of the music is so great that he must move or be shattered. True, it is called sublime, but in its sublimity it shows no mercy. We must remember that the music represents the essence of life. It reveals life totally and is therefore very powerful, even terrible. In his moment of heightened awareness it descends on the sick dog alone. What the other dogs experience as a group, as a community, he goes through by himself. That is why he refers to this facet of his experience as "das Schlimmste". Life, whose essence the narrator now experiences, makes all his questioning and experimenting seem paltry. He is chased along pitilessly. "Jagen" also connotes a type of Treibjagd, a cruel chase which will, of course, eventually end in death.

Finally, before the narrative breaks off, the narrator turns briefly to the question of music. He tells of his interest in initiating investigations in that field. It is not long, however, before he slips into a description of his powers of investigation as contrasted to those of every day dog-science (E.354). He possesses none of the scientific capabilities they have, he admits, but the reason for his incapability in science is, in

his view, perhaps his greatest asset. The reason for his incapability is an instinct, which led him to another type of science, to, in his words, "einer allerletzten Wissenschaft" (E.354). By ultimate science he undoubtedly means the knowledge of the essence of being a dog among dogs. This science lets one value freedom as the highest goal. Looking back, we can readily see why. To understand what dogs are, to understand "warum wir müssen", would offer the dogs a means of showing contempt for their "doggishness", which, as we have seen, is their curse. They cannot throw off their nature altogether, and this is why the narrator terms the only freedom possible today "ein kümmerliches Gewächs" (E.354). In his story it has been very evident that he has tried to make the community of dogs reflect on itself in order to understand itself, but he has failed. The only freedom that has been won for himself has placed him in semi-isolation on the periphery of the community.

"Forschungen eines Hundes" has given us an insight into how Kafka views the community and an individual's relationship to it. There is no binding element other than the communal fear of questions about those things that deal with the essence of dog-existence. The narrator will never know whether other individual dogs secretly pose the same questions as he. He will not know this because of his hunted perspective and because, sensing danger, they unite to discourage his unorthodox probing. One cannot maintain that there is no communication between narrator and community, because their various (negative) reactions to his questioning, while they do not tell him what he wishes to know, do tell him he is on the right track. They encourage him.[12] The other works by Kafka that will be discussed in this thesis do not focus on the theme of community the way "Forschungen eines Hundes" does. Nevertheless the idea of the "togetherness" of a group is important when it comes to discussing the verbal encounters the protagonist has with the world around him. The people he meets show themselves united, united in their belief that everything is right the way it is, or united in their rejection of the disturbing questioner. In addition they often demonstrate this unity by talking together about the protagonist in his presence or, if he is not present, with his knowledge, making his exclusion

from the group painfully visible. We shall have ample opportunity to view this in the study of dialogue in Der Prozeß in the third section.

[1] See Günther Anders, Kafka Pro und Contra: Die Prozeß-Unterlagen, Beck'sche Schwarze Reihe, 21 (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1967), pp. 94-95. To Anders Josefine represents the Jewish religion, merely an intermezzo in the history of the Jewish people. See also Herbert Tauber, Franz Kafka: An Interpretation of his Works (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1968), p. 194.

[2] Politzer, p. 9.

[3] This text and all other quotations from the short prose are taken from Paul Raabe's edition entitled Sämtliche Erzählungen (see Introduction, footnote) The dates of composition for this and for the other short prose works discussed in this thesis are taken from the commentary "zu den Texten" in the Raabe-edition (E.391-406). These dates are the result of the research of several persons, Malcolm Pasley, Klaus Wagenbach, and Ludwig Dietz.

[4] John Winkelmann, "Kafka's 'Forschungen eines Hundes'," Monatshefte, 59 no. 2 (1967), 208-209.

[5] Emrich, p. 153.

[6] Emrich, p. 154.

[7] Winkelmann, 204.

[8] A. P. Foulkes notices this parallel between Das Schloß and "Forschungen eines Hundes" in his book The Reluctant Pessimist: A Study of Franz Kafka, Stanford Studies in Germanics and Slavics, 5 (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1967), pp. 137-138.

[9] Emrich, pp. 164-165. See also his footnote on page 427. Heinz Hillmann, pp. 51-55; Struc, p. 155.

[10] Struc, p. 159.

[11] One is drawn to a comparison of the hunter with the rapacious panther who replaces the hunger-artist in his cage, "Ein Hungerkünstler" (E.171).

[12] Foulkes, p. 137.

Aspects of Dialogue

A. Introduction

In the previous section the importance of community in Kafka's work was discussed. Generally speaking, the protagonist finds himself isolated in a community, the term we used to describe a homogenous group of people, large or small. His isolation may be the result of outright ostracism or, which is more usual, of some trait, some failing, that sets him aside from the norm. His aim must be then to seek his integration into the group or to seek the approval of his special status within the group (the case of the artist). Of course, rather than endeavoring to achieve the positive goal of being accepted by the community, we might find him engaged solely in warding off the attempt to isolate him. (Whether the attempt is just or unjust remains open). In his endeavors, whatever they be, the protagonist cannot avoid coming in contact with the community. He communicates with it; usually not with the community as a whole but with its members individually or in smaller groups.

In the following section I will examine certain isolated elements of dialogue, which occur with great frequency in Kafka's work. Some of these aspects relate to the situation in which the exchange of words takes place, others to the actual exchange itself. The method of presenting these aspects of dialogue is the one followed hitherto. Shorter pieces of prose in which these elements predominate are used to elucidate the point which has been focused on. The discussion, however, may include a fuller interpretation of the work and the greater role of communication in it.

B. The Role of Personal Space: "Der Bau" and "Der Nachbar"

Without doubt one of the important aspects of communication is the situation in which the exchange of words or even the exchange of gestures takes place. The factors which must be considered are 1. the space and 2. the relationship of the people in the space to it. Generally one can make the following observation: scenes (that is conversations) take place on the protagonist's ground or on the enemy's ground, seldom in neutral territory. In making this statement one must, however, immediately

add, that the protagonist's ground is not really his. This perhaps is made most obvious in Das Schloß. K., trying to establish himself in the village, can never gain for himself anything he could call his own room. His first night in the inn he sleeps in the common room, then in a small room in which the laundry of the inn is kept, finally he and Frieda are allowed to occupy one of the rooms in the school with the stipulation that they clear the room each day before the schoolshildren arrive. This characteristic is less prominent in other works but nonetheless present. Joseph K. sublets his rooms, Gregor Samsa lives with his parents, Karl Roßmann must usually share his living space with one or more people. In this way the fact of the protagonist's otherwise uncertain position among his fellow human beings receives additional force. None of them really have a place where they are "at home"; they are unable to ensconce themselves in a permanently safe place.

The animal in one of Kafka's later stories "Der Bau" does, in fact, deal with the problem of finding an impregnable structure. The animal's lair can naturally be interpreted as the animal's inner self into which he has attempted to retreat, or speaking of it in terms of Kafka, the author, it can be seen as the author's literary work, into which he has escaped. But remaining on the literal level, which has just as much validity as the metaphorical, we must remember that he talks only about his lair, which he has constructed to shelter himself from the dangers from outside. Although the story remained unfinished, Kafka makes it clear that this protagonist also fails. His plan to secure a space reserved only for himself is placed in great doubt (even early on in his life) by his hearing a hissing or whistling sound near his burrow, which, he surmises, comes from another animal, large or small, familiar or unfamiliar, digging toward his home. Ironically, while attempting to ferret out his supposed enemy, the animal himself must dig and (partially, at least) destroy his well-formed passages.

So dear to him is this personal space, that he begins to speak with it as if with a human being: "Euretwegen, ihr Gänge und Plätze und deine Fragen vor allem, Burgplatz, bin ich ja

gekommen, habe mein Leben für nichts geachtet, nachdem ich lange Zeit die Dummheit hatte, seinetwegen zu zittern und die Rückkehr zu euch zu verzögern" (E.374). The irony we find here is, that he overcomes the fear for his life to visit parts of his burrow whereas the burrow was originally constructed to protect him. Another sentence also shows that the different parts of his burrow take on human characteristics. We read the following description: "Und ich gehe wieder den langen Weg zum Burgplatz zurück, alles ringsherum scheint mir erregt, scheint mich anzusehen, scheint dann auch gleich wieder wegzusehen, um mich nicht zu stören, und strengt sich doch wieder an, von meinen Mienen die rettenden Entschlüsse abzulesen" (E.386). The contact with his burrow replaces the contact with any outside world. He does not try to seek out any other animal. An understanding ("Verständigung") with what the narrator believes to be the encroaching animal is possible, but only in dream: "In meinem Erdhaufen kann ich natürlich von allem träumen, auch von Verständigung, obwohl ich genau weiß, daß es etwas derartiges nicht gibt . . . " (E.387). Only a bitter, almost instinctive fight is really possible, not the thought of the neighborhood of another burrow.

"Der Bau" is an extreme but good example of what private space means to Kafka's protagonists. The story is also an example of the fact that a safe place is unattainable. Encroachment is inevitable. We note that with any intrusion communication with the intruder also becomes unavoidable, even if it means a fight to the death. The short prose passage "Der Nachbar," written in the first part of 1917, presents the same problem in the human context.[1] It begins: "Mein Geschäft ruht ganz auf meinen Schultern. Zwei Fräulein mit Schreibmachinen und Geschäftsbüchern im Vorzimmer, mein Zimmer mit Schreibtisch, Kasse, Beratungstisch, Klubsessel und Telephon, das ist mein ganzer Arbeitsapparat. So einfach zu überblicken, so leicht zu führen" (E.300). We see that again space plays an important role. The narrator defines the locality within which he operates. This is not a description but more a list of what he has under his command. His fears are aroused when a young man rents the vacant

apartment next to his, an apartment he had considered taking. As in "Der Bau" the prospect of the neighborhood of someone else is a disturbing thought which develops into a pronounced fear. Harras, the man with the business next door, slips through the door into his office "wie der Schwanz einer Ratte" (E.301), (another interesting and amusing comparison, when one thinks of the rodent in "Der Bau"). Harras is difficult to pin down for any length of time; informants about his business equivocate. (The difficulty of obtaining precise information is a standard feature, which is encountered time and again.)

From the moment his neighbor has opened up a business similar to his next door, the narrator's insecurity expresses itself in the new relationship to the space he occupies. Like the animal in "Der Bau" his formerly safe seeming quarters are now insufficient. For his neighbor, whom he believes to be out to get him, the walls, which separate them and through which the slightest noise can be heard, are convenient camouflage. His words indicate it is a matter of the inevitable triumph of dishonesty over honesty: "Die elend dünnen Wände, die den ehrlich tätigen Mann verraten, den Unehrlichen aber decken" (E.301). The narrator does not communicate with Harras, but, since he is a businessman, must communicate with customers. This is done by telephone. Unfortunately for him the telephone hands on the same wall separating him from the rooms Harras occupies and he suspects the latter of being able to listen in on his business conversations (E.301). The invasion of his privacy seems complete and yet one must remember that these machinations are all conjectured. Alone the presence of the other businessman next door and the little information he has been able to glean rob him of all composure. At the beginning of the passage he showed himself in complete control of everything within the four walls surrounding him, now, at the end, he is not even in control of his personal secrets. His (would-be) rival has the double advantage of having his own impregnable fortress and, in effect, the use of his neighbor's facilities. In the fantasies born of his fear the narrator finds himself working for Harras by establishing contact with customers and wooing them only to have the

other man dash off (before the telephone conversation has ended) and steal the business.

Two works by Kafka have demonstrated in detail that which we might only find hinted at in other works: the importance of personal space for Kafka's protagonists and their insecurity when it is invaded, which it inevitably must be. The second possibility mentioned was the protagonist entering the space definitely reserved for others. This is perhaps the more usual situation in Kafka's works. Frequently Kafka's protagonists are strangers in new, unknown regions. Karl Roßmann in Der Verschollene and K. in Das Schloß fall into this category. Their efforts to find their own smaller private space in the foreign context fail also, as I have already mentioned. The foreign area the protagonist enters varies in size from country to small room. (Both of these, for example, occur in Der Verschollene.) Needless to say he usually suffers some kind of discomfort in the new surroundings. The feeling of being lost or cramped arises in addition to more outright physical symptoms, dizziness, nausea, suffocation and the like. Oppressive heat or chilling cold help to underscore the inhospitality the place holds for the hero. He is, of course, the one who suffers from these adverse conditions; the regular inhabitants are accustomed to them.

C. The Inopportune Moment: "Das Ehepaar"

In addition to the space, in which an exchange of words between the protagonist and another party may take place, there are other factors. One is the time at which he makes his appearance. Again, speaking generally, one can say that the moment at which he enters the foreign surroundings, whether of his own choice or not, is inopportune. The first chapter of Das Schloß provides an example. After his arrival in the village K. goes in search of a place to spend the night: " . . . im Wirtshaus war man noch wach, der Wirt hatte zwar kein Zimmer zu vermieten, aber er wollte, von dem späten Gast äußerst überrascht und verwirrt, K. in der Wirtsstube auf einem Strohsack schlafen lassen" (S.9). The village seems to have been taken off guard, but only momentarily, for soon K.'s turn comes to be disturbed. He beds down and goes to sleep only to be rudely awakened by Schwarzer, a

subaltern from the castle (S.9). From this moment on the battle begins. In the fourth chapter of Der Verschollene ("Weg nach Ramses") Karl Roßmann has a similar experience. Very late at night he arrives at an inn, which is not really intended for people wishing to spend the night and is given an unfriendly reception by persons he has incommoded (A.99,102-103). Josef K. and his uncle seek out the lawyer Huld at eight o'clock in the evening, as the uncle admits: "' . . . eine ungewöhnliche Zeit für Parteienbesuche'" (P.121). The fact that Huld is chronically ill and bedridden automatically makes the visit seem like an imposition. The possibility is suggested later: " . . . der Advokat, dessen erste Schwäche vielleicht nur dazu hatte dienen sollen, den neuen Besuch zu vertreiben . . . " (P.129). We will return later to this passage in Der Prozeß to observe in more detail how, in the ensuing conversation between K., his uncle, the lawyer, and later the director of the chancellery, the poor health of the lawyer and the late hour are used again to K.'s disadvantage. Suffice it to say now that K. is reminded that his visit is an intrusion,

The short prose piece "Das Ehepaar", written in 1922, lends itself well as an example of communication undertaken at an inopportune moment. It deals with a businessman who seeks out an elderly customer, another businessman, at home in order to sell him his product. In the course of the conversation the old man apparently dies, but is miraculously awakened by an endearing kiss from his wife. The visitor leaves without having concluded the deal. The obvious parallel to the biblical story of Lazarus invites the critic to look at the story in a religious context and there have been at least two very narrow religious interpretations.[2] Werner Kraft comes closer to the meaning of the enigmatic story when he describes it as trying to encompass the inexplicable reality of love and non-love existing together.[3] (The intruding businessman would represent non-love, the "awakening from the dead" an expression of love.) This interpretation does justice to the meaning of the work, but does not bring out its adroit execution. The hectic, mercenary business world invades the intimate private atmosphere of the home, which plods along

at its regular slow pace and which, in the end, even puts the former to flight. Interpreted in terms of the aspects we have discussed already, "Das Ehepaar" can be seen as an example of the protagonist's being in the wrong place at the wrong time and unable to cope with an embarrassing situation rapidly getting worse. As such his flailing about is not without its humorous moments.

The first sentance introduces us to a man hard pressed by lack of time. He devotes most of his life to work in his office. In his spare time he shoulders his box of samples to visit customers personally. This is apparently a job he ordinarily does not perform himself, but the general business situation is so grim that he is forced to do so. The despairing businessman, narrating in the first person, prefaces his account with remarks about his relations with N., the man he is going to seek out, and sets the scene of this one particular visit. In the second sentence we learn that the connection with N., with whom the narrator had been continually in touch, has been cut in the last year for reasons unknown. This represents an ominous hint that N. does not want to see him, for if the narrator has no reason to give for the lack of contact now, then it must be N. who has reasons and who has disassociated himself from the narrator. One can see that it is an inopportune time for him to ask a favor of N.. He tries to play down this break in their relationship by saying: "Für solche Störungen müssen auch gar nicht eigentliche Gründe vorhanden sein; in den heutigen labilen Verhältnissen entscheidet hier oft ein Nichts, eine Stimmung, und ebenso kann auch ein Nichts, ein Wort, das Ganze wieder in Ordnung bringen" (E.354). The word "ein Nichts" is used two times with different appositions each time. Both are intended to minimize, one the problem the other the solution to it. The first, "eine Stimmung", indicates that the reason for the lull in the relationship represents no more than a vague mood, a whim, which could be easily dispelled. (Perhaps it is not even a mood of displeasure although no elucidation is given.) The second apposition, "ein Wort", points specifically to the topic of this thesis -- communication. In dialogue, or more exactly in a quick chat the

narrator thinks he can set matters aright. This must be kept in mind for later when we see that the nonchalance of a chat can in no way be effected.

That the task before him is not so easy as the narrator would like to pretend becomes clear when he continues telling of the circumstances accompanying the conversation. There are difficulties in trying to reach N.. Kafka, in fact, uses the verb "vordringen" which suggests penetrating a strong defensive shield N., we learn, is old, Recently, the narrator adds, he has been ill and does not go to his store any longer although, on the other hand, he still holds the reins of business firmly in his hands and thus still represents a powerful figure. To speak to him therefore, one must seek him out at home, which is not the optimal place to conduct business. Such a visit, the narrator says, one gladly postpones, but we remember that he is under financial pressure to win N. back to his side (E.355).

The difficulties just mentioned represent only some of the circumstances that put the harried businessman at a disadvantage before the conversation begins. He himself prejudices his case by making his visit after six o'clock in the evening and he admits: " . . . es war freilich keine Besuchszeit mehr . . . " (E.355). The inopportune hour heightens the feeling that the narrator is under pressure because (although it is not certain) one assumes that this time is not his choice. Upon his arrival an additional piece of news makes him hesitate: N.'s son is in bed, ill, one more fact which makes his visit inopportune. Nonetheless he enters still clad in coat and hat and remains this way until his exit. It underscores the temporariness of his stay in this company. N., having just returned from a walk, also wears a heavy coat, which he, in contrast to his visitor, removes (E.355). One of the narrator's business rivals is present too -- a further blow to the narrator, but he (again in contrast to the narrator) has managed to ensconce himself so that he does not obtrude: "Er war bequem knapp beim Bett des Kranken, so als wäre er der Arzt . . . " (E.355).

In his bid to gain a favorable starting position to state his case the narrator has suffered one defeat after another. He

sums up his situation this way and we note that, after the innumerable obstacles just mentioned, the first sentence is humorously out of place:

> Nun schien mir endlich meine Zeit gekommen oder vielmehr, sie war nicht gekommen und würde hier wohl auch niemals kommen; wenn ich überhaupt noch etwas versuchen wollte, mußte es gleich geschehen, denn meinem Gefühl nach konnten hier die Voraussetzungen für eine geschäftliche Aussprache nur noch immer schlechter werden; mich hier aber für alle Zeiten festzusetzen, wie es der Agent scheinbar beabsichtigte, das war nicht meine Art; übrigens wollte ich auf ihn nicht die geringste Rücksicht nehmen. (E.355-356)

The narrator's hollow sounding confidence stems not from a recognition that he commands a strong position, but from the feeling that if he does not act now he will soon be in an even worse position. He has no clear insight into his momentary problem which might let him glimpse a way out. He only has the feeling of slipping. He expresses it in very absolute terms when he says the propitious moment will never come. He is forced to act in this immediate situation the same way he was forced to undertake the visit. We see also that he does not have the patience to wait an eternity either, suggesting perhaps that Kafka wanted to make that his secret flaw. The narrator's personal time runs faster than that of the world around him, forcing him to act now.[4]

Just before the narrator begins he notices that N. would have liked to converse with his son. He now has the added embarassment of speaking out of turn to worry about as he launches into his monologue. What the narrator has to tell N. we never find out in any detail, but as the story progresses one comes to realize his message is unimportant. "Das Ehepaar" represents an elaborate piece of scene-setting, stressing those things I have mentioned above.

Instead of giving the content of his monologue the narrator gives the incidentals that accompany the delivery of his monologue. He walks up and down excitedly, cannot control himself because he is missing his regular calming cigarette. Things that he observes disturb him. The agent, his rival, plays with his hat and last but not least he observes that N. is extremely

indifferent to his proposals (E.356). He is like an actor in front of an audience during a soliloquy, pacing the stage to command their attention. And yet, like an actor, he is very aware of their mood and his rapport with them. In a masterful manner Kafka has let his narrator describe the unfavorable initial situation growing steadily worse. The small detail of the action around him, which, as we said, does not escape his notice, makes him aware of his failure before he has completed his attempt to make a favorable impression. His answer is to continue talking, when he senses an impending disaster: "Dieses ganze, mir wenig Hoffnung gebende krankhafte Benehmen sah ich zwar, sprach aber trotzdem weiter, so als hätte ich doch noch Aussicht, durch meine Worte, durch meine vorteilhaften Angebote -- ich erschrak selbst über die Zugeständnisse, die ich machte, Zugeständnisse, die niemand verlangte -- alles schließlich wieder ins Gleichgewicht zu bringen" (E.356). The narrator has talked himself into such a difficult position that only words will save the situation. He hopes that their volume alone will balance the scale which is silently turning against him. The silence, which is sensed as a reproach, elicits wild concessions, proferred to save the sinking ship. The low point is reached when the narrator glances over to the old man in his chair only to see that he is in his last throes. The sudden death of N. puts him in the most precarious and embarassing situation imaginable. Before, he had to convince an unwilling N. of a business proposal, now he is faced with the even more unpleasant task of reporting his death. His task of communication has been increased tenfold. And yet his announcement is suddenly made unnecessary, for N.'s wife is able to wake her husband with a gentle kiss on the hand, which (for most critics) evokes the picture of Lazarus rising from the dead. This is why most interpretations of this work focus on the religious aspect.

Although the comparison with Lazarus is valid, I hope to have shown that "Das Ehepaar" is an extended example of someone's appearance at the wrong time in the wrong place for the wrong purpose, an embarassment which lingers on after the visit. The narrator's closing lament makes it clear: "Ach, was für mißlungene Geschäftswege es gibt und man muß die Last weiter tragen" (E.358). In the last scene we have proof that there can

be no reconciliation between the two spheres. The narrator is struck by the resemblance of N.'s wife to his deceased mother, who could "work wonders" by repairing damage done (E.358). For a brief second he abondons his hurried, goal-orientated behaviour to remember an idyllic childhood. But his overtures are not understood, not understood in the literal sense of the word because the old lady is deaf. In addition she mistakes him for his worst enemy at the moment, the agent. The man he has tried to overtrump even wins the victory of having made the greatest impression.

In no case can one regard this story as being only bitterly serious, a view which religious interpretations inevitably lead to. It is a well-known fact that Kafka sometimes uses common, everyday figures of speech as the basis of his stories.[5] ("Jemandem etwas auf den Leibe schreiben" receives its pictorialization in "Die Strafkolonie", for example.[6]) The apparent death of N. has as its basis a common expression also. The clue is given when he is awakened by his wife: "N. bewegte sich, gähnte laut, ließ sich das Hemd anziehen, duldete mit ärgerlich-ironischem Gesicht die zärtlichen Vorwürfe seiner Frau wegen der Überanstrengung auf dem allzu großen Spaziergang und sagte dagegen, uns sein Einschlafen anders zu erklären, merkwürdigerweise etwas von Langeweile" (E.357). To the reader who puts two and two together the mention of boredom is not that curious. The scene a moment earlier comes to mind. The old man, who, we now know, was bored and just went to sleep, seems to have died. The phrase that quite naturally comes to mind is "zu Tode gelangweilt". With his overly long monologue the narrator has bored N. to death. He is completely unable, even with the best business offer, to reach an agreement with N.. His frantic efforts to communicate cannot penetrate the naturally peaceful home-atmosphere in order to stir it up and enlist its aid for mercenary goals. The intimacy of the family wins out as the narrator and his rival beat a hasty retreat.

D. Perpetual Motion and Communication: "Der Aufbruch"

In the interpretations I have given I have brought out ancillary aspects of communication, those things which are given before a dialogue begins or which develop as it progresses. It

has been evident that the two, situation and conversation, are inextricably linked, that the struggling protagonist is at a disadvantage not just in a verbal exchange but also in the circumstances which accompany that exchange.

A further point which should be explained in this connection is motion. Kafka possesses a very keen sense for visual elements. Motion in the novel Der Verschollene is seen as a mechanized dehumanization by Wilhelm Emrich, whether actually carried out by machines or by machine-like humans.[7] Kafka uses motion in several instances to underscore the impossibility of one person or party communicating with another. "Eine kaiserliche Botschaft" represents an obvious example. The messenger continually strives toward his goal but never reaches it.[8] "Der Jäger Gracchus", "Fürsprecher", "Eine alltägliche Verwirrung" offer other examples. Sometimes it is the protagonist's opponent who rushes in on the protagonist overwhelming him in his excitement, but more often the protagonist himself is in motion. The boat of the "Jäger" in "Der Jäger Gracchus" drifts languidly into port: "Eine Barke schwebte leise, als werde sie über dem Wasser getragen, in den kleinen Hafen" (E.285). The hunter is always in motion, we learn later on, in fact the words "immer in Bewegung" are repeated twice like a refrain (E.287). It is, however, a slow, aimless movement which matches his tired despair. A dream of reaching a gleaming gate is followed by awakening and the realization that he still is " . . . auf meinem alten, in irgendeinem irdischen Gewässer öde steckenden Kahn" (E.287). The stagnation is only temporary; it does not mean that the protagonist has become sedentary. No one knows how to hold him in one spot, he says, no one knows how to help him. His continuous motion, be it ever so slow, prevents the possibility of contact with others.

The type of motion, as "Der Jäger Gracchus" has shown, can reflect the protagonist's emotional condition, in the case of the "Jäger", a tired, gnawing despair. Later I will show how his failure to secure the aid of those around him is evident in his conversation with the mayor of Riva. The reason for the continuous journey in a state of neither death nor life is not really given -- an accident, the protagonist claims. In the next

short piece of prose under discussion motion plays a key role, making it the best example of the observations just made:

Der Aufbruch

> Ich befahl mein Pferd aus dem Stall zu holen. Der Diener verstand mich nicht. Ich ging selbst in den Stall, sattelte mein Pferd und bestieg es. In der Ferne hörte ich eine Trompete blasen, ich fragte ihn, was das bedeute. Er wußte nichts und hatte nichts gehört. Beim Tore hielt er mich auf und fragte: "Wohin reitest du, Herr?" "Ich weiß es nicht", sagte ich, "nur weg von hier, nur weg von hier. Immerfort weg von hier, nur so kann ich mein Ziel erreichen." "Du kennst also dein Ziel?" fragte er. "Ja", antwortete ich, "ich sagte es doch: 'Weg-von-hier', das ist mein Ziel." "Du hast keinen Eßvorrat mit", sagte er. "Ich brauche keinen", sagte ich, "die Reise ist so lang, daß ich verhungern muß, wenn ich auf dem Weg nichts bekomme. Kein Eßvorrat kann mich retten. Es ist ja zum Glück eine wahrhaft ungeheuere Reise. (E.321)

In contrast to "Der Jäger Gracchus" and following the more usual trend of the author's fiction, the action in "Der Aufbruch" seems hectic. This is suggested by the syntax of the first lines -- short and concise. The trumpet is also often associated with an urgent call, but what it summons the narrator to in this case, not even he seems to know. It is alone a signal to depart. As we learn shortly afterward the rider-narrator has no goal he rides toward. The word "goal" is given a new interpretation as the narrator speaks. The first time he mentions it one is led to believe that he has a positive goal that he can attain. The thrice repeated "weg von hier" appears merely to express the insistance in reaching a normal, although unknown goal. The three repetitions, however, at the same time reflect the narrator's impatience in fulfilling his negative aim. What he states is that he does not want to remain in the same place. He must keep moving. The paradox has been wonderfully constructed. On the one hand he admits he does not know where he is going and on the other he says he knows his goal.

"Der Aufbruch" also deals with communication. The narrator's constant urge to move on forms the subject of the dialogue between master and servant, which leads to the curious results already stated. There is no outright total lack of communication in this dialogue, but, as usual, a lack of real understanding by

the servant for his master's problems. The piece begins with the narrator ordering his servant to saddle his horse. The servant does not understand him. The word "verstand", of course, can have the double meaning of to hear or to have a sympathetic understanding for a problem. The servant has no feeling for what is bothering his master. He does not know what the trumpet means and, by even disclaiming that he heard the trumpet, there is perhaps the suggestion that he does not want to know. A way to avoid discussing something on someone else's terms is to disavow totally any knowledge of the issue. Since he is at least unaware of some of the secret forces which are compelling the narrator to ride away, his question "'Du kennst also dein Ziel?'", which implies doubt that the narrator knows what he is doing, seems presumptuous. Consequently, there is noticeable impatience in the answer he gets. It comes out especially in the little word "doch". The servant does not understand the curse of having to make this endless journey, never stopping. In addition his statement "'Du hast keinen Eßvorrat mit'", which can also be read as a reproach, demonstrates his misconception about the length of the journey.

The final ambiguous sentence (paradoxically) brings clarity to this piece so fraught with ambiguities. The two meanings the sentence can have, hinge on the phrase "zum Glück". In translation the more obvious meaning, even banal meaning perhaps, would be "It is a truely tremendous journey to happiness". "Ungeheuer" -- tremendous, too, can mean inordinately long, fear inspiring or unfathomable, ununderstandable. The other possible translation is: "Luckily it is a truly tremendous journey". This may be puzzling at first. Why should the narrator consider a journey such as this as a stroke of good fortune? Upon further reflection one can see why the word "luckily" is appropriate. The longer and more fearsome the trip is, the more he is likely to want to stop. Indeed, as he says, he must stop to get provisions or face the prospect of starving. The more he stops the greater the likelihood that he will establish contact with people on the way. One must regard the dialogue with the servant as futile, yet one can see that the narrator harbors the hope

that one of his stops might lead to a permanence he does not have now. His itinerancy, which is not understood (here by the servant), would finally come to an end. Of course, the double meaning of the last sentence must be left intact. One cannot decide in favor of one reading over another, lest the ambivalent feelings the narrator entertains for his restless wandering be negated.

E. Information: "Eine Alltägliche Verwirrung" and "Das Schweigen der Sirenen"

Since so many of Kafka's protagonists find that they are lost in the world or find themselves in situations where their normal daily life pattern has been interrupted by an unusual event, one would quite naturally assume that they wish to collect information which will help them out of their predicament or help them at least to cope with it. This happens, but perhaps to a lesser degree than one expects. Certainly someone like Josef K. in Der Prozeß shows himself intent on finding out why he has been arrested. K. in Das Schloß attempts to determine the relationship of people he meets to those in the castle and wants to obtain a picture of the power structure so that he may slip in. Of more interest to the protagonist is the judgement accorded to his actions by those surrounding him, that is, (to express it in terms of information) he wants to inform himself of the attitudes of others toward him. We shall have considerable opportunity to see later how judgements are both rendered and withheld. The question of information still remains one to be dealt with, however, for Kafka's protagonists are constantly being bombarded with information they have not asked for. The information is inevitably unpleasant news tinged sometimes with reproach (itself another facet of dialogue which will be treated separately). It leaves the receiver unsure of himself; it hampers him in the pursuit of the goal he has set for himself. Many times the disheartening news is actually intended to be helpful by the person who gives it. He appears unaware of its negative impact. Or the information may be dropped in passing without any special emphasis being given it. A malicious intent on the part of the transmitter to impede the protagonist's progress

becomes difficult to prove. As with the other aspects of dialogue, the individual situations provide a variety of variations of this one facet.

To elucidate what I mean about unsolicited information I have chosen the short text "Eine alltägliche Verwirrung" written on October 21,1917 and to be found in the third Oktavheft. In a recent article on Kafka Hartmund Binder says the word "Verwirrung" in the first line -- the title was supplied by Max Brod using the last three words in the first line -- is a misreading, That part of the line should read "ein alltäglicher Heroismus".[9] This reading does not affect my interpretation of the passage, however. The piece is short enough to be reproduced here entirely.

> Ein alltäglicher Vorfall: sein Ertragen eine alltägliche Verwirrung. A hat mit B aus H ein wichtiges Geschäft abzuschließen. Er geht zur Vorbesprechung nach H, legt den Hin- und Herweg in je zehn Minuten zurück und rühmt sich zu Hause dieser besonderen Schnelligkeit. Am nächsten Tag geht er wieder nach H, diesmal zum endgültigen Geschäftabschluß. Da dieser voraussichtlich mehrere Stunden erfordern wird, geht A sehr früh morgens fort. Obwohl aber alle Nebenumstände, wenigstens nach A's Meinung, völlig die gleichen sind wie am Vortag, braucht er diesmal zum Weg nach H zehn Stunden. Als er dort ermüdet abends ankommt, sagt man ihm, daß B ärgerlich wegen A's Ausbleiben, vor einer halben Stunde zu A in sein Dorf gegangen sei und sie sich eigentlich unterwegs hätten treffen müssen. Man rät A zu warten. A aber, in Angst wegen des Geschäftes, macht sich sofort auf und eilt nach Hause.
>
> Diesmal legt er den Weg, ohne besonders darauf zu achten, geradezu in einem Augenblick zurück. Zu Hause erfährt er, B sei doch schon gleich früh gekommen -- gleich nach dem Weggang A's; ja, er habe A im Haustor getroffen, ihn an das Geschäft erinnert, aber A habe gesagt, er hätte jetzt keine Zeit, er müsse jetzt eilig fort.
>
> Trotz diesem unverständlichen Verhalten A's sei aber B doch hier geblieben, um auf A zu warten. Er habe zwar schon oft gefragt, ob A nicht schon wieder zurück sei, befinde sich aber noch oben in A's Zimmer. Glücklich darüber, B jetzt noch zu sprechen und ihm alles erklären zu können, läuft A die Treppe hinauf. Schon ist er fast oben, da stolpert er, erleidet eine Sehnenzerrung und fast ohnmächtig vor Schmerz, unfähig sogar zu schreien, nur winselnd im Dunkel hört er, wie B -- undeutlich ob in großer Ferne oder knapp neben ihm -- wütend die Treppe hinunterstampft und endgültig verschwindet. (E.303-304)

The passage represents one of the most concise pieces of prose Kafka composed. It has been compared to a mathematical problem in its use of letters and in its brief matter-of-fact development of the plot.[10] And it contains many of the elements of communication we have discussed or will discuss in more detail shortly. One must remember that since the passage is so short every word can carry great significance, the same as every word in a poem. Walter Sokel takes this prose piece as a demonstration piece in the opening pages of his book on Kafka.[11] He claims that "Tücke der Welt, die Unberechenbarkeit des Lebens, geheimnisvolle Feindseligkeit der Umstände" only appear to be at fault in A's not finding B. A, through impatience and disregard for what lies so close to him, does not recognize B, Sokel claims. It is the result of a hidden will which acts contrary to the declared intention of the protagonist and this unseen, unexpected will evidences itself in the action. Relating this to tragedy Sokel says: "Bei Kafka geht also tragisches Schicksal auf einen inneren Widerspruch, eine Willensspaltung des Ichs der Erzählung zurück, die unterhalb der Bewußtseinsschwelle des Ichs und daher der Erzählung bleibt".[12] Unwittingly being the instrument of his own downfall is the protagonist's tragic flaw.

Sokel does not take into account however the ever-important world surrounding the protagonist, which in this case, as we shall see, eggs him on and makes him appear far less tragic than an Oedipus or a Wallenstein. He may, in fact, be likened more to a scared animal dashing back and forth. Then too, we must remember that Kafka calls this an everyday occurrence, that is, something which does not deserve the weight which would otherwise be attributed to tragedies. The heroism mentioned in the first line -- taking Hartmut Binder's reading above -- cannot be connected with the Greek tragic hero, for his suffering bears no resemblance to that of A in this passage. A's has no stature, not even a name. "Heroismus" must therefore be taken ironically. Of course, the use of the word "alltäglich" represents deliberately misleading nonchalance, for some rather unusual things <u>do</u> take place, the vastly varying amounts of time it takes to

cover the same distance, for one. What Kafka wants to achieve by saying "alltäglich" is to give it the air of a pedestrian occurrence not to be taken seriously. It may be very painful for A, but his downfall is so routine that it is exemplary and this is again a reason for the style of the story, which makes it sound like a schoolboy's arithmetic problem.

As usual the protagonist is in motion, the people he comes in contact with are at rest. The movement alone against the background of rest gives the impression of the protagonist's being harried, even more so, of course, when the race back and forth between towns becomes more frenetic. Only one of the actors in this play (one is tempted to say comedy) is actually seen in motion; that is A, B, the man he wants to see, remains almost unseen throughout. He too travels from one place to another, but of him we only receive reports.

To report, that is, to give information, is the function of the third party in the action, the surrounding world. They seem ancillary and, on the other hand, they play a major part in the troubles of the protagonist. They, as usual, may not be the final cause of his downfall, but they do speed it up. By "they" is meant the people that the protagonist, A, finds at home and in H, where B lives. It is assumed these are village people since A's home is labelled "Dorf". The smallness of the unit "Dorf" suggests their lack of sophistication, even stupidity, the way it is presented in the townspeople in "Der Schlag ans Hoftor" or Das Schloß. Kafka uses the impersonal pronoun "man", which denotes an indefinite, anonymous number of townfolk. The use of this pronoun makes it difficult to locate culpability; we do not see one man struggling against the deceit of another. The malicious intent of the townsfolk as a group also cannot be decisively proved. Finally, the indirect speech used throughout, when reporting what they say, makes them even more remote.

At the outset the third person narrator gives a general introduction in clipped fashion, then sets the scene by telling us that A has an important business deal to conclude with B. Once again we find ourselves in the sphere of business. The protagonist has a definite goal that can (and from his point of

view must) be achieved. A is therefore dependent on B, and the matter is important to him ("ein wichtiges Geschäft"). The preliminary conference takes place and the rapidity of the trip between his town and H indicates the success of this first stage. Because he prides himself at home that he was able to cover the distance in such a short time, one also infers that he feels a quick, painless conclusion of the agreement might be reached in the near future. But he knows in advance that the final conference will take several hours and so he takes pains to get an early start to allow enough time. Thus, in spite of the ease in establishing first contact, A knows he depends on the generosity of B and cannot afford to miss the second and last meeting.

After this propitious beginning things turn downwards. The trip to H, which before only took ten minutes, the day after takes ten hours, although all conditions seem to be the same. These ten hours do not appear to be a subjective measurement of time, "Gefühlszeit". The text states that A leaves in the morning and arrives in the evening. Quite objectively viewed, ten hours have passed. A feels the effect of the long journey; it is said that he arrives tired. In this weakened condition he is confronted not with B, whom he perhaps could expect, even after such a long trip, but with those people B left behind when he set out for A's town. What they now have to tell him, looking again at the text quoted above, is basically this: " . . . daß B . . . . vor einer halben Stunde zu A in sein Dorf gegangen sei . . . " (E. 303). However, the village folk do not restrict themselves to the bare message, but tell him in the same breath that B is angry on account of A's prolonged absence. "Ausbleiben" -- the word alone suggests the expectation of A's arrival and his "staying out", taking the word literally, connotes a continuous disappointment of that expectation. The last of the sentence (" . . . und sie sich eigentlich unterwegs hätten treffen müssen") represents an opinion. The word that catches attention here is "eigentlich". Put the sentence into direct speech and it would read something like this: "(und) Sie hätten sich (or Ihr hättet euch) eigentlich treffen müssen." Not only is it a polite, but

insistant, way of putting forth a viewpoint but also a way of showing surprise, in this case of the fact that the two did not meet on the way.

The fault for not meeting on the way, however, should lie with both A and B. Their paths just did not cross. Yet A has already been viewed as the cause of B's anger, so he has already been placed in the wrong. The further inference, therefore, is that he is also to blame for not coming upon B, who had specifically set out to find him. In any case, be he to blame or not, A finds out that he has missed a second meeting (on the way) with B. The advice to remain and wait for his business contact, although good, must seem gratuitous to A, for it has been made abundantly clear to him that B ("ärgerlich") considers their relations somewhat strained. His going out in search for A represents a great favor. He is willing to expend effort to find A, although it is incumbent upon A to search out B, since he wants the business, as we have seen. For A to wait and have B locate him would mean to reverse the roles and would almost represent an insult to the other. A, more impressed by the report of B's anger than by the advice he has received, does indeed fear the loss of his business contact and now rushes home immediately to repair the damage just indicated to him.

The return trip is accomplished in a flash perhaps because he does not pay any attention to it. Before, the length of time it took to traverse the distance to H was the immediate cause of A's late arrival and the missed appointment. Now this barrier is no longer present. Nonetheless A is in trouble. Although he has no tangible evidence of his precarious position, it has been suggested to him, and in such a way that it is now the major concern. His return home in order to make amends and regain at least his former position brings the next step in his ruin, for instead of coming across the person he wishes to see he meets more people who are ready to inform him.

The information is just as disquieting as ever: B has already come early in the day. By inference, A (and the reader, who is seeing this from A's viewpoint) knows immediately that his business contact has been waiting for a long time. There is,

of course, an unexplained discrepancy, which might lead us to believe that the people A talks to are fabricating the story. In H the protagonist had learned that B had set out for A's town only one half hour before A's arrival, obviously after having waited all day. B's departure must have occured in the evening or towards evening, since that is when A arrived. When A returns to his home, he learns that B arrived early when he (A) was setting out to the town of H. The credibility of the townspeople in both towns could therefore be deemed questionable -- but not to A, who lets himself be worried again when he arrives home. As economically as A has been informed of his error that morning, there is still one word which adds another dimension to the statement, the word "doch". By using it the informants express the obviousness of the information they are reporting and at the same time suggest their surprise that A is unaware of it. The pause adds to the mood of wonderment. It is as if there were a second of reflection in order to double-ckeck before the information of B's early arrival is repeated again with more accuracy, accuracy which can only be painful to A. He is told that B came right after his departure and this in turn is corrected slightly, but even more to A's detriment, when he is told with self-assured nonchalance (expressed by "ja"), that he actually met B, talked with him, and postponed their meeting, claiming he had not time now. Indeed, since A had to be reminded of the business deal, the suspicion could have arisen whether he was setting out to conclude the deal with B at all.

With the description of the early morning's scene we find a new facet of information giving. Before, the information dealt with people and events other than A; now A is being told of his own former actions, which have eluded him. The surrounding world has thereby placed itself in the position of mastery. The protagonist no longer is in command of his own past. Of course, we must remember that the truth of what the people tell him is guaranteed by nothing. Their words gain power only by A's willingness to believe.

A new low point for A has been reached, but not the lowest

yet. Before he makes the final plunge he is lifted up again, if only ever so slightly. His informants raise his hopes by telling him that B has stayed to wait for A. Again this is presented as a great favor. B has waited in spite of A's inexplicable behaviour. (This fact is placed first in the sentence and thus gets emphasis as criticism.) Not content with just giving him this information, however, the village fills out the news with some perturbing detail: B has asked often whether A has not already returned. This small addendum lets the already harried businessman know that B is impatient. A considerable amount of tension or suspense is created by the addition of "zwar" and "noch" into the report of what B did. The word "noch" especially, coming after this buildup, indicates an ominous temporariness. His chance for reconciliation -- for by now we can almost speak of a rift between the two -- hangs by a tenuous thread. We note too, that B's supposedly often-repeated question is phrased in the negative. In direct speech it would read: "Is A not back yet?", which not only connotes impatience but also incredulity that A should have the audacity to remain away so long. The promise of achieving the goal, for which he raced back home is placed in grave doubt by this additional information.

Naturally A is happy. He is happy, as the text states, to be able still to speak with B and explain everything, that is, he sees the possibility of resolving his problem through communication, direct communication without any in-betweens, without any barriers.[13] This desire for open communication, but also the suggested prospect of B's departure, sends A rushing up the stairs. This haste which, one must stress, has been induced, leads to his final accident which precludes any meeting. Characteristically, he stumbles not at the bottom of the stairs but just before reaching the top. Kafka drives this point home by beginning his sentence with an adverb of time ("schon") which denotes the completion of an act before completion was expected, then quickly takes this idea back with the word "fast". The long sentence, in which the protagonist's fortunes appear so

bright at first, witnesses their rapid deterioration. It is significant that the fall leaves A unable to call out; Kafka uses the verb "schreien", an ambiguous word here. A cannot call out 1. to attract B's attention and establish contact or 2. to give vent to his frustration at not having made contact or 3. to express his immediate physical pain. We have not heard one direct word from A throughout the work; he is not destined to open his mouth once.

Not always does the protagonist's course end in defeat. In a few scattered instances Kafka has provided us with examples of favorable outcomes. One of these success stories is his reworking of the Homeric myth of Odysseus, in particular his encounter with the sirens.[14] As usual when he tells of characters from the stories of others, Kafka changes the plot. In this case, contrary to Homer's account, Odysseus does not want to hear the sirens' song but wants to overcome them by being impervious to it and precludes any chance of their success by stuffing his ears with wax in addition to chaining himself to the mast of his ship. This attempt to circumvent inevitable seduction seems at first to be depreciated by the narrator, for he prefixes his tale with this generalizing statement: "Beweis desse , daß auch unzulängliche, ja kindische Mittel zur Rettung dienen können" (E.304). Why the means Odysseus has chosen are considered insufficient and childish is explained in part when the narrator, after describing what he does, says:"ähnliches hätten natürlich seit jeher alle Reisenden tun können, außer denen, welche die Sirenen schon aus der Ferne verlockten, aber es war in der ganzen Welt bekannt, daß dies unmöglich helfen konnte. Der Sang der Sirenen durchdrang alles, und die Leidenschaft der Verführten hätte mehr als Ketten und Mast gesprengt" (E.304-305). This sentence interests us mainly, because it clearly implies that Odysseus' first problem lies in the world, the people, surrounding him. "Es war in der ganzen Welt bekannt" -- it is a form of information we are dealing with. The sirens' invincibility, in fact, is mythical, that is, something that is reported from generation to generation but which has not been put to the final test. One could see Kafka's account of Odysseus therefore as a

myth about one man's victory over myth. Because they believe what the world says, all the other mortals do not think of attempting an expedition like that of Odysseus. He alone possesses the characteristic of being able to ignore the world. Referring to the hero's attitude toward this available information about the sirens' powers, the narrator says: "Daran [an ihr Lied] aber dachte Odysseus nicht, obwohl er davon vielleicht gehört hatte. Er vertraute vollständig der Handvoll Wachs und dem Gebinde Ketten und in unschuldiger Freude über seine Mittelchen fuhr er den Sirenen entgegen" (E.305). The statement that Odysseus might have heard of the danger of the sirens' song conflicts somewhat with the fact that the danger was known world-wide. One asks why he did not know for certain. The syntax of the sentence reveals the answer. The first thing the narrator states outright is that Odysseus did not think of the danger, then he concedes that he had possibly heard of it. The syntax duplicates the priorities in the protagonist's mind. Foremost in his consciousness is the resolve not to think or be reminded of any barrier. Placed in secondary position is the possibility of difficulties.

It is this imperviousness to what is being said around him which represents the hero's great advantage. Even before he sets out he has proved his capability of not hearing (the task before him being not to hear the sirens' song). The imperviousness points to an egocentricity which in truth is childlike. His happiness about his paltry means for defence is called innocent. It is like a child's happiness. The same holds true for his trust in his weapons. It is very much akin to the belief in the "indestructable" (by which Kafka means naive self-confidence) and it certainly is not a characteristic of those other harried figures one so often meets in Kafka's works.

It is necessary to be fully aware of the dangers which Odysseus unwittingly confronts in order to be able to comprehend the greatness of his feat. Let us review these dangers. There is the sirens' world-famous song which penetrates everything and from which there is, consequently, no escape. The song awakens an inner emotion, passion, which is the listener's downfall. But

they have another even more terrible weapon, the narrator says: their silence. He explains the disastrous effect the silence has; one is led to believe that the sirens have been defeated, and the feeling of victory leads to destructive arrogance: "Dem Gefühl, aus eigener Kraft sie besiegt zu haben, der daraus folgenden alles fortreißenden Überhebung kann nichts Irdisches widerstehen" (E.305). For the person attempting to sail by therefore, defeat would seem inevitable. Either he hears the sirens and their song destroys him, or he does not hear it (that is, he "hears" their silence) and is destroyed from within by arrogance or by what he might perhaps also call hubris.

Odysseus sails to the sirens. Wax stuffed in his ears, chained to the mast, he represents a perfectly self-contained being, who is able to renounce all desire to hear anything. The sirens are so impressed by his defences that they decide to use their deadlier weapon. Odysseus, of course, thinks they are singing and knows he has won. As for their silence, the narrator says: "Odysseus aber, um es so auszudrücken, hörte ihr Schweigen nicht . . . " (E.305). Pointing to the seeming contradiction of being able to hear silence with the words "um es so auszudrücken". And yet the reference to expression might be pointing to another way of reading the line. One just has to stress the "ihr" to see the answer to how Odysseus escapes the deadlier side of their trap, for what he is hearing indeed is not <u>their</u> silence but his own. He had set out, one must remember, with the intention of hearing nothing, not with the intention of overcoming their song by not giving in to it after having listened to it. By stuffing his ears with wax he had created his own silence and, to repeat, he was able to do this with confidence in a successful outcome because long before that he had shut himself off to all information about his opponents' invincibility. Of course, one could also say that not knowing, or wanting to know, of their song means that Odysseus could disregard any news of their special weapon too.

It might be said, however, that regardless of how the silence is created the effect should be the same. The feeling of having defeated the sirens is present and hubris should follow, but in

the case of Odysseus this is not so because hubris is innate in him. It does not evolve at the moment he realizes his victory. His self-containment, his self-centerdness was with him from the beginning. It allowed him to disregard all warning and to trust in his means of overcoming the sirens. In the description of his glance at the moment when he actually vanquishes them, we may also detect his keen ability to remain uninfluenced. Although he notices the sirens at first, his glance afterwards turns to a point in the distance and nothing can cling to it: "Bald aber glitt alles an seinen in die Ferne gerichteten Blicken ab . . . " (E.305). His glance does not take in anything around him anymore; in particular Odysseus receives no further impression of the sirens in his immediate vicinity. Instead his eyes give off a radiance, which in turn seduces his would-be seductresses (E.305).

The addendum to the story again points to Odysseus' impenetrability, for it states that it was said of him that he was so wily the goddess of fate could not penetrate his innermost thoughts and it goes on to suggest: "Vielleicht hat er, obwohl das mit Menschenverstand nicht mehr zu begreifen ist, wirklich gemerkt, daß die Sirenen schwiegen, und hat ihnen und den Göttern den obigen Scheinvorgang nur gewissermaßen als Schild entgegengehalten" (E.305). This means that the hero's innocence was pretended. His deception is seen as a shield, that is, his awareness, and consequently his will power, were so great that they might have been an affront to the gods, so that Odysseus had to keep his astuteness from view.

F. Reproach: "Der Dorfschullehrer"

One of the most frequent phenomena of dialogue in Kafka's work is the reproach. In the author's relationship with his parents it represented an important factor. The diaries speak of reproaches he had to hear from his father, especially in connection with his lack of enthusiasm in the business venture in which he was involved, the "Prager Asbestwerke Hermann & Co."[15] (A passage from the diary about this will be introduced below in connection with the story used as an example in this discussion.) One of the first observations in the famous letter to his father

deals with the never ending "Vorwürfe" he was subjected to. (H.163). The picture of Hermann Kafka, the stern, patriarchal tyrant, must in fact be modified to include his complaining nature. With the best interests of his son and his family as a whole at heart, he often made known his disappointment and his rebukes weighed heavily on Kafka's conscience, for he was well aware that, by his father's standards, which he recognized as valid to a certain degree, he was something less than a dutiful son.

It is not unusual therefore to find the protagonist of Kafka's works being reproached for actions he has committed or omitted to perform. The degree of severity in the reproach may vary, but in few instances does it become vituperative. Not often is the protagonist loudly reviled. Karl Roßmann is perhaps one of those who is. We may think of the scene in the Hotel Occidental after Karl has been discovered absent from his post at the lift, the interrogation in which he squirms in the clutches of the "Oberportier" (A.170-191). In these scenes contumely rains down on his head forcing him to retreat into silence. It is more usual to see the protagonist reproached in passing. Indeed, the complaint against him often comes parenthetically as an aside, imbedded in an otherwise positive statement directed at him. Parenthetical statements are inherent to Kafka's style as Wolfgang Rohner has shown.[16] Although the reproaches may be tucked away in the remaining dialogue, they occur with such abnormal frequency that they certainly must catch the reader's attention. The reproach is an expression of disapproval of something with momentary or long range significance. It throws the protagonist off his guard and it may bring on a feeling of remorse, since a reproach can indicate that a person has violated a maxim of a social order, large or small (or of a personal relationship) which is considered to be binding.

In the story fragment "Der Dorfschullehrer", most of which Kafka wrote on December 18,1914, we have a good example of how the author uses this element of dialogue. The few words Kafka writes about the day of the story's creation bear out the contention that the reproach must have been prominent in his mind.

On December 19,1914, he notes in his diary:

> Gestern den "Dorfschullehrer" fast bewußtlos geschrieben, fürchtete mich aber, länger als bis dreiviertel zwei zu schreiben, die Furcht war begründet, ich schlief fast gar nicht, machte nur etwa drei kurze Träume durch und war dann im Bureau in entsprechendem Zustand. Gestern die Vorwürfe des Vaters wegen der Fabrik: "Du hast mich hineingetanzt." Ging dann nach Hause und schrieb ruhig drei Stunden, im Bewußtsein dessen, daß meine Schuld zweifellos ist, wenn auch nicht so groß, wie sie der Vater darstellt. Ging heute Samstag, nicht zum Nachtmahl, teils aus Furcht vor dem Vater, teils um die Nacht für die Arbeit ganz auszunützen, ich schrieb aber nur eine und nicht sehr gute Seite. (T.321)

A detailed account of Kafka's participation in the factory ("Prager Asbestwerke Hermann & Co.") will follow in a later section. Suffice it to say here that at this time the author was under pressure from his father to show increased interest in the venture in which he had a partnership, because the other two partners, Karl and Paul Hermann, had been called up for military service. It seems quite evident from the diary entry that the acrimonious conversation between father and son and the composition of "Der Dorfschullehrer" are linked in time. We note in fact that Kafka tells of writing the story, goes back to mention the meeting with his father, then speaks again of his writing.[17] It is conceivable therefore that the author say the influence the interview had on the story. This of course does not mean that he was merely reproducing the conversation on paper. We will see, though, what part the reproach plays in the work.

A narrator, a merchant by trade, tells of a village schoolmaster's futile endeavors to have scholars and the public at large believe that he has discovered a giant mole, the likes of which the earth has never seen.[18] The narrator, too, has played a role, that of propagating the fact of the discovery and of helping to find acceptance for it. His attempts have been crowned with even less success than his protege's, and he is on the verge of retiring from this lost cause, after having retrieved the few remaining copies of an unsuccessful paper written on behalf of the schoolmaster. The fact that Max Brod entitled this fragment "Der Riesenmaulwurf" when he first published it in

1935 shows perhaps what he considered the focal point of the story. Speculation could range far and wide as to what this animal could stand for. One might be tempted to interpret the animal as a religious symbol, as a symbol for God or for a divine revelation. Wilhelm Emrich is more cautious, identifying it as a intangible that transcends the empirical world.[19]

The question of what the mole represents can be left aside. The mole needs no definition, in fact. All one need say is that it is an object about which others have definite feelings. (What it is, is not a matter of debate in the story either, only its size, the question being: can a mole of this size exist.) The genesis of the fragment has indicated that the emphasis falls on a personal relationship, and as the story progresses it becomes evident that the topic which predominates is the relationship between the narrator and the schoolmaster.

From the very first line on we learn that the narrator finds this type of animal repulsive (E.252), and shortly after beginning his account he comes out openly with the admission that proof of the existence of the giant mole was less his concern than defending the honour of the old schoolmaster (E.254). But as he observes: "Ich gestehe, ich bereute später diesen Entschluß, denn ich fühlte bald, daß seine Ausführung mich in eine sonderbare Lage bringen mußte" (E.254). The schoolmaster naturally does not consider that his honour is in question and suspects the narrator of working against him.

The friendship that the narrator expects would come about never does, in fact: "Es entwickelte sich fast eine gewisse Feindseligkeit von seiner Seite" (E.255). He cannot label it outright enmity. As this thesis will show, it is rarely easy to identify outright enemies among Kafka's figures. The narrator finds that he is fighting a battle on two fronts. He is trying to further the schoolmaster's discovery among the mass of disbelievers and at the same time to show him that he has only his good in mind. The "certain kind of enmity" ("gewisse Feindseligkeit") evidences itself in reproaches the schoolmaster makes to his defender. He believes that his cause has been hurt by the latter, who has made his pronouncements public in writing,

whereas his detractors presented their comments only in private conversations (E.255). There is also his suspicion his helper entertains the secret wish to cheat him out of the fame due him (E.256). However the narrator has already renounced all claim to anything but the wish to help: "Ich wehrte also geradezu jede größere Beteiligung an der Sache ab; es war fast, als hätte ich irgendwie den unglaublichen Vorwurf des Lehrers vorausgeahnt" (E.256). What the narrator is reproached with most is his betrayal of the cause through lack of understanding (E.256). This represents the primary mistake. The conviction that this creature exists should be deep-rooted in the narrator, who has already confessed to a revulsion at the sight of an ordinary mole He admits now that -- even if he had discovered the giant one -- he would not have put himself out as much as he did for the man (E.257).

A scene in the latter half of the story in which the two converse brings out more vividly how the old man expresses his disapproval. He has come to call on the narrator after the failure of the latter's written defense of him. The narrator had hoped the schoolmaster had not discovered an article by a local agricultural journal, which, mistakenly identifying the schoolmaster as the author, had ridiculed the renewed attempt (actually by the narrator) to foist the tall tale of the giant mole on the public. Of course the schoolmaster has seen it -- in Kafka it is inevitable that the worst always occurs -- and a letter announcing his arrival has also indicated his censure, which the sensitive recipient reads between the lines: "Er schrieb dort: 'Die Welt ist schlecht und man macht es ihr leicht', womit er ausdrücken wollte, daß ich zu der schlechten Welt gehöre, mich aber mit der mir innewohnenden Schlechtigkeit nicht begnüge, sondern es der Welt auch noch leicht mache, das heißt, tätig bin, um die allgemeine Schlechtigkeit hervorzulocken und ihr zum Sieg zu verhelfen" (E.258). The narrator himself interprets the schoolmaster's words as a hyperbolic reproach. In addition to having a share of the general wickedness, he propagates it. This makes him far more guilty, for it suggests, of course, that he consciously dotes on wickedness whereas the world might

be wicked without realizing it.

When the old man comes, the narrator has prepared to meet him with his resignation from the cause along with a confession of his ineffectuality (E.259). The schoolmaster answers with a long monologue, which represents nothing else but another form of reproach, elaborated to an almost ludicrous degree by the long depiction of what might have been, had the narrator not destroyed all hope by his (intentional) bungling. (The description of the relationship between old and young, which the narrator gives preceeding this monologue, reminds one very much of the relationship between Georg Bendemann and his father in the last scenes of Das Urteil.[20]) In the page that comprises the monologue the old man recalls his first excitement on learning that someone else, someone influential had come forward to assist him. He paints a picture of how it could have been, a fantasy ending with his triumphant entry into the city. This is all presented with the knowledge that it will never be, since the one who was supposed to make it possible, the merchant-patron from the city, has already admitted his complete failure. The long portrayal of a daydream of success only "rubs in" the fact that the narrator has not lived up to expectations and he of course senses the intent of the portrayal, asking: "'Wollt ihr mir Vorwürfe machen, weil es nicht so gekommen ist?'" (E.261).

We note that the schoolmaster has contradicted himself, If he were entirely committed to his project ("An der Sache, nur an der Sache lag ihm." E.256), then he should have depicted the triumph of the discovery. Instead he concentrates on his personal victory, which has been frustrated. Thus he himself has moved the focus away from the mole. He may think he is unselfish in his belief, but the reader has seen differently. The schoolmaster has reproached the narrator for not being committed wholeheartedly to something, which he loses sight of too. At this point in the story we see that the original object has been pushed into the distance: only the unresolved personal conflict remains: The schoolmaster has wanted to triumph personally (although he is convinced he is only fighting

for the acceptance of the discovery). In his view the narrator has prevented (because he was malicious or misguided) his dream from becoming reality. On the other hand the narrator, who has been aware of his failure to believe in the importance of the mole, is left with his feeling of guilt and since the old man will not relieve him of it, his only alternative is to wash his hands of the entire matter. But the schoolmaster again will not let him off that easily. He does not take his leave, but remains seated in the narrator's room smoking his pipe. The quiet figure itself becomes the lingering reproach for the narrator's failure (E.264).

"Der Dorfschullehrer" is based on this structure, the reproach. It appears in other works, as I have said, more in passing. The protagonist is repeatedly placed off guard by being placed in the wrong. The action he has undertaken, whatever it be, is negated and, what is worse, is shown to be detrimental. A short passage from Das Schloß provides a further example showing how pointedly Kafka employed this device. K. tries to enlist the aid of Frieda and the innkeeper's wife in order to see Klamm. The idea is rejected out of hand. The innkeeper's wife sets about explaining why, although she despairs at making clear to him what, which is self-evident to them. (The use of "selbstverständlich" reminds us of the use of the word in "Forschungen eines Hundes".) She lists K.'s attributes, having enumerated Klamm's, saying:

> "Was sind nun aber Sie, um dessen Heiratsbewilligung wir uns hier so demütig bewerben! Sie sind nicht aus dem Schloß, Sie sind nicht aus dem Dorfe, Sie sind nichts. Leider aber sind Sie doch etwas, ein Fremder, einer, der überzählig und überall im Weg ist, einer, wegen dessen man immerfort Scherereien hat, wegen dessen man die Mägde ausquartieren muß, einer, dessen Absichten unbekannt sind, einer, der unsere liebste kleine Frieda verführt hat und dem man sie leider zur Frau geben muß. Wegen alles dessen mache ich Ihnen ja im Grunde keine Vorwürfe. Sie sind, was Sie sind; ich habe in meinem Leben schon zuviel gesehen, als daß ich nicht noch diesen Anblick ertragen sollte." (S.69-70)

We see that the list of (negative) attributes soon becomes a list of sins K. has committed. One is heaped onto the next, making

K. a criminal in this village, not to speak of being a fool in his endeavor to seek out the exalted Klamm. His undertaking therefore is pushed into the far distance. After this barrage of reproaches -- and one cannot call them anything else -- it is highly ironic to hear the woman state that she has no intention of reproaching him. It is obviously untrue.

G. Advice: "Ein Kommentar"

We have seen how Kafka's protagonists are kept informed of their situation, whether they wish to be or not. It has already been mentioned that they are almost always individuals lost in an alien world or forced into a new and precarious position vis-a-vis a familier one. Often the protagonist in his plight is confronted with advice from another person, which, like the information he receives, may not have been asked for. Advice may be offered as a substitute for other assistance that has been requested. Thus this advice cannot be said to be entirely gratuitous. Its value, however, usually cannot be recognized by the protagonist. That is to say, those people proffering advice appear to be doing so from a vantage point allowing greater knowledge than the protagonist has. Their reasoning for suggesting a course of action also remains unexplained often causing a sense of frustration when the piece of advice contradicts the protagonist's original wish or general inclination.

The short prose masterpiece "Ein Kommentar" serves well as an example. It was written at the end of 1922 and given the title "Gibs auf!" by Max Brod, although Kafka has written the title we use here on the manuscript.[21]

> Es war sehr früh am Morgen, die Straßen rein und leer, ich ging zum Bahnhof. Als ich eine Turmuhr mit meiner Uhr verglich, sah ich, daß es schon viel später war, als ich geglaubt hatte, ich mußte mich sehr beeilen, der Schrecken über diese Entdeckung ließ mich im Weg unsicher werden, ich kannte mich in dieser Stadt noch nicht sehr gut aus, glücklicherweise war ein Schutzmann in der Nähe, ich lief zu ihm und fragte ihn atemlos nach dem Weg. Er lächelte und sagte: "Von mir willst du den Weg erfahren?" "Ja", sagte ich, "da ich ihn selbst nicht finden kann." "Gibs auf, gibs auf", sagte er und wandte sich

mit einem großen Schwunge ab, so wie Leute, die
mit ihrem Lachen allein sein wollen. (E.358)

The reader receives the story from the perspective of the protagonist as usual. Time, place, and motion, those important functions of communication, which we have investigated before, are also present here. The early hour finds no one on the street, giving no opportunity for the protagonist to address himself to various persons for help. As Heinz Politzer says, no reason for his going to the railway station is given.[22] The destination suggests departure from the city, although this is not certain. One has, in fact, a "double" departure; the narrator has left an unspecified point in order to rush to the railway station from which he will leave the city. He is therefore completely without fixed position, similar perhaps to the narrator of "Der Aufbruch" who is continually en route.

Furthermore it is time that forces him to quicken his pace, for he notices that the clock on the tower shows a later time than his watch.[23] Indeed, Kafka uses the word "Schrecken" to describe the traveller's reaction, which could indicate a strong disturbance. We note in passing that this anxiety about the time naturally implies that there is a deadline that must be met, here obviously the departure or arrival of a train. However, Kafka avoids bringing this into play making it seem as if the narrator's concern arises from his lateness per se, not his lateness for any particular event. Already a metaphysical meaning is hinted at.

As usual the protagonist finds himself in an unfamiliar place. He admits that he does not yet know the city in which he finds himself. No reason for this is stated; it could be because he failed to familiarize himself with it, it could also be that he never has had the opportunity to do so. Definite guilt cannot be ascribed to him on this account. In addition the discovery that he is late makes him less certain of the way, in fact, to be precise, we must say that he only remarks that the city is generally unfamiliar to him after he has told of being surprised into uncertainty in this one particular instance, that is, the present shock has triggered a feeling of greater uncertainty. We see that the erosion of confidence occurs in increments.

The scene has been set for the ensuing conversation. The narrator is not just lost but in a panic about it. By the time he asks the policeman for help he is out of breath. One does not know whether the breathlessness results from his running or from the fear of running out of time. The policeman represents a static calm element which contrasts to the narrator's disquiet. As Politzer says: "He was nearby, standing there as if he had been on that very spot since time immemorial and intended to remain there forever."[24] The man presents his straightforward request only to receive a question as an answer. Politzer again gives a thorough interpretation of this line. It is ambiguous in his opinion. The smile is ominous in light of the question which carries an undertone of arrogance and indignation.[25] The policeman puts himself at the beginning of the sentence and downgrades the questioner with the "du" form.[26]

In addition something that the critic has not considered may be pointed out here. The question actually consists of a statement with a question mark after it. The reader is familiar with this syntax from everyday communication and it occurs in Kafka's dialogue with astounding frequency. The policeman's question far more than being a question connotes amazement at the man's requesting information from him. This leads to the presumption which has not been taken into consideration by any critic that the policeman ridicules the man's efforts, his naivete in posing such a question. Politzer's other interpretation sees the question prompted by diffidence or uncertainty, the "du" implying "human proximity and brotherliness".[27] This interpretation sounds less plausible but, it must be admitted, possible. One can also detect a note of reproach in the policeman's question, which would agree with both the attitude of haughtiness as well as the attitude of diffidence. He not only finds it incredible that the man would come to him for this information but also suggests that he should have known better. In turn, a comment of this kind points to a greater knowledge on the policeman's part. He may not know anything about how to find the right way, but he is certain that he is the wrong person to ask.

After the narrator's answer we come to the words of advice the policeman offers. True to form, his advice is neither lengthy nor substantiated. As Heinz Politzer points out the pronoun "it" is elastic with the ability to mean most anything.[28] The man should give up asking this particular person for the way or his search for the way generally, he should give up his haste, or give up everything, all hope, even life. We have here an excellent example of how Kafka uses the poverty of the printed word. Had the phrase in question been spoken out loud, the tone of voice might have given the meaning away. This is not possible, obviously, and yet, Kafka has given his reader a hint on how to interpret by repeating the two words twice. The repetition gives a note of finality to his advice.[29] Above all, though, it suggests weariness and resignation, a characteristic that no one has noticed yet. (The fusion of the "s", representing the pronoun "es", with the imperative also connotes a "lazy" tired articulation.) It is as if the policeman surveyed more than the narrator's eye could encompass. From his superior vantage point he sees the futility of the narrator's pursuing his course of action any further. (Again it is uncertain which action is meant -- searching asking, or even living.) Of course the advice meets the narrator's hurried insistance head on and stops all hope dead in its tracks. In the lack of an explanation there lies some cruelty, for the man might well assume that he is being told to stop his action because it is no longer any use. To use an analogy close to the story, it is as if the policeman sees the train departing (or knows of it) and says: "Give it up. It's no use. You're too late." This would mean that at one time success might have been possible, that the man has missed his chance.

We have seen how Kafka has turned two words of advice into a torment. This discussion has emphasized the policeman's haughtiness, his cruelty, although Heinz Politzer also sees the possibility that he is more positively inclined toward the man. While it must be admitted that so much in this short piece is ambiguous, it is my opinion that the negative interpretations of "Gibs auf", these words of advice, prevail. The policeman's final gesture

of turning away supports this impression of unfriendliness that has already been gained. To begin with, the turn alone shows that the policeman isolates the narrator. The sweep also has a certain majesty as if a king were terminating an audience. Kafka in his usual way does not make this gesture unequivocal; he says he turns away as "people do who want to be alone with their laughter". He has not said outright that the policeman turns away in order to laugh, he only indicates that it seems this way to the beholder, i.e. the narrator. But this, of course, represents the important thing, for it is the narrator's story, his dilemma. What actually happened (other than that he turned away) cannot be determined and is of lesser consequence. To the man it seems that he laughs. If the policeman is laughing, what is he laughing about? Perhaps he is ridiculing the questioner and his naivete, perhaps he laughs at the trick he has managed to play on him, or perhaps it is a laugh of desperation at the mere thought of the man's undertaking any action. In any case, though, it is a moment of privacy. His thoughts obviously cannot be shared with the man, who is left to his own devices, to accept the advice or to doubt it.

H. Judgement: "Der Jäger Gracchus," "Der Schlag ans Hoftor" and "Fürsprecher"

Closely related to the problem of information-giving is that of passing judgements. Alone in the world, often plagued by an undefinable stigma, the protagonists search out others in order to receive an opinion on their situation or, in many cases, reassurance that the course they are taking is the right one. It is a form of question, but not a question that could be answered by mere information. Instead the protagonist wants a statement of personal feeling toward an issue which is very close to his heart. Therefore we can say that judgement means basically an opinion, a statement of how another person views the protagonist's situation or actions past or present. This can, of course, merely be a description of how a person sees the exterior circumstances, but more often than not it involves a statement about guilt. Usually one of two things happens: the protagonist asks for judgement (one positive to him) and does not receive it or he does

not ask for judgement, but is judged nonetheless.

One of the many works in which asking for an opinion, a judgement, figures prominently is "Der Jäger Gracchus", the fragmentary story of the Swabian hunter killed in an accident, who is condemned to travel aimlessly in the world, neither dead nor alive, because his death barge was misdirected. Wilhelm Emrich regards "Der Jäger Gracchus" as paradigmatic for Kafka's work saying: "Das universell Allgemeine, das sich in dieser Geschichte des Jägers Gracchus ausdrückt, besteht gerade darin, daß dieser Jäger sowohl aus den Ordnungen des Diesseits wie aus den Ordnungen des Jenseits herausgefallen ist; er ist universell im Überall und Nirgendwo, läßt sich nicht mehr fixieren; es gibt keine eindeutige Bestimmbarkeit mehr für sein Dasein."[30] And yet one must point out that even if the hunter belongs neither to this world nor the world beyond, his conversation with the mayor of Riva, which constitutes most of the work, takes place in this world. The world beyond, "das Jenseits", does not seem to be defined anywhere beyond that one word uttered by the mayor (E. 287). Neither does it represent the goal the hunter still strives for, since he himself speaks of his peregrinations, up, down, and to each side on a wide open staircase which leads upwards (E.287). Where it actually leads to he does not say. Throughout the conversation the "Jäger" entertains the hope that he will be asked to stay. The stop in this part is to be seen as an attempt not only to bring his problem to the fore but to have others, in this case the mayor, take a stand.

We have seen that although the hunter drifts between this world and the next, the reader sees him only on earth. Kafka, thinking undoubtedly of his own life situation, used the fate of the "Jäger Gracchus" to embody a useless life of a person who realizes he is not part of the normal world without knowing where he belongs. In a fragment belonging to "Der Jäger Gracchus", from which Emrich quotes extensively, we hear the mayor minimize the importance of this figure in daily life. Life is short he comments and goes on to say: "So interessant nun der Jäger Gracchus ist -- das ist Überzeugung, nicht Kriecherei --, man hat keine Zeit an ihn zu denken, sich nach ihm zu erkundigen oder sich

gar Sorgen über ihn zu machen. Vielleicht auf dem Sterbebett . . . Dort hat vielleicht der fleißige Mann zum ersten Male Zeit sich auszustrecken und durch die müßiggängerischen Gedanken streicht dann einmal der grüne Jäger Gracchus" (B.333). Activity in daily life precludes thinking of the hunter, that is, precludes the laming realization that life is useless. Only when faced with death, which reduces the importance of all earthly matters, would one perhaps come to recognize that one actually has lived a meaningless life. In life such thoughts are unpleasant and would actually lead to hopeless drifting without a home. That is why the hunter makes the mayor ill at ease. The basic tenor of his words is the wish for non-involvement. One can postpone the unpleasant task of thinking about him as long as possible. We learn also that the mayor has visited the traveller at the request of his wife; in the fragment Emrich quotes he even claims to have come to the harbour-district for another purpose -- business. That the two do not really communicate with each other as Emrich claims does not really seem to be the case.[31] It is more a matter of the mayor's reserve and his unwillingness to commit himself to a judgement in the hunter's favor. He senses what the man wishes of him, but plays dumb.

Since the world beyond is out of reach of the hunter his thoughts turn to establishing permanence on earth. Before he begins telling of his fate he asks: "'Glauben Sie aber, Herr Bürgermeister, daß ich in Riva bleiben soll?'" (E.286). The cautious answer he gets is: "'Das kann ich noch nicht sagen '" (E.286). From this point on the mayor restricts himself to short questions and comments, betraying his hesitation to believe in the problem facing the hunter. After he has been told by the hunter that he (the hunter) is actually dead, he points to the contradiction (obvious to him) that he is still alive. "'Und Sie haben keinen Teil am Jenseits?' fragte der Bürgermeister mit gerunzelter Stirne" (E.287) expresses not inquisitive interest, but wonderment and censure, for, as so often is the case, the syntax has been arranged in such a way as to change the simple question, "(Und) Haben Sie keinen Teil am Jenseits?" to a repe-

tition of the fact ("Und Sie haben keinen Teil am Jenseits.") placed in question.

After "der Jäger Gracchus" finishes his description of his present unfortunate situation and the events leading up to the fateful moment when his boat went astray, his listener comments: "'Ein schlimmes Schicksal'" (E.288), but at the same time with lifted hand in a gesture of warding off something. The gesture reveals his desire to remove this man and his problem from him. The immediately following question, "'Und Sie tragen gar keine Schuld daran?'" (E.288), repeats the pattern we discussed above: a statement that the hunter shares no guilt in his fate is placed in doubt. And the protagonist is obviously stung, for he now throws out random facts about himself asking after each whether any guilt can be found ("'Ist das eine Schuld?'" E.288). But again the mayor remains within his enclosure of circumspection answering only: "'Ich bin nicht berufen, das zu entscheiden'" (E.288). Once more he does not want to commit himself to an unequivocal "no", although he concedes that guilt does not seem to be evident.

We have seen how the "Jäger Gracchus" travels around in the world looking for help. From the interpretation of his conversation with the mayor of Riva we have noticed that what he possibly means by help is the personal judgement by the people he meets that he has no guilt in his horrible fate. This may also be seen as part of being accepted in the community. The mayor hesitates in making an unequivocal pronouncement of the hunter's innocence and shows himself apprehensive about the possibility of that man's continued residence in Riva. The refusal to give a straightforward judgement, equivocation, represents a form of negative judgement. In Kafka we also find persons willing to give their personal judgement. (I still use this word in its widest meaning of "opinion".) The judgement concerns the protagonist and his dilemma and it is also invariably negative. The degree of openess may vary. In the story "Das Urteil" or the novel Der Verschollene opinion is expressed very openly. Often, however, the protagonist must interpret other people's estimation of his character or actions from more subtle

forms of expression. As in the case of information he may not want nor ask for the opinion of others. But they are quick to indicate their evaluation in one way or another. In addition these hidden opinions may show that they go far beyond what he expects. He is caught by surprise and plunged much deeper into despair than he might have considered likely.

"Der Schlag ans Hoftor," written in March and April of 1917, represents a masterly description of the development of a mood of slight apprehension into utter despair, as the narrator, the protagonist, is made to realize his hopeless situation: " . . . von völliger Zuversicht und Ahnungslosigkeit des Erzählers," as Hans Reiss says, "bis zum ausweglosen, hoffnungslosen Verderben."[32] The narrator and his sister are walking home. Passing the big gate leading in to the courtyard of a house just outside a small town, the girl either knocks on it or just shakes her fist at it (the narrator thinking back cannot remember which). In the following scenes this small incident seems to lead the narrator into a more and more grave calamity. (The girl, the one actually responsible for the "misdeed", is sent home by him earlier and so escapes.) In the end he finds himself imprisoned in a small room without hope of ever breathing anything except the air of a prison, The punishment is far too severe for the crime, one would say. And yet one cannot really define the narrator's final imprisonment as a punishment that follows conviction. The cause is so minor that by the end it has disappeared from view; it cannot be debated. There remains only an overwhelming consensus of guilt <u>per se</u>, without any immediate cause.

For most of the story we find a discrepancy between how the narrator sees his situation and how those around him judge it. The reader, for his part, sees the events from the viewpoint of the protagonist, identifies with him, and thus is inclined to see little wrongdoing in the knock on the door. The first sign that the innocuous action might have consequences comes when the brother and sister enter the town: "Wir kannten es [das Dorf] nicht, aber gleich nach dem ersten Haus kamen Leute hervor und winkten uns, freundschaftlich oder warnend, selbst

erschrocken, gebückt vor Schrecken" (E.299). The meeting with the inhabitants of the village takes place on ground unfamiliar to the protagonist, as usual. The description shows how their appearance changes in the eyes of the narrator going from friendly hand-waves, which he might expect as a normal greeting, to signs of extreme terror. They do not actually change their demeanour, the change mirrors the narrator's realization of their concern, inexplicable to him at this moment. Brother and sister have no way of knowing what frightens the townsfolk. Only their warning, that the owners of the farm that they have just passed will prosecute them reminds them of their previous action; about this the narrator shows no concern.[33] He must, however, calm his sister; one member of the twosome has succumbed to fear. On the other hand, his attempt to explain to the people of the village, that he and his companion cannot be held to account for this minor deed, only results in their withholding judgement, which means they doubt his argument. The next moment they indicate their true feelings by telling him that he too will be accused (E.299). The narrator's nod of the head and smile is as yet merely an ironic approval. When they all look back toward the farm, it not only presages the next stage in the calamity, but it seems to conjure it up. A troop of horsemen appears, for no apparent reason but to apprehend the culprits (E.299). The narrator shows he is becoming more nervous by insisting that his sister leave.

The reader notices that the pace of events is speeded up while they take on greater and more ominous proportions. The troop of cavalry, come to investigate, has hardly entered the courtyard of the farm when it has turned and is on its way to the village. The interrogation of the narrator begins while the riders are still on their horses (E.299-300). The narrator is hardly given time to catch up with the seriousness of events. His interrogator becomes judge while he looks at him. As the gravity mushrooms, his perception of the situation still allows him to cling to his self-confidence, although that too is waning fast. We see this in his words: "Noch glaubte ich fast, ein Wort werde genügen, um mich, den Städter, sogar noch unter Ehren,

aus diesem Bauernvolk zu befreien" (E.300). The word "noch" indicates that he clings to a belief that will soon no longer be valid. (Kafka has placed the "noch" first to emphasize this tenuous state.) In addition he does not believe, but "almost" believes in his capability of freeing himself.

The climax of the accelerating calamity arrives with a pronouncement by the young judge after the narrator has been asked to enter the room of a farmer's hut. This is the way the latter phrases it: "Aber als ich die Schwelle der Stube überschritten hatte, sagte der Richter, der vorgesprungen war und mich schon erwartete: 'Dieser Mann tut mir leid.' Es war aber über allem Zweifel, daß er damit nicht meinen gegenwärtigen Zustand meinte, sondern das, was mit mir geschehen würde" (E.300). The judge's action of leaping into the building ahead of the narrator, so that he awaits him when he enters, represents a visual demonstration of what has been happening all along. The opposing side has been two steps ahead of the protagonist. The words of pity are, of course, also far ahead of the events, and for the first time the narrator formulates his realization of this. The judge's statement contains or presupposes a judgement of the actions which have gone before, for in order to be pitied the man must have been found to be in a pitiable state, that is, he must have been judged to be guilty of something, which would bring down on his head a truly horrible punishment. By this one big jump forward, trial, conviction, appeal -- all have been avoided.

With the recognition that the judge sees him as a condemned man, the narrator begins to lose all hope. A moment before he was certain he was entering the room of a farmer's cottage, now, when he actually comes in, it takes on the appearance of a dungeon with a bed in the middle, which looks like an operating table and ominously suggests torture (E.300). Previously he did not accept the judgement of those around him about his involvement or guilt, now he plunges headlong into acceptance of both. The last two lines, set apart from the rest of the text, show inner development even more clearly. They read: "Könnte ich noch andere Luft schmecken als die des Gefängnisses? Das ist

die große Frage oder vielmehr, sie wäre es, wenn ich noch Aussicht auf Entlassung hätte" (E,300). The first of these sentences is a hypothetical question. We see, looking back from the second sentence of the pair, that he does not just ask whether it will be physically possible for him to breathe anything other than prison air, that is, he does not just ask whether he will someday be free. He is asking whether he would ever mentally be able to accept anything other than a prison, even should freedom be offered (and we note that Kafka avoids using the word freedom). But even this cannot be deliberated because there is no hope of physical release being granted him. Thus we now see the protagonist in a state of absolute dejection. Inwardly he has caught up with his opponent's view of his guilt and surpassed it. Not even the thought of freedom is a possibility. One must once again make it clear that this state is brought on by the judgement of others around him. Their assessment of his role and his guilt can be read in their faces and in their words. He is reminded by them that he is considered guilty and his situation hopeless, so that he ultimately believes it himself.

The short prose passage, which Max Brod entitled "Fürsprecher", is to be found in one of Kafka's literary notebooks. It was probably written in 1922. Judgement again is the focal point and, although there is no dialogue, it is obvious that communication with the world around him is the narrator's chief concern. In addition, in this work there is mention of a court and the use of this theme throws light on the concept of the court in Der Prozeß, which will be interpreted in detail in the next section.

The first-person narrator finds himself in a building in which he seeks "Fürsprecher", advocates, people who will speak on his behalf (E.322). In the first sentence he immediately casts doubt on whether his mission will be successful. The persons he meets seem very unpromising. They look like "old, fat women" and move with a slowness which does not bode well for their effectiveness, should they decide to take the narrator's part (E.322). His uncertainty about the people he meets is extended to include the locality: "Ich konnte nicht einmal erfahren, ob wir in einem Gerichtsgebäude waren" (E.322).

The word "Gerichtsgebäude" is introduced suddenly for the first time here and jars the reader slightly. The statement shows that the narrator must have assumed before, quite naturally, that he was in a court. Now he cannot find his assumption confirmed or denied by anyone. In the following sentences he debates whether an all-pervading droning sound is not a sure sign of a court. One would perhaps normally associate the droning with the noise which human voices and activity create in a building, but for this man there is no comforting message in all this sound.

Only in the middle of the piece do we begin to realize why the narrator deliberates about where he is, why he seems anxious to find proof that he is in a court building. (His anxiety has been evoked by the mood of uncertainty.) He asks a question which he then answers himself:

> Wenn es aber kein Gericht war, warum forschte ich dann hier nach einem Fürsprecher? Weil ich überall einen Fürsprecher suchte, überall ist er nötig, ja man braucht ihn weniger bei Gericht als anderswo, denn das Gericht spricht sein Urteil nach dem Gesetz, sollte man annehmen. Sollte man annehmen, daß es hierbei ungerecht oder leichtfertig vorgehe, wäre ja kein Leben möglich, man muß zum Gericht das Zutrauen haben, daß es der Majestät des Gesetzes freien Raum gibt, denn das ist seine einzige Aufgabe, im Gesetz selbst aber ist alles Anklage, Fürspruch und Urteil, das selbstständige Sicheinmischen eines Menschen hier wäre Frevel. (E.322)

It is obvious, if the narrator is in a court of law, then the law comes into effect and it provides a procedure for judging a person: there is accusation, defence, and judgement. The narrator shows his faith in the law, that is, a set of predetermined rules. The law possesses majesty, which means that it is free from human manipulation. Any human meddling is labelled as crime and if the court, the guardian of the law's autonomy, allowed unjust or capricious decision-making, life would be impossible. There is an attempt to give universality to these observations in the use of the generalizing pronoun "man" ("man sollte annehmen"). One can also detect a note of desperation in the narrator's voice as he tries to lend an air of matter-of-factness to his statement ("wäre ja kein Leben möglich"). The

court is not the ideal place for the narrator, but he feels safer here than elsewhere, where advocates are more sorely needed.

Elsewhere, "anderswo", refers to the world at large, human society. Here the judgement is actually formed: "Anders aber verhält es sich mit dem Tatbestand eines Urteils, dieser gründet sich auf Erhebungen hier und dort, bei Verwandten und Fremden, bei Freunden und Feinden, in der Familie und in der Öffentlichkeit, in Stadt und Dorf, kurz überall. Hier ist es dringend nötig, Fürsprecher zu haben, Fürsprecher in Mengen, die besten Fürsprecher, einen eng neben dem andern, eine lebende Mauer . . . " (E.322). This sentence gives us important clues on how we are to understand this passage. The horizon has suddenly been widened; the judgement is not merely a court matter but involves the entire world of the protagonist, everyone he comes in contact with in everyday life. We are now speaking of judgement not in the juridical sense, but in a much more general sense. A man's whole life is being evaluated. The individual judgements of many will form the final judgement. In the meantime the narrator spends his life looking for people who support him. In a court of law the procedure is fixed. For this reason advocates are needed less there. The narrator obviously fears life, where the human factor cannot be controlled. His accusers are pictured as foxes, weasels, and little mice, who possess all the agility that the defenders lack (E.322).

In the latter part of the piece the narrator muses once more about the space in which he is and difficulty of finding advocates. He realizes that a more populated space such as a fair ("Jahrmarkt") would give him a larger selection from which to choose those who might be favorable to him. But having made the mistake of entering this building without noticing where he was running to, there is only one positive alternative for the protagonist -- to continue on. To turn back and retrace one's steps would mean going over familiar but unfertile ground. He already knows that the people he has met are no use to him. They cannot even be pinned down by him but drift off elusively like rain clouds (E.323).

A new physical aspect of the building is introduced now. We discover that the narrator's search has taken him upwards on a staircase. He has reached a precarious height from which he would certainly plunge if he were to attempt to descend (E.323). Time also becomes a major consideration, for life, as the narrator says, is only as long as the time that is lost (E.323). At this point, alone and under stress, we note that the narrator begins to use the pronoun "du". He holds his dialogue with himself, reassuring himself of what he must do. "Findest du also nichts hier auf den Gängen," he says, "öffne die Türen, findest du nichts hinter diesen Türen, gibt es neue Stockwerke, findest du oben nichts, es ist keine Not, schwinge dich neue Treppen hinauf. Solange du nicht zu steigen aufhörst, hören die Stufen nicht auf, unter deinen steigenden Füßen wachsen sie aufwärts" (E.323). The futility of the search is already previewed in these sentences, as is the dimension of its scope. In this respect it resembles the "ungeheuere Reise" of the piece "Aufbruch", which we examined earlier. Here, as there, though, a consolation is offered. There will always be room for the search. As long as the narrator still looks for advocates, as long as he tries to establish contact with the world around him, the steps will miraculously come into being while he strives upward.

The ultimate goal for the narrator of "Fürsprecher" is to find people who will stand up for him. Josef K. in Der Prozeß seeks in part the same thing. He too, as he is given to understand, is to be judged and one of his concerns is to discover the law and the procedure laid down by that law. But he never does. On a much larger scale than in "Fürsprecher" Kafka uses the backdrop of law. K. thinks and indeed hopes his case will be handled in the normal way. He is confident that the people who have placed him under arrest will recognize how ridiculous their act has been. But although many of the trappings of judicial procedure are present in his situation (investigating, judges, judges, lawyers, chancelleries, etc.) his trial is not to be taken in the juridical sense of the word. The word Prozeß can also mean long, wearying procedure, much as the word trial

is used in the phrase "trials and tribulations". Like the man in the short passage just discussed, K. may hope that he can count on fixed procedure, but only slowly does he understand that his trial takes place in every meeting he has with other persons.

Footnotes

[1] For an interpretation of "Der Nachbar" see Theodor Rutt, "Betrachtung zu der Nachbar von Franz Kafka," Sprachpädagogik, Literaturpädagogik: Festschrift für Hans Schorer, ed. Wilhelm L. Höffe (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1969), pp. 261-271.

[2] Malcolm Ware, "Catholic Ritual and the Meaning of Franz Kafka's 'Das Ehepaar'," Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Foreign Literature, 19 No. 1 (Spring 1965), 85-88 and Jarvis Thurston "The Married Couple," Franz Kafka Today, ed. Angel Flores and Homer Swander (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 83-91.

[3] Werner Kraft, "Franz Kafkas Erzählung 'Das Ehepaar'," Wandlung. Eine Monatsschrift, 4 (1949), 160.

[4] Heinz Politzer sees personal time versus impersonal time as an important factor in the protagonist's troubles in the short prose piece "Ein Kommentar" ("Gibs auf!"), Politzer, pp. 3-4.

[5] Günther Anders, 40-41.

[6] "Am eigenen Leibe etwas erfahren," says Anders to be more precise, Anders, p. 41.

[7] Emrich, pp. 227-230.

[8] No one has pointed out that in this passage about communication the reader can be certain that communication has taken place between the emperor and the messenger, but that he has no idea about the message, whether it is positive or negative.

[9] Hartmut Binder, "Der Aber-Mann: Vor fünfzig Jahren, am 3. Juni 1924, starb Franz Kafka," Die Zeit, June 7, 1974, Feuilleton, p. 10.

[10] Hasselblatt, p. 90.

[11] Sokel, pp. 14-19.

[12] Sokel, p. 17.

[13] The indirect speech with its subjunctive, which has been used throughout the piece, embodies this lack of communication.

[14] A. P. Foulkes has related the idea of this piece, resistance to the charms of woman, to Kafka's biography. See "An Interpretation of Kafka's 'Das Schweigen der Sirenen," JEGP, 64 (1965), 98-104.

[15] On December 14, 1911 Kafka writes: "Mein Vater machte mir mittags Vorwürfe, weil ich mich nicht um die Fabrik kümmere" (T.136) and on March 8, 1912: "Vorgestern wegen der Fabrik Vorwürfe bekommen" (T.190). See also Br. 107-108.

[16] Rohner, 89-91.

[17] Although the text is not explicit about the fact that the second mention of writing three hours refers to the composition of this work, we may safely assume so. Hartmut Binder traces this and other fragments to an altercation among scientists at the beginning of the century as to whether animals can think. He believes Kafka must have learned about this subject from an article by M. Maeterlinck in Die Neue Rundschau in 1914. Binder, Motiv, pp. 136-146. This discussion may have played a role, it is true, but the diary entry suggests an even greater affinity to the arguement with his father. We note that in the mole-story the size of the animal is in question. In the diary it is the magnitude of his guilt that Kafka questions.

[18] Wilhelm Emrich notes that Kafka changed the narrator's occupation from "Beamter" to "Kaufmann", saying: "Kafka muß einen bestimmten inneren Grund für diese Berufsänderung seines Ich-Erzählers gehabt haben. Vermutlich wollte er den Kontrast zum Lehrer verstärken, der ja gleichfalls Staatsbeamter ist," Emrich, p. 148. He also notes that the merchant wants to bring the discovery of the giant mole to market like any other product. Again I say the biographical explanation might be closer to home. The discussion with his father about the factory involves Kafka's role as merchant, too. (See Section III)

[19] Emrich, Franz Kafka, pp. 146-148.

[20] In the text of "Der Dorfschullehrer" we read:

> Die meisten alten Leute haben Jüngern gegenüber etwas Täuschendes, etwas Lügnerisches in ihrem Wesen, man lebt ruhig neben ihnen fort, glaubt das Verhältnis gesichert, kennt die vorherrschenden Meinungen, bekommt fortwährend Bestätigungen des Friedens, hält alles für selbstverständlich und plötzlich, wenn sich etwas entscheidendes ereignet und die so lange vorbereitete Ruhe wirken sollte, erheben sich diese alten Leute wie Fremde, haben tiefere, stärkere Meinungen, entfalten förmlich jetzt erst ihre Fahne und man liest darauf mit Schrecken den neuen Spruch. Dieser Schrecken stammt vor allem daher, weil das, was die Alten jetzt sagen, wirklich viel berechtigter, sinnvoller, uns als ob es eine Steigerung des Selbstverständlichen gäbe, noch selbstverständlicher ist. Das unübertrefflich Lügnerische daran aber ist, daß sie das, was sie jetzt sagen, im Grunde immer gesagt haben und daß es eben doch im Allgemeinen nie vorauszusehen war. (E.259-260)

This is a good description of what Georg Bendemann sees in his father wo rises up from his bed to condemn him. For Bendemann his father also inspires terror at this moment. He uses the term "Schreckbild" (E.30).

[21] Politzer, p. 1.

[22] Politzer, p. 2.

[23] Politzer, p. 3.

[24] Politzer, p. 5.

[25] Politzer, p. 5.

[26] Politzer, p. 6.

[27] Politzer, p. 6.

[28] Politzer, p. 7.

[29] Politzer, p. 7.

[30] Emrich, p. 16.

[31] Emrich, p. 15.

[32] Hanz Reiss, "Zwei Erzählungen Franz Kafkas: Eine Betrachtung," Trivium, 8 No. 3 (1950), 219.

[33] Hans Reiss sees the narrator's fate as a fall from arrogance and self-confidence, Reiss, "Zwei Erzählungen," 219. These would, of course, be expressed in the lack of concern about his situation. One must see, however, that the lack of concern is justified; the offence is so paltry. It is the onlookers that have blown it out of dimension and they transmit their view to the protagonist.

Section III

Communication with Individuals in Different Spheres in Der Prozeß

A. Introduction

Of Kafka's three novels the one most widely discussed is undoubtedly Der Prozeß. The purpose of this section will be to examine the relations between the protagonist and the world around him as expressed in conversations between him and the people he meets. The novel consists primarily of scenes, in which Josef K. is repeatedly confronted by the contention of those around him that he has come under the scrutiny of a court because of some failing. Dialogue predominates throughout the work, but curiously enough no critic has subjected it to any exhaustive analysis. Two critical works must be mentioned at this point. In her dissertation "Die Beziehung zwischen Held und Gegenwelt in Franz Kafkas Romanen" Marianne Ruth Korst speaks of an anonymous power which takes form in a multitude of figures throughout the novel without losing this mysterious anonymity.[1] Thus she sees all the characters as parts of a whole, an institution. She disregards the importance of the scenes involving K. and individual figures. One must realize that the court cannot be defined as an institution. Many persons talk about its attributes, but the picture that remains after all this talk is by no means clearly defined, as we shall see. In the end the reader is thrown back on a collection of meetings of the protagonist with (among others) members of a system, which is only designated as a structured institution, but never really appears as such.

Another work of criticism tells us more how we are to see the figures of this novel. This is Martin Walser's well-known book Beschreibung einer Form: Versuch über Franz Kafka. In it he makes the following statement about the characters the protagonist meets: "Die Menschen, auf die der Held in Kafkas Dichtung trifft, die wir mit ihm und durch ihn sehen, sind, das fällt sofort auf, nicht 'wahr' im psychologischen Sinne. Sie sind lediglich notwendig innerhalb ihrer Welt. Sie zeichnen sich, wie diese, vorwiegend durch ihre Geschaffenheit aus. Die Ordnung dieser geschaffenen Welt ist ihre Organisation, das

Charakteristikum dieser 'Menschen', wir nennen sie besser 'Figuren', ist ihr Platz, ihre Funktion in der organisierten Welt."[2] Walser goes on to discuss the different functions of different figures. There are parallel figures, that is, figures who share the same fate as the protagonist shares or is about to share, the "Heizer" and Therese in Der Verschollene, Kaufmann Block in Der Prozeß, and "der alte Barnabas" in Das Schloß. There is then the collective, that is, in Der Prozeß the group of the accused, in Das Schloß the village inhabitants. Each protagonist has a group of figures that accompanies him. Women have the function of trump cards in the battle with court or castle. A few figures have the express function of being enemies of the protagonist. Finally, there is the opposing world ("Gegenwelt"), consisting of individual parts of a limitless hierarchy. Of them Walser says: "Weil diese Beamten so ausschließlich als Stufe in der 'unendlichen Rangordnung' ('Prozeß', S.129) fungieren, können sie auch keine eigene Meinung haben .. und nicht als Persönlichkeiten geschildert werden; was sie sagen, entnehmen sie dem traditionellen Bestand ihrer hierarchischen Organisation; deswegen hat auch die Figur bei Kafka keine Vergangenheit, diese Dimension kommt nur der Organisation selbst zu."[3]

After this characterization of some of Walser's views it remains now to explain how valid they are. Some additional and correcting observations on the secondary characters must be made. Returning to the first passage from Walser's book quoted above one must note that the secondary characters in the novel are not portrayed fully. The reader does not gain a deep psychological insight, because they are seen only for a short time and from the outside (through the eyes of the protagonist). What Walser means by the characters being "not real in the empirical sense" is unclear, unless he is referring to the fact that few characteristics are given so that in some cases the reader has difficulty in formulating a mental picture of the character. The contention that the characters are not human or natural is only partially true. A figure like Frau Grubach has characteristics that one would attribute to an

elderly, somewhat simple-minded woman. Her speech characterizes her as such, for example, It is true that Kafka will suddenly introduce unique, unnatural, even unhuman characteristics into the picture of an otherwise normal figure. It is sometimes the mixture, which gives the character his bizarre appearance.

The question of functions of different characters is complex. Speaking only for the novel we are dealing with at the moment, Der Prozeß, one must note that many of the figures belonging to the court are given titles, "Wärter", "Aufseher", "Auskunftgeber", "Gerichtskaplan" and so on. These titles delineate the character's function to a certain degree. The character may elaborate on and redefine his function. The protagonist may, in certain instances, try to use a person for a certain purpose. One can say then that he determines the function of the figure and he achieves this with varying success. Finally, one must differentiate from these functions the function that Kafka gives to the characters in the structure of his novel. This is obviously what Walser means when he speaks of function. A "parallel figure", for example, is not a label that can be found in the text of the novel; it is a description of the role Kafka gives one or more of his characters in the configuration of the rest. The idea of functionality of figures is correct, although Walser, perhaps because of his abstraction, goes too far in seeing them devoid of all traits. In addition his categories of functions do not have room for figures like Frau Grubach or Onkel Karl in Der Prozeß. Furthermore when he labels one of his categories "Frauen", one must ask whether he is referring to a function. Is the function of a character like Leni to be a woman? No, from his own description the function of women is that of being a means of influence.[4] And one must add, it is doubtful whether that is really their function or just the protagonist's wishful thinking.

When one speaks of function, in my view, one can only recognize one function. Every person Josef K. meets must be regarded as his opponent, a barrier to overcome or an impediment which burdens him in his attempt to erase the stigma of his

trial. Of course, his opponents do not see themselves as such. In his confrontations with those around him, be they from the sphere of the court or not, K. suffers defeat after defeat. Walser has recognized this reoccurring battle and epitomizes the course of each conversation in the word "Aufhebung".[5] This means that each attempt the protagonist makes to assert himself is nullified.

The important fact one must bear in mind is that Kafka makes each figure in the novel Der Prozeß into an opponent, but not necessarily into an enemy, who shows that he is acting as such. (Walser too notes the small number of outspoken enemies that Josef K. has.[6]) Every character in Der Prozeß sets K. back when he attempts to assert himself, but whether it is done with willful malice cannot be determined. Ironically, many of the characters whom K. meets claim, in fact, to be on his side and offer him their help. They do not just fulfill their function as "Wärter", "Aufseher", "Gerichtskaplan", but enter into conversation with K. on a personal level. In the first chapter, for example, we will have a chance to see that the warders soon drop their role and assume a more intimate tone, speaking about matters other than those that they have been sent to convey. This contradicts Walser's contention that the characters have no personal dimensions. There are even references to a personal life, In the chapter "Der Prügler", for example, Willem explains to K.: "Ich habe eine Familie zu ernähren, und Franz hier wollte heiraten . . . " (P.104). It is true, one must reiterate, that no extensive protrait of their character, background, or personal life is given, nonetheless -- and this is a major factor we will return to repeatedly -- their personalities can be glimpsed again and again in their words, in their view of the court and of K.'s situation. This all comes out in their conversations with him. Indeed, they are otherwise very much lost in a hierarchy of a court of which they have only a vague conception. The cohesion within the court does not stem from the fact that the officials clearly view and understand their (small) roles in the greater machinery of the organization. The cohesion arises from the fact that they accept without hesitation

their place in the hierarchy and accept the protagonist's predicament as normal. These points can only be mentioned here briefly, they will be dealt with more exhaustively later in this section,

Josef K. tries to assert himself, to preserve his mode of existence, and constantly finds himself negated. This is Walser's cycle of "Behauptung" and "Aufhebung", already mentioned, a process that can be observed not only in the greater structure of the work, but also in the single sentence.[7] The distance at which Walser views the novel (he looks at it generally, together with Amerika and Das Schloß) does not allow him to examine closely exactly how K.'s efforts are annulled. We can say that his self-assertion is verbal assertion; the opposition he meets is, for the most part, also verbal. This section will, therefore, look at what Martin Walser just touches upon fleetingly: the meetings, i.e. the conversations that are depicted in the novel. These represent Josef K.'s trial, which takes place before any formal proceedings are ever initiated. (In fact a formal trial never does really take place, at most a preliminary investigation.) From the discussion of "Fürsprecher" we have seen that the court represents the only (real or imaginary) hope the protagonist has for fair treatment. As we will have occasion to observe, the confrontations of the protagonist with the world around him not only result in the negation of his asserted position, which is frustrating enough for him, but also often prove to be reoccurring occasions for his torture. Although the effect of the words of others is obviously deleterious, one cannot prove malice on the part of K.'s opponents. As has already been stated, they often claim to be his friends and helpers.

To recapitulate my aims: in the following section I propose to analyze the interaction between the protagonist K. and the different individuals or groups of individuals he comes in contact with. It will be done from the viewpoint of communication, keeping in mind all of the characteristics, which, as has been demonstrated, are typical of Kafka's dialogue. This will necessitate a scene by scene interpretation of the novel. My chief aim is to show the following: 1. that K. is being

submitted to an extended trial of verbal torture by those around him 2. that this is done in a matter-of-fact way so that in most cases one cannot say that malice is involved 3. that he attempts certain verbal counter-attacks, which are foiled. In the course of the discussion the problem of perspective will be reviewed showing: 1. that this problem at times becomes thematic, that is, that it is a topic raised by the characters in the novel 2. that K.'s subjective limitations become more evident in his discourses with the world around him, and that people aggravate the torment arising from his lack of insight. To a far greater extent than critics to date have realized, Kafka stressed the fact that the court and K.'s trial are verbal constructions. In other words, much of what the reader learns of the court is not necessarily "seen through his eyes", as many are wont to observe, but acquired in conversation with others. Thus the protagonist is forced to depend on the court's emissaries although he refuses to accept their message of his arrest.

As has been stated elsewhere in this thesis, the question of K.'s guilt will not concern us. One may assume that he is guilty -- of lack of love or merely because he exists. Kafka does not depict the protagonist's ardous path to insight -- it remains doubtful whether K. recognizes his guilt in the end -- the stress falls more on his battle with the imperfect machinery of the court and with his daily surroundings whose complexion has changed since the hour of his arrest. The precedent for considering K.'s human environment rather than the intricacies of his character is laid down in the novel itself, in the chapter "Im Dom". When K. and the court chaplain debate the parable, which can be considered relevant to K.'s case, their discussion centers on the doorkeeper and not so much on the man from the country. K. asks what part the doorkeeper plays in keeping the man from attaining his goal. The same may be asked about those surrounding K..

At the close of this introduction a word must be said about the divisions in this section. I have maintained that Martin Walser is not wholly correct in his observation that the secondary characters exist only to perform their function in the novel.

First, they are not completely devoid of personal traits. More important, the functions that Walser has given ("Parallelfigur", "Begleiter", etc.) are not valid, I do not want to dismiss the idea of functionality altogether. It is my contention that every figure in the novel Der Prozeß is meant as an opponent of the protagonist. With everyone having only this one function it is, of course, impossible to make divisions along the lines of functionality.

The divisions that I have chosen for this last section have been suggested by Martin Walser. He names three "Verlaufsreihen", sequenceclusters one could call them perhaps. They are: the "Pension", bank, and the court.[8] In this thesis the term "sphere" will be used. Later he adds to these spheres another one: the family.[9] One must add right away that these are not the only possible spheres. The unfinished chapter "Der Staatsanwalt", for example, indicates that Josef K.'s friends were to be brought into his "Prozeß". The fragment "Zu Elsa" and mention of this woman elsewhere in the novel suggests another area which was not fully developed. These four spheres, "Pension", bank, court, and family, will refer to the groups of people that can be identified with the spheres, not to the locality indicated in the name. The people belonging to these spheres are, of course not restricted to the locality of their sphere. Thus court officials can appear in the boarding house where K. lives, K.'s uncle interrupts his work in the bank and so on. Walser, too, indicates that these spheres are not distinctly separated. The largest group of persons, court officials, has been split into two smaller groups, one coming at the beginning, one at the end of the section. The sequence of the divisions of this section -- Court Officials and Persons Connected with the Court I, Persons in the "Pension", Family, Persons in the Bank, Court Officials and Persons Connected with the Court II -- this sequence approximates the sequence of their appearance in the novel (in Max Brod's version). The parable of the man from the country is treated in the last division, although it goes beyond K.'s relationship with persons from the court, representing a summing up of his relationship with all those around him. In addition there is a brief digression into

the author's biography which on the basis of newly found documents sheds light on a little explored area of his life.

B. Court Officials and Persons Connected with the Court I

The first group we turn our attention to is the group of officials, the people belonging to the court, whom Josef K. meets in the first five chapters of the novel. (The court people that he comes up against in the latter part of the novel will be discussed later.) I take the word "official", "Beamter", very loosely to mean anyone in the employ of the court, anyone entrusted by the court with a certain function. It will become evident that K. does not always deal with a person in his official capacity. In fact, it is usual for the official or officials in question to approach K. right away on an informal level or, even if they do have official business with him, soon to drop their formality. Needless to say, K. only has any communication with persons at the lower end of a limitless hierarchy, often with people who represent only adjuncts of the court (the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener", for example). The structure of this limitless hierarchy, too, remains vague throughout the novel. It remains for the reader, like K., to learn that there is no structure. The only certainty that exists is everyone's confidence that they belong to an ordered system, accompanied by the unreflecting faith that everything is right the way it is. K.'s trial, as we shall see, is mainly the experience of his opponent's togetherness.

1. The Warders and the "Aufseher"

The first news of his arrest is brought to K. by one of two warders, who invade the privacy of his bedroom on the morning of his thirtieth birthday shortly after he has awoken.[10] The importance of this precise time in K.'s life and this specific moment in his day (between sleep and daily routine) has been discussed by other critics.[11] In a conversation with his landlady, Frau Grubach, in a subsequent scene K. indicates that the time of day was inopportune for him (P.30-31). During that conversation he also tells her that such occurrences could not happen in his office at the bank, suggesting that the fact of being surprised in bed, too, is disconcerting. Although K. does not own the room [illegible] sleeps, it can be said to be more his

territory than that of the court. Yet as these opening scenes progress we see that the members of the court have encroached upon K.'s space and that of his neighbour, Fräulein Bürstner, rearranging it to suit their purposes.

The conversations with the warders in these opening scenes are exceedingly intricate. One must gauge their impact on the protagonist. The first sign of something unusual is the fact that a normal, daily occurrence for K. does not take place: his breakfast is not brought to him by Anna, Frau Grubach's cook. Lying in bed, looking out the window he notices that an old woman next door is observing him intently. These two things disconcert him and make him ring, upon which the first warder (Franz) knocks and enters (P.9). K. has, without knowing it, summoned the first member of the court.[12] It is obvious that he has been tricked into making it appear that he knows full well whom he is calling. The first exchange of words makes it evident that the person entering does not see himself as an intruder, for, passing over K.'s question about who he is, he asks in the manner of a butler: "'Sie haben geläutet?'" (P.9). The words hover between question and statement. K. decides to follow along in the vein suggested by Franz when he answers him with the command: "'Anna soll mir das Frühstück bringen'" (P.9). With these words K. tries to make the day take its normal course. Until now there has been no direct statement to K. that he has been arrested. This slips out unobtrusively later in the scene.

K.'s command to Franz goes unheeded and the scene takes a new turn. The warder speaks to someone in the next room (the other warder, Willem, as we learn later): "'Er will, daß Anna ihm das Frühstück bringt.' Ein kleines Gelächter im Nebenzimmer folgte, es war nach dem Klang nicht sicher, ob nicht mehrere Personen daran beteiligt waren. Obwohl der fremde Mann dadurch nichts erfahren haben konnte, was er nicht schon früher gewußt hätte, sagte er nun doch zu K. im Tone einer Meldung: 'Es ist unmöglich'" (P.10). This short conversation points to a variety of factors. First, the dialogue with K. is broken off, his efforts are ridiculed. (There is nothing in the text to indicate that the laughter is "wohlwollend" as Heinz Ide claims.[13])

Second, he learns that he is dealing with more than just one person. Although he cannot tell now how many, he soon finds out that there is one more warder in the next room and a higher official, the "Aufseher", in a third room. The manner in which Kafka has his protagonist introduced to his opponents in this first chapter is not coincidental. He first meets one alone, then two, then three. It is as if the author were suggesting a numerical series: 1,2,3,...n. (For "n" one could perhaps even substitute infinity.) This is, in fact, what K. soon learns of the court: it is a limitless hierarchy. One notes too that the introduction to each new member in the series occurs in a new room. He knows nothing of what awaits him from one room to the next. (The quotation above gives proof of that.) His movement through these spaces anticipates his future course as a whole. Each door he passes through leads him to greater uncertainty. Neither one warder nor two warders and the "Aufseher" bring him any closer to enlightenment. K.'s situation here at the opening has a similarity to the situation of the man from the country in the legend of the doorkeeper at the end of the novel. Although the man from the country does not pass the first door, if he did, he would face another and another in a limitless series.[14]

The group that confronts K. is united. Their brief exchange quoted above shows this. The subject of the conversation is K.'s statement. While discussing him they exclude him at the same time. They are not consulting and deliberating with each other whether K.'s breakfast can be brought but one holds up K.'s demand to ridicule and the other responds. The decision as to what can be accorded to K. is obviously predetermined and need not be discussed by them. The community of the court figures expresses itself in their ability to communicate with each other and to understand each other in only a few words. They are talking "on the same wave length", as it were. This is something the protagonist cannot do; he cannot do it now because he is alone, later, as we will see, he cannot find anyone to form a group with him on his terms. At this early point in the novel, one must remember, K. still considers himself part of a larger community, in which he leads his life undisturbed and disturbing

no one. The intruders at first seem to be individuals, then, as the chapter and the novel progress, the opposing community of the court looms larger and larger, not only encompassing a myriad of officials, but also claiming the allegiance of people whom K. had considered a part of his everyday world.

Returning to K.'s first meeting with the court, we can find other examples of moments when the two warders present a united front. K. recognizes it when he enters the room next to his bedroom, Frau Grubach's living room. The second warder (Willem) reminds him of Franz's invitation to remain in his room and K. looks back and forth from one to the other, as if realizing that they are working together (P.10-11). A short time later, hurriedly trying to figure out who these two men might be, K. looks up into the face of one of them, a dry, bony face " . . . das sich über ihn hinweg mit dem anderen Wächter verständigte" (P.12). As K. returns to his bedroom to get his papers (symbolically he walks between the two warders) he hears a comment behind his back: "'Er scheint vernünftig zu sein'" (P.13). In the warders' view he is of course reasonable because he is doing what they originally wanted him to do: return to his room. The remark represents another instance in which K. is being talked about in his presence. One also notes that it is his powers of reasoning that are under discussion. This happens at several points throughout the novel. Here he seems to have been given a compliment, but for the wrong reason, for he has no intention of calming down in his room. The comment maddens him to such a degree, however, that he actually does lose his complacency, his "Vernunft", and tearing open the drawers of his tidy desk he cannot find the papers he is looking for (P.13).

A further instance of K.'s being talked about comes when he questions the law under which the warders are carrying out this arrest. Franz interrupts the dialogue between K. and Willem, saying: "'Sieh, Willem, er gibt zu, er kenne das Gesetz nicht, und behauptet gleichzeitig, schuldlos zu sein.' 'Du hast ganz recht, aber ihm kann man nichts begreiflich machen', sagte der andere" (P.15). The two again define themselves as a closed group by talking of K. in his presence "over his head" and find

themselves in harmonious agreement about K.'s faulty reasoning by Using the pronoun "man", though, Willem goes beyond the small group, suggesting that it is generally impossible to make anything clear to K..

The conversations K. has with his warders lay open their attitude toward their actions. They make it clear that K.'s arrest is just a routine matter, one of many that occur every day. This attitude irritates K., especially since he cannot make them explain what gives them the right to make claims on his freedom. However right they may be when they maintain that the court has been attracted by K.'s guilt, their manner in presenting their charge does not lead K. to introspection but provokes him to resist. He wants to find cracks in the closed front; he believes that someone higher up will revoke what he has just been told. Yet having no one who will agree with him he can only retreat into his own thoughts. He does this, for example, after the insult he received in the earlier exchange of words:

> K. antwortete nichts mehr; muß ich, dachte er, durch das Geschwätz dieser niedrigsten Organe -- sie geben es selbst zu, es zu sein -- mich noch mehr verwirren lassen? Sie reden doch jedenfalls von Dingen, die sie gar nicht verstehen. Ihre Sicherheit ist nur durch ihre Dummheit möglich. Ein paar Worte, die ich mit einem mir ebenbürtigen Menschen sprechen werde, werden alles unvergleichlich klarer machen als die längsten Reden mit diesen. (P.15-16)

His later conversation with the "Aufseher" proves his conjecture incorrect.

There is one word in the last quotation, which sums up one of the most important facets of the court in the opening scenes and throughout the novel. That word is "Sicherheit". The warders present their claim with utmost self-assuredness and yet to K. (and the reader seeing everything through his eyes) the whole business of his arrest is preposterous. At the bottom of the disagreement between K. and the warders lie two attitudes: acceptance of the arrest and the trial by the warders (and later everyone) as something needing no justification and K.'s strong belief that the world has gone mad. These attitudes express themselves in what the figures say and how they say it and cannot be reconciled.

The difference between K. and the warders lies also in their emotional state. Whereas K. is obviously shaken, his opponents remain unperturbed. Several times K. is commanded to do something without knowing what gives these men the right to determine his actions. As he moves toward the door in order to find his landlady, Frau Grubach, so that she may explain the intrusion to him, he is stopped by Willem in the following way: "'Nein', sagte der Mann beim Fenster, warf das Buch auf ein Tischchen und stand auf. 'Sie dürfen nicht weggehen, Sie sind ja verhaftet'" (P.11). As usual, one little word means so much; in this case the word is "ja". It puts the matter-of-factness into the statement. Not only is he surprising him with the news of his arrest but also reproaching K.. "You should know this", he seems to be saying. The disturbing idea that his arrest should be self-evident is communicated to him.[15]

Acceptance of the legality of their action is for them so much a matter of course that when K. questions their right, they answer with tired exasperation. A part of the first chapter in which this comes out distinctly is when K. returns from his room with his birth certificate. As he enters the following dialogue between K. and the warders develops:

> "Sie sind doch verhaftet." "Wie kann ich denn verhaftet sein? Und gar auf diese Weise?" "Nun fangen Sie also wieder an", sagte der Wächter und tauchte ein Butterbrot ins Honigfäßchen. "Solche Fragen beantworten wir nicht." "Sie werden sie beantworten müssen", sagte K. "Hier sind meine Legitimationspapiere, zeigen Sie mir jetzt die Ihrigen und vor allem den Verhaftbefehl." "Du lieber Himmel!" sagte der Wächter. "Daß Sie sich in Ihre Lage nicht fügen können und daß Sie es darauf angelegt zu haben scheinen, uns, die wir Ihnen jetzt wahrscheinlich von allen Ihren Mitmenschen am nächsten stehen, nutzlos zu reizen!" "Es ist so, glauben Sie es doch", sagte Franz . . . (P.14).

This exchange of words opens with a statement about K.'s arrest which is again made matter-of-fact by the word "doch". It is significant that K. objects not only to his arrest but also to the way in which he has been placed under arrest ("Und gar auf diese Weise?"). Kafka lets his protagonist show that the self-assured behaviour of the two men is irritating him. While replying

to K. Willem demonstrates his dominance by continuing nonchalantly to eat K.'s breakfast. He even has the gall to upbraid K. for irritating him uselessly. The self-righteous expression of censure emanates from his self-confidence. There is no question in his mind but that he is right. The speaker's words also suggest that he is at a loss to understand why K. doesn't accept his fate. He is perhaps correct in claiming that they, the warders, are nearest to K. at this moment. K., however, is far from recognizing that. In his eyes, by their unexplained behaviour, they have placed themselves in opposition, not in proximity to him. True to their mode of working in tandem, Franz reiterates the veracity of what Willem said with emphasis (indicated by "doch").

Much of the first scene shows the protagonist attempting to obtain information, so that he can counter with rational argument. One of his first thoughts after the initial attempts to reject the contention that he is arrested is to receive clarification about his position. The important questions for him are: who these men are, what they are talking about, what authority they are part of, and how such a thing could happen to him, K. (P.12). He does not get the information he wants. His first attempt to learn why he has been arrested is answered by Franz with: "'Wir sind nicht dazu bestellt, Ihnen das zu sagen'" (P.11). This is typical of the reaction he meets whenever he demands an answer. He is told by the guards that answering questions is not within their realm of competence, that they have been ordered only to stand guard over him ten hours a day (P.15). Of course, a certain amount of information is included in their refusal to answer. They tell him that they are only lowly subordinates, which means, naturally, that they have had no responsibility in initiating the proceedings. They claim to have no over-all view of the court which would allow them to inform K. of his state. Although they lack a precise picture of the organization they serve, they have a strong feeling of belonging, which expresses itself in their words. "'Wir sind niedrige Angestellte . . . die mit Ihrer Sache nichts anderes zu tun haben, als daß sie zehn Stunden täglich bei Ihnen Wache

halten und dafür bezahlt werden'" (P.15). Taking this statement further one sees also that these men want to make sure that K. realizes that they have been sent on official business and are not obligated to become personally involved in any way.

Yet for all their lack of answers to K.'s questions they do have some information that concerns him vitally and, although officials, they do show their personal side. This is not to say that they can be seen as fully developed characters. In speaking of their "personal side" we mean their penchant for presenting the court and K.'s arrest the way they see them. Their private conversations about K.'s reaction to his arrest represent one expression of their informality. Nonchalance is demonstrated in other ways too. Even though they are guards on official business, they do not assume a formal pose. They do not, for instance, remain standing all the time; one of them reads a book; they help themselves to K.'s breakfast in his presence.

To vivify these two points, information giving and informality of the warders, I wish to analyze an extended passage from the first chapter, the first sentence of which is already familiar. K. asks why he has been arrested and is denied an answer with the words:

> "Wir sind nicht dazu bestellt, Ihnen das zu sagen. Gehen Sie in Ihr Zimmer und warten Sie. Das Verfahren ist nun einmal eingeleitet, und Sie werden alles zur richtigen Zeit erfahren. Ich gehe über meinen Auftrag hinaus, wenn ich Ihnen so freundschaftlich zurede. Aber ich hoffe, es hört niemand sonst als Franz, und der ist selbst gegen alle Vorschrift freundlich zu Ihnen. Wenn Sie auch weiterhin so viel Glück haben wie bei der Bestimmung Ihrer Wächter, dann können Sie zuversichtlich sein." K. wollte sich setzen, aber nun sah er, daß im ganzen Zimmer keine Sitzgelegenheit war, außer dem Sessel beim Fenster. "Sie werden noch einsehen, wie wahr das alles ist", sagte Franz und ging gleichzeitig mit dem andern Mann auf ihn zu. Besonders der letztere überragte K. bedeutend und klopfte ihm öfters auf die Schulter. Beide prüften K.s Nachthemd und sagten, daß er jetzt ein viel schlechteres Hemd werde anziehen müssen, daß sie aber dieses Hemd wie auch seine übrige Wäsche aufbewahren und, wenn seine Sache günstig ausfallen sollte, ihm wieder zurückgeben würden. "Es ist besser, Sie geben die Sachen uns als ins Depot", sagten sie, "denn im Depot kommen öfters Unterschleife vor und außerdem verkauft man dort alle Sachen nach einer gewissen Zeit, ohne Rücksicht, ob

> das betreffende Verfahren zu Ende ist oder nicht. Und wie lange dauern doch derartige Prozesse, besonders in letzter Zeit! Sie bekämen dann schließlich allerdings vom Depot den Erlös, aber dieser Erlös ist erstens an sich schon gering, denn beim Verkauf entscheidet nicht die Höhe des Angebotes, sondern die Höhe der Bestechung, und weiter verringern sich solche Erlöse erfahrungsgemäß, wenn sie von Hand zu Hand und von Jahr zu Jahr weitergegeben werden." (P.11-12)

The reason for his arrest is not given to K. but he learns that action has already been taken against him. A future time is mentioned, when K. will be informed, but it is vague. The phrase "zur richtigen Zeit" also smacks of a paternalistic attitude, which supposes that the subordinate need not know what is in store for him. Their friendliness (which from K.'s point of view is questionable) is presented as a special favor. What they term "freundlich" is nothing but their casualness, which I have already mentioned. It is also implied, however, that K. could expect great severity. While indicating that good fortune gave him two such fine guards, Willem is not only patting himself and Franz on the back but also 1. suggesting that good treatment depends on luck, not on anything K. could do 2. insinuating that K, will need such luck in his upcoming case, It is clear that K. crumbles under the barrage of intimation. He is virtually swept off his feet, but he cannot sit down, because the only chair in the room stands by the window and (characteristically) is included in the personal space of the warder Willem. Franz's remark once more points to clarification, not now but in the future. In addition "das alles" remains vague. What is Franz referring to? Will K. see the reason for his arrest? or will he see why he will need luck? This is all information of sorts, yet it disturbs more than it heartens.

The next and last section of the quotation brings out more disquieting information as the warders direct their attention to K.'s nightshirt, not before giving him an encouraging pat on the back. Here they are acting completely as private persons, since they are advising K. not to follow the "normal" official procedure of surrendering his clothes to the depot. One suspects, of course, that they will realize some dishonest financial gain

from taking K.'s things. From what they say one also sees that the dishonesty of the court might not be confined to just these two, for they claim to be saving K. from falling victim to the depot's cheating. K. cannot be confident that anything is transacted above board. But the far more important piece of news comes out almost as an aside. K. hears that cases like his are not resolved quickly. Twice in this passage this fact is alluded to, once directly (and the warder seems to sigh at the thought of it) and once in the phrase "von Jahr zu Jahr". We remember, of course, that it is K. who repeatedly throughout this scene wants to settle the matter in a few words.

A short time after this Willem even points out the uselessness of discussion and again, at the same time, does just what I have described above: lets out disturbing information about a long trial. He shouts at K.: "'Wollen Sie Ihren großen, verfluchten Prozeß dadurch zu einem raschen Ende bringen, daß Sie mit uns, den Wächtern, über Legitimation und Verhaftsbefehl diskutieren?'" (P.14-15). The words "groß" and "verflucht" are certainly ominous without elucidating specifically where the danger lies. "Verflucht" even connotes hopelessness.

The first few pages of Der Prozeß have been covered in detail. The characteristics of communication and of those engaged in communication (primarily the guards, since K. says little) are great in number. Summing up we find: the warders are part of a limitless hierarchy, they are at the lower end, neither responsible for K.'s arrest nor capable of informing him about it to his satisfaction. They are absolutely certain, though, that the powers, in whose name they are operating, have a right to send them to invade K.'s privacy and consequently any allegations made against K. must have some substance. Talking together "over K.'s head" they demonstrate their unity while commenting on his ununderstandable lack of acceptance of the inevitable situation. Advice proffered by the two is mainly designed to keep the persistent questioner off their backs. They intimate that their personal involvement is negligible. They are only acting on orders. When it is a matter of their personal, financial gain (by obtaining K.'s clothes), of course,

they drop out of their official roles willingly and contravene procedure laid down by the court. In doing this they merely stay one step ahead of others who would do likewise. Disturbing as the news of a corrupt court may be, the information of lengthy ordeals is even more disquieting. And beyond this it is made clear to K. repeatedly that he is in serious trouble. The reader is given K.'s reactions of bewilderment. He tries to collect himself in order to counter but " . . . in Gegenwart dieser Leute konnte er aber nicht einmal nachdenken . . . " (P. 12). Hans Reiss, in one of the first books on Kafka, notes the importance for K. of his ability to reason.[16] We see here and we will see elsewhere how this ability erodes under pressure. Despite the unfavorable prognostications by the first emissaries of the court that he meets, K. believes that his hope lies in the future, when he will resolve his case quickly with other officials of the court.

The next such person is the inspector, the "Aufseher". The inspector's tone seems at first milder than what K, (and the reader) have heard until now from Franz and Willem. His question "'Sie sind durch die Vorgänge des heutigen Morgens wohl sehr überrascht?'" (P.20), at least, implies an admission that the occurrences of the morning could have been out of the ordinary. This man seems to be trying to see things from K.'s viewpoint and it does K. good: " . . . das Wohlgefühl, endlich einem vernünftigen Menschen gegenüberzustehen, und über seine Angelegenheit mit ihm sprechen zu können, ergriff ihn'" (P.20). Yet he is mistaken in his belief. Bit by bit his regained confidence is undermined again. We will point out only the more obvious way. First, when K. asserts his wish to sit down ("'Ich kann mich doch setzen?'" P,20) he is met with the rejoinder, "'Es ist nicht üblich'" (P.20), which indicates that he is expected to retain the position of an accused person standing in front of an inquiring judge.

K. demands clarification from the inspector as he had before from the two warders. He does not want to consider that he might be guilty, but wants to know who these people are -- a restatement of his first question in the novel (P.21,9). The

inspector shows more formality in his bearing than Franz and Willem, but that too is lessened by his action of playing with personal articles he finds on Fräulein Bürstner's night table. He too claims that he has no knowledge why K. has been arrested, but also indicates that K.'s situation is grave (P.21). Without having justified his position vis-a-vis K. he goes on to give him advice about how he should behave. This includes a good measure of censure as the following lines demonstrate: "'Auch sollten Sie überhaupt im Reden zurückhaltender sein, fast alles, was Sie vorhin gesagt haben, hätte man auch, wenn Sie nur ein paar Worte gesagt hätten, Ihrem Verhalten entnehmen können, außerdem war es nichts für Sie übermäßig Günstiges'" (P.22). The admonition to be more circumspect may be correct (assuming K. is guilty and not aware of it), but once more vagueness in combination with a didactic, paternalistic, chiding tone draws K. to focus his attention on the insults he receives. K. attempts to take control of the situation by saying he considers the matter closed and offers his hand upon it (P.23-24). His gesture, which would signify tabula rasa, is ignored. K. cannot force his meaning of this meeting (he wants to see it as a joke) on the court.

2. The Warders and the "Prügler"

The two warders, Franz and Willem, do not just make the single appearance in the first chapter. In the fifth chapter entitled "Der Prügler" K., passing through the corridor connecting his office in the bank with the main staircase, hears sighs coming from behind a door, which he has always believed leads to a storage room. Upon opening the door he finds a man in a leather outfit obviously about to administer punishment to these two figures already familiar to K.. This chapter is one of the more enigmatic ones in a novel which otherwise presents many riddles. If the novel represents a type of "Seelenlandschaft" then this event can certainly be seen as K.'s repressed feelings of guilt, his conscience, suddenly bursting out from underneath his calm exterior. My discussion of this chapter, however, will take the events literally and not assume any symbolic meaning. In terms of the aspect of space discussed in Section II we find

that the court has moved in on space K. has formerly considered safe. Of course, one must add that the storage room is one part of K.'s realm that obviously has not been foremost in his mind and that he, consequently, has not reckoned with it as a battle ground. Complacency has always made him confident in his assumption that he knew the function of the room and now he is surprised by the enemy sneaking up from behind, invading, and, as it were, re-organizing his territory.

Remembering the fist scenes of Chapter One, the reader might be tempted to think that the two warders are being punished for attempting to extort from K. his belonging and for stealing his breakfast. But the calls of the two that greet K. upon his entrance suggest something different: "'Herr! Wir sollen geprügelt werden weil du dich beim Untersuchungsrichter über uns beklagt hast'" (P.104). Thus their punishment " . . . is to be carried out on the order of the Court, not on the basis of any legal principle but on account of K.'s complaints . . . ".[17] Indeed, only a moment later, after repeating this statement, they add: "'Sonst wäre uns nichts geschehen, selbst wenn man erfahren hätte, was wir getan haben'" (P.105). One may leave aside the fact that this revelation imputes unethical behaviour to the court. More important is the point that K. is being reproached for having initiated their downfall. Reproach is the basic tenor of the whole conversation and is extended to such an unnatural degree that it at times becomes comical. K. is to be made to feel guilty. By denouncing the two K. has placed himself in a position where he could have his revenge, but the severity of the punishment and the abject state of his former opponents make his hasty act of revenge uncomfortable for him.

The scene is constructed in such a way that the whipping is delayed, but the agony for K., who is trying to prevent it, is prolonged. While he intercedes on the part of the warders the preparations continue. Their talk is calculated to make it clear to K. in detail how disastrous the consequences of his hasty accusation were. They speak of the tradition that the warders receive the accused's clothes (P.104); they show him how their careers have been interrupted (P.105). (We note that

they are not going to be excluded from the ranks of the court, though.) The final injury is, of course, the beating they are about to receive: "' . . . überdies bekommen wir jetzt diese schrecklich schmerzhaften Prügel" (P.105). By means of their description all this misery is loaded onto K.'s back, who can only try to evade it with the weak and humorously incongruous: "'Kann denn die Rute solche Schmerzen machen?' fragte K. und prüfte die Rute, die der Prügler vor ihm schwang" (P.105). Willem dispels any doubt K. may actually have had by adding that they will have to get undressed to be whipped (P.105). K. is put under increasing pressure as the scene culminates. The verbal entreaties give way to tears and finally to Franz's loud, inhuman scream when the whipper begins to beat him (P.107). The scream not only represents a painful reminder that all his talk has gotten him nowhere, but also means a danger for K. because it will summon the menials working in the bank and thus broadcast the fact of his trial. Although K. suffers at the thought that he did not save the two -- "Es quälte ihn, daß es ihm nicht gelungen war, das Prügeln zu verhindern . . . " (P.108) -- he cannot tolerate the information of his predicament being spread about.

The agony of the warders' reproach does not leave him alone either. After he has left the room K. tries to rationalize his sudden abandonment of Franz and Willem and mulls over what could have been done for them (P.108-109). From outside the room no sound can be heard, but from within, K. is bothered, so much so that he peeps into the room the next day only to be greeted by a repetition of the scene, beginning with the shout "Herr!", the appeal to K.'s conscience. The frustration at the thought of this scene lurking in the background almost makes him cry (P.110) The reoccurrence of this mental burden epitomizes the manner of K.'s trial in general. Whenever he turns his mind to it, he is faced with a defeat, which comes about in his dealings with others.

3. The Court Assembly

In the chapter "Erste Untersuchung", Josef K. is confronted by a large group of people connected with the court, which I place in the category of "officials", although it is not definitely stated that they all are such. Only one man is called

"Untersuchungsrichter"; the old men in the first rows seem to form a **presbyterium** Only at the end of the chapter when K. notices that all are wearing some sort of identification button does he see them all as officials: "'So', rief K. und warf die Arme in die Höhe, die plötzliche Erkenntnis wollte Raum, 'ihr seid ja alle Beamte, wie ich sehe, ihr seid ja die korrupte Bande, gegen die ich sprach . . . '" (P.63). We will come back to this sentence again later, for in it K. expresses his recognition of the fact that he faces a group that stands unified against him and this, in my opinion, is what the chapter builds up to.[18]

The court establishes contact with K. to inform him about the time and place of the first investigation (P.44). Kafka presents this message (in indirect speech) as one uninterrupted unit. K. is confronted with a monologue in which his appearance before the court is treated as something self-evident that needs no justification. All the pros and cons of how he is to be interrogated seem to have been considered. Assumptions have been made about what K. would prefer and although the possibility that K. may change the arrangements is left open, the tone of the monologue does not brook any objection to the fundamental notion that K. is to be interrogated. The same self assuredness that asserted itself almost nonchalantly in the warders conversations with him in the first chapter evinces itself in the words: "Es sei selbstverständlich, daß er bestimmt erscheinen müsse, darauf müsse man ihn wohl nicht erst aufmerksam machen" (P.44). One must also take into account that K.'s being summoned by telephone does not allow him to pin down and refute his opponent.

K.'s appearance before the assembly is the only instance in the whole novel in which he speaks to a larger group connected with the court. The examining magistrate represents the highest ranking officer of the court that K. speaks to in an official capacity. K.'s long monologue directs itself against the shabbiness of the court and the vagaries of its procedure. In his self-righteousness he is willing to recognize the court only out of a feeling of pity for it. But his words go beyond a mere tirade and beyond what Herbert Tauber calls "auto-intoxication."[19]

The reader cannot fail to note that K. seeks companionship, as it were, in his vulnerable situation. "'Was mir geschehen ist,'" he says, "'ist ja nur ein einzelner Fall und als solcher nicht sehr wichtig, da ich es nicht sehr schwer nehme, aber es ist das Zeichen eines Verfahrens, wie es gegen viele geübt wird. Für diese stehe ich hier ein, nicht für mich'" (P.57). Shortly after he raises the possibility that it might have been another man they have mistaken him for, the housepainter, with whom the "Untersuchungsrichter" had identified him earlier (P.57). And again a page or two later when he gives his view of this court, he describes its function as that of arresting innocent people (plural!) like him and initiating senseless proceedings against them (P.61). K. wants to see himself as a part of a community of people who have been unjustly accused, that is, he does not want to regard himself as facing only his own individual problem.

"Gemeinschaft" enters into the discussion of this chapter yet again when we look at what is communicated to Josef K., keeping in mind that there is little balanced conversation. What K. obviously listens for is reaction to what he is saying to this group. In addition he hopes to win people for his side. He is aware from the beginning that there is no unified response to his statements. The right side of the hall applauds his defiant retort to the judge's observation that he should have appeared an hour earlier. This registers with K. as does the failure of the other side to do the same, and he considers what he could say to win the rest (P.53).

This type of appraisal of his immediate situation continues throughout the meeting in addition to his observation of what the presiding judge does. Here too he is concerned with the community; he would like to split the unified front which he has met before. In this respect he is very sensitive as the following incident shows. During a pause in his speech when K. notices that the judge has signaled someone with a glance he says:

> "Eben gibt hier neben mir der Herr Untersuchungsrichter jemandem von Ihnen ein geheimes Zeichen. Es sind also Leute unter Ihnen, die von hier oben dirigiert werden. Ich weiß nicht, ob das Zeichen jetzt Zischen oder Beifall bewirken sollte, und

> verzichte dadurch, daß ich die Sache vorzeitig verrate, ganz bewußt darauf, die Bedeutung des Zeichens zu erfahren. Es ist mir vollständig gleichgültig, und ich ermächtige den Herrn Untersuchungsrichter öffentlich, seine bezahlten Angestellten dort unten, statt mit geheimen Zeichen, laut mit Worten zu befehligen, indem er etwa einmal sagt: 'Jetzt zischt!', und das nächste Mal: 'Jetzt klatscht!'" (P.59)

K. thinks that the reaction of the audience is being manipulated by a few. What this obviously means is that communication concerning him takes place over his head and, although he can only guess what the message contains, he assumes that it is inimical to him. In particular it is the secrecy that bothers him. By stating aloud the fact that they are being manipulated by individual claques, K. will have them see that their unity is contrived.

In the paragraph following K.'s outburst of suspicion there is more communication among members of this group in which K. is a total stranger. In each case he does not hear the words that are actually being spoken, he just sees that communication is taking place and makes the following mental note: "Die zwei Parteien, die früher so entgegengesetzte Meinungen gehabt zu haben schienen, vermischten sich, einzelne Leute zeigten mit dem Finger auf K., andere auf den Untersuchungsrichter" (P.59). The people, whom K. thought he had won over to his side, have united again. The divisions are suddenly not as clear cut; K. cannot be certain of anyone's loyalty. As if to confirm his uncertainty his visual perception decreases. The next sentence speaks of his inability to observe those standing further back in the room (P.59-60).

The last part of this chapter brings the renewed attempt by K. to overpower the assembly with words (P.60-61). It appears that by describing the court organization with all this corruption K. wants to indicate the commanding view he has over his enemy. He obviously wants to announce to them that he has "found them out", in order perhaps to render them ineffective. For K. the fact that the court's dishonesty is formulated in words exercises a restraining power over their claims on him. But he sees himself interrupted by a commotion caused by the wife of

the "Gerichtsdiener" in the arms of a stranger. The reaction of the audience in the vicinity is registered by K.; they seem enthused that the serious note sounded by the speaker has been interrupted (P.62). Rather than being drawn over to K.'s side as he had hoped, they are relieved that he does not continue his speech, in fact, they prevent him from approaching the couple at the other end of the hall in order to restore order. When he is grabbed by the collar from behind he suddenly forgets the pair and becomes aware of his own loss of freedom, freedom he had enjoyed from the power of his speech. Face to face with the people in the front row he thinks: "Hatte er die Leute nicht richtig beurteilt? Hatte er seiner Rede zuviel Wirkung zugetraut? Hatte man sich verstellt, solange er gesprochen hatte, und hatte man jetzt, da er zu den Schlußfolgerungen kam, die Verstellung satt?" (P.62). The narrow limits of his perspective become very clear to him at this moment. He realizes that he has been deceived in his belief that he had a following, a group of people that agreed with him.

K.'s speech had dominated the whole scene up to this point; it had been his great moment. Now just by looking at the faces in front of him he must realize that he has not swayed anyone with his talk. It seems to him like a big conspiracy to make him think he was achieving results. At his point also K. notices the emblems everyone is wearing and is very taken aback by what he sees as a confirmation of his suspicion. His reaction shows it: " . . . (K.) warf die Arme in die Höhe, die plötzliche Erkenntnis wollte Raum . . . " (P.63). The statement he now utters is the sentence I quoted earlier. It expresses K.'s recognition of a unified group of people confronting him. (Whether his accusation is based on fact is immaterial; it is enough that he sees the assembly this way.) As before when he described the depravity of the court, he seems to consider the public denunciation a weapon imbued with the power to halt the preceedings. Nevertheless when he leaves after having told them of their corruption he does so with the sound of their discussion in his ear. His last impression of the court therefore is one of their unity. K. senses that they have immediately come together again to discuss him.

4. The Wife of the Court Attendant and the Student Berthold

K. returns to the scene of the first hearing for reasons unstated. His assumption that the assembly will meet at the same time in the same place, his self-assured manner of making straight for the assembly-room without hesitation make one believe he is again attempting to assert himself by verbally demolishing the court. Of course he again suffers defeat. He finds that the opposing forces have vanished. Only the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener," the court attendant, is left. She represents another person loosely connected with the court, with no rank and no direct bearing on K.'s trial.[20] She is the same person who had interrupted his monologue the week before. It is only after a few moments of conversation that K. realizes that he is standing in a living room, that the conference room has changed its appearance (P.65). He is put off balance momentarily and asserts himself the more vigorously immediately afterward, claiming that it is not the metamorphosis of the courtroom but the fact that she is married that astonishes him (P.65). There is naturally a disparity between Josef K. and the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener". Both are of different classes. K's moralizing tone is meant to put her in her place especially after she has denied him access to the books on the judge's podium, but she, undaunted by K.'s reproach, comes out with the words: "'Es war nicht zu Ihrem Nachteil, daß Ihre Rede abgebrochen wurde. Man hat nachher noch sehr ungünstig über sie geurteilt'" (P.65). She thus deflects K.'s criticism in a sly manner, revealing her assessment of his situation and then goes on with the more disconcerting news that others (the "man" leaves the persons undefined) have also viewed K.'s performance askance and that his situation has deteriorated.

In the following conversation we do not find hostility between the two conversants. In fact the woman changes her attitude by endorsing what she thinks is K.'s plan to improve the court. As one who dislikes the court, she in effect places her fate in his hands (P.66). K., on the other hand, wants to base their relationship on mutual aid. He,will help her not out of love for his fellow man, but because she in turn can help him

(P.66). K. attempts to form a community with this one person, with whom he believes to have something in common. The union is not based on the woman's understanding of K.'s criticism the week previously, for, as she admits, she missed the beginning and the end of his speech (P.66). Somewhat later, after K. asserts his contempt for the court (P.69), she also defends one of the judges that K. had attacked for laziness (P.70). She does this, it is true, in a humble fashion, allowing that K. may be right in saying that this judge is only a lowly official. Her description of the judge's vigil at her bedside and her assessment of their relationship, however, makes it clear that she stands closer to him than she could ever hope to be with K. (P.70-71).

During their conversation the woman changes the basis of the relationship between herself and Josef K.. As we have said, she first turns him away abruptly, then, in an about-face, recognizes him as her protector, and finally makes advances to him, complementing him on his handsome, dark eyes and drawing him into an intimate tête-à-tête (P.67-68). K. mistrusts her, she shows him only that she is corrupt like all the rest. He tells her that in his opinion she belongs to the community of the court: "'Sie gehören zu der Gesellschaft, die ich bekämpfen muß, befinden sich aber in ihr sehr wohl, Sie lieben sogar den Studenten, und wenn Sie ihn nicht lieben, so ziehen Sie ihn doch wenigstens Ihrem Manne vor. Das konnte man aus Ihren Worten leicht erkennen'" (P.68). Whether K. believes this wholly or says it also in order to encourage protestations is open to conjecture. We must remember that for K. the conversation with someone from the realm of the court means a verbal duel in which he must strive to keep the upper hand.

The woman does in fact convince K. of her sincerity. Despite his fleeting suspicion that she might be trying to beguile him into the snares of the court, he finds that he will not lose anything by trusting her (P.72). But while K. is making this decision his seductress is already surrendering herself to the student Berthold who had made his appearance a moment before (P.71). In the strange confrontation that now takes place

the imperious Berthold shows K. that he considers him below his station (P.73), saying: "'Man hätte ihn nicht so frei herumlaufen lassen sollen . . . es war ein Mißgriff. Ich habe es dem Untersuchungsrichter gesagt. Man hätte ihn zwischen den Verhören zumindest in seinem Zimmer halten sollen. Der Untersuchungsrichter ist manchmal unbegreiflich'" (P.74). As Herbert Tauber describes the situation: "He [K.] sees himself reduced to the role of the accused, of the man who does not control his own life, but is accountable to an unknown person."[21] One must point out, though, that he does not limit K.'s freedom physically, he only talks about it. Moreover, he speaks with the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener" about K. "above his head", as it were. By addressing her alone, excluding K., the student had made the woman part of the court again, even though K. tries to dismiss the words which accomplished this as "unnütze Reden" (P.74). Of course, the student has suggested treatment more severe than K. has experienced up to now, and we know from previous scenes that he is far from accepting the milder treatment he has been subjected to until now. To re-establish the bond between him and the woman, K. holds out his hand, but hardly has he bid the woman come to him than the student ends the verbal duel by sweeping the woman off her feet. He carries her away, she refusing to let K. free her. K. not only sees her stolen from under his nose, but also must recognize that she does not want to be freed by him (P.74). He sees this incident as the first major defeat he has suffered (P.75).

5. The Court Attendant, the Girl, and the Information Giver

In his dealings with the court K. never has a chance to speak with the people at the higher levels, and yet one can observe a progression from people of less importance, the guards, to those with slightly more, the investigating judge, for instance. Whatever their position, however, they can, of course, lead him no nearer to the central power that decides in his case. In that part of the third chapter called "Die Kanzleien" K. is very literally led about in the offices of the court, or to be more precise, led out of them. Like Franz and Willem and the "Aufseher" too, these other officials profess to help, but in

reality comment on his debility. They insist on showing him that he is losing the battle and his confidence in himself begins to crumble.

The court attendant arrives after the scene described above looking for his wife and accosts K.. In this man we have someone who has suffered injustice at the hands of the student, that is, at the hands of a person with a position in the court hierarchy. The description of his plight indicts the court and yet he declares himself without the power to stop these injustices. His revenge on the student takes place in his fantasy (P.78) He tells K. of his dream of squashing him against the wall like an insect. Only minutes earlier K. had indulged in ineffectual dreaming (P.75). Now he is allowed to view the impotence of this dreaming in someone else. In the ensuing exchange of words the injured husband suggests that someone like the accused K. could help him, then falters and takes his statement back, accepts K.'s following offer to help but does not seem to believe his wish can be realized by K., and finally, with a confiding glance at K. he says: "'Man rebelliert eben immer'" (P.79). In one moment, in four words, he has stamped their plan for dealing with the court (in the person of the student) as impotent revolt. He generalizes with the word "man" and "immer"; the word "eben", very difficult to translate, injects a tone of resignation. It expresses the futility of action. We must realize however, that K. up to this point has no intention of resigning his fate, but believes strongly in his ability to overpower the court. Thus, although they are partners in suffering injustice, the attendant's attitude is inimical to K.'s.

It is the court attendant who invites K. in an off-hand manner to come with him to the chancellery. The invitation awakens K.'s desire and sets him up for the next defeat, which is presaged by his near fall as he enters through the door at the top of stairs, because, as if to trick him, there is an unexpected further step behind the entrance door (P.80). In the chancellery K. meets other accused persons, but cannot establish a bond with them. One, whom K. accosts, is so taken aback that he begins to scream when K. takes him by the arm and begins

to reason with him (P.82). K., in order to communicate with this man, has actually admitted to being accused himself, but he does not enjoy the advantage of joining the community of the other accused persons because of this admission. They shun him. (Why they do this we find out only later in K.'s conversation with Kaufmann Block.) As he walks along the corridors with his guide, the court attendant behind him, he realizes that he looks like a prisoner being led off and the realization becomes discomforting, so much so that he wishes to leave (P.83). We note an almost childish panic in his words: "'Nun habe ich gesehen, wie es hier aussieht, ich will jetzt weggehen'" (P.83). The attendant who invited him replies that he has not seen all yet, replies, as the text states, "vollständig unverfänglich" (P.83). Kafka makes sure that the reader understands the words sound completely neutral. The question immediately arises, of course, whether they are not intended to open the tormenting prospect of a continuation of K.'s stay. K.'s guide gains much more self-assurance. From astonishment at K.'s having lost his way already, tinged with censure, he switches to overt reproach for K.'s having caused him to waste time (P.83-84).

K.'s own desire to see that the shabby exterior of the court was matched by a shabby interior brought him into the halls of the chancellery (P.84-85). There is no doubt therefore that it is primarily his own fault that he is trapped and cannot escape, but the "Gerichtsdiener" has provided the opportunity for him -- he has tempted him in a way. Like the many other figures connected with the court he enters K.'s life for only a few brief moments, he exists only on the very periphery of K.'s case and yet he induces K. to manoeuvre himself into an exposed position. The malicious intent to do this once more cannot be proved (especially in the case of this figure). As two new persons, a girl, perhaps a secretary, and a man, the "Auskunftgeber", arrive on the scene, the court attendant's previous statement that no one would bother himself about K. ("'Es wird sich niemand um Sie kümmern.'" P.79) proves to be false. If one takes the word "kümmern" to mean that no one would let himself be disturbed by K.'s visit, the bailiff is wrong. If, on the other hand, one

takes the original statement to mean no one will care for K.'s predicament, it is correct. The two newly arrived people do help K. leave the chancelleries, but the comments which accompany their action make his weakness and his hostile environment very obvious to him, thus undermining his self-confidence even more.

In the first few moments of this scene all three figures, the girl, the attendant and, in the background, the information giver, watch K. intently as if a great transformation must occur in him (P.85). If they are expecting a realization of his own guilt from K., they are disappointed. It might be clear to the reader, as it is to the three onlookers, that K. must see his guilt. However, he sees only their expectation of something that seems about to happen to him. The "Auskunftgeber" even tries to force a reaction one way or the other by obvious impatience (P.85). The girl notices first that K. feels ill, asks him if he doesn't want to sit down, and then asks: "'Sie haben ein wenig Schwindel, nicht?'" (P.85), which is not a question but a suggestive statement of fact. She follows this with an explanation of why the air is oppressive in this locality, closing with the words: "'Aber man gewöhnt sich schließlich an die Luft sehr gut Wenn Sie zum zweiten- oder drittenmal herkommen, werden Sie das Drückende hier kaum mehr spüren. Fühlen Sie sich schon besser?'" (P.86). The juxtaposition of the question whether he feels better with the comment that he will get used to the air when he has come back for the second or third time can only be taken as ironic. The question about his well-being comes abruptly after a prediction of the future that runs contrary to K.'s intention. He has not really accepted his position as an accused and does not plan to return, She means well, it seems, because she shows concern, but for K. her words of explanation only add to the discomfort of being delivered up to these people: " . . . überdies war ihm, da er jetzt die Ursachen seiner Übelkeit erfahren hatte, nicht besser, sondern noch ein wenig schlechter" (P.86)

His dependancy on the two figures has become very clear to K.. He cannot depart without their guidance at the very least. The girl makes the observation that K. is holding up traffic

although there is none visible in the hall (P.86). She has thus made his plan to wait until he has rested impossible and perturbs him even more with her suggestion that they help him to the infirmary, that is, deeper into the inimical atmosphere. The "Auskunftgeber's" alternative solution to lead K. out of the chancelleries altogether relieves him immensely (P.87). He is so eager to be helped out of this place that he lifts his shoulders in order to make it easier for the two to grasp him. But he learns to his dismay that the information giver has merely set K. up so that he can be taunted, for instead of following up on his proposal he stands calmly with his hands in his pockets and laughs, saying: "'Sehen Sie . . . ich habe also doch das Richtige getroffen. Dem Herrn ist nur hier nicht wohl, nicht im allgemeinen'" (P.88). It is as if he had caught K. telling a lie. He directs his words at the girl too, not at K.; he considers the two of them united in a common attitude toward the accused. From K.'s viewpoint it seems that she also recognizes this because she smiles at him and, although she reproaches him for his "joke," it is done in an amiable, almost endearing, manner: " . . . [sie] schlug aber dem Mann leicht mit den Fingerspitzen auf den Arm, als hätte er sich mit K. einen zu starken Spaß erlaubt" (P.88). In any case, though, she appears to have regarded **his** laugh as an insult to K., a term she uses a moment later (P.89).

There follows the girl's explanation of the information giver's function, an explanation, to which the latter objects as a revelation of their secrets (P.89). He points out that K. is obviously not interested in what she is saying. He speculates about K.'s actions and wishes, without regard for his obvious condition. And all the while he postpones leading him out of the atmosphere which is causing his temporary weakness. A statement soon afterward reveals that he knows full well of the necessity for K. to flee this place: "'Ich glaube, er würde noch ärgere Beleidigungen verzeihen, wenn ich ihn schließlich hinausführe'" (P.89). As K. has already formulated to himself in his mind, there is no word that will aid him in his present state, only being led out will do. Resistance to their treatment of him is futile:

"K. sagte nichts, sah nicht einmal auf, er duldete es, daß die zwei über ihn wie über eine Sache verhandelten, es war ihm sogar am liebsten" (P.89).

We have seen the cruelty K. encounters in the figure of the girl and the information giver. It lies underneath their expressed desire to help. This view of these characters, however, is not shared by everyone. Kafka-critic Gesine Frey describes them this way:

> Zwei Kanzleibeamte bemühen sich sehr freundlich um K., als ihn ein Schwindel ergreift. Besonders ein Mädchen, dessen Gesicht "den strengen Ausdruck" hat, "wie ihn manche Frauen gerade in ihrer schönsten Jugend haben" (P.85), und das sonst "schlecht und altmodisch angezogen" ist wie alle Beamten dort, versucht, ihm auf alle mögliche Weise Linderung zu verschaffen. Der "Auskunftgeber", dessen "elegante Kleidung" auffällt -- er trägt "eine graue Weste", die "in zwei langen, scharfgeschnittenen Spitzen" endigt (P.87), -- wirkt zuerst als spöttischer Zuschauer, zeigt aber dann doch, daß er ebenfalls "kein hartes Herz" hat (P.90), und hilft, K. zum Ausgang zu transportieren.[22]

My previous analysis of this scene has refuted this portrait. It is true that both persons help K. out of the chancelleries, but we have seen how they do it. To call their endeavors friendly is incorrect. In the case of the information giver even the attire, the sharp points of his vest, indicate his sharp, cruel manner. The girl is much more consoling than her colleague, nevertheless, her words are not designed to put K. at ease. As we have seen she suggests to K. what might be ailing him and thus increases his illness (P.85-86).

Kafka lets the girl reflect on the "hard-heartedness" of her companion and of officials in general:

> "Es sieht so aus", sagte das Mädchen leise in K.s Ohr, während sie sich dem Gang näherten, "als ob mir besonders viel daran gelegen wäre, den Auskunftgeber in ein gutes Licht zu stellen, aber man mag es glauben, ich will doch die Wahrheit sagen. Er hat kein hartes Herz, Er ist nicht verpflichtet, kranke Parteien hinauszuführen, und tut es doch, wie Sie sehen. Vielleicht ist niemand von uns hartherzig, wir wollen vielleicht alle gern helfen, aber als Gerichtsbeamte bekommen wir leicht den Anschein, als ob wir hartherzig wären und niemandem helfen wollten. Ich leide geradezu darunter". (P.89-90)

To begin, there must be some reason which prompts the girl to give this explanation. Obviously she feels that the behaviour of her colleague and the court officials generally could lead to misunderstanding. It is also improbable that Kafka inserted this apology to correct the reader's impression of the court (although Miss Frey seems to take the cue for her judgement from this statement). The emphasis on the official's willingness to help is a subjective observation like so many others in the novel. It cannot be verified. Her reminder to K., that the information giver is not obliged to conduct people out of these rooms but that he is doing it just the same, humiliates him. It calls attention to the favor and at the same time a reproach for his making use of the "Auskunftgeber's" kindness in this way. One notes too, that when she says that everyone might be willing to help, she injects vagueness into her words with the repeated "vielleicht". To say that she suffers from the image the court officials project, is somewhat histrionic. Finally, her polarization of hard-heartedness vis-à-vis willingness to help falsifies the situation. We have seen that everyone offers their help; help comes from all sides. But at the same time everyone K. meets throws small stumbling blocks in his path, verbal barbs which rouse his anger, call up his defences, wear him down, and thus impede any recognition of his guilt.

The actions which follow the girl's candid statement only bear out the point I have just mentioned. In a compassionate manner the information giver asks whether K. wouldn't like to sit down a moment. The gesture must be considered friendly until one realizes that K. is being asked to sit down next to the accused to whom he had spoken earlier, a great humiliation (P.90). Obviously he is being considered as one of the group of accused, he is being insidiously pushed into a role he had never intended to assume. Whether he should accept this role is not a matter of debate here, we only note the devious way used by the court official to place him in this position, without spelling out why he must accept it. The hint is subtle; it could be a coincidence that the "Auskunftgeber" makes his suggestion to K. to sit down just as they arrive in front of the spot where

the other accused man is standing. However, a scene which intrudes at this point makes it seem much less a coincidence. The accused approaches the information giver and asks that he be allowed to sit and wait here in the chancelleries, although he knows it is futile. To the man's humble petition the official answers condescendingly: "'Sie müssen das nicht so sehr entschuldigen. . . . Ihre Sorgsamkeit ist ja ganz lobenswert, Sie nehmen hier zwar unnötigerweise den Platz weg, aber ich will Sie trotzdem, solange es mir nicht lästig wird, durchaus nicht hindern, den Gang Ihrer Angelegenheit genau zu verfolgen. Wenn man Leute gesehen hat, die ihre Pflicht schändlich vernachlässigten, lernt man es, mit Leuten, wie Sie sind, Geduld zu haben. Setzen Sie sich'" (P.90). The other person who, in the speaker's view, has neglected his case is, of course, K.. As one hears the information giver's patronizing words allowing the petitioner to stay, one realizes that he gives him little hope that he is doing the correct thing (although he has no constructive suggestions what else to do). It is made clear that he is only tolerated because there are those (Josef K.) who do worse than he. The next segment of this scene, referring to this exchange of words, brings ironic and painful moments: "'Wie er mit den Parteien zu reden versteht', flüsterte das Mädchen. K. nickte fuhr aber gleich auf, als ihn der Auskunftgeber wieder fragte: 'Wollen Sie sich nicht hier niedersetzen?'" (P.90-91). To hear the information giver applauded for his ability to speak with the "parties" is ironic, since K., as an accused person, would have to bear the same condescension. In fact he is reminded of his position when the invitation for him to sit down is repeated. K.'s reaction to the invitation shows that he has been stung by it.

In the remaining part of the scene K.'s feeling of nausea intensifies to an even greater degree. It is as if he were on a ship in a storm; he hears the pounding of water against the walls. The whole hallway seems to be rolling from side to side. The two persons leading him are the only points at rest. Their antipathetical nature becomes more obvious to K.. He cannot explain their calm (P.91). Once more he realizes that he is

delivered up to them (the same word "ausgeliefert" is repeated). We note that in this extreme state of disorientation K. loses contact with them. It is the only real instance of a physical communication break-down. K. cannot make out what he is being told although he does know that he is being spoken to. A high pitched tone of undetermined origin interferes with their communication. K. knows they cannot be blamed for his not hearing. It would appear that the fault lies with him -- he is ashamed that he must ask them to speak louder -- since the others keep their composure. As Heinz Politzer notes: " . . . the communication value of the note is nil."[23] Since we see everything from K.'s perspective there is no way of knowing whether or not the two court officials secretly have anything to do with it.

The first words K. does hear are words of reproach: "'Zuerst will er weg, dann aber kann man ihm hundertmal sagen, daß hier der Ausgang ist, und er rührt sich nicht'" (P.91). K.'s benumbed state has almost made him miss the only words of hope, the only really helpful words -- the directions that would give him freedom. It is no coincidence that the atmosphere which revives K. has a deleterious effect on his guardians (P.92). The first whiff of fresh air restores K.'s physical powers, but he sees that they can hardly answer his parting words, indeed the girl almost falls down the stairs. We again have an example of an inimical atmosphere robbing a person of his most valuable weapon of defence -- speech. The same had happened to K. in the chancelleries when he most needed to protect himself against the subtle verbal attacks of others.

C. Persons in the "Pension"

The "Pension" is that part of K.'s life to which, until now, he has paid little attention. Frau Grubach, his landlady, and Fräulein Bürstner, another boarder, are people who are below him in station and with whom he, consequently, has remained on formal terms. After his arrest, K. places more importance in these figures than he did previously. They now represent part of his formerly intact world and he tries to use them to cast doubt on the validity of the morning's occurrences. The alliance he attempts to form is not unlike the alliance with the wife of

the court attendant. Verbal communication and gestures play an instrumental role in the defeat K. eventually suffers in his meetings with these persons.

1. Frau Grubach

K.'s conversation with Frau Grubach is one of the first scenes after his arrest. (I will disregard a short exchange of words between K. and the son of the janitor in his apartment house which precedes it.) K. has spent several hours at his office in the bank before returning to the site of the puzzling and harrowing episode he experienced in the morning. The thought that Frau Grubach's apartment has been thrown into disorder has bothered him all day (P.28). His conversation with her, however, is intended not only to re-establish order in her apartment, but also order in his life. Walter Sokel sees Frau Grubach as "Mutterersatz" and says: "Gerade nach seiner Verhaftung fühlt sich K. besonders zu ihr hingezogen, will mit ihr über seinen Prozeß sprechen und sein Herz erleichtern."[24] This view assumes that K.'s intentions are more harmless than his conversations with the old lady prove them to be. In choosing to speak to Frau Grubach he is choosing someone, who has no connection with the court, someone who could view the morning's happenings objectively and, one gathers, declare them without rhyme or reason. Because of her age and her lower station, which ensures fawning behaviour, he is certain she will agree with him, thus restoring the previous state of affairs. This seems to be K.'s hope as he gingerly leads the conversation. The elderly woman, however, does just the opposite by saying that, from what she has heard by eavesdropping and talking to the warders, the arrest is nothing terrible, that it is a question of K.'s happiness, and that it all seems like something "learned", which she does not understand, but which one does not have to understand (P.30). The conversation which should have reaffirmed K.'s position, turns into another subdued but frustrating verbal duel. As in the case of the warders, K. is faced with a person who disqualifies himself (Frau Grubach admits she does not understand this learned thing) and yet believes that it is right. The warder indicated that they were so low in the court hierarchy they could not

explain from whom they had the power to arrest K., yet they showed at every turn that they felt they had the right to do what they were doing. In Frau Grubach, K. is again confronted with subjectivity so naive, a mind so limited, that it cannot be "reasoned" with. Because of this too it becomes difficult for K, (and the reader) to prove that this woman's opposition to K.'s way of seeing things is malicious. She judges the situation by intuition, which -- somewhat like an oracle -- cannot be questioned but must be left to stand as it presents itself.[25]

K.'s only defence mechanism against Frau Grubach's innocence is to twist what she has just said (the arrest is something esoteric) into what he wants to hear. Therefore he replies:"'Es ist gar nichts Dummes, was Sie gesagt haben, Frau Grubach, wenigstens bin auch ich zum Teil Ihrer Meinung, nur urteile ich über das Ganze noch schärfer als Sie und halte es nicht einmal für etwas Gelehrtes, sondern überhaupt für nichts'"(P.30).[26] We see exactly what K. is doing. He humors his landlady with great patience, agrees with her, "partially" as he says, then goes on to contradict her flatly, Instead of being something "learned" (Frau Grubach's view), K. has called it inconsequential -- "nichts". After telling her that the incident of the morning could not have happened if he had shown more determination in following his regular daily routine upon awakening, K. again (verbally) tries to put the old lady in a position in which she must agree with him without further discussion "'Nun, es ist vorüber und ich wollte eigentlich auch gar nicht mehr darüber sprechen, nur Ihr Urteil, das Urteil einer vernünftigen Frau, wollte ich hören und bin sehr froh, daß wir darin übereinstimmen. Nun müssen Sie mir aber die Hand reichen, eine solche Übereinstimmung muß durch Handschlag bekräftigt werden'" (P.31). There has been no agreement; K. is pretending there has. The word "solch" is ironic for he means "such a complete agreement" or something similar, whereas the reader can see that in truth the agreement is very shaky. It is very necessary therefore that it must be "strengthened" by a handshake. Going back to the sentence before, one notices that K. has left very vague what they have agreed upon ("daß wir darin übereinstimmen"). "Darin" does not

specifically refer to anything previously said. K. fabricates his convenient version out of words, a picture of what would have happened had he been prepared, and with it he expects to gloss over the unpleasant events of the morning. If anything this is what "darin" refers to. K. attempts to foist his pretended innocence on Frau Grubach the way his arrest was foisted on him. The arrest is only an unsubstantiated statement by the warders, no proof of a court has been given. (Indeed, as we have seen, the men are not able to back their claim with anything other than their self-assuredness.)

Josef K. wants an opinion from his elderly landlady, "Urteil", of course, means more too. Many of Kafka's protagonists seek the positive judgement of those around them only to meet equivocation or outright rejection. Frau Grubach's handshake symbolizes much to K.; he deliberates during the second she takes to answer whether she, in contrast to the warders, will give him the sign that exonerates him or not (P.31). Her answer fails to do this. Cowed because she has not fully understood K. she reacts involuntarily and, as it must seem to K., inappropriately: "'Nehmen Sie es doch nicht so schwer, Herr K.', sagte sie, hatte Tränen in der Stimme und vergaß natürlich auch den Handschlag" (P.31).[27] K. fails in his plan to get Frau Grubach to agree to his projection of what would have happened "if". For him it would have meant the reversal of the morning's events. The denial of the sign of approval, however, is overshadowed by a far greater setback for K.. From this old woman he learns that his concern, which he is attempting to suppress, shows all too obviously. He does not want to admit to himself that the mere statement of his arrest could worry him. Now he is told that it has surfaced without his realizing it. What makes this news all the more shattering is that Frau Grubach has picked up his weakness intuitively and has pointed it out not out of malicious desire to worry K. but out of a feeling of sincere concern ("hatte Tränen in der Stimme"). The effect of her observation is to make K. suddenly tired.[28] He recognizes the futility of his attempt (P.32). Talking to this old woman makes little sense, K. thinks.

The conversation turns then from K.'s arrest to Fräulein

Bürstner, the other boarder at Frau Grubach's. K. lets it be known that he wants to speak to the young lady; his landlady appears to want to dissuade him by saying that she does not know when Fräulein Bürstner will return from the theater and that it is not necessary to apologize for putting her room in disorder in the morning (P.32). When Frau Grubach then makes inuendos about Fräulein Bürstner's flighty character, K. angrily exclaims that she is on the wrong track. Actually, K. has tricked Frau Grubach into giving her candid opinion of her young female boarder by suggesting that the latter often comes home late, something that, in K.'s words, "can go too far" (P.32). In the matter of K.'s arrest she had been unwilling to follow his cues to exonerate him, yet here, eager to please, she, as servile as ever, is quick to come forth with the criticism she believes K. wants to hear. He reminds her of her failure to clear him by shouting from behind his closed door that she must throw him out first if she wishes to keep her boarding house clean (P.33). K., looking desperately for some kind of ally, considers for a moment moving out with Frau Grubach's young boarder as reprisal against the old lady who has done them both wrong.

2. Fräulein Bürstner

K.'s conversation with Fräulein Bürstner must be seen in the same light as his conversation with Frau Grubach.[29] He wants to have another chance to describe what happened to him in the morning so that he may be judged innocent by her. "The uncanniness, the unintelligibility of the arrest, makes him try to get into touch with her. He goes so far as to describe the whole incident to her. In the course of his description, the unintelligibility of it is to be banned, that which concerns him alone is to become a 'very interesting' case, that can be joked and talked about."[30] His motive for seeing her, at least that which he openly expresses, is not sexual: "Er hatte kein besonderes Verlangen nach ihr, er konnte sich nicht einmal genau erinnern, wie sie aussah, aber nun wollte er mit ihr reden und es reizte ihn, daß sie durch ihr spätes Kommen auch noch in den Abschluß dieses Tages Unruhe und Unordnung brachte" (P.34). We note that the words "Unruhe" and "Unordnung" refer back to what K. was

thinking before he spoke with Frau Grubach. Fräulein Bürstner has not even arrived yet and she has irritated K.. When she does appear it is very late in the evening, really too late to trouble her with this matter. Then too, since K. has forgotten to turn on the light in his room, his entrance into the hall out of the dark takes on the element of surprise. K. initiates the dialogue with decided disadvantages on his side. Fräulein Bürstner also mentions several times that it is late and that she is tired (P.35,39) and leads him out of the hall, which could be considered neutral territory, into her room which creates a compromising situation (P.35).

Fräulein Bürstner has certainly not put K. completely at ease even though she offers him a seat on her bed. She remains standing (in spite of her tiredness, K. notes) with her hat on, indicating that she for her part will not really make herself at home until this interview which K. has insisted on is finished (P.36). On the other hand when she says, "'Was wollen Sie also? Ich bin wirklich neugierig'", she is telling K. that his story had better be worth her waiting (P.36). The word "also" adds an impatient insistance to her demand that he proceed immediately. She also brushes aside his attempt to excuse his intrusion in advance (P.36). K. tries to limit his revelation of the morning's incidents by begging her pardon that her room was put in disorder without going into detail: "'Ihr Zimmer ist heute früh, gewissermaßen durch meine Schuld, ein wenig in Unordnung gebracht worden, es geschah durch fremde Leute gegen meinen Willen und doch, wie gesagt, durch meine Schuld; dafür wollte ich um Entschuldigung bitten'" (P.36). Since guilt represents a key word in the novel and since K. manages to include it several times in this sentence, one cannot help but entertain the thought that K. is asking to be exonerated. It is as if he were asking to be declared without guilt altogether. Only a short while later the following similar exchange takes place: "'Ja, es war eine Untersuchungskommission hier', fügte K. hinzu, da ihn das Fräulein mit einem fragenden Blick ansah. 'Ihretwegen?' fragte das Fräulein. 'Ja', antwortete K. 'Nein!' rief das Fräulein und lachte. 'Doch', sagte K., 'glauben Sie denn, daß ich schuldlos bin?' 'Nun,

schuldlos . . . ' sagte das Fräulein, 'ich will nicht gleich ein vielleicht folgenschweres Urteil aussprechen . . . '" (P.37). In spite of the touch of levity that is brought into this conversation, K. still wishes to get Fräulein Bürstner to declare him not guilty, however, she will not be led into doing this because she realizes that it may have more serious consequences. Of course, although we may be fairly certain of what K. means by "schuldlos" -- he wishes to extend its meaning surreptitiously as far as possible -- we do not know whether she understands the gravity of the situation. Does she actually realize that K. is demanding "ein folgenschweres Urteil", or is she merely being ironic?[31] In any event she, like Frau Grubach, steers clear of his trap.

Throughout most of the interview Fräulein Bürstner does well in keeping her distance from K.. She does this by changing her attitude toward K. suddenly. Heinz Politzer notes this too, saying: " . . . she displays a strange mixture of coquettishness and frigidity."[32] For example, she forgives him for the disorder done to her room (she makes clear she is excusing him for this), then, after noticing that her photographs have been rearranged, she chides K.: "'Es ist sonderbar', sagte Fräulein Bürstner, 'daß ich gezwungen bin, Ihnen etwas zu verbieten, was Sie sich selbst verbieten müßten, nämlich in meiner Abwesenheit mein Zimmer zu betreten'" (P.37). She takes back her pardon and in addition places the blame at his feet alone, disregarding his previous statement that it was others who did the mischief. She also vacillates between not believing what K. tells her and a more earnest offer to help him. In the text quoted in the previous paragraph we find her calling out "nein" in disbelief when K. tells her of the investigators. Somewhat further on, when K. finds that he is unable to give the reason for the investigation, the young girl becomes disappointed and reproaches him for trying to play a joke on her (P.38). In the next instant she is laughing again asking him how the investigation was. But then again K.'s offer to demonstrate how the scene of the morning went elicites from Fräulein Bürstner the comment that she is tired (P,39). She does not seem to be interested in K.'s problem any more. K.'s men-

tioning that she arrived so late then brings forth the strong reaction that she is being reproached undeservedly and that the interview has shown itself to be unnecessary (P.39). K. is hard put to find a path to the sympathy of the young girl. Fräulein Bürstner's capriciousness clearly keeps him on the defensive. He remains frustrated in achieving his aim -- to approach her with his version of his arrest and have her agree that it means nothing.

I have shown what K.'s primary purpose is and how it is thwarted. The rest of the chapter bears my contention out. K. insists on making good on his suggestion to demonstrate what happened on that morning as way of proof that this interview with Fräulein Bürstner was necessary (P.39-40). When she indignantly refuses to let K. move the night table out of place and put it in the same position in which it stood during the investigation, K. becomes excited as if one were doing him immeasurable harm (P.39). It is clear that this demonstration is very vital to him; he must show it his way. Verbalization means gaining control of the situation. Fräulein Bürstner, we must remember, was not a witness to the events of the morning and can therefore be impressed. K.'s one man re-enactment of what happened brings out the villany of the court "Aufseher". Judging by the reactions of his onlooker and by the overstatement in the words, it is meant to make the antagonist look ridiculous (P.39-40).

He is cut short by a knocking on the wall, coming from Frau Grubach's nephew the Captain Lanz, who is encamped next door. Outwardly it seems as if he were just objecting to K.'s loud voice in the next room, However, the knocking can also be interpreted as a mysterious warning not to proceed in this blasphemy. The text states that K. is so startled because he had been unable to think of anything but the events of the morning and the girl to whom he was demonstrating them (P.40). He has obviously considered himself safe from harassment only to be unpleasantly surprised. The girl in front of whom he is trying to belittle the court's officials also seems to sense the knocking as a warning when she says: "'Verzeihen Sie, ich bin durch das plötzliche

Klopfen so erschreckt worden, nicht so s r durch die Folgen, die die Anwesenheit des Hauptmanns haben könnte. Es war so still nach Ihrem Schrei, und da klopfte es, deshalb bin ich so erschrocken . . . '" (P.41). In her description of her reaction to the knock on the wall she shows K. that it is his behaviour that has elicited the reproach. There is K.'s scream, then a silence, a silence in which K.'s audacious behaviour registers with the court's emissary, and finally the sign of disapproval. Not the future consequences, not perhaps the fact that she has been caught in a compromising situation, but the momentary impression of the scene startles her.

K.'s "counteroffensive" against the court, his plan to "talk it away" must be abandoned. In the ensuing scene Fräulein Bürstner again eludes K., she reproaches him for his suggestions and repeatedly tries to make him leave. K.'s rapacious embrace represents a last resort, a gesture of dominance, since he has not been able to win her over to his side with his story of his arrest. Her concern is also that the captain is talking about them, identifying them as a group: "'Sehen Sie , . . er hat angezündet und unterhält sich über uns'" (P.42). (There was no previous indication that anyone else was in the room with whom Captain Lanz could talk.) In her mind Lanz is already broadcasting their association, which she, as we have seen, has made as tenuous as possible. It is not the captain's immediate presence that bothers her, not the possibility of his coming into her room to reprimand her (P.41). She is worried about his communication with others.

3. Fräulein Montag and Hauptmann Lanz

K. strives hard to arrange another meeting with Fräulein Bürstner. He wants merely the chance to speak to her, as he says in a letter to her (P.98). She manages to elude him. Before, K. had been able to speak with her directly, although he could not bring her over to his side. Now she becomes more remote, as K. becomes more insistent. Finally Fräulein Montag is commissioned to bring K. an answer. This person in no way represents a link between her girl friend and K.. She has only one message: that further communication will not take place.

In Fräulein Montag K. comes up against a stone wall. Heinz Politzer even imputes cruelty to her when he says that she "obviously relishes the bad tidings" she brings.[33] Not only is she cold and official, but she, like emissaries of the court, cannot be argued with, for, as she herself indicates, she is not involved and not informed (P.99). K. must listen to Fräulein Bürstner's arguments against granting an interview (tansmitted by her friend) without being able to refute them to her face. In addition her case contains suppositions about K.'s feelings and about how he arrived at his wish to request an interview (P.99). She even includes a vague but meaningful pronouncement for the future, as Fräulein Montag reports it: "' . . . Sie . . . würden selbst auch ohne besondere Erklärung, wenn nicht schon jetzt, so doch sehr bald die Sinnlosigkeit des Ganzen erkennen'" (P.99-100). From the context it is clear that Fräulein Bürstner is referring to K.'s proposed meeting with her. The words "Sinnlosigkeit des Ganzen", however, can also mean his resistance to the court generally. Of course, it is pure presumption on the part of Fräulein Bürstner, but her statement is made as if she were able to view K.'s whole case (not just their relationship) from a higher vantage point. He finds his (future) actions determined by others. They tell him what he will and will not do.

In his conversation K. had had the opportunity of overwhelming his partner in conversation if not with words then by his embrace. Fräulein Montag's presence precludes any of these means of winning Fräulein Bürstner as an ally. Furthermore everything takes on an air of conspiracy for him when upon leaving, Hauptmann Lanz enters the small narrow room, goes to Fräulein Montag, and kisses her hand reverently. This in K.'s mind makes them into a group: " . . . der Handkuß hatte sie für ihn zu einer Gruppe verbunden, die ihn unter dem Anschein äußerster Harmlosigkeit und Uneigennützigkeit von Fräulein Bürstner abhalten wollte" (P.100-101). They form a community thwarting him. K.'s subsequent attempt to seek out Fräulein Bürstner on his own is carried out in rage against this obstacle which prevents him from winning an ally. Even while closing the door to Fräulein Bürstner's room after finding no one there, he notices that his

actions have been under unobtrusive scrutiny by the group and, as he sidles along the wall, he feels their glances weighing upon him as heavily as any verbal reproach (P.102).

D. Family: Der Onkel

"Der Onkel" is part of the heading Kafka placed over what in Max Brod's version of Der Prozeß became the sixth chapter.[34] This relative who bursts into K.'s office represents not only his own interests but those of the family too. We are given one of those remote glimpses into K.'s past when we are told that the uncle had been his guardian (P.112). Since an uncompleted chapter "Fahrt zur Mutter" indicates that his mother is still alive, it is the father figure that is missing, surprising in light of the fact that the father is believed to have predominated in the author's life.[35] It is quite conceivable that Kafka consciously wanted to rid himself of the father's dominance in this work after he had given him major roles in Das Urteil and Die Verwandlung. On the other hand, the uncle in Der Prozeß retains many of the hitherto less publicized traits of Kafka's father, as Walter Sokel points out: "Zunächst stellt der Onkel die lächerliche Seite der Vater- oder Autoritätsgestalt dar. In Kafkas Mythos spielt der Vater nicht nur eine furchtbare und gigantische, sondern auch eine lächerliche Rolle. Dieser kleinliche Aspekt war mit seiner kriecherischen Unterwürfigkeit gegen gesellschaftlich Höherstehende und seinem Snobismus verbunden, wie es der Brief an den Vater zeigt."[36] Not only the letter to his father but also the author's diary gives us a glimpse of Herrmann Kafka's weakness.[37]

Uncle Karl's appearance and their mutual visit to the lawyer Huld herald a new stage in K.'s situation. "The trial seems through them to be moved out of the sphere of a personal secret," says Herbert Tauber, "The outer world which has till now, like a solid shell, without a trace of the trial, confirmed K. in his everyday world conciousness, begins to mirror his unrest in some measure, too."[38] We certainly find unrest in the figure of the uncle; whether this is true of Huld is doubtful. As we shall see, however, not only is the uncle's visit proof in itself that the trial is now public, but he makes K. painfully

aware that others know.

At the outset it is necessary to point out that the past relationship influences the present. As K.'s guardian the uncle was naturally responsible for his ward, probably made decisions for him and guided him. K. has clearly come into his own and grown over the uncle's head. He has a more important position in life, holding a central position in the bank, whereas his older relative is mentioned as "ein kleiner Grundbesitzer vom Lande" (P.112). "From the country" usually carries the connotation of boorish and backward. "Grundbesitzer", indicating a man of some property, qualifies this greatly, though. We are not dealing with a clod, but with a well-to-do- provincial.[39] Uncle Karl cannot just be turned away by K. either: "Dabei mußte ihm K., der ihm als seinem gewesenen Vormund besonders verpflichtet war, in allem möglichen behilflich sein und ihn außerdem bei sich übernachten lassen" (P.112). This then is no encounter that the protagonist could avoid.

The meeting is played down. The uncle's appearance does not startle K.. He has anticipated his visit for some time and has even envisioned details of his arrival. Mentally he pictures his uncle " . . . wie er . . . die Rechte schon von weitem ihm entgegenstreckte und sie mit rücksichtsloser Eile über den Schreibtisch hinreichte, alles umstoßend, was ihm im Wege war" (P.112). The movement and its consequences are characteristic of this person's effect on the whole. The handshake in this case is not just meant as a courtesy but as an obvious gesture of comradship (whether truly meant or not is another matter). Signalling a handshake from across the room ("von weitem") is a standard form used by people who know each other well, or pretend to know each other well, when they meet after not having seen each other for a long time. It is ostentatious, though. The outstretched hand points K. out to all around. In this case, too, the friendly gesture wreaks havoc without consideration ("mit <u>rücksichtsloser</u> Eile"); everything is overthrown. These visits are characterized as casual visits. Among the many things Uncle Karl must do is drop in on his nephew. He plans a full day's activities and is pressured by the wish to get everything

done in the short space of time that he has at his disposal. Thus, it is suggested that on this occasion, as usual, K. is not his only concern. In particular he feels constrained to take in all incidental activities, as the text states: " . . . [er] dürfe überdies auch kein gelegentlich sich darbietendes Gespräch oder Geschäft oder Vergnügen sich entgehen lassen" (P.112). One could almost argue that by placing "Gespräch" in series with "Geschäft" and "Vergnügen" Kafka is suggesting that K.'s relative equates all three since all three have equal attraction. But what this man might think of as a casual chat means a burden for K..

It is against this background that we must view the uncle's appearance to question and advise K. concerning his trial. Nothing in the chapter indicates whether he had come to town solely on this one mission or whether he has other business and this is just another "stop-off". According to his usual behaviour which is reflected upon at the beginning of the chapter, and which we have just analyzed, one should perhaps expect the latter. His entrance takes place according to form in any case. He pushes his way in between two office clerks, disregards K.'s invitation to sit down, and asks, instead, to talk to his nephew privately.

One can hardly fail to notice the lengthy introduction, the "build-up" before the uncle's specific mention of the trial (P.113). In fact, he does not mention it immediately but lets K. guess what is on his mind, something that is not difficult to do. Long before getting down to the matter at hand, Uncle Karl communicates his anxiety about K.'s situation, saying that an interview is necessary for his peace of mind (P.113). It is significant that the uncle expresses concern with reference to himself, not to the person who is actually in trouble. With great skill Kafka shows that now, momentarily, K.'s trial is crucial only insofar as it has upset the uncle. His immediate attention has been diverted to the task of placating him. When the uncle cries out: "Was habe ich gehört, Josef?" (P.113), he brings about two things: 1. K. is made aware that some news concerning him (most likely concerning his trial) is abroad. 2. The agony of knowing that the uncle knows his secret, without

openly discussing it, is prolonged.

This question connotes yet more. It strongly resembles those queries put to disobedient youth by their parents, in which, referring back to the observation just made, both parties are fully aware of the misdemeanor that has been committed. Yet, the questioner pretends that it is so incredible that it cannot be openly mentioned. (It is, of course, eventually mentioned.) As we have seen before, Kafka resorts to an everyday speech pattern (here for example, one which is used between an elder and a subservient young person). This type of question usually precedes severe reproach and is in itself a form of reproach. One should make special note of the fact that this type of reproach-question need not be the expression of a loveless relationship, quite the contrary, it implies a statement such as: "I had never expected to hear such things about you." (As a standard phrase, this type of question can also be used in cases where something positive has occurred.) It is quite evident therefore that in the figure of the uncle we have someone who is not inimical towards K., but who, nonetheless, hounds him by means of his concern. For K. would much prefer to escape at this moment by looking out the window aimlessly, i.e. by focusing on a meaningless scene, so that he can forget himself and of course his ever-present problem.[40] But K.'s uncle in his excitement cannot allow his nephew such a respite and again draws him back into the present with a reproachful exclamation describing K.'s prevarication: "'Du schaust aus dem Fenster!'" (P.113).

Over and over again in these first two paragraphs Kafka shows the uncle as an intruder, albeit well-meaning, who bombards K. with reminders of that which he would like to escape. The humor in this figure and his actions will be treated in more detail later; at the moment it is only necessary to describe them both carefully in order to see how this segment of K.'s surroundings, the family, unwittingly provides verbal harassment. A testimony of this intention lies in the length of the conversation, Kafka gives it to his readers in all its (for K.) painful detail. The repetitive character of the author's novel, and indeed

his fictional prose generally, demonstrates itself in reoccuring conversational patterns. Uncle Karl harps on the thing that K. would like to forget most and does so at first, as we have seen, by avoiding direct mention of the fact of K.'s trial. It is as if it were something too monstrous to be named aloud, an attitude, that places more emphasis on the occurrence. The uncle continues in this vein for some time. He bursts out with a question: "'Ist es wahr, kann es denn wahr sein?'" (P.113). We note that the question is strengthened in its repetition, which uses the modal "können" to express doubt in the possibility of something (as yet unmentioned) so monstrous happening. K.'s evasive answer that he does not know what his uncle wants of him draws forth a warning: "'Josef . . . die Wahrheit hast du immer gesagt, soviel ich weiß, Soll ich deine **letzten Worte als schlimmes** Zeichen auffassen?'" (P.113). The attack on K.'s honesty means a digression from the imminent topic, a "beating around the bush" out of reluctance to discuss such an enormity. Each of these statements acts as a retarding element, which builds the suspense a little more. For K. this means an unpleasant exaggeration of his situation, an open indication that he has cause to be concerned. K. finally admits his involvement in a trial "dutifully" ("folgsam"), a word which shows that he has resigned himself to the familiar relationship, which I explained above (P.113).

A facet of conversation, which is not neglected in this chapter, is the report by one of the persons involved in the conversation of something a third party has said. In this case the uncle, for example, quotes at length from a letter his daughter, K.'s cousin, has written concerning news she had of K.'s trial (P.113-115). Her information, we learn, has been gathered from one of the underlings in K.'s place of work. ("Diener" is the name used and one must keep in mind that K. attempts to keep talk of his trial from their hearing,) K. sees his trial enjoying more publicity than he has thought. In a roundabout manner he learns that even the lower echelons of the group he works for know of his predicament. Not only do they know, but this particular one of whom Erna (K.'s cousin) writes, speaks of

a situation bleaker than K. would admit. He sees K. involved in an onerous trial, which is going badly (P.114), The bad turn of events the "Diener" had deduced from K.'s mood. It must become obvious to K., therefore, that he is betraying signs of his inability to cope with the situation, once again something that he would perhaps be reluctant to admit. These signs are now being "fed" back to him indirectly, What Erna has reported to her father shows that the man in K.'s office is not antagonistic, indeed, he wishes to help K. (like Uncle Karl), but cannot see how (P.114). If K.'s salvation lies in self-reflection, as many critics claim, these people (the uncle, Erna, the servant) are not showing him the right path, because they all want K. to seek outside help.[41]

The consequence of K.'s trial, as far as Uncle Karl is concerned, is the disquieting effect it has on him (the uncle), not any inner consequence for K. (at least his relative does not touch upon this point). In the emotional conversation -- emotional on the part of the intruder -- the perimeter is extended to include other relations who would be embarrassed by K.'s difficulties.[42] Uncle Karl cries out: "'Josef, lieber Josef, denke an dich, an deine Verwandten, an unseren guten Namen! Du warst bisher unsere Ehre, du darfst nicht unsere Schande werden." (P.116). An onus is heaved onto K.'s shoulders with this statement. Any reader cannot fail to notice overstatement in the two words "Ehre" and "Schande", which are equated with K. The speaker is using an expression similar to a common phrase like "Du bist unser Stolz." It is actually a metaphor. K. is said to have embodied a positive quality of an entire group of people. The "bisher," however, suggests the turning point close at hand. In one breath K. is made aware of both the great distinction he has enjoyed in the eyes of others and the gigantic fall he is in danger of taking. Not only his fortune, his future, but that of the whole family, is at stake.[43] This could be considered a misrepresentation. K. suggests as much later on when he says: "'Da du sagst, daß auch die Familie durch den Prozeß in Mitleidenschaft gezogen würde -- was ich für meinen Teil durchaus nicht begreifen kann, das ist aber Nebensache -- , so will ich dir gerne in allem folgen'" (P.119).

Uncle Karl's excitement shows K. that he sees him in dire straits. He prejudges K.'s case before he has really gathered information from the person who is primarily involved -- K.. The following bit of conversation can serve to exemplify my point: "'Deine Haltung', er sah K. mit schief geneigtem Kopfe an, 'gefällt mir nicht, so verhält sich kein unschuldig Angeklagter, der noch bei Kräften ist. Sag mir nur schnell, worum es sich handelt, damit ich dir helfen kann. Es handelt sich natürlich um die Bank?'" (P.116). The last question is to be understood, at least partly, as an assumption. The uncle exhorts K. to inform him; is so caught up in his own thoughts on the matter, however, that he jumps to a conclusion, while he is asking. The first sentence certainly represents a subjective assessment, for K. has said very little about how the trial has actually affected him. At the risk of overinterpreting I would even go as far as to say that Kafka allows himself a little joke in order to show the subjectivity of the uncle's opinion. When the latter tells his nephew that he does not like his "Haltung" he is of course referring to his attitude toward coping with his trial. Yet while chiding him about his "Haltung", Uncle Karl tilts his head to one side. (I see the prepositional phrase "mit schief geneigtem Kopfe" describing the action of the subject of the sentence, "er", not the object, "K".) The tilted head suggests an oblique view of K. (and perhaps K.'s problems also). "Schief" in addition, has its pejorative connotation of "falsely", and perhaps the author was even alluding to a phrase similar to "etwas schief anschauen". An indication that Kafka might have been playing with words here is the fact that this descriptive segment is introduced directly after the word "Haltung" and not at the end of that sentence where it would seem more normal.[44]

The outward appearance of calm, normal life that K. endeavors to present is under constant pressure from the intruder in this conversation. We have already noticed the difference in pace; K.'s measured routine and later reluctance is overpowered by his relative's rapid barrage of words, Another annoyance, even danger, to K. is Uncle Karl's loud voice. With it he not only is expressing

his concern but also informing any would-be listeners, as K. points out to him (P.116). Overhearing and being overheard in conversation is a structure one finds quite frequently in Kafka, as we have seen. Kafka dwells on it at length in this chapter. K. tries to make his uncle speak more softly by telling him that the "Diener" might be listening (see Erna's report) and decides to remove the tête-à-tête to a less exposed spot (P.116). But until they actually leave, there is enough opportunity for Uncle Karl to arouse the suspicions of K.'s junior and senior colleagues by his eccentric behaviour. The agonizing embarrassment is caused inadvertently, as usual, for the uncle twice agrees to K.'s expressed intention of preventing others from overhearing anything with a resounding "richtig" (P.116,117). Inevitably, almost as if he senses that the situation is no longer embarrassing, K.'s visitor ceases his talk as soon as both get out of earshot of listeners: "Sie standen auf der Freitreppe, die zur Straße führte; da der Portier zu horchen schien, zog K. den Onkel hinunter; der lebhafte Straßenverkehr nahm sie auf. Der Onkel, der sich in K. eingehängt hatte, fragte nicht mehr so dringend nach dem Prozeß, sie gingen sogar eine zeitlang schweigend weiter" (P.117-118). This only lasts until he suddenly stops to ask once more how everything came about, drawing the attention of the people on the street (P.118).

Unremittingly K.'s uncle forces his nephew to act, forces his hectic pace on him. The basic tenor of most of what he says is reproach, the structure we found so often in Kafka's communication with his father. Beneath his countless questions, his disbelief, and his concern lies the constant "How could you do this to us". Closely associated with this is the reproach: "Why do you not do anything?" Several times Uncle Karl mentions K.'s indifference (P.115-116, 119). Once again one comes to the realization that he is actually suggesting K.'s case has deteriorated to an irreparable stage. Still there is no real concrete evidence for these prognostications. K. still has not had a chance to tell what he knows about his trial. The uncle's excitement over his nephew's inactive appearance even leads him to quote an adage, which, he claims, one is tempted to believe

looking at him: "'Einen solchen Prozeß haben, heißt ihn schon verloren haben'" (P.119). A quote such as this one is, in the speaker's view, supposed to lend credence to his opinion. The "Sprichwort" does not stem from him, but emanates from the tradition of an anonymous mass of people, the "Gemeinschaft". In a way the uncle is looking for a way to broaden the base of his accusation. The fact that he uses a proverb fits the pattern observed so far. Proverbs enjoy popularity but are not necessarily true. Although believed in by many, they can be just as subjective as one person's judgement.

We must take a closer look at this proverb, its effect on K, and its content. The fact is, that it certainly cannot spur K. on to action as the uncle might intend, for it shows K.'s condemnation as a fait accompli. Having a trial means having lost it. The word "solch", of course, contradicts the general nature of a proverb. This word is too specific, because its use presuposes common knowledge of the object in question. "Such a trial" -- what kind of trial, one would have to ask. Yet curiously enough the saying can be interpreted as very apt in K.'s situation. I return to the idea that K.'s trial takes place in his communication with others, in his harassment by others. Before actually beginning any formal proceedings, K. has been worn down by the preliminaries and incidentals. We must remember that K.'s uncle has been working on K. now for some time. He is tempted to quote the adage because of K.'s worried appearance at this moment, an appearance he has helped create. Having such a trial then truly means having lost it.

Along with his reproaches to K. for his inactivity, his indifference, go plans to do something immediately. Of course he finds this difficult now because K. has allowed his predicament to grow and get out of hand (P.118). His first solution is to spirit K. off to the country and thus remove him from the grip of the court. (P.118). In other words he does not trust K. to carry out his own defence. He sees this as a sort of lengthening of the lines of communication from the court to K.. They would have to use more intermediary steps -- delegated power, letters, telephones and the like -- to reach him. This must strike the

reader as ironic for this is what the court has been doing already. K.'s attacks on the court have not led him further than the lower echelons. A moment later, too, Uncle Karl contradicts himself by saying that the court would not prevent K. from leaving, since their loss of power would not be that great (P.118). He cuts off the avenue of escape he himself suggested. The second plan involves taking K. to Huld (P.120). This happens suddenly, while the elderly gentleman tells K. that he must deliberate about what to do. Again there is contradiction. Uncle Karl makes motions to help K. and discourages him at the same time with the information that his intuition in these matters and influence have decreased during his years in the country. K.'s trial must be all the more serious to him if he wants to undertake something without really being sure that he can accomplish anything positive. The frantic activity alone means that at least time is not being lost. An overpowered K. submits to his uncle's plans " . . . obwohl ihm die eilige und dringliche Art, mit der der Onkel die Angelegenheit behandelte, Unbehagen verursachte" (P.120). His uncle has forced his sense of urgency on him. Later, even, when they are already at Huld's bedside K. is grateful for the lawyer's illness because it diverts some of this zeal against which he could not put up resistance (P.123-124).

When K. and his uncle reach the home of the lawyer Huld, the conversation devolves on the latter two, with Huld taking over the leadership. Later a third person, the director of the chancelleries, who had been sitting in the room all the time, emerges from the darkness. Although K.'s trial is the subject of their conversation, K. himself retirss more and more into the background and at one point, in fact, feels that he is being neglected on purpose (P.129). He serves only as listener; his mind can wander. A sudden noise gives him a chance to leave the room altogether. The scenes with Leni take place next. At the end of the chapter, however, after she releases him into the rainy night, Uncle Karl is there again to pounce upon K, who is caught completely by surprise (P.135-136). He has not noticed the car his relative has been waiting in. The uncle bombards his

nephew with a long monologue that continues to the end of the chapter. In his familiar urgent tone he begins: "'Junge . . . wie konntest du nur das tun! Du hast deiner Sache, die auf gutem Wege war, schrecklich geschadet" (P.135). Not only does he reproach him for what he had done, but also makes it clear to him that before his actions there had been hope of setting things aright. The adverb "schrecklich" indicates catastrophe. K.'s disappearance into the other room to seek out Leni is reflected back to him through someone who observed it, and in no uncertain terms he is given to understand that he fooled nobody. In fact, the uncle does not even credit him with an attempt to disguise his intent with an excuse. Finally he continues, describing the group that K. left behind:

> "Und unterdessen sitzen wir beisammen, der Onkel, der sich für dich abmüht, der Advokat, der für dich gewonnen werden soll, der Kanzleidirektor vor allem, dieser große Herr, der deine Sache in ihrem jetzigen Stadium geradezu beherrscht. Wir wollen beraten, wie dir zu helfen wäre, ich muß den Advokaten vorsichtig behandeln, dieser wieder den Kanzleidirektor, und du hättest doch allen Grund, mich wenigstens zu unterstützen. Statt dessen bleibst du fort. Schließlich läßt es sich nicht verheimlichen, nun, es sind höfliche, gewandte Männer, sie sprechen nicht davon, sie schonen mich, schließlich können aber auch sie sich nicht mehr überwinden, und da sie von der Sache nicht reden können, verstummen sie. Wir sind minutenlang schweigend dagesessen und haben gehorcht, ob du nicht doch endlich kämest. Alles vergebens. Endlich steht der Kanzleidirektor, der viel länger geblieben ist, als er ursprünglich wollte, auf, verabschiedet sich, bedauert mich sichtlich, ohne mir helfen zu können, wartet in unbegreiflicher Liebenswürdigkeit noch eine Zeitlang in der Tür, dann geht er. Ich war natürlich glücklich, daß er weg war, mir war schon die Luft zum Atmen ausgegangen. Auf den kranken Advokaten hat alles noch stärker eingewirkt, er konnte, der gute Mann, gar nicht sprechen, als ich mich von ihm verabschiedete. Du hast wahrscheinlich zu seinem vollständigen Zusammenbrechen beigetragen und beschleunigst so den Tod eines Mannes, auf den du angewiesen bist. Und mich, deinen Onkel, läßt du hier im Regen -- fühle nur, ich bin ganz durchnäßt -- stundenlang warten und mich in Sorgen abquälen." (P.136)

We note that a great deal of the paragraph is told in the present

tense giving it a sense of immediacy, immediacy not of swift action but of long waiting, of the embarrassment which the three men experience. (Hans Reiss has pointed out the humour in this specific passage and it will be referred to again at the end of this thesis when that aspect will be discussed briefly.[45]) One must remember, of course, that this is Uncle Karl's interpretation of the atmosphere; it may just as well be an overinterpretation not to mention fabrication. We must remember also, however, that most of what K. learns of the court and his trial is not experienced directly by contact with its higher officers but through verbal projections of others.[46] Uncle Karl does a magnificent job of evoking an acutely embarrassing situation and indicating that his nephew's fortunes have been irreparably damaged. He first stresses the importance of the two other people present -- the lawyer is someone that must be won over, the director of the chancelleries is depicted as being the pivotal figure in K.'s case. (The words "in ihrem jetzigen Stadium" represent a qualification, however, that still leaves the future in doubt.) In the middle section of his description, K.'s uncle shows the three of them poised ready to discuss how to help K.. All the stages of their conversation and waiting are counted; talk peters out in silence; the director prepares to depart; he waits again, and then finally departs. Each of these stages represents an opportunity which K. has missed. The pain that comes with the recognition of having made a mistake is therefore drawn out. The enormity of the mistake is intensified by extolling the civility and kindness of the persons involved. The kindness of the director is intensified by the adjective "unbegreiflich". His kindness is so great that it is a positive relief to Uncle Karl when he leaves. Having no air to breathe is a very vivid depiction of his exasperation. He shows that another more serious result of this painful scene has been the deleterious effect on Huld's health. K.'s guilt is heightened when it is charged that he has probably contributed to Huld's total collapse and even to his death, and we note that in these two sentences Uncle Karl again manages to insert how benevolent the lawyer is and how necessary he is to K.. Finally he comes back to his

much less severe discomfiture, but in a tone of pathos, which makes it seem enormous. He even wishes to intensify his reproach by inviting K. to feel his soaked clothing, a humorous piece of detail from the reader's point of view. In the last sentence main themes of the first part of the chapter are briefly renewed. Uncle Karl again emphasizes the familial relationship and the anguish he must go through worrying on his nephew's account.

E. Persons in the Bank

1. Biographical Digression

Since the inclusion of the business world in the discussion of Kafka's work represents something of a novelty, it is useful to look at the author's life and give a brief outline of his professional career as well as a more detailed description of what could be termed his business activities. Their full extent has been virtually unknown until new documents came to light in Prague in July 1973. (I hope to publish these documents in the near future.). It must be stressed that even these perhaps do not give the full picture. There are possibly more in various archives in Prague, which, when located, would give a more complete picture. Furthermore there are other facts connected with Kafka's professional career and persons in his family all of which throw light on his literary work and should find mention here.

In the year 1906 Kafka graduated with a Doctor of Laws degree from the Karls Universität in Prague. The study of law was what his father had wished him to pursue.[47] Law was a practical profession which might open many job opportunities, although finding his first employment was apparently not easy. In October of 1907, after one year of voluntary legal work, he was hired by the Prague branch of the Assicurazioni Generali. In a letter to Max Brod in the autumn of 1907, Kafka indicates how difficult the position was to obtain, for, as he claims, it was only through the efforts of a "Mr. Weißgerber" that he was employed (Br.52). It can be assumed that Weißgerber is a misprint of Weissberger, American Vice and Deputy Consul in Prague, the man who recommended Kafka as mentioned in a letter from the Prague branch of the Assicurazioni Generali to its head office

in Trieste notifying them of Kafka's pending employment.[48] (In his application Kafka spells the name Weißberger.) Kafka knew Weissberger personally and stated in his application that he was acquainted with Weissberger's son in Madrid (probably through his own uncle who lived in that city, Alfred Löwy).[49] It has not been determined how well Kafka knew Arnold Weissberger, but since he did know him personally, it is very possible that he may have learned some facts about him in casual conversation. He was born in Kolin, a small city not far from Prague in 1853, son of a manufacturer there.[50] In 1868, at the age of fifteen he emigrated to the United States, residing in New York where he was naturalized in 1876.[51] In 1877 he returned to his native land.[52] Considering the early age at which he emigrated one might think of Karl Roßmann who arrives in New York at about the same age.[53]

From Kafka's early letters we learn that he himself hoped to find employment away from home, if only in Trieste (Br. 37,48, 49,50). Emigration to America was the standard means for Europeans to escape embarrassing situations at home and the United States was viewed by many as the country in which to make one's fortune.[54] Kafka was aware or made aware of the necessity of being financially successful. Certainly at the time he recommended the young Kafka for his first job, Arnold Weissberger represented an example of someone who had built a career. On his return home he had become a banker in Prague and Vienna, represented the "Länderbank" at the Exposition in Chicago, directed the Koliner Spiritus Fabrik Ltd., became United States Vice and Deputy Consul in Prague (a purely honorary but prestige-bringing position), and was " . . . understood to be a man of means living in rather ample style."[55]

Among Kafka's own relatives one also finds many who had successful careers and who may have served as models for figures in Der Verschollene. Biographers make no mention of the fact that Kafka had two cousins who emigrated to the United States.[56] In 1905 Otto Kafka, the son of Philip Kafka, a well-to-do merchant in Kolin, went to the United States.[57] By 1917 he had become a very wealthy industrialist, the Secretary of the Otrophon Steamship

Company, a Delaware company, which he had organized, and the President of the Vulcan Steel Products Company.[58] The directorates of both these organizations included such notables of the time as Frank H. Hitchcock, one time Postmaster General of the United States, and General T. Coleman du Pont, another influential politician.[59] Otto Kafka also had interests in Mexico and Santo Domingo.[60] The figure of Roßmann's rich uncle could well have been inspired by this man. It is worth noting that Otto's brother Frank followed him to the United States at the age of fourteen.[61] He married a wealthy society woman and broke off all connections with his family.[62] Franz Kafka most probably heard of his cousins' lives in America from Robert Kafka their brother (see below), with whom we know he had dealings in 1911 (and later), the period in which he began Der Verschollene.[63]

Kafka remained with the Assicurazioni Generali only one year, until 1908, after which he started work with the Arbeiter-Unfall Versicherungs-Anstalt with which he stayed, rising to the rank of "Sekretär" before retiring prematurely in 1922 on account of ill health. Kafka's work for this company has been thoroughly researched by Klaus Wagenbach and need not be expounded upon here.[64] Kafka was very competent in this position in spite of his own hypercritical assessment of his capabilities. The part of Kafka's professional life that has received almost no attention is his involvement in business. Several entries in his diary show that his father used him on several occasions to "run errands" for him. In one instance he was called upon to seek out employees in his father's store, whom the latter had dismissed in a fit of rage, in order to persuade them to return to work (T.65-66). In another he was to inveigle one employee into signing a statement saying that he had been employed in a lesser job, so that Hermann Kafka could avoid paying back insurance premiums, an ironic twist considering Franz Kafka's regular employment in an insurance company at that time (T.110). But one must also consider that Kafka was himself an entrepreneur. In November of 1912 he writes to his future fiancée Felice Bauer: "Um genau zu sein, darf ich nicht vergessen, daß ich nicht nur Beamter sondern auch Fabrikant bin. Mein Schwager hat nämlich eine Asbestfabrik,

ich (allerdings nur mit einer Geldeinlage meines Vaters) bin Teilhaber und als solcher protokolliert" (Br.a.F.68).[65] In truth Kafka was understating his role, for he was listed in the commercial register as "Gesellschafter" with all signatory privileges and responsibilities. He and his brother-in-law Karl Hermann were co-owners of the "Prager Asbestwerke Hermann und Co."[66]

It was probably Hermann Kafka who encouraged his son to enter into business with Karl Hermann, the husband of Elli Kafka. In the eyes of the Kafka family, Karl Hermann was highly regarded as a successful businessman and the venture was probably also designed to foster Kafka's business sense, his "Geschäftstüchtigkeit".[67] One must remember that becoming an entrepreneur, even on a small scale, meant a great step forward. It would have been more than Hermann Kafka had achieved and considering the success other relatives were enjoying, it is probable that Franz Kafka was under familial pressure to "keep up with the Joneses". There is some question whether the author himself did not actually wish to conduct a business and to become financially independent, for later, when difficulties began, he wrote to Brod that in the opinion of everyone he was responsible for founding the "Prager Asbestwerke" (Br.108). We also have the statement his father made on one occasion: "'Du hast mich hineingetanzt'" (T.280), which has already been quoted.[68] The diary entries for October 13 and 19 and for November 8, 1911 speak of meetings with a Dr. K. in connection with founding the factory. Dr. K., Kafka's "Advokat", was Dr. Robert Kafka, his cousin.[69] In this figure we find once again someone who must have been held up to the author as an example of success. In the "Brief an den Vater" Kafka contemplates what sort of person he might have become had he grown up without the influence of his father (H.164). He admits that even then he would not have been a man after his father's heart and goes on to say: "Ich wäre wahrscheinlich doch ein schwächlicher, ängstlicher, zögernder, unruhiger Mensch geworden, weder Robert Kafka noch Karl Hermann, aber doch ganz anders, als ich wirklich bin . . . " (H.164). Robert Kafka was a well known lawyer, who had among his clients many Czech aristocratic families.[70] His Prague flat was the meeting place of

prominent intellectuals and aristocrats. When he was fourteen years old Robert was seduced by his parents' forty year old cook, who bore him a son -- Karl Roßmann's peccadillo.

A contract was concluded around November 8 and the factory was entered in the commercial register on February 20, 1912, although it had been in operation since the end of the previous year. A document from the chamber of commerce gives us the following information:

> In reply to your enquiry of January 16 inst. Firm. 507/Rg. A-V concerning the allowing of the company name Prazska Tovarna na osinkove zbozi Hermann a spol. Prager Asbestwerke Hermann & Co. for the purpose of entering it into the commercial register, we wish to inform you that, on the basis of an official inspection, the owners of the company Karl Hermann and Dr. Franz Kafka of Prague carry on actual production of asbestos goods on a factory scale in Zizkov No. 918 employing (although the business is only in its beginning) 25 male and female workers in an enclosed workshop. The production is entirely mechanized and consists of 14 mostly modern machines which are driven by a gas engine of 35 H.P.. The division of labor is also carried out according to principles of factory production. The owners of the company are not involved in technical production but only direct the enterprise in its commercial aspects.[71]

To claim that the "Prager Asbestwerke" played a negligible role in the author's life would mean overlooking over thirty-five references to it in his diary and in letters in the years 1911 to 1915. Almost everyone attests to the burden this project represented to Kafka. "Die Qual, die mir die Fabrik macht" (T.155); statements like these abound in this period. The already somewhat strained relations between the author and his father were exacerbated by the former's apparent loathing of this work. At every turn he was reproached by his father for not showing more interest in the business. We see the other side of Hermann Kafka -- not the tyrant but a somewhat petty, reproachful, even nagging father concerned about his money and his health (T.198). (In this pose Hermann Kafka appears much more like the figure of the uncle in Der Prozeß.) Kafka was not the one to shrug off his responsibility either. The pressure of making the venture a success (along with

other problems) drove him to contemplate suicide (Br.108-109).[72]

In his relationship with Felice Bauer, the factory also played a more than minor role. Felice seems to have been a lighthearted, carefree and very normal girl who, when Kafka proposed marriage to her, thought of settling down and putting all energies into building a bourgeois existence, which was abhorrent to Kafka. In a letter to her he describes her role in their unhappiness. Her error lay in having tried to keep him in his unbearable situation in Prague (Br.a.F.649-650). The factory must have seemed to her more promising than the uncertain income from writing. "Sie will, stumpf gegen alle stummen Bitten, das Mittelmaß, die behagliche Wohnung, Interesse für die Fabrik . . ." (T.328-329), Kafka notes in the diary; concerning his literary work in contrast to his business activities he writes to her: "Und diese Arbeit gilt doch in gewissem Sinn Dir, trotzdem z.B. irgendein Teufel Dich zu der Bemerkung gezwungen hat, ich solle versuchen, etwas aus der Fabrik zu machen. Warum verstehst Du die Fabrik besser als mich!" (Br.a.F.625).

The "Prager Asbestwerke Hermann und Co." managed to stay alive for a scant six years. After October 1912 Kafka left the management of it to Karl Hermann and his brother Paul. It was probably due to his continued neglect that Paul was taken in as a full partner in 1914.[73] Perhaps too, the additional capital was needed. The outbreak of World War I, however, brought Kafka back into a managing position, intermittently at least, because both Karl and Paul Hermann were called up for military duty. Again a letter to Felice tells us more:

> Ich werde klagen Felice, klagen bis mir leichter wird. Du wirst aber nicht lachen? Meiner Arbeit ging es verhältnismäßig gut bis einige Tage vor Bodenbach, da mußte der Bruder des Schwagers einrücken, die Fabrik, das Jammerbild einer Fabrik, fiel an mich. Die Quälereien, die sie mir schon lange vorher, seit ihrem Bestand fast, bereitet hat (sinnlos, denn sie hat wahrhaftig keinen Vorteil davon), sind nicht zu Ende zu erzählen. Jetzt aber mußte ich wirklich heran und jeden Tag hingehen, an Arbeit war nicht mehr zu denken trotz Einsetzens der letzten Willenskraft. Die Fabrik stand ja still, aber immerhin ist ein Lager da, Gläubiger und Kunden müssen vertröstet werden u.s.w., ich mußte die Arbeit, die ich gerade in der letzten Zeit besonders festgehalten hatte, aus der Hand lassen. (Br.a.F.626)

(When one reads the line about creditors and customers that have to be placated one is reminded of Josef K. who has clients outside his office waiting to be called in.) The demise of the factory must have come during the year 1916. Sometime before the summer of 1917 Paul Hermann, who, with his brother, had helped manage the factory while serving in the army was taken prisoner by the Russians. A proxy, Dr. Karl Steurer, was named to represent his interests.[74] Even before Kafka fell seriously ill in September of 1917 steps had been initiated to liquidate the company and on July 26,1918, it was stricken off the commercial register.[75]

2. The Assistant Manager and the Manufacturer

After the biographical sketch just given it is not difficult to understand that the world of business can be found in many of Kafka's works. We have had occasion to notice it in such short works as "Der Nachbar", "Das Ehepaar", and "Eine alltägliche Verwirrung", but this list could be augmented by a good many others. One must not forget that two of Kafka's most famous heroes, Georg Bendemann and Gregor Samsa, are businessmen each in their own way.[76] This is not merely one of their attributes that could be passed over lightly. It is a fact which is central to the protagonists' situation in life and plays a role in their downfall. Being a businessman means being in ruthless competition with others. The protagonist finds himself pitted against others, even within his own organisation, who are interested not in his but their own well-being. Conversing with them means a continual jockeying for position, which will ultimately bring the greatest advantage.

And so it is in Josef K.'s case in Der Prozeß. He is primarily a businessman. Kafka has placed him in the solid and even elegant but also highly competitive surroundings of a bank. Needless to say, we can find traces of the "Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungs-Anstalt" in this bank, too. Although the unfinished chapter "Staatsanwalt" shows him in a circle of friends, who are all occupied in the legal profession, (judges, public prosecutors, lawyers), it is mentioned twice that K.'s acquaintance with this field stems more from practical knowledge acquired in his job at

the bank as chief clerk (P.283-284). The term "chief clerk" has been borrowed from Edwin Muir's translation.[77] It is somewhat deficient in translating the German "Prokurist". The seventh chapter, "Advokat - Fabrikant - Maler," gives some clues to what K.'s job at the bank (or at least part of that job) entails. Clients come to the bank to obtain its financial assistance in their (prospective) business ventures. A "Prokurist" would have the power of attorney and therefore a considerable amount of responsibility. Josef K., among others, is in charge of interviewing people engaged in business ventures, weighing their proposals, and making contracts that will, in his opinion, be the most profitable for his employers. Although his clients seek the bank's financial co-operation through K., they are by no means the humble petitioners that the author experienced in his actual place of work.[78] As we learn throughout the middle section of this chapter, this task requires K. to be capable of good judgement and does not allow for many mistakes, for there is one person, his arch rival, the assistant manager; " . . . in their mutual struggle, K. is fulfilling the unquestioned commandment of self-preservation."[79] In an unfinished chapter, "Kampf mit dem Direktor-Stellvertreter", this is stated very explicitely. K. considers whether his enemy is taking advantage of his absent-mindedness: "Es war aber sogar möglich, daß K. eine lächerliche Entscheidung getroffen oder daß der Direktor-Stellvertreter sie ihm entlockt hatte und daß er sich jetzt beeilte, sie zum Schaden K.s zu verwirklichen" (P.297). The same idea is also expressed at the beginning of the ninth chapter "Im Dom" (P.237). As stated, business means competition, and there is no room for additional private worries like a trial. The trial makes K. falter, makes him inattentive, and above all leaves him tired. True to the pattern already observed, those around the protagonist make him aware of the fact that he is slipping.

The message that the first preliminary hearing in K.'s case will take place on a Sunday, " . . . um K. in seiner beruflichen Arbeit nicht zu stören" (P.44), is ironic, for the telephone communication itself disturbs him at work. Not only that, but it has also placed him in an embarrassing situation, for directly

behind K. at the telephone stands the "Direktor-Stellvertreter", whom he has inconvenienced by making him wait.[80] The telephone conversation has left K. in deep thought and completely immobile in the situation at hand. He is even in the way. The question which K.'s rival asks seems not to expect an answer: "'Schlechte Nachrichten?' fragte der Direktor-Stellvertreter leichthin, nicht um etwas zu erfahren, sondern um K. vom Apparat wegzubringen" (P.45). It does, however, come close to representing a true comment on the state of affairs as K. sees them, a painful reminder of the bad news he has indeed just received.

The scene that now unfolds shows a strained relationship growing more so through dialogue. The assistant manager invites K. to go sailing with him on Sunday. The manner in which the invitation is given -- "über das Hörrohr hinweg" (P.45) -- may seem condescending, yet, as K. recognizes, the second highest man in the bank is actually humiliating himself by taking the first step toward reconciliation (P.45). Without really intending it, this man has placed K. in the very embarrassing situation of having not only to decline the invitation but also to reject at the same time his rival's change of heart, although it may be only a lukewarm demonstration of the wish to initiate a new relationship. K. has been forced into a position where he is forced to insult the assistant manager, but we see that he lacks the self-assuredness that others seem to have when they insult him. While his rival turns to his telephone conversation, showing no emotion at K.'s refusal, the latter stands waiting and still lost in thought. During the whole scene, short as it is, K.'s rival converses urbanely, indeed, handling two conversations at once almost (that with K. and that on the telephone). He presents the picture of unruffled efficiency, whereas K. stands there like an oaf. K. is well aware of the different nuances the dialogue takes on as it progresses, and though the Direktor-Stellvertreter taxes K.'s already strained powers of perception, he does so without really meaning to.[81]

In chapter seven we see K. still determined to use the acumen, which brought him so far in the bank, to bring his trial to a speedy and successful conclusion. He remembers an incident some

time ago. Concentrating on his trial one day in his office, K. takes pen in hand in order to prepare the deposition in his case personally only to be interrupted immediately by the "Direktor-Stellvertreter", who comes in to tell K. a stock-exchange joke, which he has just heard. Again it is not just the interruption that is annoying for K. but the way it takes place, for the intruder enters K.'s office with a loud laugh, making K. believe for a moment that it is his deposition he is laughing about: "Es war für K. damals sehr peinlich gewesen, obwohl der Direktor-Stellvertreter natürlich nicht über die Eingabe gelacht hatte . . . " (P.154). For a short moment the "Direktor-Stellvertreter has seemed to deride K.'s efforts, but it is all unintentional. His more deliberate verbal attack is reserved for a later incident.

The main scene in this central section of chapter seven is devoted to K.'s interview with the manufacturer. K. is, as usual, using office time to mull over his trial and only returns to thoughts of work because he has reached an impasse in his case. The situation at the outset presents disadvantages for K. before the actual conversation begins. He knows that important customers of the bank have been kept waiting a long time for him. Before he has had a chance to say one word to them he senses their reproach behind the closed door: " . . . warum, so schienen wieder die Herren hinter der geschlossenen Tür zu fragen, verwendete der fleißige K. für Privatangelegenheiten die beste Geschäftszeit?" (P.155). It is not only his long-term troubles which make the situation difficult for K. but also the momentary duress of being in someone's debt.

The man who is admitted to K.'s office, the manufacturer, the factory owner, is somewhat like K.'s uncle, in that he is very wrapped up in what he has come to do, namely, to transact business. This is what we see him communicating -- business and more business. Kafka uses a concentration of verbs in one sentence to describe this man's fervor. First of all, he is impervious to K.'s mechanical-sounding apologies: "Statt dessen zog er eilig Rechnungen und Tabellen aus allen Taschen, breitete sie vor K. aus, erklärte verschiedene Posten, verbesserte einen kleinen Rechenfehler,

der ihm sogar bei diesem flüchtigen Überblick aufgefallen war, erinnerte K. an ein ähnliches Geschäft, das er mit ihm vor etwa einem Jahr abgeschlossen hatte, erwähnte nebenbei, daß sich diesmal eine andere Bank unter größten Opfern um das Geschäft bewerbe, und verstummte schließlich, um nun K.s Meinung zu erfahren" (P. 156). Like the assistant manager, the manufacturer is alert. He has full command of the situation, is able to correct small mistakes while explaining his accounts. (The word "sogar" indicates this is a special feat.) In addition he reminds K. of competitive offers that have already been made to him before forcing K. to speak by falling silent. K. sees a man bursting with vitality and concentration and is reminded of his tiredness. But above all what he is being told by the factory owner's haste is, "act quickly, act now". Of course the latter refers only to his business proposal, however, it is no mere coincidence that the manufacturer's call to action parallels K.'s own feeling of urgency in his trial (P.154). Only a moment before his customer entered the room he had realized that time had gone by in which nothing had been done: "Es war elf Uhr, zwei Stunden, eine lange,kostbare Zeit, hatte er verträumt und war natürlich noch matter als vorher" (P.155). So, while being pressed to act from within himself, K. must recognize that the world around him does not leave him in peace but does the same thing from without.

During the exposition of the proposal K. does not say a word. He tries to communicate his comprehension of the matter at hand by nodding his head at the loud exclamations coming from his visitor. Soon he merely stands looking at him. It is a posture of defeat. Like a schoolboy who has been reprimanded, K. stands in front of the factory owner. Again, perhaps, we can recall his interview with his uncle in which the latter talked to him in a paternalistic, reproachful tone, forcing K. into the role of the child being scolded. The difference is that now the protagonist wants the person he is speaking to to interpret his bearing as one of resignation, and he wishes him to desist from burdening him more: "Als er [der Fabrikant] nun verstummte, glaubte K. zuerst wirklich, es geschehe dies deshalb, um ihm Gelegenheit zu dem Eingeständnis zu geben, daß er nicht fähig sei, zuzuhören"

(P.156). But this is not the case. The factory owner does not interpret K.'s stare in the way K. wants him to. The business conference must continue; K. bows his head " . . . wie vor einem Befehl . . . " (P.156-157).

Much the same as anyone else in the novel (the warders, K.'s uncle, Huld) the manufacturer expects a certain attitude from K. regarding what he has to say and presses on in this expectation in spite of the fact that the signs on K.'s part are to the contrary. This man (again like others) interprets things the way he wants to see them as, for example, K.'s action of moving his pencil back and forth across the paper and looking randomly at figures (P.157). He cannot see the gesture as one performed by a very distraught man but instead believes K. has objections, which represent for him an invitation to launch into his proposal once more, covering with his hand the paper outlining his proposal the only thing K. can really grasp ("das einzig Faßbare" P.157). The reader receives a picture of the self-centeredness of the others around K.. The manufacturer expects the situation to be normal, expects K. to be his usual self. One cannot speak of deliberate malice on the part of the faatory owner toward K.. Indeed, as we have seen, he misinterprets K.'s every sign, showing his ignorance of the chief clerk's weakened condition. Yet his presence, his talk, hammer away at what little strength K. has left. Inadvertently this man becomes another one of K.'s tormentors.

It is bitterly ironic that at this point in the scene K. regards the appearance of his ubiquitous rival, the assistant manager, as a deliverance. His entrance has a mystical air about it. K. sees him " . . . wie hinter einem Gazeschleier . . . " (P.157), but does not worry about it further. He is only concerned with the immediate and pleasant effect: the manufacturer is drawn away from him (P.157). The movement of this person (" . . . sofort hüpfte der Fabrikant vom Sessel auf und eilte dem Direktor-Stellvertreter entgegen" P.157) betrays his dissatisfaction with K.. The constellation of figures is again typical. The manufacturer turns away from K. toward the assistant manager; the two shake hands, " . . . und gingen gemeinsam auf K.s Schreibtisch

zu" (P.157, italics mine). The two form a group excluding K., and his real humiliation now begins. They talk of K., that is, the factory owner complains to his newly found listener (with n hearing of K.) that his proposal does not find favor. With the attention of both men directed toward him, K. bows his head, a sign of guilt. Then, as the two are standing at K.'s desk discussing business, we find even more explicit reference to K.'s feeling of lowliness: "Als dann die beiden sich an den Schreibtisch lehnten und der Fabrikant sich daran machte, nun den Direktor-Stellvertreter für sich zu erobern, war es K., als werde über seinem Kopf von zwei Männern, deren Größe er sich übertrieben vorstellte, über ihn selbst verhandelt" (P.157). The strange pantomine he now performs, raising up one of the pages of the manufacturer's brief to the two men, is acted out while he imagines how he will some day hand in his deposition at court. For a moment the ordeal he endures in his office is fused with the court ordeal. Since the final proceedings never take place, the reader may well ask himself whether Kafka is not indicating to him by means of this fusion of events in K.'s mind that the present ordeal K. is undergoing represents the real trial. There will not be any other.

The Direktor-Stellvertreter show himself in this conversation to be everything that K. is not. K. relied heavily on the papers which had been spread out before him on the desk, the assistant manager hardly glances at the sheet K. hands him, " . . . denn was dem Prokuristen wichtig war, war ihm unwichtig . . . " (P.158). K. cannot withstand the gaze of others (he lowers his eyes), his rival does not notice that K. looks at him bitterly, in fact, the possibility is suggested in the text that he takes his strength from such a glance (P.158). Whereas K. in his stupor seems sullen, the Direktor-Stellvertreter laughs in his ebullient mood. Kafka goes so far as to stress his versatility by describing part of his conversation with the factory owner this way: " . . . [er] brachte einmal durch eine schlagfertige Entgegnung den Fabrikanten in deutliche Verlegenheit, aus der er ihn aber sofort riß, indem er sich selbst einen Einwand machte . . . " (P.158). There is no need on Kafka's part to mention this little

conversational incident; the small embarrassment that is caused the factory owner does not arise again in any connection. Its sole purpose appears to lie in contrasting the verbal prowess of the Direktor-Stellvertreter with K.'s inability -- proof once more that verbal communication is the area where Kafka's protagonist realizes his defeat. In the unfinished chapter "Kampf mit dem Direktor-Stellvertreter" this man is again seen as completely in command of the conversation in spite of a headache he claims to be suffering from: " . . . [er] antwortete wie immer schlagfertig und fast ohne Überlegung, wie ein Musterschüler, der mit den Antworten in die Fragen hineinfährt" (P.299).

As the two men leave the room to continue the discussion of this business matter in the office of K.'s rival, the latter imparts a devastating blow to K.. He says to the businessman (and again we find the situation of two people speaking about K. in his presence): "'Es ist eine sehr wichtige Sache . . . ich sehe das vollständig ein. Und dem Herrn Prokuristen' -- selbst bei dieser Bemerkung redete er eigentlich nur zum Fabrikanten -- 'wird es gewiß lieb sein, wenn wir es ihm abnehmen. Die Sache verlangt ruhige Überlegung. Er aber scheint heute sehr überlastet zu sein, auch warten ja einige Leute im Vorzimmer schon stundenlang auf ihn'" (P.158). First the assistant manager recognizes the importance of the manufacturer's proposal, which K., because of his distraction, had failed to do. Next he makes an assumption based on his observation of K.. As if he were not well aware of his debility already, he is painfully made aware of it now. His rival infers that he does not have the compusure to carry on a meaningful deliberation, but he leaves him with the knowledge that his ordeal will continue with other people waiting in the wings.

In the ensuing pages when K. is once again alone, his thoughts turn to the trial anew, while at the same time he muses over the events that have just taken place in the preceding scene. Once again the reader may note the peculiar fusion of trial and everyday life (in this case office), for when K. thinks that he has now taken the defence in his case into his own hands,he realizes that in the previous business discussion he was unable to defend himself:

Jetzt hingegen, wenn er seine Verteidigung selbst

> führen würde, mußte er sich -- wenigstens für den Augenblick -- ganz und gar dem Gericht aussetzen, der Erfolg dessen sollte ja für später seine vollständige und endgültige Befreiung sein, aber um diese zu erreichen, mußte er sich vorläufig jedenfalls in viel größere Gefahr begeben als bisher. Hätte er daran zweifeln wollen, so hätte ihn das heutige Beisammensein mit dem Direktor-Stellvertreter und dem Fabrikanten hinreichend vom Gegenteil überzeugen können. Wie war er doch dagesessen, schon vom bloßen Entschluß, sich selbst zu verteidigen, gänzlich benommen? . . . Bedeutete nicht eine sorgfältige Verteidigung . . . gleichzeitig die Notwendigkeit, sich von allem anderen möglichst abzuschließen? (P.160)

What K. thinks about here ostensibly is that he needs peace and quiet to prepare his defence. However, at the same time Kafka lets his protagonist reason that his best defence is to shut himself off from everyone. This supports the theory that K.'s dealings with the world around him do, in fact, represent his trial. Thus when K. speaks of defence we see that he does not draw the line between court and every day life. In achieving complete freedom the greater danger lies, the passage seems to say, not in the sphere of the court but among those around him. A thorough defence implies the necessity of sealing oneself off from everything else. This is true perhaps not only because solitude would facilitate preparation of a counterattack, but also because avoiding the world would in itself be a defensive action. As has become obvious the world represents an extension of the court. This is stated more explicitly when K. begins to consider again the prospect of letting other people into his office to discuss business (as he had done so painfully a moment earlier): "Sah es nicht aus wie eine Folter, die, vom Gericht anerkannt, mit dem Prozeß zusammenhing und ihn begleitete?" (P.161).

3. The Bank Manager and the Italian Businessman

We do not meet the bank manager, the "Direktor", until the penultimate chapter. This person is one of the only friends that Josef K. has.[82] The "Direktor" has picked K. to show an Italian businessman, a client of the bank, some of the architectural sights of the city. In the end it is decided to visit only the cathedral, the place where K. then gets involved in conversation

with the court chaplain, a confrontation that will be dealt with later. The conversation between K., the "Direktor", and the Italian need not be discussed in great detail. In spite of the fact that there is no animosity between the conversants, the conversation turns into a torture for K. because, although he speaks some Italian, he cannot understand this man's peculiar dialect (P.240-241). Of course the manager understands the visitor and is also capable of giving intermittent simultaneous translation for K.'s benefit. At his late stage in the novel K.'s inability to communicate signifies the final isolation which his trial has forced him into. He is now so remote from his former self which would have welcomed such honorary duties and which would have surmounted small difficulties. Not the content of communication harrasses him here but alone the necessity that he must communicate. His endeavours are reduced to looking up and writing out individual words he will use in his meeting with the Italian in the cathedral (P.243).

F. Court Officials and Persons Connected with the Court II

1. Huld

We observe in the first part of the novel Der Prozeß that Josef K.'s confrontations with the court are sometimes followed by confrontations with people in his private life. Of course, his trial is either the topic of the conversations or is intimately connected with them. Toward the end of the novel (in Max Brod's chapter order) scenes with people associated with the court seem to predominate in frequency and length. There are the figures Huld, Block, Titorelli, and the court chaplain especially, and Leni, whom K. meets through his association with Huld. She must be considered a part of K.'s experiences with the court. Most of those mentioned above, Huld, Titorelli, and the chaplain, are figures from whom K. seeks help. This is not to say that K. has not found that other people in the court system have refused him assistance.[83] We have noticed, for example, the warders' attempts to give K. some "off-the-cuff" advice, which harrasses him more than it helps him.

The lawyer Huld, to whom K. is dragged by his uncle (in the sixth chapter), makes it is business to help the accused by giving

them advice.[84] In the sixth chapter the reader is witness to K.'s introduction to this man. The beginning of the long seventh chapter gives K.'s thoughts on his conversations with Huld since he entrusted his case to him. The conversation with Huld (actually a monologue by the lawyer given in indirect speech) represents an amalgamation of several meetings K. had had with him. We are to assume that these are things that K. has been given to hear repeatedly. In my discussion of the relations between Josef K. and his lawyer I will focus mainly on this first part of the seventh chapter.

We turn first briefly to words Huld utters shortly after being introduced to K.. In a previous section I have noted that the situation puts K. at a disadvantage from the outset. The lawyer is in bed, ill and he is able to use this fact well in the ensuing conversation with K. and his uncle. "Seine Krankheit ist Sinnbild seines Leidens für die anderen," Wilhelm Emrich comments.[85] But the sceptical reader may well question how much Huld really suffers. Referring to his illness he is able to put people the more in his debt, because it seems as if he is sacrificing himself. (In truth he regains his strength with the news of another case. P.125) He talks from the standpoint of one who is being made martyr on someone else's behalf, notably K.'s. This is the way he expresses interest in taking on the defendant's case, for example: "'Was die Angelegenheit deines Herrn Neffen betrifft, so würde ich mich allerdings glücklich schätzen, wenn meine Kraft für diese äußerst schwierige Aufgabe ausreichen könnte; ich fürchte sehr, daß sie nicht ausreichen wird, jedenfalls will ich nichts unversucht lassen; wenn ich nicht ausreiche, könnte man ja noch jemanden anderen beiziehen. Um aufrichtig zu sein, interessiert mich die Sache zu sehr, als daß ich es über mich bringen könnte, auf jede Beteiligung zu verzichten. Hält es mein Herz nicht aus, so wird es doch wenigstens hier eine würdige Gelegenheit finden, gänzlich zu versagen'" (P.125-126). Huld indulges in a good measure of hyperbole. He develops eloquence, picturing the immense but futile effort to fight K.'s case as a struggle to the death -- his death. This struggle also involves a prognosis similar to the one K. received from his warders in the first chapter. While the lawyer, like the warders, treats K. routinely (his case is one of

many he handles) he does let it slip out here and there that it is somewhat more difficult than the others. At the beginning of the next chapter, to take a further example of the same thing, K. muses over what Huld has told him in his sessions with him: "Er habe schon, erzählte er dann, viele ähnliche Prozesse ganz oder teilweise gewonnen. Prozesse, die, wenn auch in Wirklichkeit vielleicht **nicht** so schwierig wie dieser, äußerlich noch hoffnungsloser waren" (P.138). It cannot comfort K. to learn by inference that his case is fundamentally hopeless, actually more hopeless than those which appear superficially worse. **Like the** warders' information, though, this talk of other cases remains vague: " . . . die Schriften könne er leider nicht zeigen, da es sich um Amtsgeheimnisse handle" (P.138).

The information K. receives from Huld is twofold: 1. he is told about his case (mainly negative developments) 2. he is told a great deal about the court and its practices. I have already noted the fact that Huld informs K. about the great problem his trial presents to him. Accompanying news like this K. hears what consequences his mistakes in the past have had. These are blunders that -- and the lawyer makes this clear -- cannot be rectified. There is, for instance, the director of the chancelleries, whom K., according to Huld, insulted by his behaviour when he visited the lawyer with his uncle. Huld is just explaining to K. the futility remonstrating about the court when he changes the topic and says:

> . . . aber gesagt müsse es doch werden, wieviel K. seiner Sache durch das Verhalten gegenüber dem Kanzleidirektor geschadet habe. Dieser einflußreiche Mann sei aus der Liste jener, bei denen man für K. etwas unternehmen könne, schon fast zu streichen. Selbst flüchtige Erwähnungen **des Prozesses** überhöre er mit deutlicher Absicht. In manchem seien ja die Beamten wie Kinder. Oft können sie durch Harmlosigkeiten, unter die allerdings K.s Verhalten leider nicht gehörte, derartig verletzt werden, daß sie selbst mit guten Freunden zu reden aufhören, sich von ihnen abwenden, wenn sie ihnen begegnen, und ihnen in allem möglichen entgegenarbeiten (P.147).

As usual Huld dwells on the fact longer than necessary, giving painful detail of the director's displeasure and corroborates

information hinted at by K.'s uncle (P.136). The specific mention of K.'s mistake is woven into general information about the court, which heightens the gravity of his error. Knowing that the court officials are like children, unpredictably sensitive, is in itself not reassuring, but to be made aware of it, while at the same time being reminded of a slight committed against those touchy people, is unnerving. In addition, the degree of K.'s blunder is, as Huld mentions, far greater than an ordinary triviality that would hurt their feelings. To rectify K.'s mistake one would have to communicate with the man he insulted, but the latter, as we read, purposely disregards anything said about K.'s trial and makes himself completely unapproachable. In another instance when K. notes the slow progress in the proceedings, he is told: " . . . es gehe gar nicht langsam vorwärts, wohl aber wäre man schon viel weiter, wenn K. sich rechtzeitig an den Advokaten gewendet hätte. Das hatte er aber leider versäumt, und dieses Versäumnis werde auch noch weitere Nachteile bringen, nicht nur zeitliche" (P.150). K.'s reproach is contradicted and he is informed that his tardiness had caused irreparable damage. Characteristically, the exact nature of the consequence his client can expect is left ominously vague ("Nachteile . . . nicht nur zeitliche").

Huld's long exposition of the workings of the court and the habits and likings of the judges is meant as encouragement for K.. We find relatively few barbs directed toward him, only the mention of the difficulty his case presents in particular, which has already been discussed. His peroration supposedly gives insight into the court, information that K. could not obtain otherwise. What the reader (as well as K.) finds is a labyrinth. Huld explains avenues of procedure, which at first seem to offer help to the accused, but he then qualifies or actually contradicts his statements to such a degree that all hope of success by means of these avenues vanishes. Like a labyrinth they have numerous dead ends. As an example, one of many that could be found, there is Huld's talk of his work on the first deposition: "Er habe natürlich sofort zu arbeiten begonnen, und die erste Eingabe sei schon fast fertiggestellt. Sie sei sehr wichtig, weil der erste Eindruck, den die Verteidigung mache, oft die ganze Richtung des Verfahrens bestimme. Leider, darauf müsse er K. allerdings aufmerk-

sam machen, geschehe es manchmal, daß die ersten Eingaben bei Gericht gar nicht gelesen würden" (P.138-139). This is a perfect example of reversal. The procedure seems to be working for K., an important step is being initiated; then suddenly we learn of its possible ineffectiveness. Actually, if one looks closely, the reversal begins earlier when one learns that the deposition is almost completed.

It must be repeated that K.'s reaction to each individual piece of information is not given. We, the readers, have only the picture of a despondent man at the beginning of the chapter. After Huld's portrayal of the court we are told that K. is exhausted ("ganz ermattet von den Reden," P.150), therefore, rather than buoying his spirits the information the lawyer imparts weighs heavily on the accused's mind. The explanation for not showing K.'s individual reactions to specific moments in Huld's speech may lie in the fact that, by inserting moments of despairing reflection by the protagonist, the impact of the lawyer's discourse would be lessened. His monologue represents a monolith, which cannot very well be broken up. Its rambling nature, its promises (modified or broken) wear K. out (P.150). Then too we must remember that this is a general description of the way Huld is wont to talk, not the account of one specific incident. This general sample stands for the usual. It is made quite clear that these marathon sessions in themselves are repeated, forming what would be an endless chain, if K. did not decide to put an end to it: "In solchen und ähnlichen Reden war der Advokat unerschöpflich. Sie wiederholten sich bei jedem Besuch" (P.149).

We analyze the content of the lawyer's talk with K. not necessarily in order to come up with a description of the court and the court procedures, which would in turn lead to an interpretation of what the court is, but more to see what could be so annoying or disturbing to K.. For there is no doubt that these sessions with Huld do their part in wearing him down and it is my contention that this is one of the foremost intents of the work: to show a man, who is persistently made aware of a stigma, to show K. at the mercy of those around him, even of those, who wish to offer help like Huld. Heinz Politzer is very explicit about

the detrimental effect of Huld's words when he states: " . . . the lawyer resembles the authorities of the Court closely enough to relish the torture his disquisitions and descriptions cause the accused."[86] The torture K. endures is perhaps more evident than Huld's relish. One may assume that he enjoys making the accused tremble, but it must be pointed out that there is no direct evidence of this. His presentation lacks emotion; he just maintains a constant and at time monotonous stream of words. Even K. is not certain of the lawyer's malicious intent. He wonders: "War es Trost oder Verzweiflung, was der Advokat erreichen wollte. K. wußte es nicht . . . " (P.150). More and more he begins to believe that he is in danger. The belief is induced not by the actual presence of danger, but by its impendence.

The attitude of those surrounding the protagonist toward the court and K.'s guilt remains the same, and that attitude more than anything else disturbs him. Everything is accepted the way it is; no one is willing to join K. in his view of the trial as a sham and the court as a corrupt body. Huld, of course, represents one of those who accept the status-quo. Although he admits there is imperfection in the lowest ranks of the court (P.141), no lawyer would advocate any amelioration attempts: "Denn den Advokaten -- und selbst der Kleinste kann doch die Verhältnisse wenigstens zum Teil übersehen -- liegt es vollständig ferne, bei Gericht irgendwelche Verbesserungen einführen oder durchsetzen zu wollen, während -- und dies ist sehr bezeichnend -- fast jeder Angeklagte, selbst ganz einfältige Leute, gleich beim allerersten Eintritt in den Prozeß an Verbesserungsvorschläge zu denken anfangen und damit oft Zeit und Kraft verschwenden, die anders viel besser verwendet werden könnten" (P.146). Huld implies that advocates have a better view of the circumstances. Perhaps from their greater knowledge they know it is futile to attempt change, perhaps they just prefer the existing situation. The observation about the accused represents a covert piece of advice to K. not to waste his time and effort criticising the court hierarchy.

In his peroration Huld does more than accept the given situation. He becomes an apologist for the court. His function as a

lawyer is to take the side of the defendant in the latter's fight against the court. (Although never explicitely defined, this must be his function, since K.'s uncle drags him to Huld in order to get him out of the mess he is in.) One can notice throughout the monologue, however, that Huld, instead of lashing out at the eccentricities of the court, takes pains to defend its behaviour. After describing the path the accused's deposition takes (finally ending up misplaced and unread) he comes to the conclusion: "Das alles sei bedauerlich, aber nicht ganz ohne Berechtigung. K. möge doch nicht außer acht lassen, daß das Verfahren nicht öffentlich sei, es kann, wenn das Gericht es für nötig hält, öffentlich werden, das Gesetz aber schreibt Öffentlichkeit nicht vor" (P.139). One minute Huld seems to support K. in condemning the lackadaisical practices of the court, that is, he commiserates with him, everything is "bedauerlich", but it then becomes obvious that he sides with the court in exhorting K. to take certain things into consideration. The "doch" in this context suggests that the lawyer is asking his client to be reasonable. And yet the second of these quoted sentences is supposed to give a reason why the deposition is not read. The clause "K. möge doch nicht außer acht lassen" asks him also to consider a mitigating circumstance. Looking at the content of the sentence we find that actually just leads to a further apparent injustice of the court.

In another instance K. is told that the judges accept the opinion of defense counsel and that they then express intentions favorable for the accused, only to issue a decree the next day, which contravenes their stated intention (P.143). This cruel vacillation is accepted by Huld and in his explanation he inadvertently gives proof of his true attitude (P.143). He says, in fact, that one "naturally" cannot undertake anything: " . . . denn das, was sie zwischen vier Augen gesagt haben, ist eben auch nur zwischen vier Augen gesagt . . . " (P.143). "Zwischen vier Augen" can be everyday metaphor for "privately", but it could also indicate that judge and counsel do communicate by means of glances. The preposition "zwischen", which has been used rather than the more usual "unter", points to this fact too.

Communication by means of glances can never be as objective and explicit as verbal communication, that is, to agree or come to a conclusion this way presupposes an already existing understanding between the communicating partners, or, at the least, a general harmony of ideals. What has been said in the defendant's favor, in fact, may have been negated in an interchange of glances immediately following ostensible agreement. The ambiguous text leaves room for this second interpretation.

The defense of officialdom occurs repeatedly, even at the cost of Huld's deprecating himself and his profession. He tells of an incident involving an old official, "ein guter, stiller Herr", so irked by the study of a case, which had been complicated by the lawyers, that he **throws** each one, who attempts to cross the threshold, downstairs (P.145). (Huld points out in an aside that the officials are actually more diligent than anyone else.) He wants to condone the old official's eccentric behaviour and admits freely that the advocates have no rights (P.145). In a previous section he also shows his willingness to accept and explain the shabby treatment his colleagues receive: "Aber auch diese Behandlung der Advokaten hat ihre Begründung. Man will die Verteidigung möglichst ausschalten, alles soll auf den Angeklagten selbst gestellt sein. Kein schlechter Standpunkt im Grunde, nichts wäre aber verfehlter, als daraus zu folgern, daß bei diesem Gericht die Advokaten für den Angeklagten unnötig sind" (P.141). He then continues in his contradiction. Although he admits that the court wishes the accused to fend for himself, Huld insists the **counsel** is necessary. He avoids attacking the practices of the court and would rather avoid the issue of negation of his usefulness, than place the officials in the wrong. In his view the necessity for advocates exists in spite official disapproval of them.

It **has** already been mentioned that those surrounding the protagonist seem to be in harmony with each other, operating from a common understanding that the given situation is perfectly natural. We have noted in the previous paragraphs that Huld shows the lawyers accept things the way they are and we have seen his role as apologist for the court. One can go even further and uncover

a form of collusion between Huld and court officials. One reference has already been made to the lawyer's communication with the officials of the court. The conversations "zwischen vier Augen" are part of the all-important personal relationships ("persönliche Beziehungen"), in which Huld sees his forte (P. 142). He, and indeed all the other defense counsels, do not form a part of the formal structure of the court. Communication is therefore on the personal level. It is a relationship of the type already experienced by K. in the numerous conversations he has had. Once more the protagonist comes up against the togetherness of a group, as Huld portrays it in his report. K.'s only hope for getting through to the judges is through an intermediary like Huld, for as the latter explains they often do not have contact with the populace: " . . . sie haben, weil sie fortwährend, Tag und Nacht, in ihr Gesetz eingezwängt sind, nicht den richtigen Sinn für menschliche Beziehungen . . . " (P.143). Lawyers, like Huld, become their crutch.

Unobtrusively Huld suggests his role to be that of an informant and advisor to the judges that come to him. Since they are only called in on a part of the trial, as much of the trial remains secret to them, they need information about the case: "Auch in dieser Richtung also können sie von der Verteidigung manches Wertvolle erfahren" (P.144). Here the topic of his monologue, therefore, is actually that of communication. In fact one realizes that Huld's description to K. is a verbal projection of a system which itself relies heavily on verbal communication. K., of course, comes to depend on what others can tell him of the court and his trial. Huld depicts these men coming to him for advice: "An diesem Fenster hätte man manche Herren, von denen man as am wenigsten erwarten würde, antreffen können, wie sie geradezu trostlos auf die Gasse hinaussahen, während der Advokat an seinem Tisch die Akten studierte, um ihnen einen guten Rat geben zu können" (P.144). Curiously this pose is similar to poses we, the readers, have seen K. in. The difference, which K. must be acutely aware of, is that the judges obviously get aid in their despair, whereas he does not. Again one must keep in mind that Huld's attitude toward the officials of the court is touched

with obsequiousness; however flattering to his reputation these visits from judges are, he still realizes that he owes his position to them. After depicting them in this state of despair, for example, he immediately draws the conclusion that at these moments one could see how seriously they take their occupation (P.144).

The lawyer's monologue was initiated with mention of a deposition, which he had already begun to compose. (He stalls when it comes to finishing it and bringing it before the court.) Toward the end of K.'s mental review of his meetings with Huld the deposition once more comes up and is quite openly relegated to second place behind the preferred verbal communication, which is, as we have seen, in no way fixed: "Die Eingabe sei, wie erwähnt, noch nicht überreicht, das eile aber auch nicht, viel wichtiger seien die einleitenden Besprechungen mit maßgebenden Beamten, und die hätten schon stattgefunden" (P.149). In addition K. learns that he has already been the topic of discussion, without knowing what has been decided about him. There is the possibility that others have reached a long-term understanding concerning his fate. He has not played a part in reaching this understanding and muses: "Verdächtig aber blieben die unaufhörlich hervorgehobenen persönlichen Beziehungen zu den Beamten. Mußten sie denn ausschließlich zu K.s Nutzen ausgebeutet werden?" (P.151). This suspicion of K.'s gives proof enough to my contention that alone the fact of others talking, communicating, bothers him. From this knowledge (that Huld is communicating privately with the judges) K. builds up his suspiciouns of collusion, thoughts which are given on the rest of the page (P.151). Other pieces of information he has been given just serve to promote his feelings of doubt.

2. Leni

We have observed that Josef K. tries to get the women he meets to pass negative judgements about the court which hounds him. This happens in the case of Frau Grubach, Fräulein Bürstner, and the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener". In each case his attempts to take advantage of their naivete, his attempts to win them over to the idea that his arrest is nonsense, end in failure because

in their innocence they instinctively ward off K.'s suggestions or because of last minute outside intervention. To win Fräulein Bürstner, K. makes advances to her which she evades by interposing the stern figure of her friend Fräulein Montag, who breaks off all contact between the two. In the case of the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener" it is K. who is tricked into believing he has an ally only to find that she lets herself be carried off by the other side. In Leni we find a figure similar to the wife of the "Gerichtsdiener" in that she too seduces K.. (Chapter Six). After that she serves to bind K. to Huld and thus indirectly to the torture associated with the court. What her true aim with K. might be is suggested by her present relationship with Kaufmann Block. In Chapter Eight there is a subtle hint that Leni is more intimate with Block than she would like to admit to K.. Her "collection" of lovers makes her into a Circe.[87]

There is only one scene (several pages long) in the sixth chapter in which we find K. talking with Leni at any length. The conversation in no way can be interpreted as a torment for K., but there is a very unobtrusive tug-of-war between the two. K. tries to shift the conversation in the direction of his trial; Leni tries to have him notice her. This begins with Leni's chiding just after she has lured K. out of the company of Huld, the uncle, and the "Kanzleidirektor". She reproaches him for not coming out to her on his own (P.130). K.'s interest, on the other hand, directs itself to a picture of a court judge. This brings Leni to give information on the man in the picture. Pictures play an important role in Der Prozeß in that by interpreting them the characters in the novel, and the reader too, can determine more about the court, K.'s trial, or the interpreter. In the case of the picture which K. looks at with Leni, she contradicts everything the picture seems to say about the man depicted. His majesty is a sham, he does not sit on a throne but a kitchen stool (P.132). Leni belittles the judge, his physical stature, his rank and his throne, Walter Sokel points out and contends it represents the same sort of demasking Kafka practised in the "Brief and den Vater."[88] One must stress, though, that Leni's aim is not merely to ridicule the court. She also wishes to impress

K. with her insight into the true state of the court world. K.'s definite visual impression of the court is labelled false. It becomes obvious that he depends on others for his concept of the court. And thus Leni has focused K.'s attention on her as a valuable intermediary before she subjugates him sexually.[89]

Leni follows up her revelations about the man in the painting with the news that she has heard that K. is too unrelenting in matters concerning his trial (P.132). This is negative judgement, but not her own which she might have the duty to defend. When pressed for an explanation of who her source is, she evades the issue, saying: "'Ich würde zuviel verraten, wenn ich das sagte . . . Fragen Sie, bitte, nicht nach Namen, stellen Sie aber Ihren Fehler ab, seien Sie nicht mehr so unnachgiebig, gegen dieses Gericht kann man sich ja nicht wehren, man muß das Geständnis machen'" (P.132). Leni only goes so far and no further, although she intimates that she knows more than she is telling. The only option K. has is to trust in her advice, since she has cut short any explanation that might lend convincing weight to what she says. Again we realize that K., by not being referred to a third person, is forced to focus his attention on Leni. Of course, she is quick to remind K. that even with a confession he will need outside help to escape.

The pendant to the interpretation of the picture of the judge comes, it seems, when Leni interprets K.'s photograph of Elsa, his occasional mistress. That Elsa has many lovers is suggested by the photograph. She is depicted looking to one side and laughing -- "wem ihr Lachen galt," it is said, "konnte man aus dem Bild nicht erkennen" (P.134). In contrast to K., Leni does much better in her interpretation, showing once more her dominance over him before she pulls him onto the floor. Her suppositions and doubts about Elsa can only be confirmed by K., who must admit: "'Ja, ich habe noch nicht einmal das Bild so genau angesehen wie Sie'" (P.134). K. does not shy away from confiding all his doubts about Elsa to his new acquaintance and "trading" Elsa, as Leni says, for her (P.135).

3. Kaufmann Block

In the figure of Kaufmann Block we have the only other accused

person, who represents more than just a face.[90] By Block's own admission, however, the accused cannot be considered a community: "'Es gibt auch wenig gemeinsame Interessen. Wenn manchmal in einer Gruppe der Glaube an ein gemeinsames Interesse auftaucht, so erweist es sich bald als ein Irrtum. Gemeinsam läßt sich gegen das Gericht nichts durchsetzen'" (P.210). We are safe in assuming that he is involved with the same court as K.'s. This is probable because both have the same defence counsel and Block has waited in the same chancelleries that K. has visited. (In fact Block has seen K. there, as he says. P.209). Much less evidence exists to support the contention that their cases are similar, however. As we have seen, the mechanics of the trial rather then the substance of the cases are central in the novel. The primary difference is that Block's case has been pending for a longer time than K.'s. The treatment he is accorded is also definitely far harsher than that shown K.. Lurking in the background, of course, is the inference that it is only a matter of time before the protagonist will be in the same position. At this juncture Block can be thought to prefigure K.'s fate. As the novel progresses we see that K.'s trial is concluded in less time. Block is lost from view. There are two scenes with Kaufmann Block in the eighth chapter, both use dialogue extensively. In the first he converses with K. (partly in the presence of Leni), in the second he is interrogated by Huld, who wishes to display to K. how he normally treats his clients. Let us first turn briefly to the conversation between Block and K..

From Block's slight figure and ungroomed appearance, K. thinks he can be superior to him (P.201-202). Here is finally someone he can lord it over and, after having been forced to take the defensive so many times, the feeling exhilarates him: "Er fühlte sich so frei, wie man es sonst nur ist, wenn man in der Fremde mit niedrigen Leuten spricht, alles, was einen selbst betrifft, bei sich behält, nur gleichmütig von den Interessen der anderen redet, sie dadurch vor sich selbst erhöht, aber auch nach Belieben fallen lassen kann" (P.202). This quotation again gives proof of the importance of communication, for, if speaking to the apparently subservient Block uplifts K. and makes him free, then it can be

assumed that in other conversations he must have felt driven into a corner. What we have observed in the many scenes analyzed so far has born out this fact in various ways. And yet the good feeling of being able to condescend to Block is deceptive, for in the following dialogue between them, the merchant, in his ignorance and humility, quite inadvertently, leads K. around by the nose. Thus the role K. had seen himself in is altered. There is visual proof of this when Leni returns from having brought Huld his bowl of soup and having announced K.. She finds the two huddled together: "Sie saßen wirklich eng beisammen, bei der kleinsten Wendung mußten sie mit den Köpfen aneinanderstoßen, der Kaufmann, der, abgesehen von seiner Kleinheit, auch noch den Rücken gekrümmt hielt, hatte K. gezwungen, sich auch tief zu bücken, wenn er alles hören wollte" (P.216). K. has physically come down to the level of Block. We must see how K. is brought down to Block's level in his conversation with him.

K.'s feeling of superiority over Block is belied by indications that Leni is having an affair with the merchant.[91] Walter Sokel describes what makes Block the miserable creature he is: "Es ist diese erotische Ursituation im Werk Kafkas, des vom Liebespaar ausgeschlossenen Dritten, der den beiden von unten herauf zusehen muß, die den Witwer Block zum eigentlichen Unmenschen macht."[92] Block, Sokel claims, is robbed of his masculinity and at the same time of his humanity.[93] We must see that in the triangle situation, K. is also the odd man out. This is communicated to him by signs and words. When K. enters Huld's flat, for instance, he finds his mistress and Block in a state of dishabille. Block, K. discovers, occupies a small room in Huld's house and thus could be close to Leni constantly. Leni addresses Block in the familiar form besides using his first name, Rudi (P.204), and shows a certain maternal tenderness towards him. Thus Block's submissive demeanour and his willingness to swallow K.'s abrupt and sometimes harsh language does not mean he has been lorded over completely. In his way he gets back, or in fact has already had his revenge on K.. Block also does not offer resistence to K.'s verbal attacks, but answers dutifully, allowing K. to interpret what he says, and the protagonist's captious behaviour backfires. Take

for example the following piece of dialogue: (K. and Block are looking at the picture of the judge in Huld's study.

> Der Kaufmann hob die Kerze, sah blinzelnd hinauf und sagte: "Es ist ein Richter." "Ein hoher Richter?" fragte K. und stellte sich seitlich vor den Kaufmann, um den Eindruck, den das Bild auf ihn machte, zu beobachten. Der Kaufmann sah bewundernd aufwärts. "Es ist ein hoher Richter", sagte er. "Sie haben keinen großen Einblick", sagte K. "Unter den niedrigen Untersuchungsrichtern ist er der niedrigste. "Nun erinnere ich mich", sagte der Kaufmann und senkte die Kerze, "ich habe es auch schon gehört." "Aber natürlich", rief K., "ich vergaß ja, natürlich müssen Sie es schon gehört haben." "Aber warum denn, warum denn?" fragte der Kaufmann . . . (P.202-203).

As we see, Block humbly bows to the suggestion in K.'s question and comment and inadvertently adds fuel to K.'s jealousy by saying that he too has heard that this judge depicted in the painting is only a minor official, for we remember from K.'s case that Leni had given out this information just before their love scene in the sixth chapter (P.131-132). K. may well assume that Block received the information similarly. Block does not know (or pretends not to know) what K. is talking about and therefore cannot be pinned down by him.

Block manages to bring K. down from his high horse by supplying him with information, disturbing information, as usual. This places him alongside the protagonist's other antagonists. I have already mentioned the fact that he represents a living example of an accused person at a later stage in his trial. K. meets in him a man, unlike himself, whose resistence has been broken. This man has lost his energy to work in his daily profession and he tells K. about it along with an account of the disintegration of his business (P.208). (K., of course, is beginning to experience some of these symptoms.) From Block's narration of particulars of his case, K. also learns that Huld has submitted several depositions on Block's behalf, as he has done for him. Huld's various depositions -- and K. verifies the fact that there have been more than one -- the various depositions have been worthless (P.212). The merchant's description of one of these depositions just shows more of what K. has already experienced with Huld in conversation: self-praise and self-degradation before the court (P.212-213).

Progress, that which interests K. so much, has not been observed by Kaufmann Block in the earlier stages of his trial. In fact he quite complacently accepts the notion that to expect progess is absurd (P.213).

Another part of this conversation throws light on K.'s case in particular. A chance remark by the merchant informs K. that Block witnessed his visit to the chancelleries. From the "feed-back" K. learns that he (K.) is labouring under the illusion that his bearing and behaviour at that time must have given the impression that he was a man of great importance, indeed, even a judge (P.209). His dialogue with Block now gives him the other side of the coin, which he had not considered, for the former tells him that the ceremonious greeting that the group of accused in the room had shown (they had stood up) was not intended for him, K., but for a servant of the court (P.209). Everyone knew already that K. was an accused person like the rest. Block has much more disturbing news, though, which he hesitates to impart to K.. (The hesitation, a moment of retardation, only heightens the ominous suspense.) He tells him that many people believe they can read an accused person's future in his face, especially on his lips. In K.'s face the other accused in the chancelleries had seen that he would certainly soon be condemned (P.212). This statement by Block represents one more prognosis about K.'s future. One should take note, however, that even this news is not definite, but only, as Block reiterates, ridiculous superstition, "Meinungen", a word, which reminds us that K. becomes acquainted with his danger by what people tell him of it. This means the information has been relayed from their point of view. Instead of leaving the matter after having labelled it ridiculous and refutable superstition, Block returns to his account saying that the accused man K. had faced that day even read his own condemnation on K.'s lips, which in addition puts K. in the wrong as a harbinger of doom (P.210).

Block's unpleasant portrayal of an event, which had seemed so unambiguous to K., surprises him. He does not consider that there is a perspective other than his own (P.210). In the next moment he is witness to a scene in which his viewpoint allows

greater insight than that of one of the participants in the scene. I refer to the interrogation of Block by the lawyer Huld, in which K. sees Block being used as a demonstration object. Huld announces that he wants to show K. how other accused are treated so that he may learn to be more humble (P.227). During the interview K. views the spectacle of Block's humiliation and cries out inwardly about the latter's inability to see the cause for his debasement: "K. sagte nichts, er staunte nur mit unbeweglichen Augen diesen verwirrten Menschen an. Was für Veränderungen waren mit ihm nur schon in der letzten Stunde vor sich gegangen! War es der Prozeß, der ihn so hin und her warf und ihn nicht erkennen ließ, wo Freund und wo Feind war? Sah er denn nicht, daß der Advokat ihn absichtlich demütigte und diesmal nicht anderes bezweckte, als sich vor K. mit seiner Macht zu brüsten und sich dadurch vielleicht auch K. zu unterwerfen?" (P.230-231). Block's inability to recognize Huld's intentions are, of course, due to his limited perspective. He thinks Huld wishes seriously to discuss his trial. K. knows the lawyer only wants to produce a show.

What Block is led to expect from Huld is, as usual, information, information about his case. We have observed up till now how news (usually bad) has been used in K.'s case. The scene that now takes place in Huld's bedroom is a caricature of one persons's dependence on another, an explicit demonstration of the cruelty, which attends communication in this novel. It is, of course, akin to the cruelty K. has been experiencing all along. Huld does not immediately come out with what he has to tell Block, but tells him first only that he has conferred with the third judge, his friend (P.229). The fact that it is the third judge with whom Huld has spoken almost precludes the validity of any statement made, in addition to the reservation that the conversation seems to have been an informal one and therefore not really binding. Block's hunger for any news makes him impervious to these considerations. Huld leaves the supplicant on tenter hooks and has his client reaffirm his loyalty to him in a manner (and we remember also that Block is on his knees), which is reminiscent of a religious credo. Before he will say anything

Huld must be coaxed by Leni. And when he does finally speak he says only: "'Ich zögere, es ihm mitzuteilen'" (P.232), a statement, which can be given an ominous interpretation and which thus merely heightens Block's anxiety: "Block horchte mit gesenktem Kopf, als übertrete er durch dieses Horchen ein Gebot" (P.232). Instead of giving Block certainty about the bad news at least, the lawyer changes the topic. Disregarding Leni's question why he hesitates, Huld begins questioning her about his client's behaviour.

Direct communication between the advocate and Block in this scene can be considered sparse. To begin with, Huld lies in bed facing not towards Block but towards the wall (P.228). Soon even this mode of conversing is abandoned as Leni takes over for Block. K. sees the merchant in a position, extreme to be sure, but nonetheless, similar to positions he has found himself in at times during his ordeal: Block is allowed to overhear, as it were, a conversation dealing with his case. We see that Kafka makes it abundantly clear that conversation is not a means of clarification or enlightenment, but a vehicle of torture. To exemplify this I quote an extended passage. Huld is speaking to Leni:

> "Du lobst ihn", sagte der Advokat. "Aber gerade das macht es mir schwer, zu reden. Der Richter hatte sich nämlich nicht günstig ausgesprochen, weder über Block selbst, noch über seinen Prozeß." "Nicht günstig?" fragte Leni. "Wie ist das möglich?" Block sah sie mit einem so gespannten Blick an, als traue er ihr die Fähigkeit zu, jetzt noch die längst ausgesprochenen Worte des Richters zu seinen Gunsten zu wenden. "Nicht günstig", sagte der Advokat. "Er war sogar unangenehm berührt, als ich von Block zu sprechen anfing. 'Reden Sie nicht von Block', sagte er. 'Er ist mein Klient', sagte ich. 'Sie lassen sich mißbrauchen', wiederholte er. 'Ich glaube es nicht', sagte ich. 'Block ist im Prozeß fleißig und immer hinter seiner Sache her. Er wohnt fast bei mir, um immer auf dem laufenden zu sein. Solchen Eifer findet man nicht immer. Gewiß, er ist persönlich nicht angenehm, hat häßliche Umgangsformen und ist schmutzig, aber in prozessualer Hinsicht ist er untadelhaft.' Ich sagte untadelhaft, ich übertrieb absichtlich. Darauf sagte er: 'Block ist bloß schlau. Er hat viel Erfahrung angesammelt und versteht es, den Prozeß zu verschleppen. Aber seine Unwissenheit ist noch viel größer als seine

> Schlauheit. Was würde er wohl dazu sagen, wenn er erführe, daß sein Prozeß noch gar nicht begonnen hat, wenn man ihm sagte, daß noch nicht einmal das Glockenzeichen zum Beginn des Prozesses gegeben ist.'" (P.234-235)

Huld takes care to present every painful detail of the conversation. The judge, we notice, indulges in some hyperbole; he does not even wish to talk of Huld's client, he gently chides him for letting himself be "misused". Huld on the other hand salts his defense of Block with enough negative comments to make evident he can only hope to mitigate not prevent the final stern judgement inevitably descending on him. But most important of all, Huld, in his report, allows the judge to contradict himself when he accuses Block of dragging out his trial and suggests in the next sentence that the trial has not yet begun. Block is told that the blood, sweat, and tears it has cost him until now are for naught, or, at least have served no useful purpose as far as his trial is concerned. There is no real content to this talk between the two men; Block cannot claim to be any wiser than before, although he does show that he is disturbed by this "news". It has no **value** except to worry the merchant. This almost seems to be one of the judge's chief concerns when he postulates Block's reaction to one bit of news ("'Was würde er wohl dazu sagen . . . '" etc.). Block's belief in what he hears does, of course, prolong his trial, if one takes the word "Prozeß" to mean, as I have suggested before, a long, wearying procedure. If we look back to the beginning of the lengthy passage just quoted, we see that Kafka stresses the momentary rather than the long-range impact when he describes the tense look in Block's eyes as he watches Leni, for it is as if she had the capability <u>now</u> of changing what had been said previously.

After the reported conversation has done its damage (disturbing Block), Huld can discount the information he has given and use the opportunity to rebuke his client for his uneasiness: "'Diese Äußerung des Richters hat für dich gar keine Bedeutung', sagte der Advokat. 'Erschrick doch nicht bei jedem Wort. Wenn sich das wiederholt, werde ich dir gar nichts mehr verraten. Man kann keinen Satz beginnen, ohne daß du einen anschaust, als ob

jetzt dein Endurteil käme'" (P.235). He continues, saying that Block has probably read somewhere that the final judgement can come unexpectedly from anyone at any time (P.236). Although this statement is qualified -- it is true only in some cases and with many reservations -- it presents a bleak prospect. An accused person like Block or K. must fear every utterance he hears on the chance that it might contain a substantive pronouncement on his case.

Once more before this eighth chapter breaks off, Huld suggests the multiplicity of views of the court when he refers to the third judge's statement which he has just quoted. "'Was habe ich denn gesagt?'" he asks and immediately answers himself with the words: "'Ich habe die Äußerung eines Richters wiedergegeben. Du weißt, die verschiedenen Ansichten häufen sich um das Verfahren bis zur Undurchdringlichkeit'" (P.236). We know less about Block's situation than K.'s, but this statement does describe what K. has encountered also. His trial exists primarily because other people talk about it and their talk is almost always informal and therefore not binding. We think back to his conversations with the warders in Chapter One. We remember that it was hearsay which they too reported. All this represents what Huld terms "die verschiedenen Ansichten".

4. Titorelli

We have seen that the type and degree of harassment K. experiences varies from person to person. The painter Titorelli can be classified among the more enigmatic of K.'s antagonists. Opinions vary as to what this figure signifies in K.'s trial. Emrich sees him positively as someone who can help K. overcome the antinomy of freedom and concrete existence.[94] He makes K. free by letting him recognize that any trial on earth precludes the possibility of acquittal.[95] Sokel too believes that Titorelli shows K. the realistic ways to survive, which entails the renunciation of the wish to attain the highest court and acquittal.[96] Neither Emrich nor Sokel delve into the exchange of words between K. and the painter, in which the former undergoes torture again. Politzer sums it up well when he says: "The assistance Titorelli offers K. is like the help rendered to the quarry by the hound."[97]

Titorelli must be considered an antagonist, although he is recommended to K. as someone who could be of help (P.164) and although K. himself thinks of him as possibly one of his helpers (P.182). The manufacturer, who tells K. of the painter, immediately casts doubt on him by saying ("nebenbei") that he is loquacious, probably a liar, and so burdened by his own business affairs that he cannot concern himself with things not his own ("fremde Dinge") (P.164). The dubious advantages of getting advice from "einem solchen Burschen" (P.165) are, in K.'s mind, more than offset by the fact that the manufacturer has heard of his trial and that Titorelli is spreading the news (P.165). The person he is encouraged to seek help from has been working against him even before he goes to him. K. envisions a short meeting, as the text states, " . . . er wollte möglichst rasch hier fertig werden, nur den Maler mit ein paar Worten ausforschen . . . " (P.170), but, of course, not only does the conversation evolve differently than anticipated but it lasts longer than K. expects (P.199).

The part of town which K. enters on his visit to the painter is poorer than that in which the court chancelleries are located, which suggests perhaps that the atmosphere there will be even more hostile. The painter's studio, like many of the other confined areas in Der Prozeß, is hot and stuffy. Our concern lies in the manner in which it bears on communication between the protagonist and the other characters. Kafka probably intended the casual conversation between K. and Titorelli, which deals with this topic (the heat of the room), to reflect the essence of verbal communication in this chapter and in the novel generally: an unpleasant situation is heightened by the discussion of it. Indeed, it is even brought on by discussion. The reader remembers a previous scene in the novel, the one in which the oppressive air of the chancelleries nearly made K. faint. The two employees there were quick to pinpoint the cause of K.'s weakness, thereby increasing his discomfort (P.86). And so it is here. K., who has managed to forget his uncomfortable state while talking with Titorelli (P.179), is asked by the latter: "'Wollen Sie aber nicht . . . den Rock ausziehen? Es ist Ihnen wohl heiß.' 'Ja',

sagte K., der bisher auf nichts als auf die Erklärungen des Malers geachtet hatte, dem aber jetzt, da er an die Hitze erinnert worden war, starker Schweiß auf der Stirn ausbrach" (P. 186-187). Of course, Titorelli's invitation to K. to take off his jacket is meant as a friendly gesture, but it actually suggests the discomfiture which then follows. Once more we are led back to the question of how much of K.'s ordeal is suggested by those in his vicinity and how much actually emanates from the mysterious court. There is no doubt but what any genuine cause for anxiety (like the heat in Titorelli's studio) is magnified by the surrounding world, by those who would offer help.

The conversation with Titorelli actually commences with a deception instigated by the painter, which throws his visitor completely off guard, hindering his resolve to make the interrogation quick and to the point. It takes place in this manner. K. hands him his letter of introduction from the factory owner who had first mentioned Titorelli. The painter peruses it quickly and asks whether K. wishes to buy pictures or have his own picture painted (P.174-175). This tack confounds K. greatly, since he has come to discuss his case, not to buy pictures. Anxious to be done with this interview, he is now forced to consider another roundabout way of getting Titorelli to talk about the court. Actually this deviation from what K. had expected reminds us of his limited perspective, for as K. suddenly realizes he does not know what is written in his letter of introduction (P. 175). He had assumed, of course, that it merely informed the painter of his desire to know more of his trial, but the latter's matter-of-fact question whether K. wishes to buy paintings or have himself painted proves that the assumption was mistaken.

In part of the conversation that now follows K. must try tactfully to steer Titorelli toward the topic of the court. The incomplete picture of a judge on an easel in the studio provides him with a means of broaching the subject (p.175), but the painter's replies to all of K.'s suggestive questions evidence an unwillingness to give more than short, abrupt answers telling K. what he already knows. Most of the painter's answers indicate, too, that he is merely a tool of the court following instructions

(P.176-177). Then, after letting K. sweat a little in wheedling information out of him, Titorelli springs his trap when K. remarks to him with affected nonchalance that he appears to be a confidant of the court: "Sofort legte der Maler die Stifte beiseite, richtete sich auf, rieb die Hände aneinander und sah K. lächelnd an. 'Nur immer gleich mit der Wahrheit heraus', sagte er, 'Sie wollen etwas über das Gericht erfahren, wie es ja auch in Ihrem Empfehlungsschreiben steht, und haben zunächst über meine Bilder gesprochen, um mich zu gewinnen. Aber ich nehme das nicht übel, Sie konnten ja nicht wissen, daß das bei mir unangebracht ist. Oh bitte!' sagte er scharf abwehrend, als K. etwas einwenden wollte" (P.177). Titorelli has had his little fun with K.. He has known of the true purpose of his visit all along. His trap represents a form of verbal torture in which by misrepresentation, he places K. in an embarassing position and then chastises him for talking about his paintings in order to win him over. Magnanimously he prefaces his censure by saying he bears no grudge.

We have seen repeatedly that K. seeks out other people connected with the court not only to gain information, but also to get their judgement of his situation. He looks for the verification of his opinion that all these events are, if not an outright joke, at least illegal and completely unwarranted. He seeks outright affirmation of his innocence. As we have seen numerous times, the judgements, which at times are proffered without his asking for them invariably go against his view. In many cases the torment for K. lies in discovering the actual steadfast belief in the court underneath the oponent's seeming agreement with him. From K.'s point of view, of course, help means that others genuinely take his side against the court. (Whether it is the "true" kind of help, I leave open to discussion.).K. continually meets what he must consider to be prejudiced people. No less happens in the person of Titorelli. The question of K.'s innocence surfaces several times during the interview, like a refrain. But the painter's belief in him becomes more and more doubtful to K.

Shortly after K. enters the studio, after the true purpose of K.'s visit has been openly established, Titorelli gets to the

heart of the matter by asking: "'Sie sind unschuldig?'" (P.179). The question is, of course, typical of pivotal questions in the author's work, combining statement of innocence with the question of whether K. is innocent. In addition, tonal inflection, which cannot (indeed should not) be shown on the printed page but which must be considered, makes another reading possible, namely that of disbelief. Kafka again capitalizes on the poverty of normal written expression to gain ambiguity, which in turn points to the ambiguous stance of Titorelli. K., anxious for "helpers", takes it only as a straightforward question: "'Ja", sagte K. Die Beantwortung dieser Frage machte ihm geradezu Freude, besonders da sie gegenüber einem Privatmann, also ohne jede Verantwortung erfolgte. Noch niemand hatte ihn so offen gefragt. Um diese Freude auszukosten, fügte er noch hinzu: 'Ich bin vollständig unschuldig'" (P.179). Does K. appreciate the lack of consequence of his answer because he knows secretly that he is telling a lie? It is possible. Initially, however, K. senses an unprejudiced attitude, which elates him. It is his judgement of himself ("Ich bin vollständig unschuldig") which Titorelli comes back to in the course of their interview, not really seeming to agree with it and making it look ridiculous.[98] To begin with, Titorelli after an ominous deliberative silence comes out with the statement: "'Wenn Sie unschuldig sind, dann ist ja die Sache sehr einfach'" (P.179). His postulation assumes an equitable procedure in levelling charges and judging them. This is what K. has been so exasperated about. To him his tribulations are occurring without rhyme or reason. By inference the painter is saying: "When things are not simple, guilt is certain." Twice again the painter echos K.'s statement (P.181-183). After the second time Kafka makes it clear that the reiteration irritates K.: "Die wiederholte Erwähnung seiner Unschuld wurde K. schon lästig. Ihm schien es manchmal, als mache der Maler durch solche Bemerkungen einen günstigen Ausgang des Prozesses zur Voraussetzung seiner Hilfe, die dadurch natürlich in sich zusammenfiel" (P.183). (Only one page after this Titorelli mentions K.'s innocence again. P.184) Titorelli will only back the "sure bet".

We are at a point in the novel where K. has already accumulated

a certain amount of information about the court. In one instance in his conversation with Titorelli he sounds the painter out on opinions he has heard from others. He states that all agree that the court does not charge people capriciously and that once convinced of an accused person's guilt, it can be persuaded otherwise only with great difficulty (P.180). In saying this, K. is not only soliciting another view but also playing the devil's advocate. He hopes for a denial. Titorelli, however, instead of denying the information, confirms it resoundingly. The painter's answer banishes immediately any hope that he could question the court. In a fashion typical of many antagonists, whom we have observed, Titorelli overstates his objection, that is, he couches his phrases in extreme, indeed, even ludicrous terms, making K.'s hope seem in itself ludicrous. First he questions K.'s use of the word "difficult" in describing the possibility of the court's relinquishing its hold: "'Schwer?' fragte der Maler und warf eine Hand in die Höhe" (P.180). It is akin to the exasperation shown by so many people at K.'s lack of understanding regarding the ways of the court. It is emphasized also by the hand gesture, as a term far too insufficient to describe the difficulties which such an undertaking presents. If he were to paint all the judges on canvas, the painter says, K. would have more success in defending himself than he would before the live judges. The manner in which the futility of the defence is expressed evinces a certain exuberance, which in turn expresses finality. K. is dealt a devastating blow. His response is described this way: "'Ja', sagte K. für sich und vergaß, daß er den Maler nur hatte ausforschen wollen" (P.180). K. is caught in his own (verbal) trap and vanquished by the painter's greater knowledge, which K. had conceded to him before.

Josef K. has said to Titorelli about his own knowledge of the court: "' . . . ich weiß nicht viel mehr, als was ich darüber, allerdings von ganz verschiedenen Leuten, gehört habe'" (P.180). With these words he has admitted his dependence on others and the reader has observed how true this has been. Persons like Huld, Leni, and even the warders or the wife of the court attendant have all added to his picture of the court world and have sometimes supplied information about his role in it. The painter too has

deeper insight and wider experience and capitalizes on them during his conversation with K.. He alone, he says, will extricate K. (P.181). When K. notes the contradiction this statement forms with his previous contention that the court is difficult to convince, Titorelli lectures him on the fine difference between attempting to achieve something officially or inofficially in the conference rooms, corridors, and his studio (P.182). K. muses: "Was der Maler jetzt sagte, schien K. nicht mehr so unglaubwürdig, es zeigte vielmehr eine große Übereinstimmung mit dem, was K. auch von anderen Leuten gehört hatte. Ja, es war sogar sehr hoffnungsvoll. Waren die Richter durch persönliche Beziehungen wirklich so leicht zu lenken, wie es der Advokat dargestellt hatte, dann waren die Beziehungen des Malers zu den eitlen Richtern besonders wichtig und jedenfalls keineswegs zu unterschätzen. Dann fügte sich der Maler sehr gut in den Kreis von Helfern, die K. allmählich um sich versammelte" (P.182). K. does not realize that he is mentally verifying what Titorelli says by comparing it to other statements, of whose truth he cannot be sure. His concepts of the court and the development of his trial are not being derived from any formal contact with the court regulated by structured procedure but from informal information others give him in conversation. Ironically, Titorelli's information, which K. sees verified by his experience with others, deals precisely with the advantages of these personal informal relationships. K. is caught in his informants' web of subjectivity. There is no firm base from which to judge. Later he recognizes that he must accept Titorelli's opinions even if they contradict other reports; he has no time to prove their truth (P.186).

Titorelli himself emphasizes the fact that he is giving his personal subjective experience of the court when K. points out further contradictions in statements by the painter and the latter merely by smiling makes K. feel as if he were challenging the court itself (P.184). K. mentions that Titorelli had said before that the court, the formal court, is impervious to evidence but that an innocent person need no help in court and, K. states, according to the painter one can influence the judges and yet one cannot obtain complete acquittal through influence (P.184-185).

(Whether these really are contradictions, need not bother us here.) Titorelli answers: "'Es ist hier von zwei verschiedenen Dingen die Rede, von dem, was im Gesetz steht, und von dem, was ich persönlich erfahren habe, das dürfen Sie nicht verwechseln. Im Gesetz, ich habe es allerdings nicht gelesen, steht natürlich einerseits, daß der Unschuldige freigesprochen wird, anderseits steht dort aber nicht, daß die Richter beeinflußt werden können. Nun habe aber ich gerade das Gegenteil dessen erfahren. Ich weiß von keiner wirklichen Freisprechung, wohl aber von vielen Beeinflussungen'" (P.185). We notice first the obvious fact that Titorelli has disqualified himself from saying anything about the law by admitting he has not read it. This parenthetical aside, though, does not dampen his authoritative assertion. K. is being offered a choice; he may believe the law or Titorelli. The latter himself brings it to that point by saying (in the material quoted) that he has experienced the opposite of what is written in the law. The law, that which is immutable and definite, is made to appear ineffectual while Titorelli lends more weight to his experience by referring to the innumerable cases he has followed, listening to his father, or visiting the court himself (P.185).

There does not appear to be any means of gaining knowledge about the court now or in the past other than through verbal communication. The written record of the acquittals, for example, is not even accessible to the judges, making verification of their existence impossible. Records of any acquittals, such as they may be, exist for people like K. only in legends, "' . . . man kann sie glauben, nachweisbar sind sie aber nicht'" (P.186). That the legends contain a certain amount of truth again only remains a matter of the painter's personal opinion, and he affirms K.'s supposition that one cannot refer to these legends before the court. Indeed, the idea elicits a laugh from him. Once more K. finds that he faces nothing more definite than someone else's personal experience. Verbal communication is equated with uncertainty. The talk brings him no closer to the law. And yet, like the guards in Chapter One, Titorelli shows himself very convinced of the court's right to judge. The torment and frustration,

as we have seen, lies precisely in verbal communication, which makes K. aware of his case but gives him nothing definite (in his view) by which to gauge his defence.

Titorelli's two ways of escaping conviction, the "scheinbarer Freispruch" (ostensible acquittal) and "Verschleppung" (protraction), need not be treated here in great detail.[99] The former entails obtaining an acquittal from a low-ranking judge with the help of a friend who has influence (P.189-190). In K.'s case the friend would be Titorelli, who seems to reproach him for this imposition even before K. has asked the favor of him (P.189). The acquittal, however, is not binding; the case can be re-opened at any moment (P.190-191). Protraction, on the other hand, means keeping the trial in its beginning stages by remaining constantly in touch with the court and especially the judge in charge (P.193). Here too, a helper is necessary (P.193). Needless to say, the description of both avenues of escape represents depressing news for K., who obviously feels so overwhelmed by it that he begins to leave before his host and would-be helper has finished his explanation (P.194). Ostensible acquittal offers as little genuine help to K. as protraction. In that respect they are the same. Not only that, however, upon closer examination one could perhaps come to the conclusion that K. is enjoying the benefits of both means of escape already, for when he can forget his trial for a short period of time he is free, when he takes issue with people from the court he protracts his trial. Titorelli is not offering him anything new. The occurrences at the end of the chapter typify the character of the painter's assistance. Before K. is able to leave Titorelli sells him pictures, somber landscapes each one like the other. Certainly one can take the pictures as "Sinnbild des 'ganzen' irdischen Daseins," the way Emrich does.[100] But staying closer to the happenings in the chapter, one can see that the landscapes offer K. the same disheartening outlook, his escape outlets do. The latter lead him back to the court. This last fact is duplicated again when Titorelli ushers his guest out. The door by which K. exits leads him back into the chancelleries of the court, to the very same department which handles his case (P. 197-198).

In an unfinished chapter entitled "Das Haus" we get a more direct appraisal of Titorelli's so-called "help". K., we are told, tries (inadvertently first) to find out from what office the original denunciation of him emanated, information which he readily gets from Titorelli and a man by the name of Wolfahrt (P.290). Characteristically the painter makes this information less valuable by saying that the office, whose address he has given to K., has not the slightest meaning. It is only the outer office of a greater authority, which makes the accusations. Of course the insignificant office is the only one accessible to K.. The information is accompanied by a cruel smile (P.290). K.'s thoughts turn to Titorelli's behaviour: "K. kannte schon das Wesen des Malers, er widersprach deshalb nicht, erkundigte sich auch nicht weiter, sondern nickte nur und nahm das Gesagte zur Kenntnis. Wieder schien ihm, wie schon öfters in der letzten Zeit, daß Titorelli, soweit es auf Quälerei ankam, den Advokaten reichlich ersetzte" (P.290). This statement is important because it says explicitly that this treatment of himself is felt by K. as a torment.

The continuation of this fragmentary chapter brings additional proof that verbal torture is a central idea in this novel, for K., in his further musings, sees it as an integral part of the court. He realizes that he for his part can torture Titorelli by making the latter think that he (K.) has relations with this office, which the painter is unaware of. "Er hatte Freude an solchen kleinen Erfolgen," the text states, "er glaubte dann, nun verstehe er schon viel besser diese Leute aus der Umgebung des Gerichts, nun könne er schon mit ihnen spielen, rückte fast selbst unter sie ein, bekomme wenigstens für Augenblicke die bessere Übersicht, welche ihnen gewissermaßen die erste Stufe des Gerichtes ermöglichte, auf der sie standen" (P.291). These few lines reveal much. K. believes that he has understood the people from the court. To "play" with them means, of course, that he is able to make them apprehensive (just as they make him apprehensive) in his communication with them. As we have seen in this unfinished chapter, K. can torment Titorelli verbally by suggesting that he has information the painter does not have. The important part,

though, is that when he "plays" with these people from the environs of the court, he feels that he is becoming himself a member of the court. This means that, from K.'s limited viewpoint at least, the uniting bond is the common desire to torment. In the prose piece "Gemeinschaft", we remember that the bond which united the friends was their unanimous rejection of another person. This rejection was communicated to the ostracized person. The dependancy of others on K. puts him in a position of domination. We can see why he feels he has a better overall view, the "Überblick" which Titorelli at an earlier time had found he lacked (P.181). K. has placed himself above the others rather than having them look down on, and play with, him. In further deliberations K. sees a possibility of escaping into the ranks of these people.

This fragmentary chapter also gives us some of K.'s dreams, waking dreams, which naturally deal with his exposed position among people. As the text informs us, he does not dream only of those connected directly with the court (P.292). Instead, all persons are intermingled and to him it seems " . . . als sei er der einzige Angeklagte und alle anderen gingen durcheinander wie Beamte und Juristen auf den Gängen eines Gerichtsgebäudes, noch die Stumpfsinnigsten hatten das Kinn zur Brust gesenkt, die Lippen aufgestülpt und den starren Blick verantwortungsvollen Nachdenkens" (P.292). Because of their "responsible looks" the others seem to have the right to judge him. I mention K.'s dreams because Titorelli too appears in one (P.293-295). In it we find K. in a supplicating position in front of the painter, coaxing him by stroking his arm (later his cheeks). This represents an exaggerated view of the position K. is forced to take towards those around him, but although Titorelli witholds his assistance, K. is somehow certain that he will relent, which he then finally does, leading K. to the court building, where he is suddenly removed to a new carefree state (P.294). Significantly, the daydream of salvation involves no dialogue, definite gestures replace words. Titorelli, for example, clasps K. with firm pressure and pulls him with such ease and speed that K. feels like a light boat in the water (p.294). We could conclude therefore, that Kafka

did not wish to consider his protagonist's communication with the painter as completely negative. However, we must remember too, that this particular passage, the only one in which Titorelli really helps K. and makes his willingness to help obvious, was crossed out. It is perhaps the inconsistency of characterization that is shown in this paragraph which did not satisfy the author.

5. The Court Chaplain

The highest ranking official of the court that K. speaks to for any length of time is the court chaplain, the "Geistliche", during the scene in the cathedral. Actually the term court chaplain does not quite render the more ominous "Gefängniskaplan" which he calls himself quite early in the conversation (P.252), suggesting K.'s lack of freedom.[101] He fills a more unusual sort of office than K. has encountered until now, but he does share with the other officials a certain lack of instrumentality in K.'s case. This is not to say that he holds no importance for K., merely that he does not assume any express function in the mechanics of the trial, such as a judge or prosecutor might have, officials whom K. never meets. He does not speak of his power over the court; no decisions rest with him. (They rest with K., one might argue, but this is not explicitely made known to him.) Thus this figure while possessing a degree of importance is, nonetheless, a "dead end", in that he cannot help K. in any tangible way. One may, of course, point to his valuable function in telling K, that he is on the wrong track. This he does. And yet any positive admonitions he has to give are shrouded by statements that could only drive fear into him without showing the true way to a solution.

The scene is the cathedral, a place that K. has every right to regard as neutral. It is a public place belonging to everyone. He has come to show a visiting Italian businessman the art treasures to be found here. He can have no idea that this is another locale of the court. It is only after he has once entered the building that it begins to change its aspect. At a small pulpit K. notices that preparations have been made to conduct a sermon (P.248-250). He watches incredulously as these preparations proceed further. He cannot believe that anyone would preach to a church devoid of

congregation. He does not know these preparations are intended for him until his name is called out (P.250-251). The cathedral has been turned from a communal place into K.'s interrogation chamber. On the court's side everything is accomplished with dignity and solemnity, whereas K. is thrown off balance as usual. Thus when K. stands in front of the chaplain, he stands in a position of subservience, with the latter looking down on him.[102] Indeed, the cleric's air at the beginning of the conversation is patronizing. He is the one who had K. called to this place. This puts an entirely new twist on K.'s appearance in the cathedral; for it means that he has been duped by the man who had intended to meet him here, the Italian businessman, an acquaintance of the one man in his office he still trusts, the director. We remember, of course, that in the preceding scene the two had talked together in a dialect that K. could not follow. Had they actually, unknown to him, been discussing his fate? The point is not followed up by K. and we need only suggest the possibility.

After the preliminaries, the chaplain addresses K. with the question: "'Weißt du, daß dein Prozeß schlecht steht?'" (P. 252), a heartening opening line. I mean the word "heartening" both ironically and literally. It follows in the established pattern of bad news, that is not elaborated on and is thus anything but heartening. In a way it is truly heartening, though, because its bluntness opens the way for K. to entrust himself to the chaplain later. He is not left to discover the negative evaluation piecemeal during the conversation. K., thrown onto the defensive, admits that his trial is going badly, but shows that he is taking it seriously by referring to the as yet unfinished deposition. His obstinacy has been broken; he is working with the traditional means of the accused. The chaplain disregards this intermediary step and asks him how he imagines the end will be. (The end of what is not specified. It could mean the end of K.'s life, although K. takes it to mean the end of his trial.) K. becomes very frank, admits his doubts about his own case and asks whether the chaplain knows how it will end. He is obviously searching for leadership. Yet he who has assumed the pose of the preacher has no consolation whatsoever: "'Nein', sagte der

Geistliche, 'aber ich fürchte, es wird schlecht enden. Man hält dich für schuldig. Dein Prozeß wird vielleicht über ein niedriges Gericht gar nicht hinauskommen. Man hält wenigstens vorläufig deine Schuld für erwiesen'" (P.252-253). Although the "Geistliche" does not know how K.'s trial will end, he does not hold back in revealing his fears. His information, though, is permeated with vagueness. The generalizing "man" tells K. as little about his judges as Franz and Willem did in the first chapter, and it does not necessarily include the speaker. The news that he has been judged guilty and that his case might not go beyond a low court is disheartening, nontheless it contains grains of hope that would make K. persevere in his ways. The chaplain has merely said "perhaps" this will happen and K.'s guilt has been established "for the time being". Thus K. cannot know what is going to happen to him. Only the chaplain's negative assessment of K.'s situation at the moment remains definite. As Tauber notes: "He only proclaims the threat; about a promise he says as little as any other delegate of the Court."[103] The authoritarian manner and sometime-stentorian ring become completely hollow.

In this late chapter it is no coincidence that K.'s conversation with the chaplain should include not only K.'s view of his trial but also his view of relations with others connected with his trial. K.'s attempt to equate everyone -- all are humans and no one human can be guilty alone -- is rebuffed by the retort that although the argument is correct all guilty persons speak that way (P.253). This is frustrating because the argument, while being called correct, is invalidated because K. speaks as a guilty person. The truth depends on who speaks it. The chaplain does not let K. talk his way out of his singular position.[104] The remark leads K. to ask whether the chaplain has a prejudice against him. Summing up his relations with everyone else he has come to the conclusion that they do: "' . . . alle anderen aber, die an dem Verfahren beteiligt sind, haben ein Vorurteil gegen mich. Sie flößen es auch den Unbeteiligten ein. Meine Stellung wird immer schwieriger'" (P.253). Everyone, in his opinion, has singled him out as a guilty person before he has been officially found guilty, to which he receives the answer: "'Du mißverstehst

die Tatsachen, . . . das Urteil kommt nicht mit einemmal, das Verfahren geht allmählich ins Urteil über'" (P.253). One realizes immediately that the word "Urteil" is being played with here. K. expects the official verdict, "Urteil" in the juridical sense, to come as the culmination of formal proceedings. Therefore opinions given before the verdict, of which there have been many throughout the novel, would represent prejudices. K. is convinced a trial (as he envisions it) will show that a mistake has been made. The chaplain describes the proceedings melting into a judgement. The definition between stages in a court case is not present here. Looking back over K.'s numerous encounters one can come up with an explanation for the lack of defined court procedure. I have maintained that K.'s trial leading to his conviction, his downfall, takes place when he confronts any person or group of persons, be they officially connected with the court or not. He undergoes torture in small degrees every time he speaks with anyone. In innumerable ways people make it known to him that they consider him guilty. Thus the judgement is constantly being formed. The judgement represents the accumulation of these many verdicts. One is reminded of the sentence in the related piece "Fürsprecher": "Anders aber verhält es sich mit dem Tatbestand eines Urteils, dieser gründet sich auf Erhebungen hier und dort, bei Verwandten und Fremden, bei Freunden und Feinden, in der Familie und in der Öffentlichkeit, in Stadt und Dorf, kurz überall" (E.322). There is no pre-judging ("Vorurteil") because judging goes on all the time. The final judgement becomes evident when all the individual judgements have accumulated and grown to an intolerable burden, which for K. will be very soon.

Rather than telling K. facts about how his trial is proceeding in those realms that are beyond his view, the chaplain poses questions, one of which, ("'Weißt du, daß dein Prozeß schlecht steht?'"), as we have seen, intimates knowledge of the state of his trial. He continues now with the question of what K. intends to do, to which K. answers that he will seek out more help. He looks at the chaplain while stating his intentions in order to detect his reaction, a significant sign that he now depends on verification of his every move by others (P.253). It

is in effect a search for help at that moment, and K. takes on a similarity to Block.[105] In a completely defensive mood K. tries to justify his criticism of the court officials. (He has abandoned his agressive assertion.) "'Es sind doch nur meine Erfahrungen'", he calls out in desperation (P.254). In this statement he himself takes up the theme that has concerned critics of the novel for years, the fact that it is solely through him that everything is experienced. His contact with the court has been on the whole limited to peripheral figures; he has only these meetings as experiences from which to judge. The inner circle, the higher realms of the court have been postulated, but K. has not experienced them. His knowledge of the court proper as well as their handling of his case stems from verbal reports of others and this, as I have reasoned, must be seen as an extension of the problem of limited perspective. When the chaplain answers the criticism in a burst of exasperation, he refers precisely to K.'s lack of perception: "'Siehst du denn nicht zwei Schritte weit?' Es war im Zorn geschrien, aber gleichzeitig wie von einem, der jemanden fallen sieht und, weil er selbst erschrocken ist, unvorsichtig, ohne Willen schreit" (P.254). K. is being chastised for not judging correctly from his limited viewpoint and for not transcending it. It is ironic that this reproach should be levelled at K. in this dark place, which has just been made darker by the sexton's extinguishing one by one candles burning at the main altar (P.254). One could argue, of course, that K. is being admonished to look inward, or back in time. However, if this is the case, the words of the chaplain do better in expressing displeasure than in indicating where K. is to look or what he is to see. The manner in which the chaplain cries out represents a strange mixture of anger and concern. Someone who sees another person falling from a distance has perhaps a greater overall view of the dangerous situation. Thus here too the chaplain conveys to K. that the danger he is in is very grave, but this sense of extreme danger is all he transmits. Where it actually lies remains untold. We will leave the figure of the chaplain now in order to give a thorough interpretation of the legend he tells, "Vor dem Gesetz". We will have occasion to mention him again, though, since his comment on the legend has bearing on its interpretation.

6. "Vor dem Gesetz"

The parable of the doorkeeper and the man from the country at the end of Der Prozeß is generally recognized as being a summation of what K. has experienced in the novel. Like the novel as a whole the short piece is so ambiguous that it can be interpreted many ways. The exegetic discussion, in fact, begins right after the court chaplain recounts the legend. He cautions K. not to be too hasty in accepting opinions that stray too far from the text and then in the following pages goes on to report interpretations, which the reader might well consider far-fetched (P. 257-258). Kafka has obviously planned the ambiguity and takes pains to point it out. The text intimates that K. relates it entirely to his situation. We may safely assume that the similarity of the story to his situation attracts him. As we shall see, it is the aspect of deception that K. seizes upon immediately (P. 257). For him therefore the focal point must be the dialogue between the man from the country and the doorkeeper. The parable presents many of the aspects of communication with which Kafka's work is replete, all demonstrating that communication can mean the torment of one person by another. It is possible to exonerate the doorkeeper from the charge that he did not fulfil his duty, as the chaplain does, and one can find the man from the country guilty of timidity in not asserting his right to enter through the gate.[106] Yet the man's possible guilt, just like K.'s possible guilt, does not alter the fact that the doorkeeper hinders the man's comprehension of his situation. The deception occurs because the man from the country can see more in the doorkeeper's lines and his demeanor than a literal meaning. My interpretation of the parable will attempt to prove this. However let us begin with someone else's discussion of the purpose of the parable in the conversation between the chaplain and K. in the cathedral.

In an article on the legend of the doorkeeper Ingeborg Henel states:

> Der Zweck der Legende ist also, Josef K. seinen Irrtum über das Gericht und dessen Vertreter zu zeigen. Dieser Irrtum besteht zunächst darin, daß er glaubt, durch die Hilfe der Behörden, wenn er sie nur richtig beeinflußt, seinen Prozeß gewinnen zu können; und weiter darin, daß er die Verantwortung

> für den schlechten Verlauf seines Prozesses auf die Gerichtsbeamten abwälzt, die ihm, als er keine Hilfe bei ihnen findet, unfähig und böse erscheinen. In der Parabel ist der erste Irrtum durch die Bitten und Bestechungsversuche des Mannes vom Lande dargestellt; der zweite, gefährlichere Irrtum dadurch, daß der Mann die Verantwortung für seine Handlungen nicht auf sich nimmt. Er gibt sich gerne der Selbsttäuschung über die Macht des Türhüters hin und betrachtet dessen Verbot als absolutes Hindernis am Eintritt in das Gesetz. Sein elendes Verwesen vor dem Eingang ist das Urteil über diese Selbsttäuschung.[107]

She deduces this purpose from the short conversation which precedes the actual telling of the legend by the chaplain and his previous warning not to look for too much help. However, a closer look shows that the text is far more ambiguous than Mrs. Heneš would have us believe. Let us return to it. The chaplain has just descended from the pulpit. (The symbolism of this is open to a number of interpretations.) But even at a closer range the chaplain does not seem to K. to lose a certain stateliness in his character, which suggests that there is still some barrier between the two.

At this point the dialogue between them begins again: "'Du bist sehr freundlich zu mir', sagte K., sie gingen nebeneinander im dunklen Seitenschiff auf und ab. 'Du bist eine Ausnahme unter allen, die zum Gericht gehören. Ich habe mehr Vertrauen zu dir als zu irgend jemandem von ihnen, so viele ich schon kenne. Mit dir kann ich offen reden.' 'Täusche dich nicht', sagte der Geistliche. 'Worin sollte ich mich denn täuschen?' fragte K. 'In dem Gericht täuschst du dich', sagte der Geistliche, 'in den einleitenden Schriften zum Gesetz heißt es von dieser Täuschung: . . . '" (P.255). The chaplain then goes on to tell the story of the man from the country. The moment of ambiguity comes when after K. has confided in the chaplain that he prefers him to the others who belong to the court. The chaplain warns K. not to be deceived. Like K., the reader asks right away, deceived in what? Coming in the place it does, the chaplain's advice seems to mean that K. should not be deceived in his notion that he (the chaplain) is an exception among the court officials, that K. should have more trust in him, and that he can speak with him openly.[108] It is

tantamount to saying: "I am no better than the rest". Doubt is not just placed in K.'s search, but also in the competence or willingness of those he seeks help from. K.'s question is by no means "ununderstanding" ("verständnislos") as Mrs. Henel suggests.[109] It is no wonder that he misconstrues the chaplain's "Täusche dich nicht", since he has discovered all along that people, who professed to be for him, did not believe in him. The parable is of course meant to demonstrate how K. deceives himself about the court, but is that the only function of the parable that Kafka had in mind? What K. sees in it is quite different from self-deception; he sees that the doorkeeper has deceived the man from the country.

The door is there only for the man from the country and the doorkeeper guards it for him and yet the former wastes away in front of the door. It goes without saying that these functions of the door and the man guarding it are not communicated to the man from the country. In determining what is communicated to him, all the aspects already discussed come into play again. There is the situation, for example. The man from the country finds himself in a place unfamiliar to him, although ironically it is more his than anyone else's as we learn in the end. Once more one must point out that because of the scarcity of words and the compactness of the piece almost every word must be weighed. It is interesting to note that Kafka has the chaplain start the parable with mention of the doorkeeper in front of the law. This is where everything takes place. In the same way the whole legend is to be found "in den einleitenden Schriften zum Gesetz"; K. never experiences the law itself. The syntax in this first sentence is such that the doorkeeper's position (his obstruction as we later learn) is emphasized: "Vor dem Gesetz steht ein Türhüter" (P.255). At first one does not hear of a door at all, says Gesine Frey, but deduces its existence, because the doorkeeper is mentioned.[110] The focal point for the man from the country, in strange surroundings and unsure of himself, is the doorkeeper. In fact the second sentence makes this clear because it mentions him again right at the beginning; "Zu diesem Türhüter kommt ein Mann vom Lande und bittet um Eintritt in das Gesetz" (P.255). We know the

man wants admittance to the law, he requests it, but his course has led him first directly to the person guarding the entrance. This person is there when the man arrives and therefore can be deemed to have a certain priority. He cannot be said to own the space, but his obvious function as guard suggests that this space is not "herrenlos", waiting to be occupied, but that there is a power who has charge of it. There is no way for the man seeking to be admitted to know that he has exclusive rights to this entrance. On the contrary, the first words the doorkeeper directs to him reaffirm the idea that he, the doorkeeper, is in a position to allow passage or not (acting on higher authority). These characteristics of situation are all similar to those Josef K. had had to deal with. In his search for clarification, as we have seen, he must meet his opponents on their ground. They make K. aware of the fact they have a certain amount of power but only as delegates of a higher power. Furthermore they, like the doorkeeper, give the impression of having been ensconced in their position for a great length of time.

In an article on Kafka's parable Jürgen Born argues for the thesis expressed by Walter Muschg that the man from the country should have entered through the door without fear. In Born's words: "The man should never have questioned, let alone surrendered, the idea (or belief), that the Law was 'accessible to everyone and at all times.'"[111] He also implies that, because K. is guilty and because the parable represents a mirror held to his face, the man from the country is also responsible for his fate.[112] I reiterate that my object has not been to absolve Josef K., nor even to delve into what he might be guilty of. I have tried merely to show how the people around him manage to torture him when he comes in contact with them in order to extricate himself from his predicament or even find out more about it. The reader does not have an opportunity to view the man from the country for more than two pages and can therefore ascertain far less of his character and its faults. We see him engaged only in one prominent activity, striving to reach the law. It would be safe to say that this act is the main point of comparison between the two. Both are thwarted in their attempt to gain what they want. To say of K. and the man

from the country that they go about attaining their goal in the wrong way may be correct, but one must see that their antagonists greatly influence the course they take, making this path at the same time a rough one to follow. Jürgen Born leans on an argument put forth by the chaplain when he says: "We would have a genuine contradiction on our hands if the doorkeeper had said to the man, 'You may never, never enter here,' and in the same breath, 'This door was intended only for you.' But this is not the case. In the first place he never categorically denies the man entry. He merely states that he cannot 'now' grant him permission, but he holds out the hope of a possible future entry."[113] The critic suggests that we are dealing in the parable with "apparent contradictions".[114] A contradiction as outlined by Born (and the chaplain) would mean that the doorkeeper would be guilty of giving false information (a possibility) which cannot be ruled out, but which we can discount for the purpose of keeping the argument simple. Information given to the protagonist, as this thesis has shown repeatedly, cannot be verified perhaps, but this hardly ever proven to be false. The doorkeeper's words keep the man from the country from his goal in a much subtler fashion.

Kafka plays with tenses and times. Let us examine the first conversation between the two again. The man from the country asks to be admitted to the law: "Aber der Türhüter sagt, daß er ihm jetzt den Eintritt nicht gewähren könne. Der Mann überlegt und fragt dann, ob er also später werde eintreten dürfen. 'Es ist möglich', sagt der Türhüter, 'jetzt aber nicht'" (P.256). Twice the doorkeeper denies entrance to the man now, in the present. The only hindrance to entering is that the time is not right. On no occasion does he state why the time is not right or what conditions must be met in order to bring on the propitious moment. The man obviously reads between the lines, for his question whether he is to be let in later shows that he has picked up the crucial word "jetzt", which prevents the statement from being completely negative. This adverb in connection with the negation ("jetzt nicht") limits that negation and automatically opens the prospect of entry in the future. The little word "also" in the man's question indicates that he considers the alternative as a consequence

following from the doorkeeper's way of phrasing his prohibition ("ob er also später werde eintreten dürfen"). Thus it is the doorkeeper who suggests indirectly that the answer to the man's problem is to wait. He actually induces the man seeking admittance to waste his life waiting for the possibility to become reality. Further on in the parable it is mentioned that these postponements take place repeatedly. The anticipation is awakened by the words "noch nicht", which represent an even stronger promise for the future. Then at the end of the parable the man is told; "'Hier konnte niemand sonst Einlaß erhalten, denn dieser Eingang war nur für dich bestimmt'" (P.257). The past tense ("konnte", "war") is used. The doorkeeper is indicating a time which is now gone. The expressed intention of closing the door now underscores this. The man from the country is told he has missed his chance. At one time the opportunity is said to be near at hand, then suddenly (the shortness of the piece helps evoke the effect of suddeness) the opportunity is seen as past. In a way one could say the present time, the time in which the man's goal could have been realized, had never occurred. He is made to look forward to the moment and then back on an expanse of time in which at any one moment he could have entered, but neglected to do so.

Josef K., too, shuttles between being led to expect things in the future and being made aware of both omissions and the general deterioration of the state of his affairs. But it must be emphasized that in the case of both Josef K. and the man from the country, as well as in the cases of most of Kafka's other protagonists, expectations and the awareness of faults are verbal creations by the surrounding world. If we go back to the last statement the doorkeeper makes to the dying man, we could ask what, other than his words, tell us that the door was intended only for one man. On the other hand if it had been intended for only one individual, what other than the doorkeeper's words tell us that the man is the individual destined for this entrance. In the short parable the novel's narrative technique with its peculiarities are reproduced. The omniscent narrator, who might have "absolute power" to set the scene, giving those things which definitely exist or not, holds himself very much in the background.

As in the novel everything is seen through the eyes of the man from the country. The doorkeeper's thoughts, his way of perceiving things, are not presented. The reader along with the protagonist has only statements of the doorkeeper by which to judge the situation. Much like Josef K. the man from the country finds his world defined by someone else.

Jürgen Born hedges his pronouncement on the guilt of the man from the country by saying that he is at the same time not guilty and referring to the "devilish intention" of the doorkeeper.[115] "Devilish" is perhaps too strong. It suggests that the doorkeeper's actions lie outside the realm of the human and that he masterminds the man's downfall, both of which, in my view, are not the case. I see him as restricted in his office. He thinks in terms of his function -- guarding the door to the law. He has nothing to say about the law itself, for example, only things having to do with doors and guarding them. But he does go beyond his role when he speaks to the man. One cannot say that one observes a fully developed personality. Only one facet displays itself, the doorkeeper's cruelty. While fulfilling his function he plays a cat and mouse game with the man from the country. This view runs counter to that of Ingeborg Henel, who sees the doorkeeper only as an official (Beamter). In her view he is not a person but someone that carries out a function, being at the same time bound to this function, that is, not free. He is impersonal, or as Mrs. Henel puts it: "Er ist -- wie ein Ding -- durch keinen menschlichen Apell zu erreichen und beeinflussen. Wie noch deutlicher im Schloßroman hervortritt, gibt es mit Beamten keinen menschlichen Kontakt; man kann ihnen nicht einmal äußerlich nahe kommen, sie nicht zu Gesicht bekommen."[116] Certainly the doorkeeper is an official, but as is usual in Kafka, he speaks to the man from the country not only as an official. This is, in fact, one way the chaplain sees him when he says: "'Hiezu kommt noch, daß der Türhüter seiner Naturanlage nach freundlich zu sein scheint, er ist durchaus nicht immer Amtsperson'" (P.259-260). (A discussion of how friendly the doorkeeper is will follow later.) He goes on to list all the small indulgences the doorkeeper is willing to make. One must, in fact, come to the conclusion that the personal side

and the official side of the doorkeeper are well blended.

One must naturally agree to the argument Mrs. Henel presents that one cannot penetrate the mind of the official, but that one cannot judge the doorkeeper is debatable.[117] Just enough of his personal character is evident to enable one to do so. Take, for example, his reaction when the man from the country bends down in order to peek into the law through the door, which is always open. In fact, one could even interpret the doorkeeper's moving aside as a lure, a temptation for the man to cast a glance inside. When the doorkeeper notices the man peeking through the open door he laughs. In this laughter he expresses his contempt for the man's puny efforts.[118] The derision from his vantage point of authority (and to the man he seems to have authority) suggests that he has information which makes the man's efforts indeed seem ridiculously naive. He then says: "'Wenn es dich so lockt, versuche es doch, trotz meinem Verbot hineinzugehen. Merke aber: Ich bin mächtig. Und ich bin nur der unterste Türhüter. Von Saal zu Saal stehen aber Türhüter, einer mächtiger als der andere. Schon den Anblick des dritten kann nicht einmal ich mehr vertragen.'" (P.256).

These few lines contain much. First, there is the fact that the doorkeeper does not reiterate his prohibition as a command but instead actually invites the man to try to enter and then reminds him of the prohibition which he gave previously. He does not just fulfil his function, which is to say no, but leads the man on and then says no. He goes further by elaborating on the danger of contravening his prohibition, introducing this elaboration with a command "Merke aber". He then very forcefully depicts the hindrances, starting with himself, a statement of his power, then the fact that he is just an initial hindrance in a (what seems to be limitless) series of ever more serious hindrances.[119] His statement that even he cannot endure the sight of the third doorkeeper is the same as taking one large digit and squaring it. In addition the last statement redirects attention to his outward appearance which is all but inviting. But at the time this reminder of appearances is ironical, because, although the doorkeeper (or doorkeepers) may seem terrible how is one to know that they

actually are until one has tested them. The dilemma that the man finds himself in is that he only has appearances to go by. The doorkeeper's words have placed a stumbling block in front of the man. The words "'Solche Schwierigkeiten hat der Mann vom Lande nicht erwartet . . . '" (P.433) prove that the hindrances have just arisen now in the information imparted to him by the doorkeeper.

Almost every other word and action of the doorkeeper reinforces the character already delineated. The friendliness the chaplain claims to find (P.259-260) is certainly far-fetched. When he gives the man a stool to sit on, for example, he is not necessarily doing him a kindness, for it only strengthens the latter's expectation of being admitted. In addition he lets him sit down to one side of the door, placing him out of the direct, straight route leading to the law. Sitting on the stool, the man emphasizes his subservience.[120] The communication the doorkeeper has with the man is not in the form of conversations but of interrogations ("kleine Verhöre") (P.256). The questions too are described as "teilnahmslose Fragen, wie sie große Herren stellen" (P.256). The distance between the two is maintained. The doorkeeper retains the role of authority that allows him to know more about the man (he does the questioning) leaving himself inscrutable. When he takes bribes from the man, who has provided himself well for the trip, he does so with the words: "'Ich nehme es nur an, damit du nicht glaubst, etwas versäumt zu haben'" (P.256). He does not admit to personal feelings about the bribe in front of the man, claiming that he does this only for the latter's peace of mind. In accepting he not only enriches himself but obligates the donor to him. In his acceptance he gives the man from the country a sense of achievement; he can feel confident that with each bribe attempt, he has eliminated another possible hindrance to gaining admittance, although it has not had the desired result of getting him in past the doorkeeper. No positive direction is given to the man's striving. The bribes to be tried might be infinite. The statement at the same time reminds the listener that omissions are possible. This keeps him trying in order not to miss any opportunity.

One cannot relate each one of the actions in the parable to specific experiences Josef K. goes through in the novel. It would be too "neat" and as such would rob the parable of its individuality. The state of the man from the country, facing continual frustration, generally seems to match that of Josef K.. For the man, as for K., the problem centers in the human obstacle standing between him and his goal. Towards the end of the parable, as Jürgen Born points out quite rightly, this obstacle, the doorkeeper, represents to the man from the country the sole one to be overcome: "In the eyes of the one who has waited for years, the first doorkeeper grows to gigantic proportions and virtually blocks the view of the waiting man. Like one mesmerized, he gazes at the first doorkeeper, thus losing more and more the wider perspective, as does Josef K. in The Trial." [121] One must add, however, that there is a difference. Josef K. meets many obstacles in his quest to end his predicament. The many unforseen difficulties arise in his conversations with others; they create them. This multiplicity of hindrances is represented in the parable by the one hindrance growing larger and larger. And one could say that conversely the man's getting smaller, more decrepit is analogous to K.'s shrinking self-confidence. The man from the country loses his adult powers of reasoning. The text says that he becomes childish and he implores the fleas in the doorkeeper's fur collar to help him make the doorkeeper relent. Verbal communication as a means of attaining a goal is made ludicrous, but it remains to the end the only significant means the man possesses.

Ironically, it is only after he has been held in check by the doorkeeper for years and years that he gets a taste of what lies behind the door. His eyesight becomes weak and he cannot determine whether it is this failing that deceives him or whether it actually is becoming darker around him. The parable goes on to say: "Wohl aber erkennt er jetzt im Dunkel einen Glanz, der unverlöschlich aus der Türe des Gesetzes bricht" (P.257). The word "wohl" coming at the beginning of the sentence along with "aber" emphazises that his lack of sight does not prevent him from perceiving the light that shines out from the entrance. Or, to interpret the sentence further, one could say that the perception

of this radiance comes only when it (the radiance) is able to contrast with the darkness, actual or induced through impending blindness. This would mean that the glimpse of the law that the man from the country gets depends on his debility.[122] Once more we find the word "jetzt" and this time without negation. It is ironic that the only event concerning the law that comes about in the present time is the tantalizing awareness of the interior. Without a pause, however, the text goes on to say: "Nun lebt er nicht mehr lange" (P.257), intimating that death is not just the next event in a haphazard sequence, but that it represents the consequence of his experiencing only a taste of what he wants, not all of it. It is with all this in mind that one must view the doorkeeper's final words to the man from the country. There has been a build-up to the point where, by virtue of his debility, the radiance penetrates to him. Then in the man's last moments the doorkeeper expresses the intention of closing the door and in one sentence underscores the failure of the man's lifelong endeavors as well as terminating them. The chaplain refers to this final cruelty somewhat euphemistically, saying: "Darüber gehen die Meinungen auseinander, ob der Türhüter mit der Ankündigung, daß er das Tor schließen wird, nur eine Antwort geben oder seine Dienstpflicht betonen oder den Mann noch im letzten Augenblick in Reue und Trauer setzen will" (P.263). To the reader the last of these interpretations might seem the most plausible.

It would take us too far if all the chaplain's comments about the story that he has just told were to be dissected. Suffice it to mention only a few points about his argument after the narration. Before launching into the story of the man from the country he had been very definite about the fact that the legend would show K. something concerning his misconception of the court (P.255). After his narration the chaplain becomes less definite. He points to the text, saying: "'Ich habe dir die Geschichte im Wortlaut der Schrift erzählt. Von Täuschung steht darin nichts'" (P.257-258). K. is immediately attracted to the tale (P.257). He sees that the man from the country has been deceived by the doorkeeper and perhaps recognizes his situation. He too has been kept in anticipation of a trial, whereas actually it has been going on since the moment

of his arrest. He is being kept from a higher court, whose existence has only been suggested by the world around him.

The chaplain now sets about to destroy K.'s certainty of what the legend means. His first words are a warning to K.: "'Sei nicht übereilt . . . übernimm nicht die fremde Meinung ungeprüft'" (P.257). K.'s intuitive reaction is labelled a "foreign opinion", that is, K. is assumed to have accepted someone else's view naively. In the following exegesis many interpretations of the doorkeeper's actions are presented, most of which exonerate him in some way. (We note, of course, that it is the doorkeeper's behaviour not that of the man from the country which dominates the discussion.) The legend, which had seemed so simple to K., is turned into an imponderable maze.[123] This is not merely one man's opinion against another either. Repeatedly the chaplain makes it clear that he relates what others say -- "die Erklärer" (P.258,259) or just "manche" (P.260,263), "viele" (P.263), or the usual "man". K. is told once more that there are many ways of seeing things. Yet when he tries to get the chaplain's opinion, he pushes the responsibility from himself: "Sie schwiegen ein Weilchen. Dann sagte K.: 'Du glaubst also, der Mann wurde nicht getäuscht?' 'Mißverstehe mich nicht', sagte der Geistliche, 'ich zeige dir nur die Meinungen, die darüber bestehen. Du mußt nicht zuviel auf Meinungen achten. Die Schrift ist unveränderlich und die Meinungen sind oft nur ein Ausdruck der Verzweiflung darüber'" (P.260). This is almost tantamount to an admission by the chaplain that he is trying to deceive. Opinions are not to be heeded and yet he has been the proponent of a myriad of them. Then, in what may very well be Kafka's comment on his own enigmatic work, we learn of the futility of interpretation by human beings altogether. There is only one fact: the text, the way it stands. This leaves it ambiguous, yearning for interpretation, but in the end unable to be fathomed.

7. The Executioners

In discussing the last chapter of Der Prozeß Heinz Politzer writes: "It is a characteristic of the works which Kafka finished that they end in a subtle form of theatricality. Since he cannot envisage an absolute conclusion -- either an unconditional condemnation or complete redemption -- he resorts to effects quite

opposed to his otherwise understated style."[124] An official pronouncement of K.'s condemnation would be too heavy handed. As we have seen, the trial occurs in every confrontation K. has and the judgement builds up by hits and pieces, the accumulated weight bearing down more and more on him. The deterioration of his position and the loss of the ability to assert himself must sooner or later lead to the catastrophe, although more confrontation scenes could have been inserted before the end. Josef K.'s execution does not result from a sentence passed by a body of people, a court, after due deliberation. It is a final penalty, after having lost each round in his trial. It represents a sort of summing up.

It is very telling that verbal communication, which has been the vehicle of K.'s torture throughout the novel, is reduced to a minimum in this chapter. The two executioners speak mainly to each other, although Kafka avoids dialogue by saying only that conversation takes place (P.267,269,270,271). When they communicate with K. they do so with gestures or only one word (P.266,267). This makes them mechanical and, along with their costumes, lends them a theatrical air. They do not answer K.'s questions, nor do they seem to even understand them (P.267,268). Taking K. between them in a vice-like grip all three become one unit (P.267). They force him into a lifeless community. For K. their silence is a great relief: he says to himself: "'Ich bin dafür dankbar, daß man mir auf diesem Weg diese halbstummen, verständnislosen Herren mitgegeben hat und daß man es mir überlassen hat, mir selbst das Notwendige zu sagen'" (P.269). The question is, what does "das Notwendige" mean? K. recognizes that he must resign himself to whatever happens to him or whatever is demanded of him. He should not try to fight the surrounding world, since reasserting himself in order to defend himself would just mean re-opening this trial. Trial, of course, would mean suffering defeat after defeat in verbal combat. The futility of resistance had become clear to him a moment before this interior monologue with the appearance of Fräulein Bürstner. We remember that he had attempted in vain to impress upon her his innocence and subsequently had failed to gain an interview with her. (Undoubtedly too, the author, in a

very personal vein, returns to the figure with whom he had experienced his trial, Felice Bauer.[125]) After admitting the uselessness of resistance K. marches along with the two men "in vollem Einverständnis" (P.269). In the state of resignation he forms a truer community with them. "Einverständnis" connotes a willingness to join them, which he did not experience in the lifeless unit they formed **earlier** (P.267).

In spite of Josef K.'s resignation, there is still the moment before his execution when, seeing a figure at a window in the distance stretch out his arms, he questions inwardly: "Wer war es? Ein Freund? Ein guter Mensch? Einer, der teilnahm? Einer, der helfen wollte? War es ein einzelner? Waren es alle? War noch Hilfe? Gab es Einwände, die man vergessen hatte? Gewiß gab es solche. Die Logik ist zwar unerschütterlich, aber einem Menschen, der leben will, widersteht sie nicht. Wo war der Richter, den er nie gesehen hatte? Wo war das hohe Gericht, bis zu dem er nie gekommen war? (P.272). Taking the common denominator of the first question, we find that K. sees the figure at the window as someone who is trying to communicate with him. The vague outline of one single figure even lets the hope arise that many more, all people, in fact, might be behind the one. It would mean the opposite of what K. experienced in his trial. There he had learned from everyone, one by one, that they all considered him guilty. The reader realizes that the judge and the high court, that K. never experienced, do not exist. They have been created in the stories of the people around K.. His limited perspective had made him dependent on others. The point of K.'s restricted view is brought home to us in this last scene precisely by his vague perception of the figure in the background, whose intentions he can only guess. His last gesture -- "Er hob die Hände und spreizte alle Finger" (P.272) -- is ambiguous. It can be seen as a reaching out, a last attempt to communicate or as a sign of extreme despair.

Footnotes

[1] Marianne Ruth Korst, "Die Beziehung zwischen Held und Gegenwelt in Franz Kafkas Romanen," Diss. Marburg 1953.

[2] Walser, p. 49.

[3] Walser, p. 68.

[4] Walser, p. 58.

[5] Walser, p. 79.

[6] Walser, p. 63.

[7] Walser, p. 93.

[8] Walser, p. 100.

[9] Walser, p. 104.

[10] The first sentence seems to suggest authorial omniscience, but on closer examination proves to consist of unprovable hypotheses as Beda Allemann points out in "Kafka: Der Prozeß," Der Deutsche Roman vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart: Struktur und Geschichte, II, ed. Benno von Wiese (Düsseldorf: Bagel Verlag, 1963), p. 234. The narrator is stepping back into the consciousness of the main figure, says Heinz Ide, "Franz Kafka: 'Der Prozeß': Interpretation des ersten Kapitels," Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen, 6 (1962), 21-22.

[11] See Wilhelm Emrich, pp. 269-270; Sokel p. 141. More recently Klaus Köhnke has restated the importance of the moment at which K. is arrested, Köhnke, 184.

[12] Heinz Ide interprets Der Prozeß as the interruption of K.'s existence on earth by the subconscious intrusion of "Sein". In this case then, by summoning the warder, his "existential conscience," he does the correct thing without realizing it, Ide, 23. My interpretation takes this intrusion literally, as an intrusion by real persons.

[13] Ide, 24.

[14] The hindrances are suggested to the man from the country by the doorkeeper. In the same way future difficulties are suggested to K. in these first scenes.

[15] "Er stellt also das Verhaftetsein als eine Tatsache fest, deren Kenntnis er wie das 'ja' zu erkennen gibt, bei K. voraussetzt," says Heinz Ide, 26.

[16] Reiss, p. 49. See also Sokel, p. 174.

[17] Tauber, p. 107.

[18] Politzer, pp. 188-189.

[19] Tauber, p. 101.

[20] Wilhelm Emrich does not really define her position when he locates her "mitten im Gericht." Emrich, p. 276.

[21] Tauber, p. 103.

[22] Gesine Frey, Der Raum und die Figuren in Franz Kafkas Roman "Der Prozess," 2nd ed., Marburger Beiträge zur Germanistik, 11 (Marburg: N. G. Elwert Verlag, 1969), p. 72.

[23] Politzer, p. 203.

[24] Sokel, p. 181.

[25] Wilhelm Emrich's statement "Diese 'alte Frau' ist eine Wissende . . . " (Emrich, p. 270), suggests more reasoning in her statements to K. than are actually present. We cannot be sure how much Frau Grubach really "knows".

[26] I cannot agree with Wilhelm Emrich, who considers that K. is agreeing with Frau Grubach, Emrich, p. 270.

[27] We think back to K.'s conversation with the "Aufseher" in which he had tried to put an end to what he considered a ridiculous matter by extending his hand. His gesture was not accepted in that instance either (P.24).

[28] Ide, 48.

[29] Heinz Ide again interprets this conversation as K.'s confrontation with subconscious indicators of "being". Ide, 48-57.

[30] Tauber, p. 97.

[31] Fräulein Bürstner's comment would be ironic in that she, actually taking K.'s predicament lightly, pretends it (and consequently her judgement) is a serious matter.

[32] Politzer, p. 195.

[33] Politzer, p. 196.

[34] The order of chapters in Max Brod's edition of Der Prozeß, which had at one time been questioned, has recently been confirmed by Hartmut Binder, "Aber-Mann", p. 10.

[35] Walter Sokel notes this too, saying, quite rightly that the family still plays a decisive role, p. 176.

[36] Sokel, p. 177.

[37] Kafka's father was, for example, a great one to worry about

his business affairs. Apparently when he did, he would invite bouts of ill health. See T. 43, 198.

[38] Tauber, p. 110. See also Sokel, p. 178.

[39] One cannot really agree with Tauber when he says: " . . . he embodies the decision and clarity of a man of business," Tauber, p. 110.

[40] The wall, empty as it is, could represent his inner state. See Gesine Frey, p. 34.

[41] Frey, pp. 33-34.

[42] Sokel, 176.

[43] As stated in the introduction one must realize that Kafka's family was an extremly important factor in his daily life, a negative factor. See Br. a. F. 422-423.

[44] Again this seems to be a case where Kafka has taken an everyday metaphor literally. (Anders, pp. 40-41.)

[45] Reiss, pp. 157-158.

[46] Michel Dentan makes this observation: "Les éléments qui constituent aux yeux de K. et de Joseph K. la représentation des instances supérieures, leur sont fournis en grande partie par ce qu'en disent l'aubergiste, le maire, Bürgel ou Me Huld, Titorelli et quelques personnages secondaires." Michel Dentan, Humour et Création Littéraire dans L' Oeuvre de Kafka (Geneve: Librairie E. Droz, 1961), p. 129.

[47] Wagenbach, p. 99.

[48] Wagenbach, p. 246.

[49] Wagenbach, p. 248.

[50] This information comes from a report of the k. k. Statthalterei-Präsidium, No. 6374 dated Prague, 21 April 1903. A summary of the contents of this report was kindly supplied me by the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Abteilung: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.

[51] There is a conflict with regard to the date of Weissberger's arrival. Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 20 West Broadway, New York, New York, state that he arrived in 1869 (i.e. at the age of sixteen or seventeen). In Passport Application, No. 13479, dated November 14, 1899, Weissberger states that he arrived on or about May 15, 1868. Record Group 59, National Archives, Wahington, DC

[52] From the k. k. Statthalterei report.

[53] As an interesting side note: Gerhard Loose in his book about Kafka's relationship to America is at a loss to explain why Roßmann's boat anchors in the harbour of New York " . . . . obwohl die geschützte Lage und die Tiefe des Hafens den Schiffen von jeher erlauben anzulegen. Nun hatte Kafka bei Holitscher [a series of articles by H. appeared in Die Neue Rundschau] wiederholt von den Pieren beiderseits des Hudson gelesen . . . und trotzdem verschließt er sich den Tatsachen," Gerhard Loose, Franz Kafka und Amerika (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1968), pp. 25-26. If Arnold Weissberger had described his landing in New York in 1868, it would have been very much as Kafka described Roßmann's arrival. For disembarcation procedure at the Castle Garden Emigrant Depot see Friedrich Kapp, Immigration and the Comissioners of Emigration of the State of New York (New York: The Nation Press, 1870), pp. 111-112.

[54] In nineteenth century German literature (in Wilhelm Raabe's Die Akten des Vogelsang to take one example) America represents the haven for adventurers of all sorts. Johannes Urzidil quotes one of his schoolteacher's favorite warning: "'Solche Menschen wie Sie hat man früher nach Amerika geschickt." See Johannes Urzidil, "Edison und Kafka," Da geht Kafka (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1966), p. 19. But this did not just occur in the nineteenth century. In March 1914 Felice Bauer's brother, Ferdinand, was forced to make a hurried departure to the United States. See Br. a. F. 518,522,532,563.

[55] From a report by Inspector Harris, May 6-7, 1912, to the State Department on the United States Consulate in Prague, Record Group 59, National Archives, Washington DC.

[56] I received this information from Mrs. M. Steiner through Mr. Malcolm Pasley. I wish to thank both for their kind help.

[57] "Otto Kafka" [Obituary], New York Times, 25 March 1939, p. 15, col. 4. The story of Otto Kafka is by no means yet complete. I am still researching his life and career.

[58] "Corporation Head Taken as Enemy," New York Times, 4 August 1918, p. 4, col. 2. Otto Kafka, by the way, was taken into custody in 1918, as an enemy alien. He was referred to as "one of the wealthiest alien subjects" in New York City. (See the same article.)

[59] See the article quoted in the previous footnote. See also "Frank H. Hitchcock," The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, XXVII (New York: James T. White, 1939) p. 182; and "T[homas] Coleman DuPont," The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, XXII (New York: James T. White, 1932), pp. 3-4.

[60] "Kafka Left Family in Want, Wife Says," New York Times, 25 November 1923, Sec. II, p. 1, col. 4.

[61] This information comes to me from Mrs. M. Steiner.

[62] Information from Mrs. M. Steiner. As in the case of Otto Kafka, there is probably more information to be found in documents.

[63] Frank Kafka's disappearance would give new meaning to the title Der Verschollene, of course.

[64] Wagenbach, pp. 147-148.

[65] Critics and biographers differ on whom the company belonged to. Wagenbach, who makes no mention of the factory in his biography, says in his monograph that it belonged to Karl Hermann and the family, Wagenbach Monographie, p. 83. Walter Sokel: " . . . Fabrik seines Vaters und Schwagers", p. 86; Loose: " . . . die seinem Vater und seinem Schwager gehörende Fabrik . . . ", p. 83. Brod says that Kafka was asked by the family to acquire a share in the factory, Brod, p. 93. Documents show he was involved from its beginning. Of Course, it is possible that a previous company belonging to his brother-in-law and the author's family was dissolved so that the "Prager Asbestwerke could be formed. I was not able to find any evidence of this. From the letter to Felice (January 1, 1912) it is evident that his father supplied the financial backing for Kafka's share (Br. a. F. 68). It is also possible that his uncle, Alfred Löwy, assisted with money or advice. On May 23, 1912 Kafka wrote in his diary: "Gestern guter Brief von Onkel Alfred wegen der Fabrik" (T. 199).

[66] Information from a letter signed by Karl Hermann and Franz Kafka in the "Akten über die Einzelgesellschaftsfirma Prager Asbestwerke Hermann und Co. des k. k. Handelsgerichts zu Prag," Rg V-254 in the State Archives in Prague.

[67] This background information about Karl Hermann was obtained in an interview with Madame Vera Saudkova in Prague, July 1973.

[68] See also Br. a. F. 452.

[69] Mr. Malcolm Pasley confirmed the fact that this name was written in the manuscript of Kafka's diary.

[70] This and the following information from Mrs. M. Steiner.

[71] From the Handelsgericht file Rg A V-254. My thanks go to Dr. J. K. Zeman, Acadia University, for the translation of the Czech original. It is curious to find some of this detail in Kafka's diary: "10. August [1912] . Nichts geschrieben. In der Fabrik gewesen und im Motorraum zwei Stunden lang Gas eingeatmet. Die Energie des Werkmeisters und des Heizers vor dem Motor, der aus einem unauffindbaren Grunde nicht zünden will. Jammervolle Fabrik" (T.202). See also Kafka's moving description of the women workers in the factory written sometime between February 5 and 8, 1912 (T.176-177).

[72] Brod spoke secretly with Kafka's mother, who devised a plan

to lie to Hermann Kafka ("der seiner Krankheit wegen auf keinen Fall aufgeregt werden dürfe") about his son's absence from the factory, Brod, p. 99. Paul Hermann's increased participation in the "Prager Asbestwerke" probably dates from this time.

[73] From a letter in the Handelsgericht file Rg A V-254.

[74] From a written court verdict in the Handelsgericht file Rg A V-254.

[75] From letters in the Handelsgericht file Rg A V-254.

[76] "Das Urteil" can obviously be interpreted biographically from this angle. Georg, the young successful merchant, thinks of his friend in Russia to whom he has been untrue (actually his true self whom he has denied): Nun betrieb er [der Freund] ein Geschäft in Petersburg, das anfangs sich sehr gut angelassen hatte, seit langem aber schon zu stocken schien, wie der Freund bei seinen immer seltener werdenden Besuchen klagte" (E.23).

[77] Franz Kafka, The Trial, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir, revised by E. M. Butler (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

[78] The claimants that came to Kafka in his office were much humbler. "'Wie bescheiden diese Menschen sind,'" he said to Max Brod, "'Sie kommen zu uns bitten. Statt die Anstalt zu stürmen und alles kurz und klein zu schlagen.'" See Brod, p. 87.

[79] Tauber, p. 80.

[80] See Kafka's letter to Felice, March 21, 1914 (Br. a. F.) in which he describes how he was bothered in a telephone conversation with her " . . . ein Direktor, ein widerlicher Mensch, hinter mir, machte Späße, ich hatte ihm fast mit dem Fuß einen Stoß gegeben . . . ". See also Br. a. F. 541.

[81] See also the chapter "Kampf mit dem Direktor-Stellvertreter" in which his success in confusing K. is not the result of decernable maliciousness (P.296).

[82] Herbert Tauber says of the bank manager: "His character bears the reflection of divine love," Tauber, p. 81.

[83] Ira Kuhn even speaks of " . . . the over-anxious zeal of almost every one in the novel to be of assistance to Josef K. See "The Metamorphosis of The Trial," Symposium, 26, No. 2 (1972), 238.

[84] "Der Advokat repräsentiert also jene ganze Sphäre menschlichen Geistes, in der die Ohnmacht des Bewußtseins erkannt wird, der Glaube an die Stelle des Wissens, die Anheimgabe ans Schicksal an die Stelle der Empörung und Auflehnung tritt," says Emrich, p. 280.

[85] Emrich, p. 280.

[86] Politzer, p. 206.

[87] Sokel, p. 192.

[88] Sokel, pp. 188-189.

[89] Wilhelm Emrich uses the phrase "sexuelle Hörigkeit," p. 280.

[90] Herbert Tauber believes that in Block Kafka has painted a horrifying picture of himself, Tauber, pp. 113-114.

[91] Reiss, p. 86.

[92] Sokel, p. 193.

[93] Sokel, p. 193.

[94] Emrich, p. 285.

[95] Emrich, p. 289.

[96] Sokel, pp. 269, 271.

[97] Politzer, p. 210.

[98] Politzer, p. 173.

[99] "Ostensible acquittal" and "protraction" are terms used in Tauber, pp. 114-115.

[100] Emrich, p. 291.

[101] Frey, p. 138.

[102] Frey, p. 136.

[103] Tauber, p. 116.

[104] Heinz Politzer states that K. is actually asking why he has been singled out, Politzer, p. 184.

[105] Gesine Frey notes the similarity between the pronouncement that the chaplain makes about K.'s trial to that made by Huld about Kaufmann Block's case, p. 138. Since Huld showed cruelty during the Block-scene we may assume cruelty here too.

[106] Jürgen Born, "Kafka's Parable Before the Law: Reflections Towards a Positive Interpretation," Mosaic, A Journal for the Comparative Study of Literature and Ideas, 3, No. 4 (Summer 1970), 157-158.

[107] Ingeborg Henel, "Die Türhüterlegende und ihre Bedeutung für Kafkas 'Prozeß'," DVLG, 37 (1963), 54.

[108] Sokel, pp. 239-240.

[109] Henel, 54.

[110] Frey, p. 144.

[111] Born, 157.

[112] Born, 156.

[113] Born, 157.

[114] Born, 159.

[115] Born, 161.

[116] Henel, 55.

[117] Henel, 56.

[118] Sokel, p. 203.

[119] Politzer, p. 183.

[120] Sokel, p. 201.

[121] Born, 155.

[122] Sokel, p. 203.

[123] Kudszus, 313.

[124] Politzer, p. 212.

[125] In a letter to Felice (end of October, beginning of November 1914) in which Kafka describes his version of the meeting in the Hotel Askanischer Hof, at which their engagement was ended, we find that at the critical moment he too, like K., had nothing to say: " . . . es ist möglich, daß ich, wenn ich etwas Entscheidendes zu sagen imstande gewesen wäre, aus Trotz geschwiegen hätte. Das ist möglich, aber ich hatte nichts Entscheidendes zu sagen. Ich sah, daß alles verloren war, ich sah auch, daß ich es noch im letzten Augenblick durch irgendein überraschendes Bekenntnis retten konnte, aber ich hatte kein überraschendes Bekenntnis zu machen" (Br. a. F. 617).

Conclusion

In conclusion it is proposed not only to sum up what has been discussed but to introduce a few new observations or elaborate on those that were touched upon only briefly in the body of the thesis. First, a recapitulation. This study began with a discussion of the community and the protagonist's relationship to it. The community is a collection of beings who are thrown together, for no apparent reason or by a mysterious force, and who remain that way because they do not question their being together. The protagonist stands on the periphery of the group. In "Forschungen eines Hundes" the narrator is not a full-fledged member of the dog-race because he refuses to live the life of an ordinary dog and give up his questioning of what being a dog is. From the time of one incident in his youth, when he experienced insight into "togetherness," he has been cursed with the drive to examine certain facets of being a dog. The narrator of this work is on the attack, probing for a response to his questions, and he encounters the united front of his fellow dogs who, on the defensive, deflect his uncomfortable prying into the communal secret, which they do not fully comprehend but only sense. Their attitude toward him otherwise is open and friendly; in fact, they attempt to entice him back into an unreflecting normal dog-existence by pretending to give him favored treatment. In doing this they demonstrate a remarkable complicity, as if they had conspired together to prevent the investigator from analyzing his observations in public.

"Forschungen eines Hundes" is a work which focuses on what the "togetherness" of beings really is. The author's use of a dog-society to mean human society carries the negative connotation found in the expression "a dog's life". Although the other works discussed in this study do not deal expressly with this topic, the fact of community plays a role nonetheless, for the protagonist always finds himself among people who are united. In other works by Kafka the figures comprising the world surrounding the protagonist are less passive. They play an instrumental part in bringing about his downfall, although no malice can readily be discerned by the reader.

Much of Kafka's work is built on one scene or a series of

scenes. The scenes are comprised mainly of dialogue (in various forms such as direct speech, indirect speech, "erlebte Rede", or condensed report of statement). The protagonist's defeat occurs when to attain his goal, he is forced to come in contact with others. He experiences his defeat in conversation with those around him. Section II was therefore devoted to discussing isolated aspects of dialogue or of communication generally. First, three factors attendant upon communication were discussed. The protagonist finds that space he considers his has been invaded. This throws him off balance and puts him at a disadvantage when he speaks with others or, as in the case of the short piece "Der Nachbar", makes communication impossible. Strangely, the protagonist's relationship to his own personal space is better than that to the animate world around him, as witness the animal in "Der Bau", but even here there is a realization that he cannot be completely secure inside his lair, which he regards as his only "friend". The protagonist also invariably chooses the inappropriate moment to approach another person in order to present his case or may be approached at a time when he is unprepared (Josef K.'s arrest, for example). Then too, speaking with another person may be made difficult by the fact that the protagonist is doomed to be continually in motion. He is driven (by restlessness, anxiety, or some undefined power) to move from one place to another or from one person to another, often in order to seek help. Paradoxically, the curse of having to move on constantly offers the one slight hope of relief therefrom, since remaining in motion means entering new spaces, making new contacts, on the chance (although it never happens) that this will lead finally to his coming to rest.

In the actual exchange of words, the discussion centered on four main structures which are used to torment the protagonist and bring about his ruin: information, reproach, advice and judgement. Although separated for purposes of examinating them, they may be found to overlap. Thus a statement may give information while at the same time containing a reproach. Again, summing up, one can say that the protagonist is over-informed, that is, he receives unsolicited information with disheartening

or disquieting detail, and, at the same time, is unable to inform himself of facts vital to his existence or future course of action. Reproach makes him aware of mistakes injurious to himself and sometimes simultaneously drives home the fact that he has injured another. Advice is, of course, intended as an aid, but is frustrating in that it goes against the hero's inclinations. It is given without substantiating argument and, at times, in a condescending manner. Finally, there is judgement, perhaps the most important structure found in Kafka's dialogue. Judgement represents an estimation of the protagonist's worth, but also in a wider sense, it is an opinion on the situation he finds himself in and his prospects for the future. As in the case of information, judgement is given when it is not wanted. It is invariably negative. When positive judgement, favorable opinion, affirmation, is desired by the protagonist, his partner in dialogue witholds it. The same happens when he wishes to have his adversaries judged negatively by a third, uninvolved party. One must remember, too, that Kafka plays with the meaning of the word judgement. As a juridical term, judgement is the opinion spoken after the deliberative procedure of a trial. The unfolding of that procedure is fixed and gives equal opportunity to prosecution and defence. This is the judgement hoped for by the protagonist, as was evident in "Fürsprecher". What he receives, however, is judgement subject to no procedural control, open to all the vagaries of human behaviour.

The purpose of the final section was to examine dialogue and in a wider sense, communication, on one major work, Der Prozeß. It goes without saying that an examination of the exchange of words between figures in the novel had to lead quite naturally to a picture of inter-personal relationships. Here is an instance where the world around the protagonist, in this case Josef K., takes a more active role in his downfall. Two warders and an inspector ("Aufseher"), representatives of an undefined higher authority, a court, inform Josef K. that he is under arrest. This act and the mention of a long trial to come suggest a stigma attached to K., who, however, at the moment of his arrest is neither aware of any wrongdoing nor conscious

of anything in his mode of life that should arouse feelings of guilt. In the unfolding of the story, K. is compelled to enter new realms and assume contact with various people he had not known before. In addition he finds himself forced into a new relationship with those spheres already familiar to him, all in order to learn more about the trial and the court. At the same time he protests that he has been singled out for no rhyme or reason and looks for confirmation of this view. Each conversation he enters into brings defeat to K.. Using mainly the dialogic devices we observed in Section II, the people K. meets make his search hopeless and withold any word which would reassure him of his innocence. In shorter pieces like "Eine alltägliche Verwirrung," "Das Ehepaar," or "Der Schlag ans Hoftor," the catastrophe is reached in one scene. Der Prozeß shows one man being worn down by an accumulation of verbal struggles which have invariably ended in his defeat. Within each scene, even within each utterance, we find an accumulation of adversities. This is, as we learn, K.'s trial.

One characteristic of dialogue in much of Kafka's fiction, one that is very evident in a work like Der Prozeß, is that the exchange of words deals with a subject that is in some way vital to the protagonist's situation or existence generally. The warders appear in K.'s apartment to notify him of his arrest, although the message only slips out after a period of time. K. speaks with Frau Grubach in the hope that she will declare the arrest an absurd event and later with people like the wife of the court attendant or Titorelli in order to find out more about the court and what could be done for him. The topic in all conversations is inevitably the court and/or K.'s situation. This gives the destruction of K. a relentless pace. In other works this is also true, although perhaps not so pronounced. In the novel Das Schloß, conversations center on K.'s attempts to gain entrance to the castle or to find out more about it. Only in an early work like Der Verschollene does conversation show less purpose. Nowhere in Kafka's work does one find a broad discussion between characters of intellectual topics such as the wide-ranging Naphta-Settembrini conversations in Thomas Mann's Der Zauberberg, nor the aimless

light conversation, or even chit-chat, that Fontane masters so well. It must be added, of course, that both in Fontane and Mann, however remote and neutral the conversation may seem, it either becomes very relevant to the situation or already contains undercurrents which have great bearing on the individuals involved, their problems, and their relationship to each other.

In Kafka then there is what we could term an immediacy in each exchange of words the protagonist has with those around him. And yet, as topical as the conversation may be for the protagonist, -- it concerns him, his situation now and in the future -- he cannot achieve any breakthrough talking with others. In many of the conversations that were analyzed one noticed that K.'s partners in dialogue previewed the future difficulties in K.'s trial. This began in Chapter One with the warders' statement that K. could consider himself fortunate to have two warders such as they in his difficult trial. Statements like these continue to appear in almost every scene. They can be considered as pieces of disquieting information. And yet they serve another function. They take the emphasis off the meeting in progress. By referring to future troubles, one could say that the warders give their conversation with K. a more incidental appearance. By incidental I mean that the significance of the meeting is reduced, not the significance of K.'s trial. The warders make it clear they consider K.'s trial a serious matter, although they see themselves as "small fish". Nothing can be expected from them and nothing can be effected at the moment of the conversation. K. is faced with his impotence to end his trial by one argument, in one fell swoop, as it were. Thus the important event is always yet to come. What happens at the moment has, at most, importance in the light of future developments. This, as we have seen, matches the situation in which the man from the country finds himself in the parable at the conclusion of Der Prozeß. The doorkeeper continually makes the present moment worthless (the man cannot gain entrance now) by pointing to the future. He is only a lowly official, the more terrible doorkeepers lie behind his door. On the other hand, in retrospect, actions or omissions K. has made suddenly take on more importance in the present and, it is indicated, will also

have bearing on the future.

The momentousness of K.'s trial grows in his mind. Preparation of his defence assumes greater meaning for him. But each meeting fails to bring about the final court battle. Instead K. learns that his situation has eroded behind his back. In the last chapter he recognizes the futility of protest, and yet in his mind the question remains: where are the high judge and the high court which he has never seen? One must agree entirely with Beda Allemann in saying that it is not important to determine what the court is in reality, or what it represents translated into the reader's terms.[1] We know that for K. it is the body that, judging him according to judicial procedure, (in his opinion) would have to find him innocent. This is what K. hopes it is. In reality all he (and the reader) know of the high court and judge has not been gained by experience, but through the suggestions of others. They themselves remain vague because they too have not experienced it. The fact of limited perspective is recognized by K.. In Huld's interrogation of Block he has a chance to view someone else's blindness to the actual situation and in his discussion with the chaplain he brings up the fact of his limited experience. Winfried Kudszus, who traces the few signs of authorial presence in Der Prozeß, makes the following observation which bears on the point just discussed: Die Reduktion auktorialer Komponenten, so bemerkten wir schon, ist aufs engste mit einem fortschreitenden perspektivischen Solipsismus des Helden verknüpft; je mehr das -- seiner Tendenz nach -- auktoriale Erzählpanorama schrumpft, desto mehr kristallisiert sich eine personale, gänzlich auf den Helden bezogene Erzählsituation heraus. Dieser Situation entspricht . . . Josef K.s Ermüdung und Verzweiflung wie etwa auch sein rudimentäres Realitätsbewußtsein. Dem perspektivischen Geschehen läuft also ein innerer Prozeß, der Zerfall des Helden parallel.[2] In the light of my previous discussion it becomes evident that one must add a new paradoxical twist to the phenomenon of solipsism. As the novel progresses, Josef K. has sought out, or has been led to, an even greater number of helpers. He has accumulated more and more opinions, advice, and fragments of information, all of which, one might reason, should raise him onto a higher level of understanding. And yet the

opposite occurs. The more information K. collects and the more viewpoints he consults, the more he is thrown back on himself; the more his horizon narrows.

In discussing dialogue in Der Prozeß and in other prose by Kafka one should not forget the humorous element. Max Brod mentions that when Kafka read the first chapter of the novel to a group of friends, everyone laughed without restraint, not the least, the author himself, who laughed so much at times that he could not continue to read.[3] Critics who have analyzed this element in the author's work have come up with various explanations of where the humour in Kafka's work lies.[4] Generally it has been found in the way figures like K. try to cope with problems which arise in their lives.[5] This study has looked at the verbal torture or, to use a milder word, the verbal harassment, to which the surrounding world of the protagonist subjects him. The reader is forced to admit that, strange as it may seem, this verbal torture has its ludicrous aspects.

The frustration of others in their attempts to achieve their goal has always provided a basis for humour. The basis for humour in cartoons, for example, is more often than not a situation, in which one figure is frustrated in his plans to ensnare another figure, not only frustrated, but totally vanquished. What one finds amusing is not so much the fact that the cartoon figure is defeated, but the usually exaggerated manner in which this is brought about with the eventual victim usually ending up buried under a truly staggering pile of debris. In a cartoon, of course, one has a visual picture; the actions are physical and obvious. A parallel process is evident in some of the conversations Kafka's protagonist has with the surrounding world. One recalls, for example, the long speech in which K.'s uncle reproaches K. for running off with Leni, leaving him to speak with Huld and the "Kanzleidirektor" alone. K. is spared no pain. He is buried beneath a torrent of words depicting each phase of an embarrassing scene whose initiator -- this is made abundantly clear -- is K.. Here one truly has the opportunity to observe the humorous cumulative effect of Kafka's detail. The long painful description, humorous in its exaggeration alone, is finally crowned by Uncle

Karl's reference to his discomfort waiting for K. in the rain: "'Und mich, deinen Onkel, läßt du hier im Regen -- fühle nur, ich bin ganz durchnäßt -- stundenlang warten und mich in Sorgen abquälen'" (P.136).

The overwhelming of Josef K. by detailed description of events that effect him is not confined to this one incident. It happens repeatedly in Huld's description of the court, for example, or Titorelli's description of the methods of escaping conviction. Even a cruel scene such as Huld's interrogation of Block evokes laughter when the lawyer, having assured himself from Leni of his client's good behaviour, transmits the conversation he had with the third judge containing many statements about Block and his case, all with devastating import for the future.

There is another humorous aspect of Josef K.'s defeat in his conversations with others. The dialoguic devices noted in Section II, information, reproach, advice and judgement, reoccur with a frequency that is unnatural and consequently ludicrous. In fact, the reader soon recognizes that each dialogue will inevitably lead to the protagonist's frustration. This inevitability, too, makes him smile. We must remember that, for the most part (up until the last two chapters at least) the individual defeats by themselves do not have major consequences. As in individual parts of dialogue it is their accumulated weight which drags K. down and forces him into final resignation.

The inevitability of defeat becomes all the more humorous in view of the fact that most of the figures seem to be trying to help K.. (The limited perspective makes it impossible to determine this with certainty.) Their destructive words slip out on the side. Frau Grubach has good intentions of pleasing K.; what she says irritates him. K.'s uncle has his nephew's well-being at heart, but each word he says places the future of that well-being in doubt. Huld's profession is to defend, but all K. gains from his talk is the suspicion that his lawyer might be colluding with the court to his detriment. Titorelli is happy to demonstrate his knowledge of inofficial court procedure and thereby offer K. a way out of his situation. His proposals, however, are disheartening rather than helpful.

In the introduction it was said that in his work Kafka gives his representation of his peculiar relationship to the human community. He was convinced of his inability to become an ordinary member of that community, and even more certain about the fact that, whatever reason this might have, it was a fault. Consequently, in his work he describes his protagonist on the periphery of the community, dependent on it and yet without any intimate bond with it. As in the case of the author, the fault lies in him. However, as this study has shown, the surrounding world does not hinder him in his task, out of malice or out of awkwardness. Kafka has suggested both reasons. On the one hand the reader can view the protagonist's defeat and destruction in his encounter with others with exasperation, on the other hand, though, he can view it with a smile, recognizing the humour in the petty but relentless process.

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