

ALICE K's ADVENTURES INTERROSCRIBING SIMULANDRA: OF
PERFORMANCE THROUGH QUESTIONS IN *ALICE'S*
ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND *THE TRIAL*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION	2
Interroscribing the Law (s) of Self.....	10
Interroscribing the Law (s) of “Family.”	18
Interroscribing the Law (s) of ““Family.”” I	37
Interroscribing the Law (s) of ““Family.”” II	47
Interroscribing the Law (s) on the Stage, Theatricality	54
CONCLUSION.....	67
WORKS CITED	74

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of the characters Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Josef K in Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and the ways each is an uncertain "self" in an uncertain "family." The thesis performs according to Carroll's and Kafka's considerations that the prose-page is a stage of performance of whatever ideas are appropriate to the context, in this case, analysis of ideas from the two novels. Both writers explored the power of the Law (s) of language but both also suggested that the truth of language will never be known. To use the language of Kafka, the "truth" of language is a door that will never be entered. The result is that uncertainty appears around every corner of the "self" and the families or language of "families" that Alice's and K's selves are part of. The conclusion in the thesis is arrived at in the text via explorations of specific word meanings (such as "reeling and writhing" and "family") and how the meanings of these words are related to the contexts (physical and intellectual positions) from which they are birthed. And the necessity of performance at the core of the thesis reveals itself through performances of "knowledge" that remain uncertain and always hidden inside the door of Kafka's Law (s) or, in the case of Alice, metaphorically underground.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Thomas Ruggles Pynchon, Jr.

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I would like to thank Dr. Boren for encouraging my thinking and my writing style. I would have been out in the cold without him. I thank my Thesis Committee: Dr. Boren, Dr. Clifford, and Dr. Montwieler. Further, I would like to thank the library for all their help with getting assorted books and articles, Interlibrary Loan, and the library café for all the espresso I could suck down.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Still Image from Orson Welles' adaptation of <i>The Trial</i>	1
Pieter Brueghel the Elder's "The Tower of Babel"	4
Sir John Tenniel's Illustrations from <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> (untitled in text)	8, 14, 45, 55, 58, 61
René Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe"	62



1

“The more horses you put to, the faster your progress-not of course in the removal of the cornerstone from the foundations, which is impossible, but in the tearing of the harness, and your resultant riding cheerfully off into space.” Franz Kafka.²

¹ <<http://www.cfi-icf.ca/trial.html>> Retrieved: 20 January 2007. This image is taken from Orson Welle’s adaptation of Franz Kafka’s novel, *The Trial*.

“*Interroscribe*, v. The act of writing that twists and enacts the process of questioning such as ‘to interrogate,’ ‘to cross-examine,’ and/or ‘to investigate’ together with a parallel act of writing such as ‘to explicate,’ ‘to describe,’ and/or ‘to illustrate.’ The term asserts elements of dogma into the writing but carries the implication of the question in it as well.”

INTRODUCTION.

“Listlyers and Reelers ” have entered this door, the door of a text in which Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* enjoy unity and separation, are written together and apart, and, in other words, have birthed and are birthing an event.³ The process of negotiating with Alice in her Wonderland about the obstacles to her finding and living the truth of her life and with Josef K in his trial/city is here called “interroscribing” because this thesis concerns modes of thought that are always open to question and yet are always being written and performed through acts of uncertainty. The very act of writing and analysis implies a shut-down, or a jamming, to refer to Roland Barthes’s thinking on textual acts of meaning in *S/Z*. In this movement is a performance that is nevertheless never free from the possibilities of questions “Before the Law,” one might say, on the stage of discourse.

This project is about reading the principle characters in the two novels as interroscribing their respective zones “inside the text.” The job of this essay is to discuss with some detachment how they each rely on assorted contextual definitions, or Law (s) of home life, theatricality, and

² Whisper from the Darkness: I use this aphorism from Franz Kafka’s *The Zürau Aphorisms* to begin imagining the labyrinth of efforts that are also imagined in tie Trans. Michael Hofmann. New York: Schocken Books, 2006. 46.

³ Whisper from the Darkness: Jacques Derrida, in his essay, “Before the Law,” named after the very fable Franz Kafka includes at the end of *The Trial*, writes that he is the doorkeeper of the text as Kafka is the doorkeeper of his text. (as in: Doorkeeper of a Doorkeeper of a Doorkeeper *ad infinitum*)

the flux or blur between those Laws. Lewis Carroll might analogously call these positions before the Law (s), “Universes of Discourse,” to which each must submit and yet which each may still transgress. This thesis picks at the divide between the Law of certainty, in the Jean Baudrillardian sense where language might be perceived as a scientific device where objectivity, empiricism, and truth reign, and the Law (s) of uncertainty where subjectivity, conjecturalism, and improbability reign. It is about questions and questions (Corngold “The Question” 101). The challenge in reading these two idiosyncratic literary efforts is to consider boldly Werner Hamacher’s “cloudy spots” of the Law (s) (302) and Jean Baudrillard’s claim, “At all events, the undertaking is never complete” (33); and to examine the acts and necessity of performance exhibited by Alice in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Josef K in *The Trial* that result in living under the Law (s), replete with “cloudy spots” and incompleteness.

One can expect to observe there are doors everywhere inside the door of this (my) text. There are texts opening within texts and images appearing as well. Some of the doors are made obvious in the text because they will be seen through their in-text MLA citation style. For instance, Immanuel Kant writes in the “Preface to the First Edition” of his Critique of Pure Reason this is human thinking, “Human reason, in one sphere of its cognition, is called upon to consider questions...” (xix). Some of these doors lead to the basement through the use of footnotes. An analog to these doors-within-doors is found in Pieter Brueghel the Elder’s “The Tower of Babel.” This image is a construct full of doors. There is some space between the doors but it is a challenge to call those spaces “doors.” The result is that the painting’s viewer always already stands before a door and never enters because there is always a door on all sides.



This picture analog is relevant because it sets up the first method to approach both Kafka's and Carroll's works, respectively. This first premise for approach is that the Law must be negotiated via all so-called segments of quotidian existence. Also, the Law is presented as always in the present tense. For instance, in *The Trial*, the Law, or apparatus of the Law Court offices, is connected through a door literally to almost every scene in which Josef K exists.⁵ For instance, the opening of the novel finds Josef K waking from sleep in the early morning to find two inspectors have come to arrest him (1-19).⁶ He is then told that he must show up for a hearing the next Sunday morning (35). He goes to the building in which the hearing takes place and finds that not only does the court execute its routine inside the apartments themselves (which are living quarters), a fact that K discovers only through relentless and dedicated knocking on doors to find the right one. He also finds there is an actual Law office at the top of the apartment building set aside for the Examining Magistrate (41-53).⁷

The second premise for approach illuminated by the above painting is found in the images of the spaces between the doors. Toward the end of Kafka's novel, a priest tells K a

⁴ <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tower_of_Babel_\(Brueghel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tower_of_Babel_(Brueghel))> Retrieved: 20 January 2007.

⁵ Whisper from the Darkness: I use this spelling of Josef K but in the first English translation by Willa and Edwin Muir, Josef K was spelled "Joseph K."

⁶ Whisper from the Darkness: I am using two translations of *The Trial* certainly, but all references except one, which will be noted, are from the Breon Mitchell translation.

⁷ Whisper from the Darkness: I use K for Josef K hereafter.

parable called “Before the Law.” In the parable, a man from the country stands before the door of the Law to get in. There is a guard there who tells him he cannot enter, the man from the country never enters, the questions abound as to what the Law actually is, and the man dies before ever entering to find the truth. The priest’s explanations reveal the multi-directionality (perhaps even contradictory) thinking on the Law and the meaning of the two characters. The explanations also set up an implication that scholars are involved in thinking about the Law’s meaning (s). And archived within the life of the scholar is the scene of the Library. Or rather, as the questions are seemingly infinite about the Law and the truth, the Library as also seemingly an infinite space.⁸ But within the space of the Library are the spaces between the doors of the above painting. These analogs are guides, not truth.

The reason these analogs are guides and not truth is because although the infinite Library does present a platform for thought, it is also inadequate because the very nature of the doors of the Law and truth implies they can not necessarily be separated from other doors. In other words, it is easy to talk about the doors of truth, or “the doors of perception” (to nod to Aldous Huxley) in hallways of a place that we understand to be a Library or an archive. It is not so easy to think in terms of that hallway because it is no default that one can separate the Law from the endless questioning. The best example of this is found in early in *The Trial* where K goes to his hearing and tells the crowd gathered that the examining magistrate should direct the entire event with the authority a bold theater director has (49). This short segment of the larger chapter lays open the Law as working in tandem with theatricality and the implosion of meaning is an inevitable result

⁸ Whisper from the Darkness: The infinite Library metaphor comes out of Jorge Luis Borges’ short story, “The Library of Babel.” *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings*. Eds. Donald A Yates and James E Irby. Trans. James E Irby. New York: New Directions, 1964. 51-58. Borges writes, however, that the legions of books and pages of workings of the world’s alphabets are in fact *finite*.

of its misdirection and misreading possibilities through performance and gesture rather than explanation and description (Kuepper 60-63).

To turn a corner and open Alice's Wonderland more attentively, there is some need to open the doors to the tunnels connecting Carroll's and Kafka's edifices that show Franz Kafka had some familiarity and understanding of ideas circulating in Victorian England's literary scene. This is what might be called a "back door approach." Peter F. Neumeyer writes that Kafka had more influence on English authors than other of his time, but that Kafka himself was not terribly familiar with the great breadth of the English scene (630). Rather, he was quite familiar with Charles Dickens, another Victorian writer working within the larger matrix of Victorian literature. In particular, Neumeyer relates a short reference from Kafka's diaries. He writes, "His indebtedness to Dickens is acknowledged in his diary: (October 8, 1917) Dicken's *Copperfield*. 'The Stoker' a sheer imitation of Dickens. The projected novel [Amerika] even more so" (630).⁹

But that is not the only Dickens influence on Kafka's work. Deborah Heller Roazen sees Dickens' *Bleak House* and *Der Prozeß (The Trial)* as both being about the crushing unknowable Law (252). Roazen draws a distinction in the type of Law that Dickens examines and the kind that Kafka does. She writes, "...to draw a distinction in the kind of symbolism characteristic of Dickens and Kafka arising from the fact that 'Kafka is primarily concerned with the apparent muddle of Divine Law and Dickens with the actual muddle of human law'..." (252). One can question whether Kafka is primarily concerned with the "muddle" of Divine Law or whether he sees all these laws as somehow working always in varied degrees and times. And perhaps, "muddled" is another way of rephrasing Alice's status as outsider who must choose which rules to follow and which "game" to submit to or engage in (Blake 88, Sewell 62) and Kafka's status as the outsider who must work out his relationship to his trial (Cohen 221, Litowitz 105) .

⁹ Whisper from the Darkness: The emphasis through the [] is mine.

One could also ask why Roazen pits the “muddle” of Divine Law as apparent and the “muddle” of human law as actual. And one could wonder about this author’s particular metaphysics and what would create the need to draw the two muddlings asunder by two very different words even though both “apparent” and “actual” are archived under the letter “A” in English lexicons. But the point, however, is that Kafka and Carroll are explicitly connected via the textual door and tunnel represented by Dickens’ texts. And Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* was upstaged by fellow Victorian writer Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass*, which is seen as a re-reading and re-thinking of its predecessor. *Through the Looking-Glass* and *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, considered as one unit, represent the exemplar of the Victorian theatrical novel (Vlock 165). All three authors, Charles Dickens, Lewis Carroll, and Franz Kafka, deal with workings of “the Law” and each depicts it as “muddled.”

It is time to emerge through the trapdoor of Victorian intertextuality and authorial influence into *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. To look back to the above Breughel painting and make an analog of it to Alice’s journey, Alice sits outside in the grass with her sister while her sister reads a book without pictures (1).



10

¹⁰ <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114>> Retrieved: 20 January 2007. Notice the second picture looks a lot like the opening picture of a tunnel and the Law doorkeeper. But as the Door of the Law (S) is unenterable, the light of

Alice then follows the White Rabbit down into a rabbit-hole (the opening of a Breughelian warren to be sure), which allows a conceptual metaphorical space that gives birth to an interroscoring through and between *The Trial* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Both narratives are about tunnels and doors. Second, those rooms, or spaces between doors, in Breughel's painting are all through Alice's story as well. For example, right after she falls through the rabbit-hole (itself a door of passage) down the tunnel into that first room, she is confronted with a tiny door that sets up a rather complicated challenge to get open (5-8). This scene is not just one with a door in a clearly demarcated space, but rather a door that must be negotiated through assorted actions such as drinking a bottle of liquid, changing size, and making sure to have the right sized key for the lock, all actions unavailable to the man from the country described in Kafka's "Before the Law." In other words, this is the realization of the metaphor of the Infinite Library flipped into the image of the warren where the holes and tunnels are not clearly set aside as objects of easy entry, in or out, but rather are built into a larger system of thinking and working out of challenges or opportunities.

Like K in *The Trial*, Alice must recognize that the Law (s) and questions of expected behavior are connected in multiple ways to every scene in her journey through Wonderland. The best example of this is when the caterpillar asks Alice to perform a song called, "You are old, Father William" (45-48). In this performance, the Father gives advice to the young man. Then the young man asks Father William how he can chew such tough food. Father William replies, "In my youth," said his father, 'I took to the law, And argued each case with my wife; And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw, Has lasted the rest of my life'" (47). The very performance of the song includes a reference to the Law and to "family." He must exercise this

Orson Welles' still from his film adaptation of the novel might as well be total darkness as it is in the above John Tenniel illustration from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

action articulating and questioning laws and meaning continuously to have strong jaws. Further, after Alice finishes her performance, the caterpillar judges her action as not fully correct (48). She is told her words were “not quite right” but the reader is left with no example of what the truth of the song might actually be (48). Of course, the very unknowability of the Law of that performance is right in front of us, as it is also clear to us in our reading of Kafka’s *The Trial*. “The Law,” that tells us what to do and what not to do, that constructs meaning and deconstructs it all at the same time, and that also enjoys relations with theatricality in K’s story. But this is yet just as unknown to K.

Interroscribing the Law (s) of Self.

Both novels entertain questions of performance of the “Self” in front of the Door to the Law of Self. The limits of the dialectical framework inherent in these questions of performance of “Self” are unknown in these two novels, but a good place to start is with the disparity between the concepts: K and Alice are simultaneously subjects who choose their actions and are objects to whom actions are done. They are never free. Or, K and Alice are simultaneously subjects who gaze and are objects upon which the gaze falls. The language is easier to find in *The Trial* as the

images of theatricality and investigation and examination are explicitly in the text.¹¹ The best example is found when K feels he must explain why his neighbor Fräulein Bürstner's room is slightly ransacked after the morning the inspectors arrest him. He feels he must apologize to her for whatever inconvenience it causes her. K performs the scene of his arrest in terms of theatricality: "You have to visualize the cast of characters. It's very interesting. I'm the inspector, two guards are sitting over there...And now the action begins. Oh, I'm forgetting myself, the most important character" (31). In this short segment, K authorizes the reading of theatricality in the text (a point that will be exhibited and analyzed later), reveals he is being watched by the inspector, and posits himself as the character who holds the power and the arresting watch. In other words, he is both a subject/performer who gazes and an object/performer at whom is gazed and is never free from that paradigm.

The line between being one who gazes and an object of the gaze is the simple way to see how the character must judge the Law (s). The question of K's moves is seen in another example that makes for a link and turn back through the door to Alice. During the week after K's first hearing on a Sunday, at which he yells about the absurdity of the court's proceedings and storms out, he expects to be told about an other hearing the following Sunday (54). There is no such alert. So K goes to the same apartment building at which the pervious Sunday's hearing was held. It is here K sees the sign "Law Court Offices Upstairs" that lets him know the Law is

¹¹ *Whisper from the Darkness*: In Willa and Edwin Muir's translation, it is not stated in text on the morning of K's arrest that he actually done anything wrong. Their translation says, "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning" (1). It specifically says he was arrested without having committed a crime. In other words, the work of the Law was done to him for whatever reason. In Breon Mitchell translation, however, he writes the text this way, "Someone must have slandered Josef K., for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong, he was arrested" (3). Mitchell's translation says, through the use "truly wrong" it is possible K actually is guilty and therefore must be examined and inspected by the systems of the Law. In other words, K is perhaps not just an object of scrutiny, but also an actor who acts and pays the consequences for those actions.

intimately tied to this apartment for the living out of daily existence. He talks to a court usher who tells him there is no hearing this morning and opens the door to the offices. The scene behind the door reveals a long hallway of defendants to K (67). K refers to these defendants as “colleagues,” which by linguistic turn molds K into an object of scrutiny for the Law’s processes (69). It is true that as K is compared to the Inspector in his performance of his arrest for Fräulein Bürstner, it is not a far step to open a lexicon and archive “Inspector” under the list of possible near-synonyms for Examining Magistrate.

To take this a bit further and make the point clearer: as K is inspected and examined, he also inspects and examines. One can think about this blurring of inspects/inspected and examines/examined because the very act of asking the court Usher about the Examining Magistrate’s life and asking to see the Law court offices in the top of the apartment building are acts of inspection and examination, acts of looking for the truth of the matter. Also, the manufacturer (who tells K later about the painter Titorelli’s relationship to high ranking judges) suggests that as K is the Chief Financial Officer, he is also “practically a lawyer” (135). And to lead the thinking out of the text-door labeled “*The Trial*” and into the door labeled “*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*,” in the same segment where K asks about the Examining Magistrate’s life, the usher tells K, “In this building alone, he’s already been thrown out of five apartments he wormed his way into” (67). It is intriguing to think of K as a worm, or a caterpillar perhaps, in light of Alice’s adventures, who moves from scene to scene as inspector or examiner because in this role, K performs an action of power much as the caterpillar atop the mushroom does in ordering Alice to perform the above mentioned song. The worm/caterpillar metaphor and its application to both novels works through tunnels like a footnote itself in the textual analog or like the undertext of reading other books for argument support and understanding. In other

words, the metaphor of the worm is an act and a thing. It is an object that exists in the text, as the worm does, and is a vehicle for thought.

The worm metaphor sets up the platform on which to examine the dialectic between Alice as a proactive creature and an object to which things are done. First, the very action of jumping in the tunnel and following it into the darkness is a proactive investigation of examinatory curiosity. After Alice sees the White Rabbit with the pocket watch, Lewis Carroll writes “Alice started to her feet...ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge” (2). The scene portrays a Rabbit jumping down a hole that is called a “rabbit-hole” but that could just as well be nicer label for “worm-hole.”¹² Second, after she falls all the way down and passes through the fall to the bottom past bottles of all sorts with labels of varied types, labels such as “orange marmalade” and “drink me” (3, 7). These labels are given by Lewis Carroll but they could have been something more sinister, something like “poison,” as Alice herself admits (7). It is thus only by the grace of Carroll she does not drink a bottle labeled, or mislabeled, “poison.”

At the same time, Alice has, “...read several...histories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules...” (7). In these words, it is read that there were rules for the proper actions of children characters in narratives in existence before Alice got herself down underground in the “rabbit” hole. Rather, those rules, or Law (s) were done to Alice before she started this adventure. Jean Baudrillard writes it this way, “...the very principle of the world that thinks us” (42). There is something between the subject “Alice” and the object “Alice” in this scene

¹² Whisper from the Darkness: It might be interesting to think about *The Trial* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in terms of worm-holes and dimensions of time and space, the symbolic exchange in the Jean Baudrillian sense, and subjectivities. One can easily see, in a Freudian sense, that Alice faces herself as inspector worm and question, as riddler and riddle itself. She is always “reeling and writhing” between these conceptualizations.

because the world in which she drinks the labeled bottles are labeled already and she claims to have read other books written before her adventure that explain the proper “rules” for a situation such as this. Her claim for knowledge, however, is questionable because just a little while later after Alice drinks the bottles labeled “drink me,” and collapses toward the grounds like a “telescope,” she finds a cake on a plate under the table, the table she cannot reach because she has grown too short for its normal usage, eats it because it is labeled “eat me” and shoots toward the sky “like the largest telescope that ever was” (8, 10). “Curiouser and curiouser,” she yells (11). The rules she assumed she had a command of are not so easy to follow. Even more, the image of a little girl that scrunches into a small narrow bunch and then stretches out into a long narrow wispy creature certainly sounds wormish or lizardish. Alice is changeable and still labeled “Alice.” She performs “Alice” even though she is trapped in a body that is not “Alice.” She looks like this:



13

Thirdly, later in the text, Alice meets a Mock Turtle and a Gryphon, who tell her about their education (103). Alice assumes she understands that “education” is (partly) a matrix for “writing” the students even if they somehow are “free” in their minds. They tell her they learned “French, music, *and washing*” and “reeling and writhing, of course, to begin with” (103). In this scene are the words that must exist outside and before Alice in order for her to give back a question, “to begin with.” Words for narratives existed before Alice. To this question of what the “regular course” at school is, she is told “reeling and writhing” by the Mock Turtle. On the surface, it looks like “reeling and writhing” is simple word-play on “reading and writing.” It surely is. And although this activity of reading and writing is a confrontation between accepting words presented by others and forming other words to hand back, “reeling and writhing” is a phrase that smacks eerily of a worm on a fishing line or a serpent slithering through the

¹³ < <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114> > Retrieved: 20 January 2007.

swamp.¹⁴ It is also a phrase that hints that language itself is a tunneler by nature, a thing that is not only a passive activity. It is an action of discourse as well as an object of discourse and it is this action, this performance, that is never clarified through “reading” and “writing.” Rather, as language is itself a tunneler, it is also something underground (under the surface), something uncanny and uncertain (Freud, Trans. Strachey 218).

Finally, when Alice asks the caterpillar how to get “normal” size again and she performs “You are Old Father William” for him, he asks her, “who are you,” to which she replies, “I – I hardly know, sir, just at present...” (42). Her “self” must be reconsidered in light of the Law (s) as known and unknown in the world she inhabits “just at present.” After all, the very figure who asks Alice this question is himself a caterpillar, a form of worm who also must go through his own dialectical alteration on the way to becoming something else, a butterfly. Before that

¹⁴ Whispers from the Darkness: First, I have to think about H.P. Lovecraft’s story, “The Whisperer in Darkness,” the text from which I grabbed this recurring motif of burying a voice in the underground/undertext. In this story, Lovecraft writes about Albert N. Wilmarth’s letter conversations with Henry Akeley from Vermont. The letters tell of a great flood in “wild domed hills of Vermont” (415) and the resulting conversation about the strange creatures that were supposedly seen floating down into the valleys with other flood debris. These creatures are said to look like nothing anyone had ever seen but yet did conform to the old folk tales about why one should always avoid those hills. To make a long story short, Wilmarth’s character is an expert on folk/mythology and certainly assumes it is an academic topic—that the locals are just backwards and he, the studied one, “knows” what the truth is. But one of the things I respect about Lovecraft is that he often turns humanity’s need to know the truth and scientific excursions into scenes in which the seeker is either left to die underground or is traumatized for life telling others to stay away just as there is planned an investigation into the very area from where the character has just arrived. This story is no different. The beasts that are seen in the flood debris are glimpsed by locals but are written off by the “authorities.” Akeley records some weird voices talking in a barely human machine-like voice and sends the recordings to Wilmarth who does not know what to make of it. Finally, Akeley invites Wilmarth up to Vermont from Miskatonic University in Arkham, MA (the famous University that does not exist but which H.P. Lovecraft writes about so often) to see for himself and to bring all their research together. Wilmarth makes the trip and talks with a voice that sounds like Akeley but is left literally in the dark during the conversation and thus can never see him. A few days later, the text says, or implies very strongly, that Akeley has been turned into one of these robot-voices by these evil creatures that live in the hills nearby. The thing is that we will never know because Wilmarth runs from the house the morning after he realizes it and notices that all the “proof” had disappeared. The result is twofold: 1) The world can never accept Wilmarth’s story except through his word. This is already a scene of uncertainty. 2) The very center of the investigation, Akeley’s claim to have information and “proof” of these creatures’ existence is buried in literal darkness and is only called forth by this insistent whisper from the dark which draws the investigator in. In other words, as there is no proof but only a whisper it is not clear if the whisper is in fact actually there in the dark drawing in the investigation or if the discovery is perpetrated by the actor, Wilmarth himself, so that he goes forward with the search. We are also thus left with an eerie uncertainty—Freud would call this “uncanny.” And while on the topic of Freud, one can’t help but note the fort/da metaphor applies beautifully here – that which is uncanny & repressed is thrown out, while the act of control and normalization is figured in the reeling in all the acquisitions of language. Or, “fort/da” is a “reeling and writhing.”

alteration, however, one must also allow that a caterpillar could also be used as bait, uncannily writhing at the end of a line (Freud, Trans. Strachey 218).¹⁵

The Law (s) of Self that has been described through standard life of a male named K in *The Trial* is an object to which life's powers are enacting and a subject that enacts. I.e., K is both the object the Law arrests, expects attention and hearings, and the subject who is a creature that is his own examiner, attention getter, and inspector. To glance back to "reeling and writhing" in regards to K in *The Trial*, he tries to reel something in on his own figurative fishing line, the truth of the Law (s)'s involvement in his life and the lives of the people who live in the apartment building to which he sees the first attachment of Law Court Offices. Also, K is reeled in by the Law Court Offices by being arrested and expected to go to hearings.

The word "reeling," however, is more complicated than this. "Reeling" is, "The action of winding on a reel" (OED) This definition speaks to the "normal." The Examining Magistrate has already been compared to a worm, a worm that is tied and thrashing. And K is described in such a way that he begins to act as an "Inspector" himself, a label not too distant in meaning from "Examining Magistrate."¹⁶ The idea that the term "worm" represents a reeling or reeled object is reasonable. The OED also defines "reeling" as, "The action of staggering." The difference between these two words (although they are archived under the same representation, "reeling") is

¹⁵ Whisper from the Darkness: The purpose of this footnote is to explain "Uncanny" and make its relevance to Alice explicit. I do not plan for nor expect this term to be seen as fully a psychological or psychoanalytic definition, but rather a metaphor of the way in which culture is everywhere in the life of a human being rendered through language. That being said, it is thus essential to understand that Freud's definition of "uncanny" explores the line between that of our home, or that which we intellectually believe to be true and without question by reason, and that which is our repressed un-home, that which we do not talk about and would rather lock away in a figurative asylum. By default, I must acknowledge the madness, or rather, the image of Alice as normal (our rationally understood cultural definitions of normal) is a normal which also archives within itself, the un-normal, the evil, the uncertain, and the things which appear irrational. In other words, Alice as normal girl and Alice as worm-like/serpent-like creature are both un-normal, uncertain, and madness.

¹⁶ Whisper from the Darkness: I want to note that it is just a matter of labels which separates the good bottles of stuff for Alice and the "poison." She makes this clear.

huge because between these two definitions is the difference between the subject who reels and the object that staggers as by a force either outside or bigger than itself.

Added to the consideration of “reeling” are two definitions of “writhing.” The first is, “...twisting or turning to and fro.” The second is, “Marked or characterized by sinuous or tortuous movement” (OED). There is similarity in these two definitions, but they are not the same. One of the definitions suggests twisting one way and another. This action occurs mechanically, such as the human torso engaged in normal activities and/or to something robotic or programmed. Either way, both the human torso action and the mechanical arm have attributes of known or rational behavior. The second definition with its “sinuous and tortuous movement” carries elements of irrationality and the unknown.

We have seen Alice exhibit these terms of rational and irrational movement as a subject and as the object of forces outside of or greater than herself. Alice says she knows not to drink the bottles she reads marked “poison.” But as soon as she drinks those that simply say “drink me,” she becomes a tortuously moving writhing creature, a “reeler and writher” through the narrative. Alice crashes to the ground with a tiny crunched accordion bang and then eats the cakes labeled “eat me” and springs upward into a shape not too unlike a giant worm or serpent. There are consequences to her actions. She reveals her “self” to be a subject who chooses to drink or not drink, to eat or not eat, and then the world writes “her.” Yet, Alice is always in this prison and must always perform “Alice” through the uncertainty between the subject and the object.

Interroscribing the Law (s) of “Family.”

As K and Alice are both subjects/objects who must stand before the Door of the Law of “Self” and perform their interpretations of that Law, they both must also stand before the Door of the Law of “Family” and performs their senses of that Law. The dialectic between those two conceptualizations (subject and object) provides a framework through which to discuss more and less cloudy formations of “family” in K’s and Alice’s respective adventures. Most have a notion of the “family.” The OED defines the standard idea as, “The body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants, etc.” Archived within the word “family” is a family of meanings and a sense of family that exists before it is ever given a term. Rather, it is a family generally inclusive of a home. Thus there are also material relations to family.

Alice has definitions of family and home. Just after she jumps in the “rabbit” hole after the White Rabbit, she falls past all sorts of items she understands from her own home. Lewis writes, “then she looked...and noticed...cupboards and bookshelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures” (3). These are material objects, if we accept the grammar of English as truth in the descriptions, and not abstractions. But Alice has abstract definitions and associations of home as well. For instance, as she falls and sees all these homely objects, she says, “...after such a fall...I shall think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they’ll think me at home! Why, I wouldn’t say anything about it, even I fell off the top of the house! (which was very likely true)” (3). When she says “home,” it is clear that she both means the place (the building) as stairs are part of the edifice of some houses where families live. She also means that archived within “family” is the place where her family lives, the objects that are part of their particular routine, and the people who live in that home. In other words, Alice feels the judgmental force of the

people close to her. One can say this because as she falls down the tunnel/well by herself, she is not really alone in her mind because as she falls she thinks of home and says so. That definition of “family,” that power over her definitions of reality and habit is caused by the Law of family that holds sway in her thinking and allows her to judge her actions now according to some always already conceptualization of falling, danger, and physical well-being.

On the topic of well-being and Alice’s physical danger at the very end of the quote in which she flippantly talks to herself about falling off her house, she says she “wouldn’t say anything about it even if I fell off the top of the house!” and another voice writes, “(which was very likely true).” The inclusion of these extra few words and the attention of the author’s use of punctuation does something fascinating because it is possible the reason Alice would not say anything about falling off the top of the house is because she would not be alive. In other words, if she falls off the house and says nothing, she is reeling, in the staggering sense. The greater force that “does” to her would kill her. The imagery of this scene suggests this too. There has been some discussion of the objects of home in the well, that they are archived in the very consideration of family/home. But at the same time, she is literally and morbidly falling in a well. She sees these objects which are homely but the setting and the death-setting is un-homely, uncanny, or *unheimliche*.¹⁷ Alice is a subject who thinks of home, yet is an object on whom “home” has made an impression. She finds objects of fascination in the well, such as picking up a homely jar labeled “Orange Marmalade.” But she does this in a setting that is quite unhomely, a tunnel where she is all alone, away from the very family/home she thinks of (Still, the tunnel points back to her home as well). In other words, just as “home” is archived under “family,” “unhome” is also archived there and the friction between these phrases means they must ever be

¹⁷ Whisper from the Darkness: Just as Alice tumbles down the tunnel/well and exists at home in some way and not at home in some way, I exist at home in this text and underground like Alice in an unhomely, or uncanny to refer to Freud again, of this text.

rephrased and rephrased. Certainty, or rather what Jean Baudrillard might call tremor-less, remains unattained (Baudrillard “The Intelligence...” 99).

There more examples of Alice and the Law (s) of family that infect her perception, but a slightly tangential step into a different space, through a different door, is necessary in order to explain the archive and certainty. Jacques Derrida has written two books on the archive, two books archived under the text in this document: *Archive Fever: A Freudian Fever*, and *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, & Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida examines the archive as continually held by some form of decision and power structure or name. He argues that the archive is housed under the domicile called the *arkheion* and overseen by a person of control called the *archon* (2). These are each scenes of Law, where the place and the person who rules that place are each a Law. Thus, Alice’s archivization of home (family) carries with it several inherentnesses of Law, the place as truth, the leader of that place (perhaps the father, though it is not clear in her story), through which her judgments of homely artifacts, the cupboards, the maps, etc, must pass through her Law of family.

In the second book, *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, & Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*, Derrida considers the infinity within the archive through Hélène Cixous’ gift of her writings to the Bibliothèque National de France. In this text, Derrida explores the infinite reading and what he calls “forgetreading,” a figure of speech that is perhaps a stand-in for re-reading again what was repressed or forgotten or lost in any given reading of one item after another (32-33). Lewis Carroll asserts the need for the same methods in different language in his book on logic (xvi). Endlessness of reading and “forgetreading” happens when one transports one’s self through the archive. In Alice’s case, she must continuously read the scene of her descent into the underground by reading it as home/family/life and unhome/alone-ness/death, the items that are

surely forgotread. Here, reading is a dialectical action that grabs in one “Universe of Discourse” for Law and also grabs in another “universe of Discourse” for Law. Of course, the dialectic itself is only a figure of speech because that word itself carries too much baggage of a conversation/discussion on/about/between only two positions of thought. The act of working through dialectic is thus always already a performance.

To connect the archive of Law (s) and readings/forgetreadings to Kafka and the *archon*, the one who guards the archive, the *arkheion*, one has only to think through the short Kafka text, “The Watchman,” which is a fable of sorts about a character who runs by a Watchman and wonders if he should go back and tell him he passed or whether he should just keep going the direction he intends. The Watchman holds the power of silence (an idea examined below) and it is not clear exactly if the Watchman is supposed to be a threatening force an ambiguous gazer. “The Watchman” is another exploration of the question of borders or limits between the subject who places meaning on something and the Other Power that renders restrictions or judgments on an object and it is another possible stand-in for the power which holds sway over the (an) archive.¹⁸

“I ran past the first watchman. Then I was horrified, ran back again and said to the watchman: ‘I ran through here while you were looking the other way.’ The watchman gazed ahead of him and said nothing. ‘I suppose I really oughtn’t to have done it,’ I said. The watchman still said nothing. ‘Does your silence indicate permission to pass?’”

¹⁸ Whisper from the Darkness: I do not necessarily want to spend too much more time writing about Jacques Derrida right here, but there is something, another undertext, to his writings on the Question. The one I specifically want to mention here is *Aporias*. In this text, Derrida writes about the borders of orders of inquiry and borders where those inquiries either die or fall subject to another border of inquiry.

The question of permission to pass implies that Inspector Worm Alice's relationship to the Law (s) is one of constant attention. And moving like the Worm/Inspector through Alice's particular Law (s) of family/home, one sees other examples of the Law of family in Alice's adventure. For instance, in the scene where Alice sees for the first time the Cheshire cat, the Duchess, and the sneezing because of all the pepper in the house-soup, Alice is thrown a baby by the Duchess and told that the Cheshire cat grins because most cats do (59). Alice catches the baby and walks out of the house. She hears the baby snort and does not know what to make of it. It is then she notices that the baby has turned into a little pig (63). The relevance of this section to the Law of family is found through, 1) The dialectic between taking the pig back to her "home" and leaving it there, and 2) The dialectic between Alice as little girl birthed by her parents and Alice as little animal who has no place back at "home" and who *perhaps* was not birthed by her parents. Alice says, "If you're going to turn into a pig...I'll have nothing more to do with you. Mind now!" (63). That Alice tells the pig baby to "Mind now!" presents an example of Alice adopting what she might consider normal motherly instincts as defined by her particular "family/home" background. That is one example of the Law of family where Alice performs "mother" and "Alice" the girl. Another example (which really just furthers this view that Alice's "maternal" instincts are normal) is found right after Alice tells the pig baby to mind her. Alice says, "Now, what am I going to do with this creature when I get it home?" (64). The very act of concern for this "creature" implies a maternal Law she would have learned at home but it also implies a certain kind of morality, the morality of care for the less fortunate or of stranded children. Alice understands, as the line asserts, the difference between what has been accepted at her "home" and what might not be. It is clear from her question the Law of her family/home is

not an institution that accepts all openly. The institution judges and has taught Alice to judge as well. Thus, she is inside that Law of the family but her questions suggest her ever-outsider status.

Alice's sentence with the question of what she plans to do with the "creature" when she gets home is not the question one would ask if the "creature" were a normal baby wrapped in a blanket (let us hope). Rather, her recognition of the creature throws up the lattice or girding for the second question that relates the Law of family to the text: that of the dialectic between Alice as little girl birthed by her parents and Alice as little animal who has no place back at "home" and who perhaps was not birthed by her parents. Alice, after drinking the bottle marked "drink me" shrinks like a short telescope and then after eating the cakes marked "eat me" expands like a longer telescope, to a thing that looks more like a worm than like a little girl. One could very easily call that worm thing a creature and not a person. Then the caterpillar asks Alice who she is, as his status as an actual worm makes his question of her self/normality as the shrinking/expanding worm-like telescoping creature poignant. But in this section in which Alice carries around a pig baby and questions whether she should take it home, "...what am I going to do with this creature when I get it home?" she asks, Alice is by implication herself again made into a creature, in fact a pig, and this it is more poignant to ask whether she can ever enter "home" again or will either have to find a new "home" or will forever remain at "unhome."

It is true that Alice chooses to let the pig run off and that it is thus "absurd" to go on with it. Carroll writes, "It was neither more nor less a pig, and she felt that it would be quite absurd for her to carry it any further. So she set the little creature down..." (64). One implication of Alice's decision is that Alice chooses the Law of her home instead of a new possibility of home, or "unhome." This implication is seen through the letting go of the creature, a creature that could be something of herself. The idea that she herself is a creature worthy of acceptance back into

her “home” is questioned in the same chapter as the rest of this narrative section of the pig baby. Just a few pages prior, after Alice sneezes and the Duchess sneezes constantly due to the cook ladling quantity after quantity of pepper into “a large cauldron which seemed to be full of soup,” Alice notices the Cheshire cat and asks, “Please would you tell me...why your cat grins like that? (58-59). Now, the Duchess (who tosses the pig baby at Alice a few moments later) replies, “It’s a Cheshire cat...and that’s why. Pig!” She said that last word with such sudden violence that Alice quite jumped; but saw in another moment that it was addressed to the baby, and not to her, so she took courage, and went on...” (59).

One cannot say with certainty (there is that word again) the Duchess’ words were directed at the baby, especially because at this point the baby is considered by Alice to be a baby in the normal human sense. But the sentence that states the word “Pig!” is a sentence that is directed toward Alice in its entirety, except for that word perhaps, but is only questioned by the one who might be abused by it. In other words, it is possible that as Alice has already been likened to creatures of a less-than-homely state, and that the dialectic between the baby as a cute, wrapped up entity and pig as snorting object of which it is “absurd for her to carry it any further” is set up. Alice has thus shown the space between which Alice has been objectified by the Law (s) of family, i.e.; motherly instincts, morality toward less fortunate creatures or stranded children, etc, and the space where Alice has determined or created something of the world for herself. The rationale for this reading is found in the observation of the statement of Alice’s reaction to the gesture of yelling “Pig!” in the same sentence as the rest which was addressed to her. She “determines” inside her own mind the word was directed at the baby and not toward her. The gesture is not completely unambiguous even if the baby does turn out to be a pig because

people are often called pigs and Alice has already been explicitly likened to other creatures of non-human/non-homely qualities.

Something even more powerful, however, in the creation or observation of the space between Alice as normal little girl and Alice as something Other is found at the very beginning of the chapter in the conversation at the Duchess' door about how Alice is to get inside the house. She sees "a footman in livery" that has a fish-face knock on the door and answered by a "footman in livery" that has a frog-face. Now it is obvious that "fish" and "frog" are both archived under "F" in the English lexicon. But what is really essential here is to understand that Alice has already realized at the end of the previous chapter where the caterpillar tells her what sides of the mushroom she must eat to become "normal" size again that she will not surely be accepted into this family with her current "normal" size. So she eats a little more of the mushroom until "she had brought herself down to nine inches high" (54).¹⁹

It is then that she goes to the house and asks how she is to get in, a perfect example of the assertion of herself and yet the acknowledgment of the different rules of home. She must simultaneously make the declaration through her action/performance of what she is going to do, turn herself to nine inches, and yet realize she must question her own rules of self because there a differing Law (s) at work here. Further, as the doors of the house might be likened in a general way to the un-enterable doors of the Law (s) in Kafka's parable "Before the Law" (a Law of text inside a Law of text), Alice has this very weird conversation with the Frog foot-man about how

¹⁹ Whisper from the Darkness: I do not want to discuss the power of the animal footmen carrying the letter between the inside and outside of the house because that, even though I have already mentioned Freud, gets a little too into the Universe of Discourse, as Lewis Carroll calls it in his book on symbolic logic, of psychoanalysis and the discourse which says the letter carrying back and forth between the inside of the house (a stand-in for the psyche/unconscious) and the outside of the house (which is a stand-in for conscious and/or the "outside world" in general. This is a reference to Nicholas Abrahams and Nicholas Rand's article: "The Shell and the Kernel" in which they write that the message-sending between these two spaces can be written figuratively as an exchange of letters inside an envelope which is the "membrane" between the unconscious and the conscious.

she is to get in. She asks after she knocks on the door, "...how am I to get in?" (57). The Frog foot-man replies to her that knocking would have value if he were on the other side but as he is not, knocking is useless (57). Alice asks again, "How am I to get in?" (57). The Frog foot-man replies, "Are you to get in at all?...That's the first question, you know" (57). Alice now is asking questions and the foot-man, who is employed or lives in this home, also asks questions. Now, clearly, this un-enterable door relates to the door of Law (s) as presented by Kafka, and it seems as though no amount of asking or inquiry will open the door of Law because even while these questions are asked, the Law (s) of that particular family makes its own Law clear by opening its door and giving Alice the opportunity to enter. There is still this image of Alice as this reeling writhing subject who attempts to get into this specific door but is at the same time made subject to its own standards. After all, what was the first question? "Are you to get in at all?" And what did we learn was the first course as illuminated by the Mock Turtle? "Reeling and Writhing" (103). The image thus is of Alice who has turned herself into a nine inch long creature, clearly not "Human," with the assistance of the caterpillar and who now is pulling towards the door of the house and is allowed, reeled, to come in by a greater force than herself. She as the Law (s) of this house reveals, is an Alice who is both subject and object and who leaves the house staggering outside carrying the pig baby with her. The text states, "Alice caught the baby with some difficulty" (62).

All this discussion about to doors of the Law (s) enterable and un-enterable, allow a turn to how the Law (s) of family is exposed and hidden through the Door of Kafka's *The Trial*. First, *The Trial* is an account of a narrative which takes place in a so-called real setting of a modern European city. It does not follow the same set of definitions of family as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* does, as there are no scenes in which animals talk with humans or are compared to

humans. Rather, there are actual characters that are named as relatives to K. The similarity between the two novels is found in the power that the Law (s) of family attempt to hold over K's dealings with it, with the trial itself, and how the negotiations between the trial and the Law (s) are quite tremor-filled, in the Jean Baudrillardian sense of blurry/uncertainness. The two explicit examples of the Law (s) of family's the power inflicted upon K by his niece Erna and his uncle Karl, who also has a first name archived under the same letter "K" as K himself. This archivization of course shows that not only is the first name of an uncle archived under K's name, but the very family is archived under that K also, an obvious example of the Law (s) of family before which K must stand. Uncle Karl enters K's office at the bank, past attendants carrying documents in and out of the office, an image which weirdly suggest the Frog and Fish foot-men in Alice's story.

Uncle Karl is described as someone who feels he must get everything done he sets out to do everyday (88). K calls him "the Specter from the Countryside," a nickname/term which speaks to the man from the country in "Before the Law," the man who must wait before the law until his death having never entered. He is here to give K advice about dealing with his trial K rightly assumes. K tells Uncle Karl not to worry, to which he replies, "That scarcely sets my mind at rest. Josef, dear Josef, think of yourself, think of your relatives, of our good name. You've always been our pride and joy, you mustn't disgrace us now" (91-92). Clearly, Uncle Karl is ill at ease with this predicament. The entire trial is something he understands as something that is by default unsettling, or should be. And there is some evidence for this. For instance, after K goes about his work, Uncle Karl just stands there. Uncle Karl asks K, "But how did it happen? These things don't happen all at once, they build up over a long period of time; there must have been some indications, why didn't you write to me...I'm still your guardian in a

sense” (93). There is a bit of humor in this line because the first lines of the novel are, “Someone must have slandered Josef K., for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong, he was arrested “(3). There is the difference in this line between what K might have done, which was wrong and what he might not have done, which was truly wrong. Breon Mitchell makes this point in his translator’s preface where he makes the case for his translation after Willa and Edwin Muir’s precisely because of items such as their interpretation of the German word “*böses*” which Mitchell translates with the ambiguous addition of adding “truly” to “wrong,” that to him argues the essential cloudy nature of the word and its meaning.²⁰

Mitchell’s play with this word is another way of saying that the Law (s) of language is another Law Door, which may or may not ever be entered. Mitchell’s play with this word also shows the “reeling and writhing” nature of language as an action and an object, simultaneously performing itself in that space. The point is that when Uncle Karl states to K the un-suddenness of the arrest and the criminal trial proceedings, he tells him these things always build up over time and do not “happen all at once.” The text, however, implies the arrest and ensuing trial process as something that can happen suddenly. The truth of this event is perhaps another Law (s) of truth door that may or may not ever be entered or enterable. Then Uncle Karl asks why K had not written to him and asked for his help. This comment about the necessity of writing to family, or to people in general is also a little bit of a joke because the very act of the novel *The Trial* being written is its own act of adhering to that Law (s) of communication to family/people

²⁰ Whisper from the Darkness: Breon Mitchell’s actual words are: “A further problem is posed by ‘Böses,’ a word that, when applied to the actions of an adult, reverberates with moral and philosophical overtones ranging from the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden to Nietzsche’s discussion of the origins of morality in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Beyond Good and Evil). To claim that K. has done nothing “Böses” is both more and less than to claim he has done nothing wrong. Josef K. has done nothing *truly* wrong, at least in his own eyes” (xix). It is clear from this short quotation that even under/in the word “Böses” is a whole history of dialectic and writing, writing by Friedrich Nietzsche which was most certainly read by Franz Kafka, at least according to Stanley Corngold in his book *Lambent Traces: Franz Kafka* (95) and Reinhold Grimm in his article: “Comparing Kafka and Nietzsche” (342).

through its own account of the trial. In fact, the novel keeps on as long as long as K is alive and trying to negotiate his trial/process.

Then there is Uncle Karl's comment about still being K's "guardian in a sense." It is not clear what the "past" is as the novel begins in one sentence at the moment in the morning of K's arrest. But the OED defines guardian as, "One who guards, protects, or preserves; a keeper, defender; 'one to whom the care and preservation of any thing is committed'," "Guardian of the Peace: an earlier name for a 'Justice of the Peace'," and "in **Law**. One who has or is by law entitled to the custody of the person or property (or both) of an infant, an idiot, or other person legally incapable of managing his own affairs."²¹ It is not exact which of these definitions fits the neatest in this context, but several traces of the words join in working out the scene. First, as Uncle K is family, he feels some weight of the Law (s) of his family "responsibility" to take care of his nephew. The father is not ever mentioned in the novel and we will not look into the psychoanalytic qualities of "the trauma" of the Law (s) of the Father, but in this case, Uncle Karl is a surrogate father who might be perceived as the real "head" of Kafka's family life.²² And to qualify these statements, we must look to Uncle Karl's own qualifiers of his statement for a second. He states, "I'm still your guardian in a sense." It is this "in a sense" that pops out because all the above definitions of "guardian" are sort of layerings, traces, archivizations of this one word that lacks a set definition. It is not clear what he means by "in a sense" but he does tell K that he expects to be contacted for help because Uncle Karl is a person who adheres to the Law (s) of family's sense of what it might mean to be in and work with a family unit could contact a "loyal" family member.

²¹ Whisper from the Darkness: The emphasis is mine.

²² Whisper from the Darkness: Jacques Lacan has written on the Law (s) of the father in his Feminine Sexuality.

Erna's relationship to the Law (s) of family and her relationship to K is examined a moment, but there is something else in this scene that is worthy of attention. Uncle Karl tries to talk K into going back to the "country" with him, Uncle Karl tells K, "You've lost some / weight too... You'll regain your strength in the country, which is a good thing" (93-94). The scene represents Laws pitted against each other. First, there is the Law (s) of the guardian, represented by Uncle K, who tells the keep of his guard, K, to join him with the family away from the city and easy grasp by the Law (s)'s workers. Second, there is the acceptance on some level of the Law (s) itself, whatever it is, and its inescapability and power. This is a scene of one Law (s) against another. The legal Law (s), whatever it is, against the Law (s) of family. K responds in kind and reinforces this reading (Mellen 299; O'Brien 44-45). He replies, "They might forbid me to leave" (94). K has no proof for his opinion, especially after the Inspector tells K the morning of his arrest, "...you're under arrest, certainly, but that's not meant to keep you from carrying on your profession. Nor are you to be hindered in the course of your ordinary life" (17). Thus even in K's response to Uncle Karl about why he might not be able to go back to the country with him and obey some reading of the Law (s) of family, he has yet submitted to another Law (s) which makes K an object upon which the Law (s) is performed.

But still in light of the Inspector's words on how K's normal daily routine and work habits will not be interrupted by his arrest, it seems K the subject has perhaps created the Law (s) in his mind and chooses to follow it without any perceived real need to do so. He has made the Law (s) up (in and for) himself. The scene represents a matter of trial between K and Uncle Karl because Uncle K makes demands for K's allegiance to the family and to follow him the country, a matter of trial between K and the Law because that is the very novel and the agents of that Law (s) have made themselves physically present in K's life from the beginning to the end, and a

matter of trial between readers and *The Trial* because as the Law (s) has told K he need not disturb his daily routine of life and family relations, vocation, etc, the reader who might be as overwhelmed as K is (the sheer number of varied positional academic readings on *The Trial* show that readers are as in the dark about the trial and its meaning as K is. And as K submits to the Law (s) rather than submitting to Uncle K's request for following a Law (s) of family that is pitted against the Law (s), the possibility is clear that K, like a reader, makes the truth instead of submitting to a truth that is already there and then expects that definition of meaning to comply with the reading (Barthes, Cohen, Feuerlicht, Gavin, McGowan, and Mellen).²³

This trial between K the subject and K the object, and between some version of these two conceptualizations is seen still further in the same scene. K tells Uncle Karl another reason why he will not go to the country with him. K says, "...I don't think a stay in the country would be to my advantage, even in the sense (that word "sense" again) you intend, because it would imply

²³ Whispers from the Darkness: These are all critics, excepting Roland Barthes, who have noticed the place in the text where K commits weird actions which do not speak to a man who has done much thinking for himself about what he wants. I include them as a Whisper although neither are they part of my reading proper nor are they essential to a great understanding of the text. They are nevertheless undertexts both in my reading of *The Trial* and in this work. They are to be thought of, perhaps, as archived in/under this very document and while part of the document also exist in other archives and part of some other possible texts. I think that questions of self are only fascinating where they involve abstractions or dark playing, such as where Alice may or may not be a human "reeling and writhing" creature. I am not a reader of identity and definitions of the self because such intentions are counter productive to community and the attention to needs of humans outside our minds/hearts etc. Also, Cynthia B. Cohen writes, "His responses to his arrest are inconsistent, silly, and manipulative. He oscillates between submission and defiance, but displays neither openly" (219) and "Joseph K has developed no character of his own through purposeful action, generalized reflection, or feelings toward others, and so he must assume a variety of artificial selves. He refuses to commit his true self to a meaningful engagement with the world and others. Joseph K refuses to fulfill himself as a human being" (222). Ignace Feuerlicht writes K as a man who is guilty of living a detached not-full life (342) and of omitting his true self (344). William J. Gavin and Jeremiah Conway write that K's awakening from normalcy presents him with the opportunity to see how others live and change his own life (16). John P McGowan writes, "...as soon as one accepts his own actions as signs than can be variously interpreted by others and by himself...then one has tacitly admitted that the 'I' exists as a being-for-others, is always accountable to the Law" (8). Joan Mellen writes, "René Dauvin asserts that 'he is guilty because he had not taken his total 'I' into account...' (296). K. is...guilty of sacrificing the Law to the law. Pressure from everywhere is designed to uphold these laws...K's uncle [Law of Family]" (299) [emphasis mine].

flight and a guilty conscience” (95).²⁴ Again, K is here being asked to follow the Law (s) of family by exiting his daily grind and going to the country but K has decided to submit to/fabricate the Law (s) involved in his arrest and his trial. And as Uncle Karl keeps trying to talk to K, really make him listen to him as one might listen (mind) a parent, he keeps trying to get K’s attention by stopping and talking to him, like one would if you were giving a lecture in front of a group on a stage. Kafka writes, “...taking his uncle by the arm to keep him from stopping again...’Josef,’ his uncle cried, trying to twist away from him so he could pause....’you’ve undergone a total metamorphosis...and all your relatives will be...dragged through the mud” (94).

The “metamorphosis,” of course, speaks to Kafka’s novella, *Die Verwandlung* (*The Metamorphosis*), written in 1913 but published in 1915, while Kafka was slowly writing *Der Prozeß* (*The Trial*). The biographical information is not absolute on a relationship, except that story is about a man named Gregor Samsa who wakes one morning to find he has turned into an insect, something like a Dung Beetle, and in return gets rejected as a monstrosity by his family Law (s).

Alice is portrayed as some kind of animal or non-human creature, *The Trial* ends with K lying under a tree “like a dog” (231), and some of the workings of the Law (s) of family in *The Trial* are presented as objects to submit to or reject for something else. The point here is that even though Gregor Samsa is the explicit Other in *The Metamorphosis*, it is possible those family

²⁴ Whisper from the Darkness: I was thinking about the word “sense” and how it is a word which realizes the archive of words within words (even if they are covered by the same representation: “sense”) because sense refers to sensory organs and resulting experiences of the human body and it refers to shades and traces of meaning in a way which is often quite uncertain. There are many definitions of the word “sense” archived in/under the word “sense.” The OED defines “sense” this way: Each of the special faculties, connected with a bodily organ, by which man and other animals perceive external objects and changes in the condition of their own bodies. Usually reckoned as five: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch,” [This is the way we think about the word normally] “The faculties of physical perception or sensation as opposed to the higher faculties of intellect, spirit, etc,” “Applied to similar faculties of perception, not scientifically delimited, or only conjectured to exist,” and “With defining word: the intuitive knowledge or appreciation of what action or judgment is appropriate to a given situation or sphere of activity.”

members could have chosen to embrace him, even if they did keep him inside. Rather, consider it is not Gregor Samsa who is the monster, but family Law (s) itself. In the scene here in which K tries to get his Uncle to keep going, to leave his office so he can get back to work and stop worrying whether someone is outside eavesdropping from outside the door, its own Law (s) that desires submission (92), and as K grabs Uncle Karl's arm, it is he who tries to "twist away." The use of "twist" harks back to the creature of Alice and the use of the first lessons of "reeling and writhing." But in this case, the twisting and metamorphosing looks built into the swing from K's point of view. The observation of the metamorphosis built in makes a great deal of sense if he wants to exhibit the following of a certain Law (s) of professionalism, even if one does not ascribe to it. But, Uncle Karl twists out of K's grasp just as Uncle Karl tells K that K has gone through a metamorphosis, like the very object who has metamorphosed himself telling someone else, in this case K, of his metamorphosis. There is a slight sense of projection here as Uncle Karl has perhaps undergone a metamorphosis and already is representative of the "monster" but says his nephew K has gone through that change. There is then fear in the space between the normal human behavior, however that is defined, and the animalistic/creature/Other behavior and the mind's swayings rock back-and-forth/twist-to-and-fro between some Law (s) of family and some Law (s) of another thing. This back-and-forth/twisting-to-and-fro is the performance of the law (s) of family by K and by Uncle Karl.

Uncle Karl is the family member given the most textual space and is the mediator between K and the lawyer Huld (96-110). But K's niece Erna acts as the mediator between K and Uncle Karl. When Uncle K walks into K's office and K says, "I can guess what you want'...submissively, 'you've probably heard about my trial'...'From whom?...Erna wrote to me about it...she doesn't see anything of you...you don't take any real interest in her...(89-90).

Uncle Karl's comments point to two Law (s) of family here. The first is his actual attention to the family as a member of the family to whom K feels he must genuflect. The text says K responds "submissively." The second, and the greater Law (s) of family represented in this scene is the guilt that could be felt by Uncle Karl (hereafter called Uncle K)'s statement that K cares not to spend time with his niece Erna. It is not certain K cares nothing about his niece, but the implication of guilt is certainly there. "Guilt" is an idea that has been written on extensively (Friedman, Lesser, Pinsker, and Stern), but is mentioned here a little in relation to the Law (s) of family in light of the sentences already parsed and because the last sentence of the novel says, "...it seemed as though the shame was to outlive him" (231). Guilt is certainly a factor in the novel and it seems the Law (s) of family plays some factor in that lattice of guilt.

The Law (s) of family has more examples with Erna. Uncle K says those words about K not caring to see Erna and this comment carries a guilt trip effect with it. K's thoughts go further as the conversation between Uncle K and K goes further. Uncle K reads aloud from the letter from Erna. She complains about K who never has time to see her and that she once went to the bank to see him recently, "last week," but that K was too busy to speak with her. She also writes that K sent her some chocolates on her Name-Day and that one of K's assistants told her the reason K was so busy must have something to do with the trial he is involved in (90).²⁵ Erna suggests to Uncle K, her father, that he look in on K next time he goes to town, another example of the Law (s) of family, because, well, Uncle K could write it off unless he ascribes to the Law (s) himself (91). He is not forced to perform this duty. As soon as Uncle K finishes reading the

²⁵ Whisper from the Darkness: There has been some written, perhaps not a from a feminist point of view, but with questions about a view of women as the sexual creatures in the novel and which K asks to help and who are glad to give any assistance they can. The novel says women are attracted to something in the eyes of guilty men, especially Leni, the lawyer Huld's assistant, the woman the text spends the most time with (184). Second, when K goes to see Titorelli and all these little girls run around. Titorelli tells K it is because they think he is to be painted. But if women are attracted to guilt, then if the little girls running around Titorelli's studio trail K around thinking he is to be painted like a judge, then it implies the judges might also be guilty in some similar way as K, even though we are not told what it is.

letter and in the moments before the actual conversation gets down to the trial and its effects on K and his family's lives, K thinks to himself:

“K nodded; he had completely forgotten Erna due to the recent various disturbances, he had even forgotten her birthday, and the story of the chocolates had obviously been invented merely to cover for him with his aunt and uncle. It was very touching, and the theater tickets he now meant to send her on a regular basis would hardly make up for it, but right now he didn't feel up to visits at her boardinghouse and chats with a seventeen-year-old high school girl” (91).

K's guilt for having forgotten Erna's birthday (Name Day as Erna refers to the holiday in her letter) is not assumed because even though Erna performs the emotion that says she understands (her Uncle K is very busy with the trial), and K says to himself in his mind that this is the truth, he ends this internal thought with the suggestion that he still does not plan to interact on any serious level. He thinks, “...but right now he didn't feel up to visits at her boardinghouse and chats with a seventeen-year-old high school girl” (91). He still might go ahead and send her the tickets as he “planned,” but he is still not going to spend time with her for the same reason she has already mentioned and K echoes. It is unclear why K decides to send Erna theater tickets. It could be because he chooses to perform his role as the caring Uncle K and the theater tickets are the best external representation of submission to the Law (s) of family and the performance therein. The disparity between the performance in the exteriority and the “truth” of K's feelings for family are observed in the same quote of internal dialogue. First, the text itself is an act of theatricality (Anderson 167). Second, even if K sends the theater tickets, he still says to himself he will not take the time/energy to spend time talking to a “...seventeen-year-old high school girl” (91). In other words, there is a presumption of disparity between the act (stand-in for the

possibility that K just made that sentence up in his head on the spot and never has or had any intent to send Erna those theater tickets) and the intention to not go chat with a “seventeen-year-old high school girl.” K combats with himself over the Law (s) legal, Law (s) occupational decorum, and Law (s) of family in this scene. It could just be that he performs for himself, the object/audience, the Law (s) of family even if it is a lie.

Interroscribing the Law (s) of “Family.” I.

Alice and K have performed their senses of “family” before the Door of the Law of Family as they performed the “Self” before the Door of the Law of “Self.” But “family” is not only one door, it is legion. In this section, “Family” is graphically rendered in quotes-within-quotes because the word “family” has other meanings and other words called “family” archived under it. The OED defines the other senses of “family” germane to this reading of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *The Trial*. Some of these senses of meaning are: “a collection of birds and animals of different natures and propensities living together in harmony in one cage”; “The group of persons consisting of the parents and their children, whether actually living together or not; in wider sense, the unity formed by those who are nearly connected by blood or affinity”; “Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor: a house, kindred, lineage”; and finally, “A group or assemblage of objects, connected together and distinguished from others by the possession of some common features or properties.” It just depends which definition of “family” is performed in what context or matrix.

Alice’s relationship to the falling through the tunnel/well connects through a kind of door/tunnel to a set of possible experiences that have happened or could happen at her house. Two of these experiences are “tumbling down stairs” and “...if I fell off the top of the house.” These are experiences that would be judged in some way or another by those members of her family at home (3). Of course, her internalizations of the judgments from family, the Law (s) of family, mark that Law (s) in her consideration of life with those people at that place called “home.” Her lines about tumbling down stairs and falling off the top of the house entail a sense of “home,” the second definition quoted above, the sense of family as descended from a house where “family” resides. The use of “descended” in the definition relates to Alice because as she

says these words in the early pages of the novel, she is in fact descending from the lawn of her family home into Wonderland. The first and fourth senses of “family” reveal new meanings for Alice, meanings considered after they are examined in K’s trial.

There is no mention explicitly of a “house” where K’s family lives, but there are mentions of other forms of place that imply a similar thing. The first is the scene where Uncle K arrives in K’s office and asks about the trial. Uncle K says, “...it would be best for you to take a brief vacation and visit us in the country side” (93). There is no mention of the “house,” as referred to a meaning of “family” in definition number three. Uncle K is a member of blood relative we presume. Definition number two mentions a building where one could tumble down stairs or fall from the top of the roof. There is surely a “home” in the country. In that same scene, K asks Uncle K how he found out about K’s trial. K proceeds to read Erna’s letter out loud which mentions Erna’s attempts to talk with K but is frustrated in her attempts because K is so busy. K responds, not out loud to Uncle K, but in his head, with an idea that he is to send her some theater tickets weekly but “...he didn’t feel up to visits at her boardinghouse and chats with a seventeen-year-old high school girl” (91). In this sentence, the “house,” as referred to in definition number three, is a boardinghouse, a “home” away from “home.” Erna acts like it is “home” as K acts like his boardinghouse is “home” even though they are respectively a depiction of an “unhome.”

There is no mention of animals in *The Trial* as there are in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. But there are other senses of “family” in Kafka’s novel. They are just closer to some interdescription between definitions number three, “Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor: a house, kindred, lineage,” and number four, “A group or assemblage of objects, connected together and distinguished from others by the possession of some common features or properties.” Beginning with

the boardinghouse in which K resides and in the scene where the Inspector wakes K up in the morning, K says to him (even before he knows what is going on), “Anna’s to bring me breakfast” (4). “Anna” is not explained precisely, but if the owner/landlady of the house is Frau Grubach, Anna is a laborer in the house. K goes on to complain to the Inspector about some noises in the next room “...and how Frau Grubach can justify such a disturbance...” (4).

“Next door” speaks to definition number three where the “family” is defined as descended or connected to a house, an actual physical space for “family.” But the calling out to Frau Grubach is something else. K expects breakfast made sent by her and brought to him. In this respect, Frau Grubach is a stand-in for a maternal character. She performs “mother.” K’s “real” mother is never mentioned in the novel.²⁶ The “mother” in K’s mind does two things here. She is the care-giver who brings K breakfast every morning and she is also the Law of the boardinghouse who supervises events in the house. Later, when K goes back home after work, he wants to apologize to Frau Grubach for the “disarray” in the morning and “to restore order” (21).

K achieves no results in his attempt to restore order, for in that same section he calls the house Frau Grubach’s boardinghouse. Or, the care of the house is hers, the stand-in for the mother of the “family.” And when K attempts his apology, Frau Grubach sits and darns stockings, an act which is stereotypically traditionally performed by the “mother.” K asks Frau Grubach why she is up so late. She responds, “There’s a lot of work to do, during the day I belong to my boarders, evenings are the only time I have to put my own affairs in order” (22). This sounds a bit like a conversation a mother would have if she was in charge of a household. Not only that, but as K tells Frau Grubach about his arrest

²⁶ Whisper from the Darkness: I do not want to go on and on about the definitions of “mother,” but the **OED** contains several senses of the term which can be considered. Three of them are: “The female parent of a human being; a woman in relation to a child or children to whom she has given birth; (also, in extended use) a woman who undertakes the responsibilities of a parent towards a child, *esp.* a stepmother. Used as a form of address to a woman by her (young or adult) children, and freq. also by her stepchildren or other children in her care; also (*colloq.* and *regional*) by a father to the mother of his children,” “Freq. with *the*. Womanly qualities (as taken to be inherited from the mother); maternal qualities or instincts, *esp.* maternal affection,” and “A woman who exercises control over an institution, etc., and similar uses.”

during the attempt-at-apology scene, Frau Grubach tells K that even though she is his landlady, she also cares about his happiness, a maternal sentiment.

Frau Grubach's reply about splitting her long days into submission to the Law (s) of family/house and submission to the Law (s) of self sets up the sense of the Law (s) of family as a fractured event (a fracturing and fragmentation that increases with time) because not only must K ask Frau Grubach about the running of her house, but Frau Grubach says she must submit herself to the running of that house and still find time for herself. In other words, K tries to control (or performs what he thinks is control) the scene by setting things straight about this morning, the morning of his arrest, but he can not because the Law (s) of the family/house, Frau Grubach, is in charge but only in a way because "being-in-charge" is not a guarantee of freedom but rather a platform for only more negotiations between Law (s). These negotiations are preformed through submission to the Law (s) of self and the Law (s) of family/home, as personified by Frau Grubach the "mother" performer in her "home."

The discussion goes on and the intricacies of family Law (s) continue to unlock and evolve. That morning during K's arrest, the Inspector tells K that his vocational routine will not be altered, as we have already seen, but the Inspector goes on to say, "...to render you arrival at the bank as inconspicuous as possible, I've arranged for three of your colleagues here to be placed at your disposal" (17). K thinks to himself that these men, who he had previously thought were just photographers along with the Inspector from the Court, are not colleagues because they are nothing but "lower-level clerks" (17). Of course, the detailing of these three men as mere lower-level clerks, even non-colleagues speaks to the Law (s) of hierarchy at work and the Law (s) of family again works reigns again because work and employees deploy similar terminology. This is a Law (s)-within-Law (s)-within-Law (s), very like Brueghel's structure of doors-within-

doors-within-doors. The real reason, however, for recalling the “colleagues” is due to K’s first vision of seeing them in the next-door room-to-his looking at photographs of her (12). Fräulein Bürstner’s room has been violated by these agents of the Law and the Inspector because the Inspector had “shoved” the nightstand “to the middle of the room as a desk for the hearing” (12). On first glance it appears as no big deal. To K, however, it is because she is not only a fellow lodger at the boardinghouse, but something of a sister if Frau Grubach is the Mother in this setting. *A Sidebar*: It is important not allegorize either Fräulein Bürstner as the “sister” or Frau Grubach as the “mother,” but the boardinghouse is like-a-family, not an absolute replacement object. In the interest of movement, however, there is yet more to Fräulein Bürstner as stand-in for sister. The same night K tries to apologize to Frau G, he enters the house and passes by a “young fellow standing spread-legged at the entrance, smoking a pipe” (21). He says he is the caretaker’s son (21).

The entrance to the building where K lives is a door there has been discussion about the connection of the Law (s) to every aspect of existence through doors to apartment buildings, work, etc. And if K’s boardinghouse is a metaphor for “home,” then it is not a mistake to consider that as the son standing by the door of K’s boarding house sets it up as a metaphor for the Law (s) of family. So after K finishes trying to set things straight and control the situation with Frau Grubach earlier about the worries K assumed must have occurred there this morning during the arrest, he tries to sleep but thinks he wants to talk to Fräulein Bürstner when she gets home. Eventually she gets home from the theater and K tells her that one of his “colleagues” from the bank touched her photographs. K performs the role of dutiful like-brother (33).

For Alice, the Law (s) of “family” relates more, of the four definitions above, to definition number one, “a collection of birds and animals of different natures and propensities

living together in harmony in one cage” and number four, “A group or assemblage of objects, connected together and distinguished from others by the possession of some common features or properties.” In light of thinking about Alice as a homely/unhomely creature who may or may not be right for home according to the Law (s) of family she has learned, the collection of animals in one cage is apt. Alice is a telescoping worm-like creature who can shrink to nine inches high and then back to something more lanky, something like Bill the lizard who is sent into the chimney of a house in which Alice who has grown into some abominable thing inside it. Alice has grown too big to inch her way out. The Lizard looks like this:



27

²⁷ < <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114> > Retrieved: 20 January 2007.

This image of Bill has generally the same proportions as Alice after she eats the cakes labeled “eat me.” Alice is still called a “little girl” from a human family, but is now married to a new family, one which contains animals as stated in definition number one. The definition that includes animals in a single cage is a bit dubious. The text, however, is a form of holding cell in which she is never free. Alice jumps from scene to scene from group to group, groups which become surrogate “families” for Alice and to which she submits according to their respective Law (s). During and after Alice’s game of croquet with the Queen of Hearts and the Queen tells the executioner to cut off the Cheshire Cat’s head, there is a conversation under the guise of logic regarding whether the Cat’s heading floating in the air is actually a head which can be cut off or not. The conversation is as follows:

“The executioner’s argument was, that you couldn’t cut off a head unless there was a body to / cut it off from: that he had never had to do such a thing before, and he wasn’t going to begin at *his* time of life. The King’s argument was, that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and that you weren’t to talk nonsense. The Queen’s argument was, that if something wasn’t done about it in less than no time she’s have everybody executed, all round” (92-93).

This scene sets up two elements. The first is the Law (s), in a legal sense and in a family sense, of the Man-Wife Team, King and Queen. In this respect, their Law (s), although nonsensical as perhaps the Queen suggests about the very logic-debate between the King and the executioner. Ironically, the forceful judgment enacts a performance of The Mystic Writing-Pad as interrogated by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Derrida (Derrida, “Scene of Writing” Freud, “Note on the Mystic Writing Pad”). The Mystic Writing Pad is a device on which every mark written would be stored as trace writings underneath a wax-like paper on a wax layer. The

indentations of writing are made on the top layer of wax-like paper and also indented or scratched in the layer below. The result is that one can write and never, theoretically, lose any notes nor forget everything.²⁸ Freud writes these traces of memory/writing as good to not forget anything, but that if one so chooses, one can lift the wax-like paper up and remove all traces (308). Of course, the act of remembering everything, or rather storing traces that can be used to think or to remember (if that is even possible) is really a performance of archivization, or writing. Derrida writes how the archive is really an endless archive (the traces only appear to disappear), too big for any building, and forgetreading (perhaps repression) is in the nature of the activity of interaction with the archive. About this Mystic Writing-Pad, Derrida writes, “Repression, not forgetting; repression, not exclusion. Repression, Freud says, neither repels, nor flees, nor excludes an exterior force; it contains an inner representation, laying out within itself a space of repression” (“Scene of Writing” 196).

In other words, the Queen calls out to the King and the executioner that their modes of debate over the decapitation of the Cheshire cat are nonsense. Her judgment is debatable because the Queen, as power behind the executioner, might be actually nonsensical because it is her who throws around “Off with his or her head” everywhere she goes. It is possible that this phrase is used so many times with her that its meaning implodes indefinitely. But it still carries traces of power. Some examples: At the Tea Party with the Mad Hatter, the Dormouse, and the March Hare are singing songs about tea-trays twinkling in the shy and the Dormouse starts repeating the word “twinkle.” The Queen responds with the words, “He’s murdering the time! Off with his

²⁸ Whisper from the Darkness: I understand that Jacques Derrida’s words on the Hélène Cixous archive assert that one always already sets of hierarchies of reading while forgetreading/perhaps repressing, other readings/assertions. They both seem to work here as this very section reveals. Hélène Cixous has written about his very thing in her book *The Newly Born Woman*.

head!” (75)²⁹ At the croquet field, just before the game, the Queen arrives and sees the three gardeners, the three playing-card performing as gardeners who Alice sees painting the white roses red (forcing the white roses to perform as red roses) because they fear their heads being chopped off, laying on the ground. The Queen asks Alice who they are, to which she replies, “It’s no business of *mine*.”³⁰ The Queen yells, “Off with her head! Off –,” but before she could finish Alice screams back, “Nonsense!” (84). The nonsense judgment is given to the Queen but it is she who is so loud in yelling the same judgment to the King and the executioner as they debate the Cheshire cat beheading situation.

More irony is found in her exercise of her control over those two in that situation. During the debate over whether, or how, to behead the Cheshire Cat, the King and the executioner are both right in their argumentation (Sutherland 5). In the lines above, the executioner argues, “...you couldn’t cut off a head unless there was a body to cut it off from” (92-93) The executioner is correct because beheading means there has to be a body from which to detach the head. But the King is also correct. He argues, “...anything that had a head could be beheaded, and that you weren’t to talk nonsense” (93). The King has also reasoned correctly in his

²⁹ Whisper from the Darkness: I have considered an analysis of time throughout this book, its connection to singing, rhythm in dancing, the White Rabbit’s obsession with it and his pocket watch, and then just now the Queen’s accusation against the Dormouse for murdering time. I think about time is both “real” and metaphorical in that as the White Rabbit worries about not having time or getting time that he is obsessed with controlling something before the end where the “end” is his eventual real or figurative death (Derrida *Aporias* 40).

³⁰ Whisper from the Darkness: I have thought about the word “mine” as it is used in this context, as something that is owned or considered as owned by the “me/my.” Now archived with this word is the word “mine,” a word which refers to the underground place where minerals or organic objects of some culturally determined worth are buried. The OED defines “mine” as, “An excavation or system of excavations made underground for the extraction of metals or metallic ores, coal, salt, precious stones, (less commonly) building stone, clay, etc.; an open-air excavation for the extraction of such substances. Also: a place where such excavations are conducted,” “As the first of two or more possessives modifying a following noun,” and as a verb, “To dig or tunnel under the foundations of a wall, fort, etc., so as to cause its collapse or to gain an entrance.” Of course the very scene of the “mine” is also a decent figure for an archive, like an archive-within-archive or something. But that archived with “mine” is also the verb “to mine” shows that “mine” in Alice’s sense of owned set and default by her, is perhaps not certain as to claim something as “mine” is really to claim “I am in the procedure of mining that thing or myself” Or, not ‘mine,’ “mining.” See Papin’s article as referenced in Works Cited for information on the metaphor of the Hopi Native American language and its attention to the verb-action description of reality where nature moves as opposed to most of the languages I know which refer to “things” as nouns, set, known, un-moving.

statement on the Cheshire Cat's beheading. Except, the King also counters that any judgment than his is nonsense. Even though the King and the executioner have both used logic/reason to arrive at true statements, the Queen arrives at her own subjective opinions about just getting it done, an arrival made upon no theoretical or abstract reasoning of logic and simply says, "...if something wasn't done about it in less than no time she's have everybody executed, all round" (93). But to this, Alice replies by screaming "Nonsense!" (93). So, even though the King and the executioner both use reason or logic to arrive at a seemingly set truth, it is countered with acts of nonsense, the Queen having everybody executed, which are in turn countered with statements and acts by Alice as she calls the Queen's acts nonsense. There is nothing inherent about the King's power and there is nothing inherent in the Queen's power. The result is a performance of power by the Queen, the King, and Alice. And as the central death-threat in the novel, the threat of death is made visible by her. And as the premier political power in the novel, one whose power acts are perhaps nonsensical, the Queen opens consideration through the door labeled "performance."

Interroscribing the Law (s) of “Family.” II.

The performances continue through other archivizations of “family” and the Law therein via “family” as acting troupe and can be observed first in the Queen-as-Law (s)’s performance throughout (she and her husband form the central juridical power of family as death controllers). The Queen’s performance builds the platform from which to explore other Law (s) of “family.” This reading of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* pertains to performance theory and stands before another door through which we read back into *The Trial*. This is the second element the discussion on the King-Queen metaphor of Law (s) of family reveals. The first example, the one that presents the Law (s) of family and performance, is rather the idea of the touring, performing acting troupe, a group which must stay together under its own Law (s) if it is to be. The OED defines “troupe” as “A company, band, troop; *esp.* a company of players, dancers, or the like.” The family resemblance is not immediate, but one can imagine the image of the troupe gathered in a figurative circle as a “family” where the center is the unknowable and unenterable Law (s) that holds the “family” together. This section addresses the Law (s) of family as troupe in Alice’s story only to strengthen the lattice onto which performance and theatricality is looked at closer and built onto. There are no such examples in the *The Trial* because it is K’s family member Uncle K who makes the connections for K to Lawyer Huld and the “inner” Law (s). Theatricality is nevertheless ubiquitous in *The Trial*. So much so, in fact, that it is unnecessary to spotlight particular examples of Law (s) of family as troupe. It is just necessary to examine some implications of theatricality.

The first example from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is in a central scene, the scene with the caterpillar and his request for Alice to sing “You are old, Father William” perfectly. The caterpillar is a sort of father, or a phallus stand-in who commands (Lacan 82). We can mention

the ending of the performance of the song before the analysis of the song itself because though it might hang over, it is not the central idea. As soon as Alice finishes her performance, the caterpillar says, “That is not said right” to which Alice replies, “Not *quite* right, I’m afraid” (487). There are three judgments in this moment. The first is the judgment by the caterpillar Law (s) of father on Alice’s performance generally. The second is that one could ask what he means by “not said right.” The caterpillar’s judgment is ambiguous because there is no absolute standard of the song or its perfect performance provided. The third is that the judgment that springs from the ambiguity of “not said right” is illuminated in Alice’s reply. “Not *quite* right,” which is another example of uncertainty and also harks back to the question of ambiguity in translation from Kafka’s German *Der Prozeß* to the English *The Trial* and the disparity between Willa and Edwin Muir’s translation of “*böses*” as “wrong” and Breon Mitchell’s translation of the same term as “truly wrong.” Except in this case, the uncertainty or ambiguity in translating the caterpillar’s judgment, “not said right,” is from English to English. In other words, Alice is judged as having not performed correctly an action of language, the song, by the caterpillar’s Law (s) of performance. The caterpillar’s Law (s) of performance, where he plays the father of the Alice/caterpillar duo and where Alice is the actor/subject who sings and the actor/object who is judged by a Law (s) of language which is never entered by way of absolute knowledge. The Law is thus uncertain and ambiguous just as the competing translations of “*böses*” are.

To look to the overlap of performance, family, and the Law (s) in the song itself, a space for performance-within-performance, there is much in the scene. The song is about a “young man,” Father William’s son, who tells his father he is old. The old man retorts with a series of anecdotes in verse form about what he has done in his old age and how he has coped with it. The verses are in the form of Call and Response. The Call is, “You are old...,” and the Response is,

“In my youth...” In other words, the son tells his father he is old and the father responds with some moment on his youth and changes since. In the fifth and sixth verses (which can either be thought of as absolute fifth and sixth verses or the third verse-couplet) the dialectic between the son and father is as follows:

“‘You are old,’ said the youth, ‘and your jaws are too weak

For anything tougher than suet;

Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak –

Pray how did you manage to do it?”

In my youth,’ said his father, ‘I took to the law,

And argued each case with my wife;

And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw,

Has lasted the rest of my life.’” (47).

Old Father William ends the tune by telling the son he will not answer any more questions as three are enough. This is the Law (s) of family as archived under the meaning of the most common sense of the word. The father is the ruling party (just as the caterpillar represents atop his mushroom throne) and the son is not. But under another sense of “family” is the strange pairing of performer and audience. In the first case, the performance-within-the-performance, the son asks the father questions about his old age and the father performs the answers through a song. There are also pictures in that section. In those pictures the father seems also to be dancing. The point is that the father commands the performance in the Law (s) of “family.” The alteration of performer to audience (and perhaps back again) is switched once more as the father takes the lead and performs answers to his son’s questions according to his own desire. The father performs the role of father for the son and performs the song according to the rules of

performance in the moment. He is not free in these roles. It depends which Law (s) commands the moment and Old father William must submit to some combination of them.

The second pairing of performer and audience is in the same scene. This is Alice's performance for the caterpillar. Now the caterpillar represents some kind of Law (s) as he is the "father" in that pairing. Especially in light of him telling Alice has not performed the song "quite right," which is an analog to the father simply telling the son to leave after he has performed all he wants to perform. Further, the Law (s) is built into the song itself linguistically and about speaking (which is a form of performance). For example, when Old Father William says, "I took to the law, / And argued each case with my wife; / And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw, / Has lasted the rest of my life." (47). First, the father performs the "mother" because she must submit to his Law (s) as the father must submit to his role under the Law (s) of family. The talking through the Law (s), whatever he meant by it was performed with the wife, not to his wife. The use of "with" implies the performance of that marriage and the Law (s) of its power over them as both. Second, the father tells the son he has trained his jaw through his endless performing of that Law (s) with his wife. This endless performing means the act is something that must continue, especially as the father performs the song solidly for the son and then stops when the Law (s) of family becomes intertwined and he enacts his "right" to stop that particular performance when he feels. One could assume that his performances with his wife continue. There is no arrival, no certainty, as such, perhaps until death.³¹ There is only the door of the Law (s) and performances before it.

³¹ Whisper from the Darkness: Derrida points out in his book The Secrets of the Archive that *certes*, the Latin for "certainty," is an anagram for "secret," something which will never arrive or to which none will ever arrive. Jacques De Visscher has also written on this secret, but he focuses on the German word *Geheimnis*. He writes, something which harks back to the Law (s) of family and the unknowable thing which keeps the "home/unhome" and "family" defined, "'The 'secret' (*Geheimnis*) is understood in this instance as that which protects and holds those who dwell within the home (*das Heim*) together'" (121).

Another conspicuous performance in this same section is the performance of the subject of the text through pictures, another performance-within-a-performance. This is the place that really marks performances' uncertainty (s). The disparity between how to "read" the text and the pictures reveals more uncertainty and that performance itself is the only act accomplished. Every other act is incomplete and thus uncertain. This section sets up the next stage for exegesis in *The Trial*, that of theatricality. Michel Foucault has acknowledged in his book *This is Not a Pipe* the mental acrobatics necessary to think logically through the difference between text and pictures if they are included in the same work. Foucault writes, "An order [a Law] always hierarchizes them, running from the figure to discourse or from discourse to the figure" (33).³² Foucault also writes, "The text must say nothing to this gazing subject who is a viewer, not a reader. As soon as he begins to read, in fact, shape dissipates" (24). In other words, even though a reader, (Foucault refers to this reader as a viewer in regards to pictures. "Viewer," he suggests, is a more passive term), reads and hierarchizes a given text or image set, his or her hierarchizations are perhaps all wrong if the image is its own truth.

The result is that any act of hierarchization is only a performance of meaning and another door of the Law (s) of the performance is thus never entered via the act of performed meaning attachment. The images, like the Law (s) in *The Trial* and the truth of the caterpillar's judgments against Alice's performance of "You are old, Father William," are uncertain, thus unenterable, uninhabitable, and unknowable. There is more of the unenterable and uncertain in relation to theatricality in *The Trial* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* below but first a stop by the "Art Door" to view John Tenniel's illustrations that accompany Alice's performance of "You are old, Father William." This is meaningful because even though the text is complicated and very funny, the images seem to be their own performances, performances represented through Father

³² Whisper from the Darkness: The term within the [] is mine.

William dancing and standing on his head (as mentioned above) and do not necessarily have to be there for any reason which “helps” the text be understood. But they are nevertheless included in the book despite their lack of necessity for imagining the ideas as suggested by the text itself.

Here are a two of those images:



³³ < <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114>> Retrieved: 20 January 2007.

³⁴ < <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114>> Retrieved: 20 January 2007.

Interroscribing the Law (s) on the Stage, Theatricality.

“All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts...” >William Shakespeare.³⁵

In this section, performance of meaning before the Door of the Law (s) is brought to center stage (a cliché that works here perhaps). And its centeredness is tied to one of the first images in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the picture from the novel in which Alice kneels in front of a tiny door pulling a curtain back to see the door. This image unites the images of the door, as in the door of the Law (s), and theatricality and performance right from the beginning. Also, the image is itself a performance full of ambiguity and uncertainty and it combines theatricality through the curtain and the door. The import of the image is in its representation of the unenterable door for Alice the girl. She must perform in different character. The import is also found in the implication that just as the image performance represents an unenterable door, performance itself is no guarantor of truth and analyses of these performances also stand before that door. The result is a performance-within-a-performance that always already stands before the door and remains ambiguous and uncertain. The irony is that the performances must continue endlessly anyway. Here is the image of Alice standing before the door and drawing aside the curtain, a signifier of theatricality.

³⁵ Shakespeare, William. “As You Like it.” The Complete Works. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1994. 622.

The questions of the truth under the map are found in Friedrich Nietzsche's work (Franz Kafka and Jean Baudrillard both knew Nietzsche's work). The Empire will perhaps always be a simulation of the world and there is no way to be able to perceive of the world without simulation performances. The Empire is not free to command whatever it wants. It must perform its mapping on top of other performances. The Empire, as signifier of Law (s) and its mapping, will always already be a performance of power and image making and broadens the sense of meaning for "performance" until it infects the "audience" too. So even though Baudrillard credits Borges with a serious project writing toward a conceptualization that would be later labeled the "simulacrum," he then criticizes that project. But in the very essay in which Baudrillard hurls his critiques against Borges, Baudrillard includes these words, "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth--it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (1). If we think in terms of the Art of Cartography as perfected form during a human attempt to control nature, the very center concept to Baudrillard's project, then the Map of Empire as large of the Empire starts out as a simulation, and not a map covering the real.

As it been already written about the extent to which Franz Kafka knew the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (Corngold *Lambent Traces* 98, 99, & 102; Grimm 342), it is then worth a moment to get back to the theatricality in *The Trial*, uncertainty, and questions of the real through the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. From there, to the conclusion at the door (s) of performance's Law (s) in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* via an enactment of language on the prose-page, the page on which both Lewis Carroll and Franz Kafka performed such efforts (Anderson, Mladek, Sutherland). Nietzsche writes in "The Madman" about a man who runs about one morning carrying a lit lamp screaming how he and the people around him killed God. Nietzsche writes, "Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed

him” (181). The Mad-Character also screams, “What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions?... How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers?” (181-182). The question he is actually asking is: How do we then, as murderers of God/the Truth, perform Now?

The relevance for the use of Nietzsche here is found in the image of the God/Truth killers and the resultant questions are signs of total uncertainty because the “real” has either been severely questioned or thrown out altogether, depending on how Nietzsche is read. This language that speaks to drifting “Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions” portrays a vision of a universe of movement and limited recognition/sight of the “true” direction—a fact which unsettles notions of empiricism and objectivity in language. Drifting an unknown direction is a strange mirroring of Nietzsche’s questions of the “real” in his *Twilight of the Idols*. He writes, “The true world—we have abolished. What world has remained? The apparent one perhaps? But no! With the true world we have abolished the apparent one” (486). Secondly, the universe of uncertainty rendered through the language of drift is also the language of movement. It is a universe of flux that Werner Heisenberg calls a system of events rather than things and ambiguous rather than certain (Papin 1255, 1258). Events are actions. They are physical and ambiguous, such as any performance is. And any language that claims totality or having entered the door of truth/ or the Law (s) is questionable, even this statement.

The third relevance for the language of drift pertains to consideration of Michel Foucault’s book *This is Not a Pipe* because there are pictures in *The Trial* and *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. The pictures in *Alice...* are explicit and the pictures in *The Trial* are discussed in text and by one of the major characters, major because he is so revealing of perceptions of the

Law and the huge disparity and quantity of uncertainty in readings of pictures and text.

According to Michel Foucault, even if a writer performs hierarchizations, it is necessary to understand the context from which those hierarchizations arise. This contextualization implies a limitation of freedom. The following image is a good example.



37

The text in the *Alice in Wonderland* is, “A large rose-tree stood near the entrance of the garden: the roses growing on it were white, but there were three gardeners at it, busily painting them red” (81). The text gives a narrative about gardeners and gardens. But looking closer at the image, itself in the shape of a door (a door within-the-door-of-this-document), one does not see a garden, per se, or gardeners, per se. One sees something else, something that works according to its own Law (s) of performance. Foucault’s words, “A pipe, a pipe,’ cry the students, stamping away while the teacher, his voice sinking lower, murmurs always with the same obstinacy though no one is listening, ‘and yet it is not a pipe’” (30) make more sense. Foucault says, “This is not a garden. These are not gardeners.” Here is the image of the pipe/not pipe:

³⁷ < <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/114> > Retrieved: 20 January 2007.



So, not only does the image not speak to a “garden with gardeners,” but the image itself is a performance of something separated from the text, not gardeners and not a garden. The gardeners are performed by playing cards that are artistic renderings that represent uncertainty. And the act of painting nature’s white roses over with red is a rendering of something not-rose. Perhaps this is an example of truth-games as Foucault would call them (Foucault “The Ethics...” 25). This is not a pipe and those images above are not gardeners in a garden of red roses. But still the text says they are. The text and the images are performances and the cards are not free because they must be dealt.

The universe is uncertain. The drifting universe of Baudrillardian tremors is an analog to Nietzsche’s narrative of “The Madman” and his universe which slips “backward, sideward, forward, in all directions” in language, between performances of text and performances of images in texts. The images are truths. But as Foucault implies again, our language performances of meaning are perhaps lies, or not-the-truth-as-such. This performance between language and image/gaze-making through the anasemia, the picture-truth which works as truth outside or on the borders of language, is explicated by Abraham and Rand. They write, “...we want to evoke that image of the Ego fighting on two fronts: turned toward the outside, moderating appeals and

³⁸ <<http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.thisIsNotaPipe.en.html>> Retrieved 26 February 2007.

assaults, turned toward the inside, moderating excessive incongruous impulses...[in the space between the inside and the outside of a shape best recognized by the metaphor of]...a shell” (17).³⁹ A shell that covers the image that blocks language but that also covers the text the images in Alice theoretically augment. The shell is fragile, fragile like an egg-shell, obviously, but also fragile like dry bones in a tomb.

What is the relevance of the tomb image here? Because Alice at the very beginning of her story leaves the scene of life (the scene of her sister reading that book without pictures in the light of the living) and descends underground only to bind herself to unhuman/unhomely creatures, creatures that have a place in horror as “reeling and writhing” subjects/objects. Alice is called a human but the imagery of her in her story is something not quite so. The definitions are tremor-filled. For example one, Alice reacts to the bottles labeled “Orange Marmalade” and trusts that it is what it says it is inside. She will never know. Alice trusts the label on the bottles that says “Drink Me” because she has embraced the writing in the world before her which has told her to not drink bottles labeled “Poison” because so many children have fallen to hard times in stories before hers who did not follow the rules of what to drink and what not to drink. But as the labels are only labels of meaning or implied meaning, the thinking subject Alice could just as well be Alice the Dead made literally an object of bones and dead flesh after she is poisoned.

For example two, after Alice the burrowing creature (Inspector Worm) plunges into and down the well, she mentions how she would not mention anything too serious if she tumbled down the stairs or fell from the top of the house because those actions are, according to Alice, nothing compared to the falling down this tunnel/well. The place of home and the effect of the Law (s) of family is enacted here. But simultaneously, Alice is underground, a metaphor for the tomb/archive (or at least unhome), and defines her experiences with language of family/home

³⁹ Whisper from the Darkness: Emphasis through the [] is mine.

with a set of rules that she does not recognize as the language of “family” or “home.” In the same scene of the fall where Alice says she would think nothing about tumbling down stairs or falling off the top of her house, it is given to the readers by the Narrator the words, “Which was very likely true” (3). It is not precise what these words “mean,” but it could be argued their implication is one of death, as in, if Alice tumbled down the stairs or fell from the top of the roof of her house, she would think nothing of it because she would be dead. She would become food for worms (she might, as a worm, have to eat her “self” in some way). All together, Alice falls into a scene decidedly “unhome,” but define it in terms of “home.” It might need to be one or the other, but it seems to be both.⁴⁰ Or, to pick one is to kill another and the narrative will not let that occur. She is not free, but constantly between “home” and “unhome.” Alice has been given life, but in the text, some scenarios suggest her death. Or at least her fragility. Finally, any reading by a so-called critic over-writes, in the Mystic Writing Pad sense, another reading of Alice and her death is itself a form of death because it fails to acknowledge a multitude of hierarchies and life-movements of interroscrition, the act of asserting and asking questions simultaneously. Jacques Derrida refers to this endless question posing as “deferring a dangerous cathexis...” (“Freud and the Scene” 202). Even this reading carries death around in it everywhere. Alice is performed as alive in the texts as performed by a reader even though the images are also there to perform and unperform (if that is possible). Each performance has its own Law (s) which means Alice is never free.

And because, first, K dies at the end of his story “like a dog,” which is really like saying “not-a-dog” right after leaving the cathedral, the signifier of God/death/mortality/human limit. More subtly, however, is the scene of death or forgetreading when K feels he must explain to

⁴⁰ Whisper from the Darkness: I do understand that these situations work in so many more ways than in a binary manner, but the necessity for the dialectic of the moment presents itself. It will of course necessarily fail to comprehend the truth.

Fräulein Bürstner why her photographs are touched and moved all over the place. He portrays the scene in which the guards, the Inspector, and those three colleagues from his bank are about the boardinghouse. K says, “You have to visualize the cast of characters. It’s very interesting. I’m the inspector, two guards are sitting over there...And now the action begins. Oh, I’m forgetting myself, the most important character” (31). The scene is interesting; K is right in saying this. But as soon as he performs the scene by himself for Fräulein Bürstner, he sets up the room for her imagination, a setting up that works as its own Law (s) of performance. There is the implication of removal through the directness of the language to Fräulein Bürstner the audience and K the performer and not only her boardinghouse-mate. K stands before the door of the Law (s) of boardinghouse-mate and actor. Thus he is not free in here. But in this rendering of the scene, K says, “Oh, I’m forgetting myself, the most important character.” This forgetting is a forgettreading of his existence in “reality.” K’s forgettreading sets him up as always already dead except through an action of mining the possibilities of scene performance for what seems to be missing.

The third scene is where Titorelli the Painter explains the differences between the types of acquittal and the lines of meaning in his paintings. It must be stated that the Law (s) is affiliated with the artist (thus his art) through a direct door Titorelli says is often entered by the Judges he paints (155). More importantly, even though the artist’s work is not shown in the explicit way John Tenniel’s are shown in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the discussion about the painting and the limits between the Law (s) of language and Law (s) of performance through the anasemia of paintings is explicit enough that it should be examined. One must stand before the door of the Law (s) of performance as unlocked by art and paintings. First, Titorelli explains how all judges want “...to be painted like the great judges of old and only I can do that”

(151-52). Jean Baudrillard's sense of images as referenced to only other images is here. It is perhaps a metaphor for a kind of closed system where the real is dead and alive.

Even more importantly, the artist also states that he is the only one who can paint today's judges with the images of the old judges because the artistry is passed generationally. Titorelli says, "My father himself was a court painter... The rules for painting the various levels of officials are so numerous, so varied, and above all, so secret, that they simply aren't known beyond certain families" (151). So within the secret Law (s) of painting performance, is the Law (s) of family. Archived within one secret is another. But if certainty (*cathexis*) is ever arrived at, the result is death because all closed systems or completely defined/asserted systems are systems at rest, i.e.; dead (Papin 1258).⁴¹ Also archived within the secret is the secret of the painting themselves, the Law (s) of their respective performances. The painting of "justice" by Titorelli as commissioned by some judge or another is interpreted by K as symbolic of a truth, but Titorelli explains how wrong-headed is his call. The conversation is:

"'It's the figure of Justice,' the painter finally said. 'Now I recognize it, said K, 'there's a blindfold over her eyes and here are the scales. But aren't those wings on her heels, and isn't she in motion?' 'Yes,' said the painter, 'I'm commissioned to do it that way, it's actually justice and the goddess of Victory in one.' 'That's a poor combination, said K, smiling. 'Justice must remain at rest, otherwise the scales sway and no judgment is possible... You've painted the figure the way it actually appears on the throne.' 'No,' said the painter, 'I've seen / neither the

⁴¹ Whisper from the Darkness: K refers to the Court as, "...the strictly closed system of the court" (115). This is a phrase that suggests further questions about the nature of truth-Law (s), but which are to be entered through an entirely different Door/text. Second, Jean Baudrillard refers to the world without tremors, the un-deferred *cathexis*, as a form of madness. He writes, "When this haziness, this tremor does not exist, when an act is purely operational and is perfectly focused, we are on the verge of madness" (99). Third, just as Jean Baudrillard writes about the close system of signs in his view of postmodernity (today), then the Law (s) as K says is closed is perhaps a stand-in for the world of postmodernity without referents to anything but more of itself. It seems a prison.

figure not the throne, that's all an invention'... 'that's surely a judge sitting on a judge's chair...but it's not a high judge, and he hasn't ever sat⁵ on a throne like that'" (145-146).

First of all, K assumes judgments must only be made at rest, but also speaks to the anti-deferment of the *cathexis*, one must assume that K's vision of justice/judgment/interactions with the Law (s), whatever it is/they are, is one at rest, i.e.; dead. He is told that Justice is moving. Second, K thinks he can judge the Law (s) of the performance of the painting, but he is wrong in every respect (according to Titorelli). K piles up his inquiries about the judge on his throne and Titorelli tells K the judge is not a high judge. K assumes the throne is part of the actual setting from/in which Titorelli made his rendering of the judge, but Titorelli replies the throne is absolutely an invention. And more, the judge has never sat upon such a throne. There are two ideas within this and then toward the door of the concluding performance from K's stage to Alice's dancing music. The first idea is that the painting (like a gesture in a play) is a silent truth, an ambiguous truth that is like God in that it is a truth that exists outside of language like an anasemia (Puchner 28). The painting is absolutely and totally its own truth outside of language, a silent Law (s) that is never enterable or known through language. The image gesture is a pole that holds truth and attracts language to define it, even though the image gesture can only be and refer to itself for its meaning as a silent Law (s) (Abraham and Rand 20). And the image itself is a judge, a representative of the Law (s). This means that when K stands before the door of the Law (s) of the art performance, he is also standing before the Law (s) as well. It also means that even though K is the subject who looks at the painting, he is also the object at whom the painting silently stares. K is never free because the very reason he went to Titorelli is to find out about the law and its processes to get through it easily. He cannot.

But, as *The Trial* progresses and K leaves Titorelli's, K spends the rest of his last day alive in the Cathedral talking to a priest who tells K all about the Law (s) through a fable named, "Before the Law." Now, it seems no coincidence that K is at the Cathedral because he is at the Cathedral at 10-11:00 AM in a scene which is quite dark to show an Italian Businessman some of the major art pieces of the city (205). This darkness is the same darkness K has walked around in since his arrest. He is never free from the beginning, waking up under arrest, to this scene. The artist Titorelli, besides painting judges and talking about painting, also tells K the most about the Law (s) than anyone else in the novel. Titorelli tells K of the three types of acquittal: The first is labeled "Actual Acquittal" and is the judgment Titorelli has no sway over in his contacts with judges and in which innocence (or death perhaps and in need of Absolute judgment) is "probably decisive" (152)⁴² The second is labeled "Apparent Acquittal" and is when the arrested person can appear to be free only to find upon arrival home after leaving the Law Court Offices to find an Inspector and guards there ready to arrest again (159). And the third is labeled "Protraction." "Protraction" is when the defendant is always engaged with the lower echelons of the Law Court Offices, like Lawyer Huld to whom Uncle K introduced K to, and must stay attentive to this process endlessly (160). It is not obvious exactly which of these three results (or some combination) K experiences. It is clear, however, due to his death at the hands of two guards just after he leaves the Cathedral, K experiences no such "Actual Acquittal." This means he is never free right to the end (the story begins with guards waking him and ends with guards taking him to his death) and still stands before the door of the Law (s) waiting to enter.

⁴² Whisper from the Darkness: I note the use of "probably decisive" because even that assertion is stated with a sense of uncertainty about it.

To turn back to connections between K's time with the Italian painter Titorelli and K's time waiting for the Italian Businessman in the Cathedral with the Priest, another man who tells K much about the Law (s) in God's place as Art is its own truth like God. The Priest, who is also the Prison Chaplan, tells K the fable, "Before the Law" and explains it. Or, rather, he adds a cornucopia of theoretical attempts to "explain" the Law (s) that is unknowable and unenterable throughout the rest of the narrative. The Priest tells K of the man from the country who comes to the Door of the Law (s) but is told by the Doorkeeper there that he cannot enter. The man from the country waits until his death, having never entered, and as he dies, the Doorkeeper closes the Door of the Law (s) (215-217). Death is everywhere. After the Priest tells the fable, he goes on to repeat some of the theoretical implications. For example, the Priest says, "The commentators tell us: the correct understanding of a matter and misunderstanding the matter are not mutually exclusive" (219), the Doorkeeper often switches from being the "Official" and just a human confined to the role of Doorkeeper and just as unable to know or enter the Door of the Law (s) (219), just as K can be seen as simultaneously in his own life/narrative context as an Inspected and an Inspector (Alice as both the subject/girl and some kind of worm), and then, "You mustn't pay too much attention to opinions. The text is immutable, and the opinions are often only an expression of despair over it" (220). The translation into the text as immutable draws another parallel between the truth of a work of art, in this case a prose work, and God, the inhabitant (theoretically speaking) of the Cathedral. Also, if Franz Kafka, like Lewis Carroll, writes texts as performances, those performances are a form of *anasemia*. Those performances end in the death/borders/limits of language each time a piece of commentary is thrown against the textual gesture and the Law (s) of its performance and falls into the abyss. The Law (s) and its negotiations are always in the present tense. It is always Now. Commentary is never free and

must be engaged in (like Old Father William talking the Law (s) with his wife) endlessly. This is the other end of the pole. The first is the God-like truth of the performed art/gesture and the Law (s). The second is the death of language in its attempts to answer questions (where life abounds) and clarify all uncertainty. Death is everywhere.

CONCLUSION.

In a conclusion-like act, the stage is set for something else, a Law (s) meets family and a Law (s) meets stage performance and a salutatory gesture that opens more Doors and illuminates more questions. On the following stage is Josef K the object who awakes to find himself under arrest. A week later, he shows up to an apartment in one of which is a Law Court hearing inside the door of a husband & wife's home. The building also has official Law Court Offices upstairs, Offices from which the Examining magistrate has wormed his way into numerous apartments in the building and becomes the man to whom K might be compared or swapped for. K was arrested, placed under the hold of the Law (s), a law he never finds out. This is a door he never enters.

Along the routine of his arrest and "trial," K is told about the Examining Magistrate Worm. But K's own investigations and round about travels through the apparatuses of the Law (s) through doors suggests that he is a "worm." Or rather, he performs as something like a worm/object, a worm/subject, and yet simultaneously performs "K" for his boardinghouse "home" and Uncle K, a representative of the Law (s) of family. At the center of this point of Law (s) of self/Law (s) of family is the Law (s) of theatricality where performance stands as the (perhaps) only opportunity for "knowledge." Uncle K represents K to lawyers and the law (s) is steeped in the theatrical right up to and including K's death, "like a dog." There is only uncertainty (a statement that sounds certain but is hard to trust under the same definition), one

submits themselves to Law (s), performs the way they think it is supposed to be done, and hopes. The middle of this performance/play is K's death and at which point the appropriate sets will be de-scribed while the new ones will be described.

On the new sets Alice will appear and dance and sing the Lobster Quadrille with in a family of animals before she runs along with the rest of them a court proceeding in which someone is accused of stealing Tarts. Then Alice changes again and performs something of herself again. She performs songs for a caterpillar but only after she asks him who she is. He can never tell her; the Law will never speak. Alice is a girl and/or a worm but in regards to Alice's status as girl worm, the Law (s) is uncertain. She performs "normal Alice," but also performs "mother" for a child that is not even human. Where is Alice in this? It is uncertain, but she must perform under the juridical Law (s) and Law (s) of family and is never free from that burden. On the subject of the burden of performance, Alice sings and dances with animals because that is the Law (s) of performance in the moment and then must perform courtesy for the Queen of hearts because the Queen represents the political Law (s) and is at her core "nature," an artistic rendering herself. Alice must always stand at the door of the Law (s) performing her "self," for the Law (s) of family, and then always Interroscribing her performances by considering the Law (s) of performance itself. But like all doors of the Law (s), that door will never be entered either.

"THE PLAY"

Act 1. Scene 1.

K dressed "hastily" for he needed to make it to his first hearing, he felt, even though he had no idea what time he is to be there, even though he was told the week prior that he need not alter his quotidian existence while under arrest and in his trial. K submits himself to the Law (s) anyway because, well, it is there and he decides he must be attentive. During this week since the

fine morning of the arrest for something unclear, K received a message about the hearing. While he was on the phone getting his directives from the voice on the line, the Vice President of the bank lounged nearby awaiting another phone call to be put through. During the wait, the VP casually asked K if he would join him on his sailboat the approaching Sunday morning. There was no writing on the wall or voice from another dimension that told K if this friendly gesture was performed for the sake of the Law (s) of work/team/family or for the sake of the Law (s) of etiquette. K is left in the dark like a dog outside under a tree tied to a chain.

Act 1. Scene 2.

At the building in which the hearing takes place, K found the room and stood in front of a mass of people (like an audience), some of whom were standing in a balcony watching. K assumed the scene was absurd because he held his hat in his hands and prepared himself to deliver a monologue to the audience. He criticized the proceedings and said, "...they are only proceedings if I recognize them as such" (45). If only he had taken his own words to heart and understood the Inspector who told him only a week before that his life would not have to be nudged off its daily course. It seems Kafka had recognized the proceedings as such. But the proceedings are only gestures performed by actors and nowhere in this scene is there a person standing at a podium reading narration or yelling monologues of truth. Kafka was under arrest and directed by a force greater than he was. That much is in the "real" story. But the meaning behind the assertion of his arrest was somewhat directed by K himself. He was simultaneously written and writing the proceedings as such and after he finishes his speech to the peanut gallery, as K considered this band of merry observers, the audience claps loudly and yells, "Bravo!" K reacted suddenly to this behavior in ignorance of its implications and tells the Examining magistrate to demand of these paid troupe members, the family of actors in this apartment for

families, to make sure they Clap, boo, and hiss on their cues. Otherwise, the roles of Law Court members and defendants would not be carried to their most “true” import. K dashed out the door to prepare for later scenes.

Act 1. Scene 3.

K kept looking at his watch. He had waited for the Italian Businessman for more than an hour in the Cathedral. It was true he had no interest in this aspect of politicking and networking with clients and moneyed interests, but the Law (s) of work is the Law (s) of work. He glared at the one old woman who knelt with folded arms before the painting of the Virgin, turned his eyes the door to the square and straight-walked closer until a voice from the darkness exploded, “Josef K!” It was the Priest of the Cathedral. The Priest told K about a story about a man who was messed up with the Law (s) but who never figured out the meaning and died in front of the Door of the Law (s) without ever having gotten justice or an explanation. The Priest also stated some of the more academic readings of the story but asserted that just as these paintings exist always in silence and explanation-less, this story has not ever been given a truth of intent by the Creator/One-with-everyone’s-life-in-the-breach of the story or anyone else. He pointed at K and told him the language of explanations dies of shame in its incompetence to make its arguments true. To the left of the Priest, farther to the rear in the darkness there was a sexton who looked at K and held a pinch of snuff in one his fingers, “What do you want?” yelled K. The sexton did not look away but rather gestured off in the distance. K asked, “What does the man want?” but received no answer. It was a gesture that was explicitly ambiguous for K the observer. But off in the distance, in time, for it was K’s thirty-first Birthday, were two men who wore clothes matching the look of guards for the Court gathered about K. K calls them supporting actors and walks with them to his death, and space, as K walks with them to a quarry thinking about what

this action means and who knew how to help where K is stabbed in the heart. The two supporting actors looked at K and said in unison, “‘Like a dog!’...it seemed as though the shame was to outlive him” (231).

To quit this performance on the notion of animal/human, please pardon for a quick set-change and border rearrangement.

Act 2. Scene 1.

Alice looked around the garden and could not see anybody. Of course, there was no reason she knew she could expect somebody to be there. She stood near a large mushroom and looked to the right. Nothing. She looked the left. Nothing. She looked all around the base and scratched her head. Her eyes went bright like she had an idea and look on top, an action which took her to her tippy-toes. A blue caterpillar. He stood tall on the mushroom to Alice, like her father stood tall to her. He asked her who she was. She replied with a tremor in her voice, “I-I hardly know” (43). Alice told the caterpillar she was not herself because she had changed or something and asked if he could see that. He replied in the negative. Alice told the caterpillar it was weird for her to change sizes every so often, as she had done several times already that day. The caterpillar, scrunched down and stretched out and told her it was not weird at all. He had just judged her words according to a Law (s). Alice stood for a moment, performed some song at the caterpillar’s request, and told the caterpillar it was wrong for her to be only three inches tall. The caterpillar, with anger rising in his voice, reeled its head and screamed, “It is a very good height indeed!” (49). Alice looks away and asks quietly, “Well, how can I get back to my normal size?” The caterpillar tells her to eat some of the right side and some of the left side of the mushroom in the correct ratio to adjust her size. “Which side is which?” asked Alice. The caterpillar said nothing. He inched off to the side behind the curtain.

Act 2. Scene 2.

Alice had a conversation with an ugly Duchess, the one who threw a pig wrapped up like a baby (but it not a baby) at Alice with no explanation and no warning. Alice did not know what to do with it. Like all good girls, she adopted the morals of her home and took on the creature, before actually realizing it was a pig. This was Alice the little girl who had suddenly become a mother to a pig. Hmm? What does it mean? Alice never tells us and the authorial voice never addresses the issue with any footnotes or parentheses. Later, however, Alice meets the Duchess again, comments once more on her ugliness, (after playing an incomplete game of croquet). At the end of the game, Alice carried a flamingo/croquet mallet in one arm and talked with the Duchess who told her, “Everything’s got a moral, if you can find it” (95). A few pages later, Alice learned the Lobster Quadrille, met a Gryphon, and listened to a Mock Turtle tell a story about his education in “Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.” All in all, this little family of travelers, so to speak, “learned” that one of the main courses in the Mock turtle’s education was Mystery.

Act 2. Scene 3.

After Alice performed a song about beautiful soup, the troupe wandered to the Court where a Trial was about to begin. The Law (s) has a door to everyplace. The White Rabbit entered the scene, the same White Rabbit who wore the waistcoat earlier in the day and whom Alice followed into the Rabbit Hole. But in this act, he wore the appropriate garments for a court official, a gown that looks like a face card. The Law (s) here is headed by a family of cards, each with their respective “values” labeled on them. The question of the Trial was “Who Stole the Tarts?” The king demanded the verdict be stated against the Tart Stealer, the Knave of Hearts (right at the start) but the Rabbit suggested they defer the verdict until all the evidence is heard.

Unfortunately, not all the evidence is ever heard about the Knave's larceny or about the meanings of the textual performance. Maybe that means the verdict can never be stated with certainty. Not only is all the evidence never heard, but the jurors, the creatures put in charge of the judgment of a crime never put forth in absolute terms of clarity by a known Law (s), wrote their names on boards. Alice looked at them and said, "Stupid Things." The jurors took these words as their directive and wrote them on their boards. Alice laughed and said to herself that those boards will be a great muddle before this trial is ended. Alice's separation from these creatures became enacted as she began to grow to normal size, knocked over the jurors bench, was yelled at by the King, was threatened with decapitation by the Queen, and retorted with vigor and deliberateness, "You're nothing but a pack of cards!" (135). She judged them but it is not clear if this is a "true" judgment because in that very trial, The Mad Hatter said logically his hats are not his because he sells them but is nevertheless called a thief by the King as he started to give evidence of the scene of the crime (a scene that does not exist except in attempts to recreate it in the trial). This of course all started with twinkling and tea but the Mad Heter is screamed at again by the King, rightly, because he already knows "twinkling" begins with a "t."

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