Kafka's 'The New Attorney': A Therapeutic Poem Offering a Jewish Way to Face Death

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Most people think of the German-Jewis7h writer, Franz Kafka, solely as a novelist and as a creator of short stories. However, in an anthology of modern Jewish poetry, published in 1980, the editors asserted that some of Kafka's writing "can truly be said to be prose poetry" (Schwartz and Rudolf 836). This contention would not have surprised Kafka's close friend, Jiri Langer, who himself was a poet. Langer stated, "Kafka was an original person in an absolute sense. A poet—but his way in sacred matters was not to show his originality" (Oppenheimer 303). When Kafka died, Langer wrote a poem honoring his memory, entitled "On the Death of a Poet" (Oppenheimer 303).

Literary criticism of Kafka's work has also viewed many of his writings as being a form of poetry. Bezzel sees Kafka's work as poetic because through it he created a system of symbols which allowed for a completely modern method of communication (124). For Sussman, Kafka's work is essentially poetic because of its great mystery. Speaking on this matter, he says that Kafka's "fictive process . . . is similar to poetry. The poetic process—whether described as 'staging,' 'framing,' 'unfolding,' or "metaphor"—is distinguished precisely by the inability to anticipate when and what it will produce" (22).

Selden Rodman has edited an anthology of modern poetry, described as "distinctive for its selection of important European poets in translation" (McDonald 1909). In this anthology, Kafka's work, "The New Attorney," has been selected as one of the most significant poems of the twentieth-century.[1] The purpose of the present paper will be to show that Kafka wrote his poem, "The New Attorney," in order to declare that he had found a Jewish approach to face his death; a death which he believed would occur in the near future because of the foreboding nature of his severe medical symptoms. I will demonstrate that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," was stating that he was going to function as an intepreter of Jewish law; and by assuming this role, he would likely achieve a rewarding afterlife. Also, I will make the case that the poem, "The New Attorney," by providing Kafka with a path towards immortality, served a definite therapeutic purpose because it succeeded in giving him the courage to face his death.

Concern with Death

In an extensive study of creative artists, Jacques found that most of these talented individuals personalized the subject of death in their work between the ages of thirty-five and forty (149-150). Kafka wrote "The New Attorney," in January 1917, when he was thirty-three years old. However, there was good reason for Kafka to have been concerned about death at a slightly earlier age than most other creative artists: he had experienced adverse medical symptoms, starting in 1911. These symptoms included insomnia, profuse sweating, high fever, intense stomach cramps, severe headaches, and frequent anxiety attacks (Citati 174).

Both Citati (173) and Jofen (2) claim that Kafka knew he was suffering from tuberculosis in January 1917, although he did not receive a medical diagnosis for his condition until September 1917. They point to the fact that some of the stories Kafka wrote shortly after "The New Attorney" clearly indicate a personal awareness of the disease. For example, Citati contends that Kafka had foretold his condition in "A Country Doctor" when the physician discovers in the boy's right side a wound "pink in color, with diverse shades, dark at the bottom, lighter towards the edges, slightly granulated, with irregular clots of blood" (173). Jofen uses as an example "A Report to an Academy" where Kafka, in the guise of the ape, Rotpeter, "has the red spots often seen on the faces of T.B. patients—thus probably also explaining the name 'Rotpeter' (20).

Kafka, in his autobiographical writings, also gives credence to the idea that he knew he was suffering from tuberculosis before the actual diagnosis of September 4, 1917. Kafka wrote in his diary on September 18, 1917 that "it is the age of the infection rather than its depth and festering which makes it painful" (*Diaries* 183). Kafka wrote to a friend in early September that "the illness . . . I have been inducing for years with my headaches and insomnia has now suddenly erupted" (*Memory* 154). Unfortunately, in 1917, pulmonary tuberculosis, the illness about which Kafka was commenting, generally proved to be fatal since it "accounted for 30 percent of all deaths in Prague" (Pawel 362).

In "The New Attorney," which Kafka wrote during January 1917, he clearly expressed great concern about his likely death by the inclusion of Alexander the Great in this work. For Kafka, the figure of Alexander symbolized his own death as he later conveyed in an aphorism written in January 1918.

> Death is in front of us, rather as on the schoolroom wall there is a reproduction of Alexander's Battle. The thing is to darken, or even indeed to blot out, the picture in this one life of ours through our actions. (*Dearest Father* 144).

We see by the aphorism that death, for Kafka, is associated with the image of Alexander the Great and that anything which can be done to "blot out" the image would prove to be therapeutic. This paper will soon show that Kafka, through his poem, "The New Attorney," not only expressed great concern over his own personal death but also offered a way to ultimately overcome his gloomy Alexander image (i.e., personal death looming in the near-future).

The Connection with Judaism

Max Brod, who was Kafka's closest friend, said of him that in early 1917 he "was drifting . . . into Judaism" (Hayman 220). Studies by Strauss, Robertson, and Oppenheimer have all supported Brod's contention. Kafka himself reinforced this claim when he said of his creative work written between 1917 and 1922 that "if Zionism had not intervened, it might easily have developed into a new secret doctrine, a Kabbalah" (*Memory* 212).

Kafka, speaking specifically about his collection of writings which appeared under the title, *Ein Landarzt [A Country Doctor]*, of which "The New Attorney," was the first offering, stated:

> Ever since I decided to dedicate the book to my father, I am anxious for it to appear as soon as possible . . . At least I will have done something, not perhaps settled in Palestine, but at least traveled there with my finger on the map. (Pawel 307-38).

Undoubtedly the strongest evidence that "The New Attorney" has a connection to Judaism is that Kafka offered this prose poem to the philosopher, Martin Buber, to be published in a journal edited by Buber, called *Der Jude [The Jew]* (Kafka, *Memory* 152). Buber's editorial policy was to accept only articles that bore some relationship to Judaism (Oppenheimer 29-30). As far as Buber was concerned, *Der Jude* "was designed as a forum of ideas new and reviving in the German-speaking Jewish community, a rallying-point for resurgent Jewish national identity, and a guiding, creative force in the search for the new Judaism" (Oppenheimer 29). Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that Kafka would have submitted "The New Attorney" to Buber unless he himself believed that his prose poem had a substantial Jewish content.[2]

Ideological Immortality

Blanton has recommended that poetry be used as a therapeutic resource in cases where an individual is frightened over the prospect of his or her personal death (57-85). According to Blanton, poetry has the ability to offer "a common sense note that should be pondered by those who are obsessed by fear of dying" (59). Blanton believes that one way

a poem can function in a therapeutic manner is if it offers its reader or writer a way to achieve immortality (78-79).

Rank identifies this particular function of poetry as "ideological immortality" (288-289). Rank says of poets that their creative work is an attempt to attain immortality by providing the basis for "actualizing their thought, their wish, or their word" (289). Thus, for Rank, poetry provides a creative outlet by which one can find a successful approach to immortality.

For Jung, finding an appropriate way to achieve immortality is, by necessity, therapeutic (110-114). Commenting on the relationship among the fear of death, striving for immortality, and the idea goal of therapy, Jung states:

> When I live in a house which I know will fall about my head within the next two weeks, all my vital functions will be impaired by this thought; but if on the contrary I feel myself to be safe, I can dwell there in a normal and comfortable way. From the standpoint of psychotherapy it would therefore be desireable to think of death as only a transition—one part of a life-process whose extent and duration escape our knowledge. (112)

Because of this point of view, Jung says that he considers "the religious teaching of a life hereafter consonant with the standpoint of psychic hygiene" (112).

According to Lifton, one type of ideological immortality which has proven to be therapeutic is the theological idea of transcending death through spiritual attainment in life (6). It will shortly be argued that the poem, "The New Attorney," suggested the above approach, in that Kafka recognized through this work that if he committed himself to a pious existence while still alive, he would ultimately manage to overcome death.

"The New Attorney" and Its Jewish Sociological Context

At this juncture of the paper it would be appropriate to look at the prose poem, "The New Attorney." Since this work is relatively short, and because I am treating it as a poetic creation, I will offer a full rendering of "The New Attorney" as it appears in Rodman's *One Hundred Modern Poems*.

> We have a new attorney, Dr. Bucephalus. There is little about his external appearance to remind one of the time when he was still Alexander of Macedonia's charger. But anyone familiar with such matters can still notice something. Did I not just lately see even a quite simple court

attendant stare at the lawyer with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower as the latter, lifting his legs high, mounted the stairs step by step, with a tread that made the marble ring?

The bar in general approved of Bucephalus' admission. They tell themselves, with amazing insight, that Bucephalus' position under our present social system is a difficult one and that he therefore—and also because of his world-historical significance—deserves to be met halfway. Today, as no one can deny, there is no Alexander the Great. Many, of course, still know how to murder; nor is there any lack of skill at stabbing your friend over the banquet table with a lance; and for many Macedonia is too narrow, so that they curse Phillip, the father—but no one, no one can lead us to India. Even in those days India's gates were unattainable, but their direction was designated by the royal sword. Today the gates have been shifted elsewhere and higher and farther away; many hold swords but only to flourish them, and the glance that tries to follow them becomes confused.

Therefore it may really be best, perhaps, to do as Bucephalus has done and bury oneself in the law books. Free, his flanks unpressed by the thighs of a rider, under a quiet lamp, far from the din of Alexander's battles, he reads and turns the pages of our old books. (42-43)

According to Oppenheimer, Kafka, in "The New Attorney," is represented by the horse, Dr. Bucephalus (262). This connection is clearly demonstrated by Dr. Bucephalus choosing law as an occupation, and in this chosen profession being only half-heartedly accepted as a lawyer by his peers. Kafka himself chose law as a profession and he spent most of his adult life toiling for the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute of Prague which rarely employed Jews. In fact, until 1848, Jews were not allowed to practice law at all in Prague, and even though, by the turn of the century, they were admitted to the bar, it was still very difficult for them to gain acceptance in governmental agencies (Pawel 181-182). Thus, we see in "The New Attorney" that Kafka, the Jew, would never be entirely accepted as a peer by his fellow Gentile lawyers but could only be met "halfway" by them in the "present social system."

Not only does Kafka, in "The New Attorney," comment upon the type of relationship which existed between Jew and Gentile, he also expresses the hostility that typified the relationship between Jew and fellow Jew in turn-of-the-century Europe. The dramatist, Arthur Schnitzler, who lived during this period of time, said "that a Jew never really respected

another Jew, as little as prisoners in an enemy country respect each other" (Stolzl 54). Stolzl, writing specifically about Jewish anti-Semitism in Prague, stated that these Jews "knew each other so well they can inflict far deeper wounds than any outsider can" (55). Speaking in a more literary manner about Jewish anti-Semitism, Kafka, in "The New Attorney," declares: ". . . nor is there any lack of skill at stabbing your friend over the banquet table with a lance." It is because of statements like this one which lead Oppenheimer to believe that "The New Attorney" is, in part, depicting the tragic predicament of Jewish anti-Semitism amongst German-speaking Jews (262-263).

It is no wonder, then, that Kafka, as Bucephalus, isolates himself from other human beings in the last paragraph of "The New Attorney." Kafka asserts in this final paragraph that he, Dr. Bucephalus, is most contended when "free, . . . under a quiet lamp, far from the din of Alexander's battles, he reads and turns the pages of our old books." Based on the symbolic connection which was made earlier in this paper between eliminating the picture of Alexander's battles and finding an approach to overcome personal death, one could say that Kafka is turning to the private world of books, rather than to the public world of disrespectful and rancorous human beings, when he anticipates his own death. This line of reasoning will become much clearer in the next section of the paper when an investigation is made of the horse as a symbol in Jewish theology.

Bucephalus and the Afterlife

According to Oppenheimer, when Kafka says in the last paragraph of "The New Attorney" that he is going to bury himself "in law books," the law being referred to is "the written traditions of Judaism" (262). This would make sense because Kafka had very little interest in the secular law of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which he practiced in his daily job. To show his disdain for this type of law, Kafka once claimed that "it intellectually fed on sawdust which moreover had already been pre-chewed by thousands of other mouths" (Pawel 122). Furthermore, it would make sense for Kafka to study Jewish law because, if he wanted to find an approach to overcome death as represented by "Alexander's battles," then Jewish law was replete with examples of individuals achieving immortality.[3]

By Kafka identifying with Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, in "The New Attorney," he is using the horse in the same way that it is used in some ancient Jewish burial places. According to Goodenough, the horse appears in a "Jewish burial place not as 'mere decoration,' but as a symbol of the hope of life to come" (8:148). This representation of the horse as a symbol of immortality is expressed most clearly by the rhetorical question Kafka asks in "The New Attorney."

> Did I not just lately see even a quite simple court attendant stare at the lawyer with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower as the

latter, lifting his legs high, mounted the outside stairs step by step, with a tread that made the marble ring?

According to Goodenough, although the horse as a symbol of immortality might have had pagan origins, it was eventually adopted into Jewish theology (8:148). For example, Elijah was transported to heaven by a horse-drawn chariot (II Kings 2 11). Also, Enoch traveled through the heavens on both a horse and a horse-drawn chariot (Ginzberg 1:129). Since I believe the patriarch, Enoch, figures quite significantly in Kafka's discovery of an ideological immortality, more will be said about this subject in a subsequent section of the paper.

There is, however, another symbol representing death and the afterlife which Kafka uses in the rhetorical question from "The New Attorney." This is the symbol of the marble staircase which Bucephalus was earnestly climbing "step by step." According to Goodenough, pictures of steps are found on ancient Jewish funerary lamps and are to be thought of as a variant of Jacob's ladder (8:150). As such, Goodenough believes that the symbol of steps, either on a ladder or on a staircase, represents the hope of ultimate blessing in a future life (8:157). Relating this symbol to "The New Attorney," one could say that Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus, is showing his desire for a beneficial afterlife by ascending the marble staircase.

A Jewish Legend of Alexander the Great

There is also a Jewish legend of Alexander the Great which plays an important role in viewing the content of "The New Attorney" as being related to Kafka's desire for a rewarding afterlife. I have already mentioned how Kafka used the "blotting out" of Alexander's battles as a symbol of overcoming personal death. The Jewish legend of Alexander expands upon this theme, and since Kafka owned a book, published in 1913, containing the legend, he would have no doubt read it before January 1917, when he wrote "The New Attorney."[4]

The legend relates that Alexander traveled to the Ganges River with some of his companions to discover an earthly paradise. Eventually, they arrived at an enormous wall which seemed to have no entrance. After journeying a few more days, they reached a gate which had been set into the wall. Alexander then sent a few of his companions to explore the gate. As they were scrutinizing it, an old man appeared. Alexander's men asked him to pay tribute to their great military leader. He would not. Instead, the old man said that inside the wall was a blessed abode, and that Alexander and his men could not stay any longer for they shortly would be drowned by the river's force. He then gave them a stone which had spiritual meaning to present to Alexander.

Alexander and his men returned home to Babylon where they presented the stone to all the sages in the land, asking each to unlock its riddle. Only an aged Jew, named Papas, was able to come up with the answer. He demonstrated that the stone outweighed any amount of gold. However, when the slightest amount of dust was sprinkled on the stone, then even the lightest feather could outweigh it. Papas' interpretation of this phenomenon was that God favored the ambitious conqueror, Alexander, while he was still alive, but after his death he would be deprived of all his vitality and merely turn into dust (Cary 19-20).

The connection between this Jewish legend of Alexander and "The New Attorney" is most evident when Kafka said of Alexander's exploits that "even in those days India's gates were unattainable; but their direction was designated by the Royal Sword." Both Robertson (139) and Oppenheimer (263) claim that what Kafka meant by this statement is that if persons were to attempt to achieve a paradisacal hereafter, they could not be preoccupied with materialistic strivings and aggressive yearnings like Alexander the Great. Being turned into dust after one's death, the fate of Alexander, was obviously not the type of afterlife Kafka had in mind for himself. Indeed, in Jewish tradition, the only persons who were not capable of enjoying some kind of afterlife were individuals, like Alexander, who suffered a violent death (Eliade 1:121).[5]

The Jewish legend of Alexander is also related to "The New Attorney," in that it depicts the futility of believing in a Messiah capable of bringing about the resurrection of the dead and the subsequent return of these resurrected individuals to the Jewish homeland of Israel. Both Robertson (139) and Oppenheimer (148 and 264) point out that Alexander the Great should be viewed only as a false Messiah. They claim that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," substituted India for Israel as being the earthly paradise. Thus, his statement, "for many Macedonia is too narrow. . . . but no one, no one can lead us to India" makes sense in light of the ultimate failure of the Messianic task.

At one time many Jewish sects believed that only a Messiah could bring about the ressurection of the dead and the recovery of a Jewish homeland (Scholem, *Messianic Idea* 157). However, with the advent of the Hasidic movement in eighteenth-century Europe, there occurred the neutralization of Messianism. The Hasidim believed, instead, that "every individual is the Redeemer, the Messiah of his own little world" (Scholem, *Messianic Idea* 262). According to Hasidic doctrine, a theology with which Bar-David (235-286) has demonstrated Kafka was very familiar, the settlement of Israel was God's will and the best that human beings could hope for was an ascent to a heavenly paradise after death, or an ecstatic ascent through the heavens while still alive. It is because of the Hasidic neutralization of Messianism, an idea which had spread across many Jewish communities in Europe, that Kafka could confidently say in "The New Attorney": "Today the gates have been shifted elsewhere and higher and farther away; nobody points out their direction."

I believe that since Kafka felt it was futile to cling to the idea of a Messiah who would come along at some future date and resurrect him from the dead, he turned, instead, to a Jewish figure from the ancient past as his source for a beneficial afterlife. In the next section of the paper I will show that Kafka, in "The New Attorney," used Enoch's ascension as the theological basis for his heavenly journey to immortality.

Kafka and Enoch

Kafka owned a book containing the legend of Enoch's ascension through the heavens, along with subsequent Jewish interpretations of that legend. The book was called *Die Religiosen Bewegungen Innerhalb Des Judentums Im Zeitalter Jesu [The Religious Practices of the Jews at About the Time of Jesus].*[6] This work was written by Moriz Friendlander and first published in 1905, so Kafka would have had ample time to read it before January 1917. That Kafka new about Enoch's ascension is confirmed by a dairy entry for June 1916, when he wrote: "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him" (*Diaries* 156). Corrouges claims the above passage shows that Kafka believed it was possible that he, like Enoch, could live out "the normal immortality of Adam—despite original sin" (107).

According to Jewish legend, because God wanted the patriarch, Enoch, to be a scribe for the angels in heaven, he instructed him in all earthly knowledge and wisdom while he was still alive. God, in turn, expected Enoch to impart his knowledge to those human beings who wished to learn from him. On the day that Enoch was to ascend to heaven, God sent a gigantic horse to carry him above. Thousands of people followed Enoch on the ride, but he urged them to go back. Most of them did, but some did not. On the seventh day of the journey, Enoch was carried even farther into the heavens by a chariot drawn by chargers. Those who refused to separate from Enoch on this journey were later found dead at the place where Enoch originally began his journey. Only Enoch was able to successfully complete the heavenly ascent (Ginzberg 1:129-130).

According to Ginzberg, rabbinic interpretations of this legend generally agree that although Enoch might have begun his journey while he was alive, eventually he "came to heaven after his death" (5:157). The rabbinic interpretations also agree that Enoch's ultimate destination was paradise. Here, some rabbinic texts state, Enoch was transformed into an angel. These rabbinic sources take Enoch's transformation to mean that learning and wisdom are an essential aspect of Judaism, and that anyone who devotes his or her life to this endeavor will be considered a pious human being. Furthermore, upon death, like Enoch and other pious individuals, a learned person could certainly be transformed into an angel (5: 156-157).

Thus, Kafka knew that if he devoted himself to a life of study within a Jewish framework, then a rewarding afterlife likely awaited him. However, Kafka also knew that if he did not live up to the high example set by Enoch, he could be cast back down to earth like the less pious individuals who followed Enoch and, thus, he would have failed in his journey to reach a heavenly paradise. I believed it is for this reason that Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus in "The New Attorney," states that he is being observed "with the professional eye of a modest racetrack follower." Professional racetrack followers are generally gamblers who earn their living through taking risks on events that have some probability of failure associated with them.[7] Although Kafka must have been confident that a life of knowledge obtained through studying Jewish sources would allow him to reach a heavenly paradise after death, he could never be absolutely certain that his spiritual goal would be realized.

Kafka as Interpreter of Jewish Tradition

I have argued that Kafka, in the guise of Dr. Bucephalus and like the patriarch, Enoch, before him, believed that a life of piety was one dedicated to knowledge and wisdom; and that, ultimately, this type of commitment would lead to a rewarding afterlife. Scholem, commenting upon the role of the pious intellectual in Judaism, argues that not only must he study, but he also must be able to interpret Jewish tradition (*Jewish Piety* 33). I claim it is in this fuller sense of the Jewish intellectual role that we should understand the ideological immortality which Kafka refers to in his prose poem, "The New Attorney." Kafka, as Dr. Bucephalus, will study Jewish law. However, Kafka, in real life, will both study and interpret Jewish tradition. This broader role is clarified by the stories that follow "The New Advocate" in the *Landarzt [Country Doctor]* collection.[8]

Oppenheimer, commenting upon why Kafka demanded that "The New Attorney" begin the *Landarzt* collection, says that it "discretely suggests . . . the spiritual implications of the stories to come" (262). Of those remaining stories in the Landarzt collection, eleven of which were written shortly after "The New Attorney," Oppenheimer says they are evidence that Kafka considered the collection "to represent recognition of, or commitment to, his Jewish origin and tradition insofar as he could . . . scrutinize it through the medium of his art" (152).

Kafka himself confirmed the Jewish meaning of each of the thirteen stories succeeding "The New Attorney" in his *Landarzt* collection, by eventually sending them all to Martin Buber to be published in *Der Jude [The Jew]* (Memory 152). Also, he originally called this collection *Verantworung [Responsibility]*, suggesting "that behind the collection lay a sense of moral responsibility, . . . related to a Jewish sense of vocation or task" (Oppenheimer 152).

Transcending Biological Death as the Therapeutic Legacy of "The New Attorney"

In January 1917, when Kafka wrote the prose poem, "The New Attorney," he was experiencing the symptoms of what he believed was a very serious illness. In his prose

poem, Kafka symbolically expressed the idea that, similar to the patriarch, Enoch, he could obtain immortality by acquiring knowledge from the sources of Jewish tradition. By the summer of 1917, when he completed the final story in his *Landarzt* collection, he had already succeeded in offering a unique interpretation of important spiritual issues from the standpoint of Jewish tradition.[9] In August 1917, Kafka began hemorrhaging and coughing up blood; and then on September 4, 1917, he was diagnosed as having a type of tuberculosis which could prove fatal.

Upon hearing this diagnosis, Kafka was not at all alarmed and seemed to accept with great composure the fact that he was suffering from a life-threatening illness (Citati 176). Although his equanimity in the face of grave danger seemed strange to some of Kafka's acquaintances, this paper has shown that Kafka's calmness could be traced back to the ideological immortality he had first expressed in his poem, "The New Attorney."

Kafka's closest friend, Max Brod, in his biography of Kafka, has confirmed my idea that Kafka had formulated an ideological immortality at the time he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis; and that Kafka's immortality-belief was similar to the one which we find in "The New Attorney." Brod said that, by the fall of 1917, Kafka had already found something "indestructible" in himself, which meant that he had already experienced something that was absolute, permanent, and transcendent (Brod 172-173). According to Brod, his friend's "indestructible" entity was the chariot of the pious life. Of course, this kind of chariot, like Enoch's, suggests the figure of a horse being associated with the immortality-belief. Thus, we have the same kind of important relationship as was depicted in "The New Attorney," where Kafka, in the guise of the equine Dr. Becephalus, ascended, step by step, the marble staircase symbolically leading to his hereafter.

Kafka's autobiographical writings offer further evidence that he had discovered an approach to immortality which was based upon the Jewish symbolism in "The New Attorney." On January 28, 1918, approximately five months after he had completed the *Landarzt* stories and had received the unwelcome diagnosis of tuberculosis, Kafka wrote: "The apparent silence in which the days, seasons, generations, and centuries, follow upon each other is a harkening; so do the horses trot before the cart" (*Dearest Father* 89). Here, Kafka seems to be responding to the call for an eternal life and, at the same time, it appears that he is travelling towards enternity on a horse-drawn chariot, similar to Enoch's heavenly mode of transport. Oppenheimer has likewise argued that this passage by Kafka represents his strong belief in the eternal.

> The image's curious effect lies in it evocation of 'that which is to come' as something which lies 'ahead' in passing time (associated with the forward progression of the horses), and, simultaneously as something which lies 'behind' in space (associated with the chariot following them)

> . . . Having made the spiritual transition, perhaps one will encounter or be caught up in the *Jenseits* [the world to come] by what moves, in the *Diesseits* [the present world], constantly behind. (139)

Just a short time after Kafka had written the above passage, where he associated the horse-drawn chariot with an eternal life, he included in the same autobiographical notebook his view on death and the afterlife.[10] Kafka's belief on this matter was:

> Only here is suffering suffering. Not in such a way as if those who suffer here were because of this suffering to be elevated elsewhere, but in such a way that what in this world is called suffering in another world, unchanged and only liberated from its opposite, is bliss. (*Dearest Father* 46)

Certainly,in a Jungian sense this view would have to be considered "hygienic" because Kafka had been able to successfully "discover in death a goal towards which one can strive" (Jung 112).

Kafka died on June 3, 1924, at the age of forty-one (*Memory* 249). According to Max Brod, up until Kafka's death "one felt infinitely well in his company" because "the indestructible made its presence felt" (173). Also, Brod believed it was a knowledge of the "indestructible" which allowed Kafka to bear "his sufferings heroically, generally even with equanimity" (168).

The above statements by, and about, Kafka exemplify the therapeutic value that a belief in a life hereafter can offer a person who is suffering from a life-threatening illness. However, as this paper has demonstrated, in Kafka's case the therapeutic value of a rewarding afterlife must be traced back to his prose poem, "The New Attorney." In this poem, using Jewish symbolism, Kafka conveyed his ideological immortality, which later, he was able to actualize in the *Landarzt* stories through his interpretations of Jewish tradition. Thus, it is my contention that Kafka's special view on death and the afterlife, which he held till the day he died, should be seen as the therapeutic legacy of "The New Attorney."

Notes

[1]The English-language translation of "The New Attorney" was first published in 1946 by Schocken Books. It can be found in a collection of shorter works by Kafka called *Parables and Paradoxes*.

[2]Although Kafka offered "The New Attorney" to Martin Buber for publication in *Der Jude*, Buber eventually chose two other works – "Jackals and Arabs" and "A Report to an Academy" (*Memory* 152).

[3]For a summary of the numerous examples typifying Jewish beliefs in the afterlife, see Eliade (1:120-124) and Roth et al. (2:336-339).

[4]According to Oppenheimer (263), the Jewish legend of Alexander had been published in a book that

Kafka owned called *Sagen der Juden* by M.J. bin Gorion. It had also been published in the book, Der Born Judas, by M.J. bin Gorion, which Kafka might have read before January 1917.

[7] On the subject of who might not be eligible for an afterlife, according to Jewish theology, Eliade specifically states that the rabbis "believed that persons who suffered violent or otherwise untimely deaths might not be permitted to enjoy the afterlife" (1:121).

[8] The information about Enoch's ascension can be found on pages 180, 181 and 271 in the Friedlander book which Kafka owned. For a complete list of the books in Kafka's personal library, see Wagenbach (251-263).

[9] In an alternative English-language translation of "The New Attorney," the expression "racetrack follower" has been replaced by "regular punter," which, of course, means a frequent gambler. For the alternative translation, see *The Penal Colony* by Franz Kafka (135-136).

[10] The stories which follow "The New Advocate" in the *Landarzt* collection are "A Country Doctor," "Up in the Gallery," "An Old Manuscript," "Before the Law," "Jackals and Arabs," "A Visit to a Mine," "The Next Village," "An Imperial Message," "The Cares of a Family Man," "Eleven Sons," A Fratricide", "A Dream," and "A Report to an Academy" (*Letters* 135-136 and 452).

[11] Dates for the stories in the *Landarzt* collection are taken from Kafka (*Letters* 499), Flores (13-25) and Robertson (136-137).

[12] Kafka's views on death, immortality, and the therapeutic value of believing in an afterlife can be found in his fourth octavo notebook (*Dearest Father* 88-108). All the material in this notebook was written in 1918 between January 28 and February 26.

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