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"Josef K von 1963...": Orson Welles' 'Americanized' Version of The Trial and the changing functions of the Kafkaesque in Postwar West Germany

Anne-Marie Scholz

¹ When Orson Welles' adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* was released in West Germany in 1963, many critics were preoccupied with the changes Welles had made to the original work, a response that was perhaps unsurprising given the assumption that film adaptations are meant to abide by the literary work. The key issue here, however, is the meaning of fidelity. What makes specific texts meaningful within a particular culture, so that issues of "textual fidelity" become significant? ¹ After the end of World War Two and the Third Reich, during which time Kafka's works had been banned in Germany, those same works re-entered the Federal Republic (they continued to be banned in East Germany) essentially altered in their original meanings. They had become symbolic of what is still known as "the Kafkaesque", an atmosphere of "Angst", resignation and powerlessness linked with the anxieties of postwar life. Promoted primarily through the editorial efforts of Kafka's friend and literary executor, Max Brod, who encouraged a reading of Kafka's works as allegories with a universal philosophical dispensation and an understanding of their author as a type of spiritual figure outside all historical and literary context,² the "Kafkaesque" would nonetheless find itself circulating in very real historical and national contexts where the idea of 'postwar anxiety' meant different things to different people, including fear of nuclear annihilation, communist takeover, and in the case of West Germany, fear and unease over the legacy of the Third Reich, its effects on German society, and its international standing as a nation.

² By the early 1960s West Germany had integrated into a Cold War alliance with the United States, which tended to encourage a focus upon the immediate threat of communism and to discourage either an open confrontation or a working through of the

fascist past. Until recently, many scholars of German history have argued that an active effort to confront the legacy of the National Socialist past did not begin until the late 1960s. Recently, however, revisionist historians have put forth that the issue of how to remember World War Two and what conclusions should be drawn from it were already on the agenda by the mid 1950s.³ Habbo Knoch conceptualizes this process of active memory construction in terms of what he calls "the long 1960's":

The "modernization" of memory took place between 1955 and 1965 when Nazi crimes attracted public attention and when they were reinvented as a visual, emotional but virtual and limited experience. In the long 1960's that began in the second half of the fifties, West German society continued its long process of "coming to terms with the past". It produced its images of Nazi crimes to serve not as a mirror but as a movie of something that took place far away and remote from everyday life.⁴

3 This essay seeks to explore a small corner of this process by focusing upon the ways in which a German speaking author banned by the Nazis was appropriated by an American film auteur and how German commentators responded to his movie.⁵

4 Certainly one of the founding texts of "the Kafkaesque" was *The Trial*, written by Kafka as a fragment during World War One and organized and published as a novel by Brod after Kafka's death in 1924.⁶ In the original story, the protagonist Josef K. is arrested in his apartment without being informed of charges, accusers, and without being imprisoned. Instead, his ensuing trial becomes an extension of the hierarchy and regimentation he experiences at his job as a bank administrator, where he attempts to save face and keep the proceedings a secret to protect his reputation. Though he is never informed of the charges, Josef K. is progressively integrated into the legal formalities of constructing a defense within a system that offers him no basis upon which to act. Throughout his trial, Josef K. comes into contact with a number of figures who aid and abet him within this absurd scenario, such as Miss Burstner, his boarding house neighbor, Hassler, his attorney, and Leni, Hassler's nurse. Throughout *The Trial*, a series of erotic scenarios involving Josef K. and a variety of female figures tend to link sexuality to the other corrupt dimensions of the court. As Josef becomes increasingly frustrated and disoriented, searching for help that only seems to involve him more deeply in the unjust proceedings, he is eventually found guilty and executed by knife at the hands of two "wardens" of the court.

5 In the adaptation for film, an international co-production starring Anthony Perkins as Josef K., Welles himself as the attorney Hassler, Romy Schneider as the nurse Leni and a number of other internationally prominent stars, Orson Welles altered the story in a number of telling ways.⁷ Most significant for the German reception, he linked Kafka almost directly to the issue of German fascism. Welles' tapped into one of the then prevailing interpretations of Kafka as a "prophet of fascism", a writer whose works had anticipated the dehumanization and tyranny of the concentration camps in their focus upon how the rational, bureaucratic mechanisms of the state can lead to the annihilation of the individual. Yet, rather than linking the figure of Josef K. to the idea of victimization under that system, he instead focused upon the protagonist as a figure of ambivalent resistance. In an interview with the French film journal *Cahiers du Cinema*, Welles explained why he refused to take over the ending of *The Trial*, where Josef K. is executed without resistance: "To me it's a 'ballet' written by a Jewish intellectual before the advent of Hitler. Kafka wouldn't have put that after the death of six million Jews. It all seems very Pre-Auschwitz to me."⁸ Welles' sense of *The Trial* as being narrated by a Jewish man

in pre-fascist Europe ultimately motivated him to alter it in such a way so as to emphasize the themes of agency and resistance. Josef K. is executed at the end, but he resists his oppressors, and the theme of resistance plays a far greater role in the film than it does in the novel. In the novel, Josef K. offers a certain amount of resistance at the outset but this gradually breaks down, whereas in the film his level of resistance actually increases.

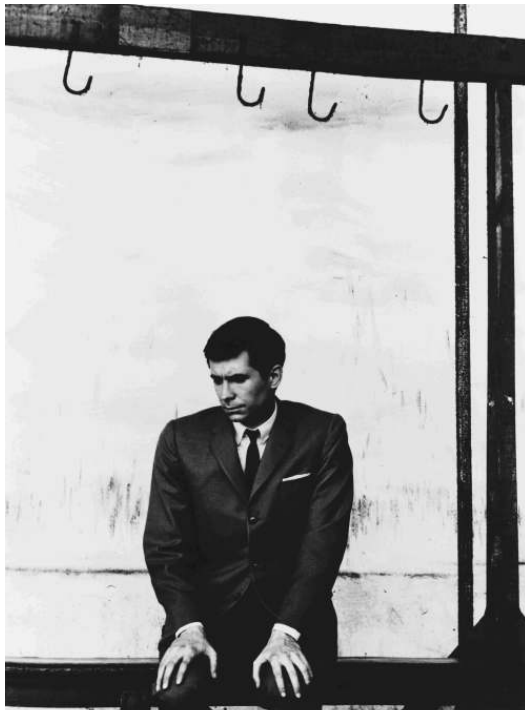
6 Welles reinforces his emphasis on agency through his modification of the "Parable of the Law" which he uses as a frame for understanding the proceedings of his film. In the parable, a guard stands before the door of the Law, controlling entry. A "man from the country" comes requesting admittance but is not allowed to enter. The man decides to wait by the door, in the hope of some day gaining admittance. In old age, still waiting, he asks the guard why in all the years of waiting no one else has ever come by to request admittance to the Law, to which the Guard replies: no one else could gain admittance at this door, as it was intended only for him, and now he (the guard) would close the door. This parable, presented in the film on pinscreens created by Russian and U.S. artists, is shown at the beginning, thus framing the subsequent plot, whereas in the novel the parable is told towards the end.⁹ In the film, however, the parable reappears briefly towards the end as well, emphasizing the contrast between "the man from the country" and the figure of Josef K. Indeed, Josef K. interrupts the figure played by Welles as he attempts to tell the story again, thus disrupting its function as parable (i.e. having universal significance). Welles' reframing of the Parable of the Law thus highlights Josef K's resistance to its message of chaos and arbitrary power.

7 As Josef prepares his case, he moves through a series of modernist and baroque spatial environments, not specifically located anywhere, that tend to dwarf and overwhelm him from the perspective of the viewer, and which make his efforts to take charge of the situation appear quite ludicrous. He becomes progressively more active and resistant as his case moves along, and tends to put up a front of resistance whenever he is confronted with court officials. When he is finally executed, it is not with a knife, but rather with dynamite that sends up a cloud of smoke, reminiscent of an atomic explosion for a number of critics, though Welles denied the connection. In the film, the two court wardens appear to be uncomfortable with the prospect of stabbing the condemned man, and prefer to dispense with him at a distance by throwing sticks of dynamite into the pit where he had been lying.

8 One very telling change was noted only by a few critics. In the novel, as Josef K. is being carried to the execution site, he spots a figure raising a hand toward him in a window. He then speculates who this person might be, a foe, or even possibly a friend? No such figure appears in the film, and several critics noted this as a point of even greater unremitting pessimism in the film than in the novel. At least Kafka offered the hope of some kind of human connection in the midst of the tyranny of arbitrary power. In contrast, Welles offered only the nervous resistance of a completely isolated individual.¹⁰

9 Throughout the proceedings, Josef K. has a series of erotic encounters, most of which find their precedent in the novel. Yet unlike the novel's protagonist, Welles' Josef is active in the legal sphere but generally passive in the erotic sphere. Consistently, he is only seduced reluctantly by the women he meets. For example, during the first 'realistic' scene, Josef K's arrest, Welles links Josef K's sense of guilt to his sexual feelings for his neighbor, Miss Burstner, who has been transformed from a stenographer in the novel to a nightclub dancer in the film. Thus, sexuality in the film is a source of guilt and anxiety for Josef K., rather than a source of resistance to the system that entraps him.

10 Josef K. moves among a group of other accused persons who take on the contours of concentration camp victims/survivors, and throughout the film there are explicit references to the cruelties of the concentration camps, such as a row of meat hooks Josef K. walks past as he moves through the building where his trial is taking place. Welles works into the plot symbolic references to and associations with modern forms of totalitarianism and tyranny, including the legacy of concentration camps under German fascism, the threat of nuclear annihilation as a result of the Cold War, and the subordination of the individual within a technocratic mass society. By integrating these references to different forms of state tyranny as a series of surreal confrontations that Josef K. has with his environment as he prepares his trial, Welles in effect links all of these totalitarian forms into one 'modern order', suggesting cultural connections between them that transcend national boundaries. As we will see, for German viewers these references functioned both as specific historical referents and as a part of a larger transnational tendency toward totalitarianism that ideologically linked 'the brown and the red'.¹¹ This tension between the historically specific and the metaphysically general would prove to be a central aspect of the identity of "Josef K of 1963" and marked a development in Kafka's German reception away from philosophy and toward history, meaning German history. (See Figure 1)



DER PROZESS - BRD, Frankreich, Italien 1962 Regie: Orson Welles
Quelle: Deutsche Kinemathek

Figure 1 Anthony Perkins as Josef K. in Orson Welles' *The Trial* (Pressefoto No. 7 Der Prozess, Schorchtfilm).

The Trial

11 When Welles' version of *The Trial* was released in the United States, the issue of textual fidelity played only a minor role in critics' responses to the film. Those critics who didn't like the film tended to blame the ego of Orson Welles and his inability to discipline it in such a way as to produce a second world class film. Since *Citizen Kane*, several argued, Welles had not made a similar masterpiece, and *The Trial* was no exception. Living up to *Citizen Kane* was more important to U.S. critics than whether or not *The Trial* was an

adequate adaptation of Kafka.¹² Critics who didn't like the film tended to argue that it wasn't true to the novel, while those who liked it were not concerned about fidelity. The film had of it "more Welles than Kafka," to be sure, but then again it was so much better than other films, "even when they are well made."¹³ The film had humor, something which American critics appreciated. This was associated, however, with Welles rather than Kafka. American audiences won't catch the humor, critics argued, because they will see the name Kafka and automatically think of "polite despair".¹⁴ That Welles actually derives much of this humor from Kafka was not at issue. U.S. critics also frequently mentioned the portrayal of sexuality in the film. Here, too, they assumed this was a Wellesian addition. It wasn't. When Peter Bogdanovich asked Welles where he got the concept of the "dirty pictures in the judge's textbook," Welles responded, "From Kafka. And I got all the dirty eroticism of the rest of the movie out of that one thing." Later in the interview, Welles told Bogdanovich to "read the book sometime. It's short."¹⁵

¹² Few critics who reviewed Welles' film in West Germany in 1963 were unfamiliar with Kafka, and most based their observations on the comparison between novel and film. Yet here, too, this was not an inevitable approach. As in the U.S., there were critics in Germany who linked the film to Welles' *oeuvre*, especially to *Citizen Kane*, primarily because *Citizen Kane* was not even screened in Germany until twenty years after its release. This gave viewers the chance to make comparisons, and one Berlin critic wryly noted that Welles hadn't developed his film technique much since that time.¹⁶ Indeed, a number of critics titled their reviews "Citizen K", suggesting that the themes of *The Trial* had more in common with Welles' earlier film than they did with Kafka, that it was, in essence, more American than German.¹⁷ Another critic linked *The Trial* to the era of German expressionism and referred to it as in essence a silent film, "even if Orson Welles lets his actors talk too fast."¹⁸

¹³ When Welles' film was released in West Germany, the indigenous film industry was under fire on a number of fronts. As elsewhere, television was making major incursions into formerly movie-going audiences. But more significantly, the German film industry was subject to major criticism for not managing to keep up with the quality productions issuing from other European countries, such as France and Italy. The German film was in a moribund state and needed reviving. Film clubs in West Germany that came into existence after the war to promote international films as a means for re-cultivating and re-civilizing German society were generally appalled by the escapist 'Heimat' film fantasies and other film fair that was, indeed, popular with German audiences, but not, in their eyes, of great aesthetic or didactic value.

¹⁴ In 1962, young German filmmakers issued the Oberhausen Manifesto, a moment that has been linked to the beginnings of the new German cinema. However, as Heide Fehrenbach has argued, the Oberhauseners were not part of a new generational trend, but had emerged out of the critical film club and festival scene of the 1950s. It was not until the mid 1960s that New German cinema began to come into its own.¹⁹ In the meantime, art cinema in Germany was coming from elsewhere, providing potential models for a new German cinema. Orson Welles was a respected American auteur and popular actor with international credentials; Kafka was an internationally respected German-speaking author who had been banned by the Nazis. This combination promised something novel and sought-after: greater political and artistic diversity for German audiences in need of re-education, and aesthetic quality for German filmmakers in need of inspiration.

- 15 Publicity for the film in West Germany was managed by the Schorcht Film Verleih. The Schorcht Verleih had distributed some of the most successful films of the 1950s, such as *Ein Herz spielt Falsch* (1953), *Sauerbruch-Das war mein Leben* (1954), and *Rose Bernd* (1957).²⁰ However, after the death of its founder Kurt Schorcht in 1959, it “lost direction”, despite increased investment, and went out of business in 1965.²¹ The publicity Schorcht generated for Welles’ *The Trial* reflected a film industry in a time of transition in its effort to market the film as simultaneously a politically aware cinema, an elite art cinema product and a potentially popular blockbuster. Its overarching goal seems to have been to reclaim Kafka as a *German* author of international renown. Kafka “could not conquer the walls of German dictatorship” of the past and was rejected as decadent by communist East Germany. Nonetheless, his work triumphed in France, England and the United States.²² Now an American auteur of the highest calibre had decided to adapt a famous Kafka (read: German) text and expectations for the film were very high. The Schorcht publicity quoted Welles’ emphasis on the “prophet of fascism” model at several points,²³ and now, at a time of a “Kino tief” (cinema slump), Welles had taken a great risk with controversial material that had arrived late on the German scene due to its place on the “rassische Verbotsliste”, the list of racially banned authors.²⁴ Further, the publicity emphasized that the film was true to Kafka, despite one invented love scene by Welles involving Anthony Perkins and Romy Schneider. With this pronouncement, Schorcht seemed to be attempting to appeal both to elitist Kafka aficionados as well as average filmgoers interested in love and romance between attractive and popular actors.²⁵
- 16 Most German critics of the film (and some French critics whose work was published in German periodicals) relied on a number of aspects from the Schorcht publicity as jumping-off points, but then went in decidedly different directions. The majority of German critics did not agree that the film was true to Kafka and sought to understand it within the framework of “Welles vs Kafka”, two auteurs with decidedly different agendas. Yet, interestingly, this was not primarily a question of a demand for textual fidelity. Rather, setting up this opposition was a means to understand the meaning and function of Kafka’s work in German society since the end of the “rassische Verbotsliste”, the meaning that “the Kafkaesque” held for elite members of German society since the end of the war and, crucially, what had changed.
- 17 Schorcht’s publicity (and several critics) pointed to a recently published (1961) Kafka bibliography that contained over 5000 entries, testifying both to the literary significance of Kafka as well as to the many possible ways Kafka might be understood.²⁶ The socialist-oriented critic Rolf Traube wrote in the *Deutsche Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf) that Kafka had been a very fashionable author after World War II:
- The awareness that one has barely escaped a terrible catastrophe and is most likely moving toward an even greater one, gave a snobbishly cultivated “Kafkaesque” a popularity that soon irritated professional literary observers, so that in 1955 the young people in the Group 47 resolved the following: whoever pronounces the name Kafka one more time today, will be fined one German Mark.²⁷
- 18 Group 47, whose membership included such figures as Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Ingeborg Bachmann and Günther Grass, had been founded to create a more innovative, politically aware space for literature as a counter-voice to the Adenauer era’s social, political and cultural conservatism, and their satiric criticism clearly called attention to the more conservative functions of the “Kafkaesque” that was often associated with what Andreas Huyssen referred to in 1986 as a

depoliticized version of modernism that had come to provide a much needed cultural legitimation for the Adenauer restoration. During the fifties, the myth[s] of...universal existentialist Angst...helped block out and suppress the realities of the fascist past. From the depths of barbarism and the rubble of its cities, West Germany was trying to reclaim a civilized modernity and to find a cultural identity tuned to international modernism which would make others forget Germany's past as predator and pariah of the modern world.²⁸

19 Traube's review demonstrated that *criticism* of this depoliticized version of Kafka was already circulating in the 1950s.²⁹ By 1963, so Traube continued, the "Kafkaesque" could no longer function exclusively as an elitist form of intellectual contempt. Welles' production would be subject to objective scrutiny rather than to fashionable acceptance. Critical reflection upon Welles' film was thus one means of coming to terms with the different possible meanings attached to the "Kafkaesque" in the postwar period.

20 Confronted with Orson Welles' reading of Kafka, German critics often felt compelled to put into words what it was that Kafka meant to them as well. Few did this by dismissing the film; indeed, the film was praised by most critics as a fascinating attempt to come to terms with Kafka. Yet, by and large, German critics were profoundly ambivalent about Welles' version of *The Trial*. Within the framework of the "Kafka vs. Welles" debate two principle definitions of the "Kafkaesque" emerged from the critical discourse. The first was the "prophet of fascism" model, the notion that Kafka's works had "anticipated" the concentration camps in their emphasis upon arbitrary tyranny and violence, which was understood as at odds with the second notion of Kafka as a metaphysician whose stories raised general questions of the meaning of existence; this tension between a 'historical' and a 'metaphysical' Kafka governed the discussion of the ways Welles had updated or modernized the novel to make Kafka relevant to the early 1960s. Even if critics preferred an ahistorical, metaphysical version, the debate nonetheless created a space for a historical Kafka that Welles in his film had inextricably linked to the German past.

21 The "anticipation of fascism" was a theme that was quite familiar to most German critics, though it did not go uncontested. Welles offered this version in the Schorcht film publicity, reprinted in the *Welt am Sonntag*: "Why Kafka? Because of his up-to-dateness. This story of a person, who winds up underneath the wheels of the organized society, the wheels of the police, the army, the justice system...and then there is this premonition of the times of concentration camps, that still exist today. And will always exist."³⁰ Overall, in contrast to his early films, which focused upon the U.S. as a country ruled by wealthy elites, Welles understood his later work as attempting to analyze abuses of state power "because today [1958] the state is more powerful than money."³¹ The motif of "abuse of state power" allowed Welles to incorporate references to different tyrannical political systems into his film, but his specific reference to concentration camps was an unmistakable reference to German fascism.

22 There were a number of German critics who also associated the name of Kafka with a "premonition" of "things to come": "Franz Kafka predicted what in the decades following his death happened to so many people: the state of absolute lawlessness."³² K.H. Krüger noted that "this premonition [of Kafka's] of the concentration camps is nonetheless made palpable by Welles."³³ A critic in the *Westfälische Rundschau*, following the Schorcht publicity, wrote:

That is the story, that is a dream, filled with dream logic. "Do not try to solve puzzles!" Orson Welles warns. Despite this reality shimmers through everywhere. The reality of the concentration camps and the Gestapo, that Kafka anticipated. The

reality of today, where the individual is lost in the whirlpool of the masses. A film that finally demonstrates what film is and should be.³⁴

23 Reinold Thiel, film critic for *Filmkritik* and an SPD activist, linked the "anticipation of fascism" model to Hannah Arendt's reading of Kafka as a critique of the form of bureaucratic government in pre World War One Austria, and that Welles had taken over Arendt's perspective in his film and transferred it to the bureaucratic state of modern times.³⁵ Like Arendt, Thiel argued, Welles ignored Kafka's "metaphysical aspect" and his interest in "the meaning of existence," instead focusing solely upon the historical dimensions. Ultimately, Thiel did not think Kafka's *Trial* was an appropriate vehicle through which to critique the totalitarian state, and that Welles' version left the viewer "with the baroque violence of isolated ideas."³⁶ Others disagreed. Volker Baer wrote in the *Tagesspiegel Berlin*: "over these pathetic creatures, who are being intimidated to death by a totalitarian system, hang coldly threatening meat hooks which recall terrible associations with concentration camps. Welles has extended and concretized Kafka's vision."⁽³⁷⁾ Baer thought that the most authentic dimensions of Kafka had been captured by Welles in the visual images of the film, less in the dialogue and performances.

24 Enno Patalas, founder of the journal *Filmkritik*, suggested that the interpretation of Kafka as a "prophet of fascism" had had a critical function in the immediate postwar years. Particularly such works as "In der Strafkolonie" began to be taught at German universities just as the first eyewitness accounts of concentration camps were published after the war.³⁸ By the early 1960s many critics were ambivalent about this model and tended to reject it as a trend that had long since passed and that, moreover, had been imported from outside. According to critic Walter Kaul, foreigners had essentially made Kafka into "a world fashion, in whose train concepts such as Angst, mechanization and bureaucratization cavorted with one another."³⁹ Critic Karena Niehoff also passionately rejected this interpretation:

Welles would like to persuade Kafka, as have others before him, that he had prophesied Hitler, all terror dictatorships, concentration camps and other anonymous tortures, [as] a visionary contemporary critic ... Welles misunderstanding is "horribly banal"; he views Josef K. as a classical hero, who goes to his death with the courage of a Russian anarchist, the siblings Scholl or the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, unconquered, with one last cynical word on his lips, ennobled by the radiance of innocence in an evil world.⁴⁰

25 Why Niehoff's objection to Welles' 'heroic' version of Josef K? Kafka did not see fascism coming, she continues. Rather, he saw a world without God. Niehoff's discussion of her own sense of Kafka, however, revealed a preoccupation with questions of guilt and its attribution that suggested history played a role in the "Kafkaesque" as much as did metaphysics and religion:

That which gets the heart beating while reading Kafka is the untragic triviality and how it insinuates itself; the absurd does not reveal itself as such, rather it becomes the crystalline result of an unprotected Reality considered through to its logical conclusion; the complacent everydayness hides and releases in every moment the possibility, not only to be put on trial, but, what is even worse, to actually become guilty, guilt based upon an unknown and inaccessible law.⁴¹

26 Despite her generalized language, Niehoff's bitter resistance to the heroic Josef K. and the preoccupation with K becoming 'guilty' indirectly reveal an awareness that the reality of the recent German terror dictatorship was the reality of collaboration rather than heroism. Karena Niehoff was a Jewish woman who had survived the Nazi period in the Berlin underground. After the war she became a journalist and wrote for the Berliner

Tagesspiegel between 1952 and her death in 1992. She was also a witness in the postwar trial of the German filmmaker Veit Harlan. Harlan had directed the anti-semitic film *Jud Süß*(1940) and was accused in the late forties of membership in Nazi organizations and "crimes against humanity," from which he would be acquitted.⁴² Niehoff had testified against Harlan and, in the course of the proceedings, had been subject to anti-semitic heckling and insults. She was politically engaged, but refrained from talking about the past and did not draw attention to her status as a Jewish survivor in her work. Her ironic-associative style of writing reflected here in her critique of Welles' film hinted at her own personal experience of persecution.⁴³

27 For the conservative critic Walter Kaul, writing for the *Kurier* (Berlin), the "prophet of fascism" model also concealed a preoccupation with getting to historical essentials in aesthetic terms: "Every bitter association is quickly blended out through the hoaky flashing of a blade, at which point one yearns for Bunuel-Dali's (from *Un Chien Andalou*) shaving of the eyelid from the eyeball."⁴⁴

28 One French critic, Alexandre Alexandre, writing for *Der Kurier* from Paris, noted that Kafka's texts were a means of coping with the terrors of the Gestapo during the war and that his texts continued to be relevant in a postwar world where "the deeply awaited Renaissance of freedom and human dignity did not immediately materialize."⁽⁴⁵⁾ Another French critic, writer and academic, Jean-Louis Bory, also actively approved of Welles' linkage of Kafka to fascism. Welles had "modernized" Kafka. He wrote in *Arts* that Welles had "accused that which had made history even more Kafkaesque than Kafka: the world of the concentration camps, and, in short visual allusions, had awakened the memory of the Nazi camps. This world threatens to become our world as we continue on the road of progress."⁴⁶ For Bory, Welles had detected two interrelated types of guilt. The first was the guilt of the accused who resists the accusation; he is guilty of being an individual. And as an individual, he is guilty of collaboration, of being a cog in a system, becoming frightened only when he is accused himself.⁴⁷ Bory, as a French critic, was surely not unfamiliar with issues related to French collaboration with the Nazis during World War Two. His views and those of other French critics were circulated widely in German film magazines.

29 Like Bory, German critics were also preoccupied with questions of agency and guilt. Welles' 'modernization' of Kafka was about the state of 'Josef K.' in 1963:

Today, whoever has experienced a trial, whether a political trial directed against war criminals all the way to civil cases involving traffic violations, notices again and again how in our secularized times the consciousness of guilt has either receded or been completely damaged. Particularly in treason cases the familiar phenomenon may be observed, that fear of terror and its organizations is much stronger than the feeling that one is guilty of something In Welles film, the conscience has long since been lost, and the terror of an authoritarian regime and its organizations liquidates the isolated, soulless human being.⁴⁸

30 Despite the self-righteous tone, the analysis here of how in police states fear replaces conscience as a basis for action or agency, hints at the relevance of such issues for an understanding of the (then) recent German past. Indeed, as the previous five years had seen a number of spectacular court cases, such as the "Einsatzgruppen" trial of former SS members in the late 1950s and the Eichmann trial in Israel in 1961, the courtroom had been transformed from a metaphysical symbol to a concrete, historical place. Welles' film thus encouraged viewers to link Kafka's *Trial* to the present moment.⁴⁹

31 Making Kafka into a “prophet of fascism” was one thing, but transforming Josef K. into an active agent who resists the tyrannies of the court was quite another. Many German critics rejected this idea by way of a critique of the American actor Anthony Perkins's performance. German critics often framed Welles' casting of Anthony Perkins in the role of Josef K. as a misreading of the character.⁵⁰ In Kafka, they claimed, Josef K. has two primary characteristics: he is passive and he is anonymous. Anthony Perkins did not fit either of these. First, Perkins was a well-known star in the early 1960s, which made it difficult for viewers to understand the figure of K. in the ‘authentic’ Kafkaesque sense of anonymity. The German-born Jewish refugee François Bondy, Swiss citizen and political editor of the *Schweizer Monatshefte*,⁵¹ described this notion of anonymity in his critique of the casting of Perkins, which again shed light upon the ways such apparently neutral notions as anonymity were being actively tied to more controversial, more politicized concepts such as complicity:

In *The Trial* there is a tendency to self-destructiveness, to complicity in one's own destruction, to masochism Orson Welles does not pick up on this strain. Only for this reason could he choose an actor for whom the grey anonymity of the Man without a last name does not fit, and in whom one can detect no traces of resignation or complicity with his own enemies.⁵²

32 Secondly, Josef K. in the novel is perceived to respond passively to the arbitrary charges of the court. In the final scene, in particular, as well as in his response to the Parable of the Law, Josef K. actively resists the court's interpretation of the events and his execution.

33 A number of critics attributed this resistance to an Americanization of Kafka through the figure of Welles. The director had projected his own identity as a “rebel against American conformity” onto Josef K., yet nonetheless remained a very real American.⁵³ In the film, Perkins assumes the contours of an ‘Americanized’ resistance hero, taking on the court single-handedly and refusing to succumb.⁵⁴ American art had a tendency to exaggeration and overextension, another critic argued, citing such disparate examples as William Faulkner, Margaret Mitchell, Jackson Pollock and Elia Kazan. Welles belonged in this company.⁵⁵ The link to Welles as an American made plausible the otherwise rather unconventional connection between resistance and Americanization and exemplifies how the figure of Welles as an American auteur could function as a “transnational mediator”, in Uta Poiger’s term, for alternative notions of Americanization, ones that went beyond the U.S as imperialist world power or purveyor of mass culture.⁵⁶

34 Resistance to the casting of Perkins functioned on another level as well, since this particular Josef K. had a past. As one German critic put it, Perkins' star image was so influenced by his previous roles, particularly that of Norman Bates in Hitchcock's *Psycho*, that his presence in the film functioned as an “illusionsstörende personelle Vordringlichkeit”⁵⁷ (an obtrusive, illusion-shattering persona). Thus, the content he gave to the form of the ‘anonymous’ Josef K. was that of a murderous neurotic cross-dresser. And even his later, more romantic role, as the young lover opposite Ingrid Bergman in *Lieben Sie Brahms?* (*Goodbye Again*) echoed the effeminate qualities of the character of Bates for a number of German critics. Thus, paradoxically, critics found Perkins too heroic, American and protest-oriented on the one hand, and too neurotic, hectic and jumpy on the other. This combination of qualities, bridging as it did conventional divisions of gender, was not suited to the characterization of an anonymous everyman.

35 Other critics, however, appreciated the dimensions Perkins brought to the role and did not necessarily collapse his previous performances into one stereotypical image: "Anthony Perkins has dispensed with the sophisticated ladies-man type. He portrays the increasing confusion of Josef K. with great sensitivity and intelligence."⁵⁸ "Anthony Perkins," the *Augsburger Allgemeine* stated, "personifies the trembling soul of Josef K."⁵⁹ Critic Peter Körfggen offered a subtle analysis of why he thought Perkins' performance fitted Kafka quite well by comparing Kafka with Hitchcock's films:

It has been criticized that Anthony Perkins' Josef K does not get under the skin. But Kafka is not Hitchcock. His intellectualism prevents him from leaving things at a recoverable shock. The insinuating confusion of our time does not hit like a bolt of lightning. And psychologically it is much more likely that the crew of an anchorless ship would be more subject to a paralyzing sense of horror than to spontaneous panic.⁶⁰

36 Significantly, Körfggen linked this empathy for Perkins' "lähmendes Entsetzen" (paralyzing horror) to his understanding that Kafka's works did indeed contain elements of resistance, an aspect that was regularly underplayed by German critics.

37 During their first meeting to discuss the possibility of Perkins playing the role of Josef K., Welles said that Perkins was an essential precondition for him to make the film.⁶¹ Perkins was well-known in the early 1960s and a number of German critics attributed Welles' (mis)casting to have been undertaken largely for commercial reasons.⁶² Yet in later interviews Welles revealed that it was precisely the qualities Perkins brought to his previous roles that he wanted in the part of Josef K. In addition, Welles also linked those qualities to Perkins' status as a closet homosexual; Josef K's fears were thus linked to transgressive sexuality.⁶³ Thus, subjectivizing and 'sexualizing' K.'s guilt was one of Welles' central strategies in his adaptation of Kafka. Indeed, Welles relied upon the intertextual quality of Perkins' image to lend to Josef K. a complex subjective dimension.

38 Interestingly, German critics did not directly comment upon the sexual dimensions of K's guilt; instead, they argued that the film parted company with Kafka because it relied too much upon "psychological realism" where a star, not an anonymous hero, determines the action. In a report on the evening from a journalist identified only through the initials 'tm', it was stated that "biography" rather than "existence" was the film's main issue.⁶⁴ Thus, a genuinely Kafkaesque hero, in German eyes, was one whose primary characteristics were passivity and anonymity, not sexuality or biography. To sexualize his crisis was to personalize it and thus make it less publicly significant to the question of the "plight of modern man." This was the essence of the problem with the film in the eyes of several German podium discussion participants at the Technische Hochschule Stuttgart. During a public discussion in a "large packed lecture hall" between humanities professors, critics, and a representative from the Schorcht Film Verleih, Rudolf Lubowski, the question was raised: "Was Welles' *The Trial* 'Kafkaesque' or not?" Lubowski responded with the assertion that the film's psychological aspect had a purpose: to make "the nightmare of modern existence emotionally accessible to the average cultural consumer." The critic of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, Hellmuth Karasek, countered with the response that culture was meant for the "happy few" and that to psychologize was "to vulgarize". By transforming Kafka into a mass cultural vehicle, Karasek implied, Welles had created a "dangerous forgery".

39 While not giving much space to the responses out of the "packed lecture hall" to this conservative reading of *The Trial*, the journalist 'tm' nonetheless conveyed his own criticism of this old fashioned reading of Kafka in a sarcastic introduction to his report:

The apologists for literary purism and the unassailability of the literary work of art were in their element when it came to the issue of whether the film had either totally messed up or retained minimal traces of the "Kafkaesque" atmosphere ... Rudolf Lubowski quickly became the black sheep, upon whom the conceited and the differentiated, the objective and the resentful reproaches against this film and against the film industry were unloaded.⁶⁵

40 It is useful here to refer to Dietmar Schmidt, editor of the Protestant Information Services periodical *Kirche und Film* (Church and Film) and biographer of the controversial Protestant church president Martin Niemöller,⁶⁶ who called attention to what he perceived as an anti-intellectual trend in the West Germany of the early 1960s. He suggested in an editorial that films like *The Trial* could provide models of "heilsame Unruhe", forms of "healing restlessness" that might awaken the conscience of their viewers more effectively than most church sermons were doing. Additionally, Schmidt suggested that Church leaders should take the critical capacities of their congregations more seriously and promote more complex cultural products that did not necessarily offer "positive images". In the area of literature, according to the well-known scholar Walter Jens, a one-sided emphasis on the "positive" had taken over, and the same seemed to be happening in film:

With a nonchalance, from which can only be assumed that there never was such a figure as Goebbels or such an institution as the Reichskulturkammer, or indeed, that both have again become definitive authorities, the familiar adjective pairs "nihilistic" and "positive", "corrupting" and "healthy" are thrown into the debate.⁶⁷

41 Schmidt thus linked the either/or criticism of such films as *The Trial* to the cultural politics of the Third Reich, and called on his readers to remember the function of such 'black and white' judgements on public culture in the past.

42 If many German critics preferred Josef K. as an anonymous everyman lacking sexuality and biography, and hence rejected Anthony Perkins' characterization, they were more enthusiastic about the cast of female players, especially about Romy Schneider's performance as Leni. Their discussion revealed the ways Schneider's image as the naive, charming Kaiserin Sissi, a holdover from her popular films of the 1950s, was shifting in the early 1960s. Schneider as the young empress Sissi embodied an archetypal female ideal of the 1950s in Germany and Austria. Sissi's dilemma as a foreign import into the royal Austrian house was that, unlike her mother-in-law who identified with the public function of ruling and insisted that her daughter-in-law do the same by giving her children to a royal governess, Sissi wished to raise her children herself in classic middle class fashion, vehemently rejecting any claims or pretensions to power. The popularity of this image would haunt Schneider, pushing her to move to Paris where she took on other roles and was recognized by the critical establishment as a fine character actress.

43 German critics took note of the dramatic shift in Schneider's image in their response to *The Trial*. While many could not see beyond Perkins' previous roles, Schneider had clearly shifted away from her earlier screen image: Schneider's "bravado performance as the (sexually promiscuous) nurse has nothing more in common with the little Sissi soul she once was."⁶⁸ The *Frankfurter Allgemeine* wrote: "Romy Schneider has dispensed with the charming little goose Sissi. The svelt, high-heeled witch with the cat's eyes, quick steps, pressing gestures and whispers understands the elementary art of seduction. An excellent

performance."⁶⁹ Often Schneider's performance was favorably compared with the performances of the other actresses: Jeanne Moreau, who played the nightclub dancer Miss Burstener, and Elsa Martinelli, who played Hilda, the court attendant's wife. This almost seemed like a contest between European nation-states, with West Germany, France and Italy competing for the prize of who could play a Kafkaesque female most effectively.⁷⁰ In the eyes of German critics, Schneider's was the most convincingly Kafkaesque performance.

44 What exactly did this mean? More detailed discussions of Schneider's Leni revealed a key assumption some critics held about the role and place of women in a Kafkaesque universe: that they were not true subjects:

Romy Schneider as Leni ... is a doll in a double sense of that word, in her erotic submissiveness and marionette-like impersonality. She represents completely the image of the women in *The Trial* who do not possess sufficient substance, who are too animalistic, ever to become the "accused" themselves.⁷¹

45 Apart from drawing attention to the interesting fact that there are indeed no accused women in Kafka's universe, the interpretation of this absence by critics highlights the archetypal significance attached to forms of submissive female sexuality and the ways these apparently stood in deep conflict with notions of agency. Ironically, several critics praised Schneider's Leni as her first quality characterization, even as they defined her, tongue in cheek, as without character, a being "somewhere between a frog and a human," referring to Leni's physical defect: small webs between several of her fingers.⁷²

46 Those critics who commented upon the clearly sexual, as opposed to "Kafkaesque" dimension of the female performances stressed the morally problematic nature of their behavior: "Kafka's reality is completely disconsolate—how dreadful then that the "deliverance through the woman" seems here always to be expected from some half-prostitute, in a form of final confusion, which loses itself in empty sensuality."⁷³ This could not be Kafka, despite the fact that these sexually aggressive female characters all crop up in *The Trial*. Those critics who conceded that there were sexual dimensions to be found in Kafka and who liked Schneider's performance sarcastically attributed her shift of image to the "arts" the "little Vienna beast" had learned in Paris.⁷⁴

47 Thus, Schneider's performance as Leni was, on the whole, considered quintessentially Kafkaesque, while Anthony Perkins' Josef K, with important exceptions, was not. What did this suggest about the changing functions of the Kafkaesque in postwar West Germany? One very interesting aspect is tied to gender. Despite Josef K.'s passive anonymity, his status as subject is reinforced as an accused party. Women in this world of passive anonymity occupy a space a notch below even this status, as their sexuality degrades them to animal status. German critics did not think to link the sexual aggressiveness of the female characters in *The Trial* to the more active dimensions of Josef K. that Welles creates. Nor did they relate a Josef K. who resists his oppressors to the isolated moments of resistance in the Third Reich, as Niehoff suggested but then rejected—the Warsaw Ghetto fighters or the Siblings Scholl. Instead, the proper world of Kafka was a world where men were unjustly accused but did not resist and women were not accused at all. Thus the framework of the "Kafkaesque" essentially excluded women as agents and indeed suggested the limits (as critic Reinhold Thiel argued in his critique of the film) of using Kafka as a framework within which to analyze the dynamics of state power.

48 Nonetheless, the reception of Orson Welles' adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* in the West Germany of the early 1960s demonstrates that there had been a development of sorts in the ways Kafka could circulate in German society. If Kafka's works could be actively linked to German history and its terrors, as was argued by some German and French critics during (in France)⁷⁵ and immediately following (in Germany) the war, the 'fashionable' pessimism of the Kafkaesque that could be linked to a suppression of the past which followed in the first half of the 1950s had now given way to the option of both. Active, resisting individuals circulating in a "Kafkaesque" world could be put down to the hubris of an isolated American film auteur, but it provoked questions in West Germany as critics saw something like a concrete historical agent, if not an active rebel, hidden away under the layers of metaphysical existence:

Persecution no longer emerges, as in Kafka, out of a metaphysical consciousness of guilt; rather, it is secret yet real powers, that take a Josef K. to court leading to execution.

The Josef K of 1963 ... this must be decisive.⁷⁶

49 It was then up to, among others, the New German cinema to interpret this historical agent and what he (and indeed, she) chose to do or not to do.

50 While Welles' *The Trial* did not become a popular blockbuster in 1963, its status in German film circles is well-established.⁷⁷ Enno Patalas has described *The Trial* as a "Film Club Heuler", a film that was well-liked and appreciated in art film circles and that has since taken on a didactic aspect.⁷⁸ Pupils reading Kafka for the Abitur exams (Kafka is a regular on exam lists in German schools) might see the film as part of their coursework, or the film may be screened as a classic in the remaining art cinemas in Germany today.

51 In hindsight, Welles' 'sexualization' of Josef K., which several German critics linked to the vulgarity of mass culture, has proven to be prophetic. Four years after the film's German release, the publication of Kafka's *Briefe an Felice (Letters to Felice)* would reveal an intriguing connection between the metaphysical aspects of Kafka's *Trial* and his tormented engagement to Felice Bauer, the woman to whom Kafka was engaged twice but never married. This material was not available to the public when Welles made his film (although Felice Bauer had sold the letters to Kafka's publisher in New York in the late 1950s). Thus, Welles' and Perkins' attempts to give to K. a dimension of sexual guilt would, to some extent, anticipate later revelations about the relationship between Kafka's biography and his work.⁷⁹ During his engagement with Bauer, Kafka was engaged in an intimate correspondence with Bauer's best friend, Grete Bloch, at the same time that he was writing in a similar vein to Bauer. Bloch revealed this correspondence to Bauer, who subsequently called a meeting between herself, her friend and Kafka at a hotel in Berlin to confront Kafka with what both she and Bloch perceived as his duplicity. Kafka's account of this 'hearing' reveals that he remained completely silent throughout, unable to articulate an adequate defence on his own behalf and claiming to be completely unaware of a conflict between the two correspondences. The engagement to Bauer, which consisted almost exclusively of letters rather than face to face encounters, was broken off twice and a marriage never took place. Because he perceived his engagement as in essence an extension of his literary calling, whereby any form of literary expression could or would not be excluded, Kafka had an acute awareness of a conflict between his writing and the bourgeois norms attached to marriage and founding a family. He began work on *The Trial* in August of 1914, shortly after the meeting in the Berliner hotel.⁸⁰

52 These revelations suggest a completely different reading of Kafka's *Trial* from those that ultimately defined the contours of the historical or metaphysical "Kafkaesque", and

certainly lend credence to the distinction between the pre and post-fascist Kafka. Indeed, 125 years after Kafka's birth, scholars of German literature are still battling with the metaphysical "Kafkaesque" first created by Max Brod, attempting to situate him in a historical and cultural context that today is more interested in 're'-constructing Kafka as a product of his time.⁸¹

53 In 1963, however, Kafka's status as a German-language writer banned by the Nazis and his politicized function as a 'prophet of fascism' enlisted Welles' film and the leitmotif of 'Americanized resistance' in the continuing process of coming to terms with the past in West Germany. While receptive to the idea that fascism may have been anticipated by a Jewish writer, German critics preferred an anonymous, passive Josef K. to one who resisted his oppressors. Ultimately, this preference reflected less a more accurate reading of Kafka than it did a defensive though basically accurate perception of the increasing exposure of the 'anonymous German everyman' to historical scrutiny as the 1960s progressed. Orson Welles cryptically suggested such an aspect in a statement quoted in the publicity material:

My film is not only about the conspiracy of the court against the innocent; it is much more a study of the corruptability of the judicial process. My hero (Josef K) is not innocent; he is capable of being just like the others. Yet none of the others comes to his aid. And neither does he do anything for those around him.⁸²

NOTES

1. See especially James Naremore (ed.), *Film Adaptation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000): 1-16. Compare also with John Orr, "The Trial of Orson Welles," in John Orr and Colin Nicholson (eds.), *Cinema and Fiction: New Modes of Adapting, 1950-1990* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992): 13-27.
2. Paul M. Malone, "Trial and Error: Combinatory Fidelity in Two Versions of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*" in Deborah Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye and Imelda Whelehan (eds.), *Classics in Film and Fiction* (London and Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2000): 176-193, 179.
3. Wolfgang Becker and Norbert Schöll, *In Jenen Tagen...Wie der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm die Vergangenheit bewältigte* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1995); Christoph Classen, *Bilder der Vergangenheit: Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus im Fernsehen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1955-1965* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1999); Helmut Dubiel, *Niemand ist frei von der Geschichte: Die nationalsozialistische Herrschaft in den Debatten des Deutschen Bundestages* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1999); Norbert Frei, *1945 und Wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005); Michael Geyer, "Cold War Angst: The Case of West German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons" in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany*,

1949-1968 (Princeton UP, 2001): 376-408; Michael Th. Greven and Oliver von Wrochem (eds.) *Der Krieg in der Nachkriegszeit: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Politik und Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2000); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Knut Hickethier, "Der Zweite Weltkrieg und der Holocaust im Fernsehen der Bundesrepublik der fünfziger und frühen sechziger Jahre," in Greven and Wrochem, *Der Krieg in der Nachkriegszeit*, 93-112; Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Useable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert G. Moeller, "Victims in Uniform: West German Combat Films from the 1950s," in Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Nazi Past in Contemporary Germany* (MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2006): 43-61; Hanna Schissler, "Writing about 1950s West Germany," in Schissler, *The Miracle Years*, 3-15; Frank Stern, "Film in the 1950s: Passing Images of Guilt and Responsibility," in Schissler (ed.), 266-280; Frank Stern, "Gegenerinnerungen seit 1945: Filmbilder, die Millionen sahen," in Greven and Wrochem, 79-91; Edgar Wolfrum (ed.), *Die Deutschen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004).

4. Habbo Knoch, "The Return of the Images: Photographs of Nazi Crimes and the West German Public in the 'Long 1960s.'" in Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis (eds.), *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and the Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006): 31-49, 46.

5. For further arguments dealing with questions of the influence of American popular culture on the construction of a German memory culture, see Anne-Marie Scholz, "Eine Revolution des Films: *The Third Man*, The Cold War and Alternatives to Nationalism and Coca-Colonization in Europe," *Film and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 31 (2001): 44-53, and "The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957) Revisited: Combat Cinema, American Culture and the German Past," *German History* 26 (2008): 219-250.

6. All primary source materials are taken from the archival collections of the Deutsches Film Institut, Frankfurt am Main, the press archives and library of the Film Museum Berlin, the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin, and the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen, Konrad Wolf, Potsdam-Babelsberg.

All references to Kafka's *The Trial* taken from Franz Kafka, *Der Prozess*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998, which is based upon: Franz Kafka, *Gesammelte Werke*, (Dritte Ausgabe). Max Brod (ed.) *Der Prozess* (S. Fischer Verlag / New York: Lizenzausgabe von Schocken Books, 1950).

7. All references to Orson Welles' adaptation of *The Trial* from: "The Trial: A Film from Orson Welles", dir. Orson Welles, Paris-Europa Productions, 1963; video release Fox-Lorber Associates, Inc., 1998.

8. Originally published in *Cahiers du Cinema*, 165 (April 1965); reprinted in *The Trial: A Film by Orson Welles*, Modern Film Scripts; Eng. trans (of

- interview) by Nicholas Fry (New York: Simon Schuster, 1970; London: Lommer Publishing Limited): 9.
9. Wikipedia defines „pinscreen animation“ as follows: to “make use of a screen filled with movable pins, which can be moved in or out by pressing an object onto the screen. The screen is lit from the side so that the pins cast shadows...” The artists were Alexandre Alexeïeff and his wife Claire Parker. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinscreen
 10. USE (Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert), "Der Prozess," *Film-Dienst* (24 April 1963).
 11. Wolfgang Beutin et.al., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte* (6th ed.) (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 2001): 612-613.
 12. See for example Stanley Kauffman, "Joseph K. and Orson W," *The New Republic* (2 March 1963):34-35.
 13. Jonas Mekas, "Movie Journal," *The Village Voice*, 8 (21 February 1963):15.
 14. Ernest Callenbach, "The Trial," *Film Quarterly*, 16 (Summer 1963): 42.
 15. Orson Welles and Peter Bogdanovich. *This is Orson Welles*, Jonathan Rosenbaum (ed.) (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993): 285-86.
 16. Karl-Heinz Krüger, "Kein Freispruch für Orson Welles," *Der Abend* (West Berlin) (2 April 1963).
 17. Enno Patalas, "Citizen Kay," *Frankfurter Rundschau* (8 June 1962); Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert, "Franz Kafka als Citizen K," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (8 February 1963); "Der Prozess," *Rheinische Post*, Kreis Dinslaken (23 July 1964).
 18. Walter Kaul, "Der Prozess," *Der Kurier* (West Berlin) (1 April 1963). The film's soundtrack, which was entirely 'looped', was characterized several times as 'difficult'. The film contains no original dialogue.
 19. Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995): 211-233.
 20. Klaus Sigl, Werner Schneider, Ingo Tornow. *Jede Menge Kohle? Kunst und Kommerz auf dem deutschen Filmmarkt der Nachkriegszeit* (München: Verlag Filmland Press, 1986):123-133.
 21. Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures: German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005): 73; "Schorcht-Film stockte auf," *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 162 (14 July 1962): 14.
 22. S.M.P (Siegfried M. Pistorius), "So leise fallen Dichter aus dieser Welt," Schorcht Filmgesellschaft m.b.H., Publicity Press Release, 2-3. "So erscheint 1937 die sechsbändige Prager Gesamtausgabe seines Werkes, das zwar die Mauer der deutschen Diktatur nicht zu überwinden vermochte, dafür aber den Raum der französischen und angelsächsischen Literatur über Nacht erobert" (3).

23. Alfred Maria Schwarzer, "Orson Welles verfilmte Franz Kafka," Schorcht Filmgesellschaft m.b.H. Publicity Press Release. "Schwarzer refers to the story as a "Vorahnung der Konzentrationslager" (1).
24. Sigfried M. Pistorius, "Orson Welles: nach fünf Jahren wieder ein Film", Schorcht Filmgesellschaft m.b.H. Publicity Press Release.
25. Sigfried M. Pistorius, "Der Prozess: Gegen die Zwangsjacke der Obrigkeit," Schorcht Filmgesellschaft m.b.H. Publicity Press Release.
26. Harry Järv, *Die Kafka-Literatur: eine Bibliographie* (first edition) (Malmö: Cavefors, 1961).
27. Rolf Traube, "Das Pathos der Angst," *Deutsche Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf) (17 May 1963). "Das Bewusstsein, einer furchtbaren Katastrophe soeben mit knapper Not entronnen zu sein und möglicherweise einer noch viel fürchterlicheren entgegenzusteuren, verlieh einem snobistisch gepflegten „Kafkaismus“ eine Popularität, die selbst den professionalen Literaturbetrachtern bald übel aufstieß, so das 1955 die jungen Leute der „Gruppe 47“ den Beschluß fassten: „wer heute noch einmal den Namen Kafka ausspricht, zahlt eine Mark.“ Significantly, Traube was one of the few critics to discuss Kafka's Judaism.
28. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986): 191.
29. Oliver Passek, "Die Gruppe 47 im politischen Kontext," in Peter Gendolla and Rita Leinecke (eds.) *Die Gruppe 47 und die Medien, MUK* (Massenmedien und Kommunikation), 114/115 (Siegen: FB 3 Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft an der Universitaet-GH Siegen, 1997): 102-114.
30. Anne Bauer, "Orson Welles: Darum drehe ich Kafka...", *Welt am Sonntag* (Berlin) (15 April 1962). "Warum Kafka? Seiner Aktualität wegen. Diese Geschichte eines Menschen, der unter die Räder der organisierten Gesellschaft gerät, die Räder der Polizei, der Armee, der Justiz...Und diese Vorahnung einer Zeit der Konzentrationslager..."
31. Andre Bazin, Charles Bitsch, Jean Domarch, "Gespräch mit Orson Welles," *Cahiers du Cinema*, 87 (September 1958); German translation in *Der Film: Manifeste, Gespräche, Dokumente 2* (Piper Verlag).
32. Georg Herzberg, "Der Prozess," *Film Echo/Film Woche* 29 (10 April 1963): 8. "...Was in den Jahrzehnten nach seinem Tode so vielen Menschen widerfahren ist, hat Franz Kafka vorausgeahnt: Der Zustand absoluter Rechtslosigkeit."
33. Karl-Heinz Krüger, "Romy's Erfolg im "Prozess" (West Berlin) (28 January 1963). "...und etwa die Vorahnung der Konzentrationslager.. [wird] von Welles immerhin spürbar gemacht."
34. J.S. "Überall schimmert Wirklichkeit," *Westfälische Rundschau* (Dortmund) (13 June 1963). "Das ist die Geschichte, die ein Traum ist, erfüllt von Traumlogik. "Lösen Sie keine Rätsel!"-warnt Orson Welles. Trotzdem schimmert überall die Wirklichkeit hindurch. Die der Konzentrationslager und der Gestapo, die Kafka vorausschaute; die unserer Tage, die den einzelnen im Strudel der Masse versinken

lässt...Ein Film der endlich wieder einmal zeigt, was Film sein kann und sein sollte."

35. Reinold E.Thiel, "Der Prozess," *Film Kritik* (May 1963): 244-248.

36. Ibid, 248. "So ist alles, was dem Zuschauer bleibt, sich zu delectieren an der barocken Gewalttätigkeit einzelner Einfälle..."

37. Volker Baer, "Nicht Kafka..." *Der Tagesspiegel Berlin* (4 April 1963). "...Über den armseligen Kreaturen, die von einem totalitären System zu Tode eingeschüchtert sind, hängen kalt drohend Fleischerhaken, grausame Assoziationen an KZ-Lager weckend. Welles hat Kafkas Visionen weitergeführt, konkretisiert."

38. Enno Patalas, interview with the author at the 9th Annual International Bremen Film Symposium at the Kino 46, Bremen, 24 January 2004.

39. Walter Kaul, "Der Prozess", *Der Kurier* (West Berlin) (1 April 1963). "...es machte den metaphysischen Dichter zur Weltmode, in deren Schleppe Begriffe wie Lebensangst, Mechanisierung, Bürokratisierung, usw. sich bald munter zu tummeln begannen."

40. Karena Niehoff, "Geisterbahn auf dem Oktoberfest," *Christ und Welt*, (3 May 1963): 22. "Welles möchte, wie ja vor ihm schon andere Interpreten, Kafka einreden, er habe Hitler, alle Schreckensdiktaturen, Konzentrationslager und sonstige anonyme Tortüren vorausgesehen, ein Visionärer Zeitkritiker...Welles Misverständnis ist entsetzlich banal...(er) hat (Josef K.) zu einem klassischen Helden bestimmt, der mit der Tapferkeit eines russischen Anarchisten, der Geschwister Scholl oder der Warschauer Gettokämpfer in den Tod geht, unbesiegt, mit einem letzten zynisch-verächtlichen Wort auf den Lippen, vom Glanz der Unschuld in einer bösen Welt geadelt."

41. Niehoff, "Geisterbahn auf dem Oktoberfest," 22. „das was das Herzklopfen beim lesen Kafkas ausmacht, ist doch die untragische Trivialität, in die es sich einschleicht, das Absurde gibt sich nicht Absurd, sondern stellt sich als kristallinisches Ergebnis der schutzlos zu Ende gedachten Wirklichkeit dar; die gleichmütige Alltäglichkeit verbirgt und entlässt in jedem Augenblick die Möglichkeit, nicht nur gerichtet, sondern, was fürchterlicher ist, tatsächlich schuldig zu werden, schuldig nach einem unbekanntem, unzugänglichem Gesetz.“

42. Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, 195.

43. Karena Niehoff: Feuilletonistin und Kritikerin, with an essay by Jörg Becker, "Wer das Schreiben liebt, wird es auch fürchten," (München: Verlag edition text + kritik in Richard Boorberg Verlag GmbH & Co, KG, 2006): 9-77.

44. Kaul, "Der Prozess," *Der Kurier* (Berlin) (1 April 1963). "Jede bittere Assoziation wird rasch durch kinntophaftes Messerblinken verwischt, bei dem man sich nach Bunuel-Dalis Augapfelrasur sehnt."

45. Alexandre Alexandre, *Der Kurier* (10 January 1963). "Ruf und Anerkennung dieses Propheten festigten sich im Nachkriegs-Europa, da

die sehnsüchtig erwartete Renaissance der Freiheit und Menschenwürde des Staatsbürgers sich nicht schlackenlos kristallisierte.“

46. Jean-Louis Bory, *Arts* (26 December 1962), Film distribution materials from the Schriftgutarchiv of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek , 111/11-12, 31 January 1963. “Angeklagt wird das, was die Geschichte noch kafkaischer als Kafka die Welt des Konzentrationslagers nannte- und Welles hat in kurzen anspielenden Bildern die Erinnerung an die Nazilager verwandt.”

47. Ibid.

48. USE (Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert), "Der Prozess", *Film-Dienst* (24 April 1963). “Wer einmal heute einem Prozeß beigewohnt hat, von politischen gegen Kriegsverbrecher bis zu zivilen wegen Verkehrsvergehen, macht immer wieder die Erfahrung, wie sehr in unserer säkularisierten Zeit das Schuldbewußtsein verflacht oder gar zerstört ist. Gerade in Landesverratsprozessen zeigt sich stets von neuem, daß die Angst vor dem Terror und seinen Organisationen weit starker entwickelt ist als das Gefühl, sich schuldig zu machen...(In) der Kafka-Deutung von Welles dagegen ist das Gewissen längst verloren, und der Terror eines autoritären Regimes und seiner Organisationen liquidiert nun den isolierten, entseelten Menschen.” (152) Another significant trial that took place during this time that was linked to the Cold War was that involving the federal government vs. the magazine, *Der Spiegel*. Editor-in-Chief Rudolf Augsbury had been arrested for allegedly publishing classified defence information.

49. Konrad H. Jarausch. "Critical Memory and Civil Society: The Impact of the 1960s on German Debates about the Past." in Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis (eds.), *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006): 11-30, 20-22.

50. "Der Prozeß," *Die Zeit* (Hamburg) (19 April 1963); Dieter Strunz, "Kafka, von der Kamera gejagt" *Berliner Morgenpost* (4 April 1963).

51. R. Reich and B. Bondy (eds.) *Homme de lettres* [Rudolf Köser] (Zurich: Freundesgabe, 1985).

52. François Bondy, "Im Entscheidenden kein Kafka," *Die Welt* (West Berlin) (6 April 1963). “Im „Prozess“...ist ein Zug zur Selbstvernichtung, zur Einwilligung in die eigene Zerstörung, zum Masochismus vorhanden, den die Exegeten sehr verschiedener mannigfacher Weise gedeutet haben, der aber nicht wegdiskutiert werden kann. Orson Welles ist dieser Zug entgangen. Nur deshalb konnte er einen Darsteller wählen, zu dem die graue Anonymität des Mannes ohne Nachnamen nicht passt und bei dem von Resignation, von Komplizität mit den eigenen Feinden nichts zu spüren ist.“

53. Ulrich von Thuna, "Citizen K," *Film: Zeitschrift fuer Film und Fernsehen* (June/July 1963): 42. Thuna described Welles as a „'Rebellen' gegen amerikanische Konformität, der in Wahrheit doch ein sehr echter Amerikaner bleibt.“

54. Ulrich Kurowski, "Ein verfilmter Kommentar" *Echo der Zeit* (Recklinghausen) (12 May 1963).
55. USE (Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert), 11904, "Der Prozess," *Film-Dienst* (24 April 1963): 153.
56. Uta G. Poiger, "Beyond "Modernization" and "Colonization," *Diplomatic History*, 23 (Winter 1999): 45-56. See also Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).
57. Erwin Goelz, "Prozeß gegen Kafka," *Stuttgarter Zeitung* (25 May 1963).
58. Karl Korn, "Ein Exempel" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (1 July 1963). "Anthony Perkins hat den Typ des smarten Damenlieblings abgetan. Er ist mit hoher Sensibilität und Intelligence Josef K, in dem Verwirrung unheilbar angerichtet wird." Anthony Perkins' European image was linked much more closely to his role as the young lover of Ingrid Bergman in *Goodbye Again*. In contrast, in the United States, his image was always tied to the performance in *Psycho*.
59. Dr. T.L., "Neue Filme in Augsburg: Der Prozeß" *Augsburger Allgemeine* (11 July 1963). "...AP, die personifizierte, zitternde Seele des JK."
60. Peter Körfgan, "Der Mensch braucht das Unzerstörbare..." *Mannheimer Morgen* (8 June 1963). "Es ist bemängelt worden, AP's JK gehe nicht unter die Haut. Aber Kafka ist kein Hitchcock. Seine Intellektualität hindert ihn daran, es bei einem reparablen Schock bewenden zu lassen. Die schleichende Verwirrung unsere Zeit teilt sich nicht in einem Blick mit. Und der Besatzung eines ankerlosen Schiffes bemächtigt sich mit psychologischer Wahrscheinlichkeit weit eher lähmendes Entsetzen als spontane Panik."
61. Charles Winecoff, *Split Image: The Life of Anthony Perkins* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Lightning Bug Press, 2001 [1996]): 193-194.
62. Erwin Goelz, "Prozeß gegen Kafka," *Stuttgarter Zeitung* (25 May 1963); Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert, "Franz Kafka als Citizen K," *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (8 February 1963).
63. Edward Guthmann, "Repeat Performance: Welles' Rare Masterpiece Restored-Film Based on Kafka's *The Trial* opens at the Castro," *San Francisco Chronicle* (7 January 2000) available online at <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2000/01/07/DD15381.DTL>
64. tm, "Prozess gegen Orson Welles," *Stuttgarter Zeitung* (21 June 1963).
65. Ibid. "Die Apologeten des literarischen Purismus und der Unantastbarkeit des absoluten Sprachkunstwerks waren in ihrem Element, als es auf der Podiumsdiskussion des AstA im überfüllten großen Hörsaal der Technischen Hochschule darum ging, ob der Film „Der Prozeß“ von Orson Welles Kafkas Roman total vermurkst oder in minimalen Spuren doch noch etwas von der „kafkaesken“ Atmosphäre

wiedergegeben habe. Rudolf Lubowski vom Schorcht-Filmverleih, München, avancierte schnell zum schwarzen Schaf, auf das sich die plumpen und die differenzierten, die sachlichen und die ressentimentgeladenen Vorwürfe gegen diesen Film und gegen die Filmwirtschaft überhaupt entluden.“

66. Rudolf Joos et al. (eds.), *Mosaiksteine: Zum 65. Geburtstag von Dietmar Schmidt* (Frankfurt am Main: Gemeinschaftswerk der Evangelischen Publizistik): 172-173.
67. Dietmar Schmidt, "Heilsame Unruhe," *Kirche und Film*, 6 (June 1963): 2-3. "Mit einer Unbekümmertheit, die vermuten lassen könnte, es habe nie ein Goebbels und eine Reichskulturkammer gegeben--oder aber: beide sein heute schon wieder massgebliche Autoritäten--werden die vertrauten Adjektivpaare "nihilistisch" und "positive", "zersetzend" und "gesund", in die Debatte geworfen."
68. "Der Mensch K. unterliegt der Macht," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine* (Essen) (13 June 1963). "Neben P und OW...fällt besonders RS auf, deren bravouröses Spiel als flittchenhafte Krankenpflegerin nichts mehr mit dem Sissi-Seelchen von einst gemein hat."
69. Karl Korn, "Ein Exempel" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (1 July 1963). "Romy Schneider hat das Strahlegänschen Sissi abgetan. Die ranke, hochbeinige Hexe versteht sich mit Katzenaugen, raschen stelzenden Schritten, drängenden Gebärden und Flüstersätzen auf elementare Verführung. Ein vorzügliche schauspielerische Leistung."
70. "Genial an Kafka vorbei," *Kölnische Rundschau*, (25 April 1963).
71. François Bondy, "Kafka-Gesehen von Orson Welles," *Die Welt* (29 December 1962). "Romy Schneider als Leni...eine „Puppe“ im doppelten Sinn des Wortes, in erotischer Willfährigkeit und marionettenhafter Unpersönlichkeit. Sie entspricht ganz der Vorstellung der Frauen, die im „Prozeß“ nicht genug Substanz haben, zu tierhaft sind, um selber Angeklagte zu werden."
72. "Filme der Woche: Nach Kafka: "Der Prozeß", *Westdeutsche Rundschau* (Wuppertal-Barmen) (18 May 1963). "Ihr gelingt der Darstellung der Leni, jenes Wesens zwischen Frosch und Mensch."
73. "Hitchkafka," *Die Welt* (West Berlin) (18 April 1963). "Immer ist seine (Kafkas) Wahrheit ganz trostlos—wie entsetzlich ist es, um nur ein Motiv herauszunehmen, dass...die ‚Erlösung durch die Frau‘ hier immer von irgendwelchen Halbprostituierten erhofft wird, in einer Art letzter Verzweiflung, die sich in leerer Sinnlichkeit verliert."
74. Karl Heinz Krüger, "Kein Freispruch für Orson Welles," *Der Abend* (Berlin) (2 April 1963).
75. Kafka did have a small readership in France during WWII. See Françoise Tabery, *Kafka en France: essai de bibliographie annotée* (Paris: Minard, 1993): 17-22. See also Robert Marthe, "Kafka in Frankreich," *Akzente* 13 (1966):310-320.

76. USE (Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert). Review of *Der Prozess*, *Film-Dienst*, 17 (24 April 1963): 152-153.
77. Of the 409 films released in West Germany in 1963, Welles' *The Trial* was in 194th place that year in terms of cinema attendance. See Sigl et al, *Jede Menge Kohle?*, p. 137.
78. Enno Patalas. Interview with the author at the 9th Annual International Bremen Film Symposium at the Kino 46 in Bremen, 24 January 2004.
79. Franz Kafka, *Briefe an Felice, und andere Korrespondenz aus der Verlobungszeit*, Erich Heller and Jürgen Born (eds.) (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976); see also Elias Canetti, *Der Andere Prozeß: Kafka's Briefe an Felice* (München, Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1984).
80. Canetti, 60.
81. See for example Volker Weidemann, "Kafkas Welt in einem Kästchen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 16 (20 April 2008): 31; Friedmar Apel, "Mythengestöber", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 283 (3 December 2008): 32; Friedmar Apel, "Der war ja gar nicht kafkaesk," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 186 (11 August 2008): 34
82. S.M Pristorius, "Orson Welles: nach fünf Jahren wieder ein Film," Schorcht press and publicity release. "Mein Film erzählt nicht nur von der Verschwörung des Gerichts gegen die Unschuld; er ist vielmehr eine Studie der Bestechlichkeit von Gerichtsverfahren. Mein Held ist nicht unschuldig, er ist fähig, den Anderen ähnlich zu sein. Aber von allen Anderen kommt ihm niemand zur Hilfe. Und auch er tut nichts für die Menschen , die ihn umgeben."

RÉSUMÉS

This article investigates the reception of the American *auteur* and actor Orson Welles' adaptation of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* in West Germany in 1963. It argues that the film's ambivalent reception by German critics was closely tied to the process of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" (coming to terms with the past) that had developed in Germany during the mid-1950s with the widespread circulation and publication of visual images of Nazi war crimes, and that was in the process of a more politicized transformation in the early sixties. Through the figure of Welles, this essay also explores the ways U.S. culture could influence this process. Welles' reading of Kafka as a "prophet of fascism", whose Josef K. actively resists his oppressors—even if to no apparent avail—set off a timely discussion among commentators about the meaning and function of Kafka's works in post-war West Germany. In 1963, in the midst of spectacular court cases and "trials" that began to highlight the widespread complicity of Germans in National Socialist war crimes, the theme of "active resistance" to tyranny that Welles' version of *The Trial* offered did not fit the picture. It was, as one critic suggested, a distorted, "Americanized" fantasy. Others, however, appreciated the didactic value of Welles' international co-production, which coincided with the

beginnings of the New German Cinema movement, a confrontational effort to engage with questions of the past through film.

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