

The 'Night Sequence' in Noelte's Film Adaptation of Kafka's *Das Schloss*

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I: Introduction

Whilst thumbing through background information that would aid in my comparison of Noelte's adaptation of Kafka's "Das Schloss", I came to the realization that a film director, when adapting his work from an existing piece of literature, faces many of the same problems that the translator encounters. Thus, before jumping straight into the film/text comparison, I would like to outline this point briefly, feeling that delving into this theory might further our understanding of the processes that are involved when bringing literature to the screen.

In the chapter entitled "Der Textstatus des Films",¹ Kanzog argues that the danger always exists of film adaptations being classified as doing "an injustice" to the work on which they are based by those who do not take into consideration the different nature of the media involved in the process. Although the term 'media' cannot be applied when talking about the translation process, the interrelationship between the source text and the target text bears similarities to the text/film one. The accusation of "doing an injustice" to the original has been leveled at many an unfortunate translator. Both he and the director who deals with literary adaptations face the same basic problem, namely, to decide on how much of the original can and should be transferred to the target given that there exist certain limitations inherent in each process (i.e., semantic fields for the translator, film length for the director). While it is clear that these limitations differ fundamentally for the director and the translator, the processes themselves undergo similar pressures. This position is reinforced when we look at some of the principles that Kanzog uses to outline the problems that are associated with film adaptations:

- 2) No transformation can occur without the loss of information.
- 3) Out of every transformation there arise variants and the invariant.
- 4) *Adequacy* is, by definition, a descriptive term, not a normative one.²

Meant as guidelines to viewing and judging film adaptations, these rules could easily be applied towards translation. The variant/invariant dichotomy is especially noteworthy, for it can and has been used when examining the structures that underlie translations³. It can be argued, however, that, due to their respective parameters, variants in adaptations are tolerable to a greater extent than in translation: unlike the translator, the director has a finite amount of space/time in which she can work in. Still, similarities between these two distinct fields are detectable and this in turn

1 See Klaus Kanzog, *Einführung in die Filmphilologie*, Reihe Diskurs Film, Münchener Beiträge zur Filmphilologie, Bd 4 (München: L. Bauer, E. Ledig, M. Schaudig, 1991) pp. 17-20.

2 Ibid, p.17. Note that the first principle listed was left out, since it specifically addresses film adaptations.

3 See summary of Popovic's theory in J. Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 1991) pp 26-28.

should warrant further investigation. For now, keeping in mind the variant/invariant dichotomy, let us turn to the main task at hand, the comparison of the Kafka text and the film version.

II The Post-Shooting-Script of the 'Night Sequence'

The post-shooting-script (PSS) is a necessary tool for any text/film comparison. Without it, it is virtually impossible to absorb and categorize the information that any film sequence contains. Transferring film back to text allows for a direct medium to medium comparison, which, in turn, is the only practical way in which any comparison is possible at all. Ironically, such a transposition entails some of the same problems discussed in the introduction: the act of turning film back into text results in a loss of information, for it still relies on a human observer to organize the information as he perceives it. Although the process of producing a PSS has been greatly refined by the use of computers and modern viewing and editing equipment¹, it still requires judgment calls by the observer. Hence, variations can and do still occur.

This PSS of the first fifty-one shots of Noelte's film can, when compared to some of the more sophisticated methods of transcribing film back into text² used today to, might be classified as somewhat primitive. Most notably absent are the time references³ as well as the lighting effect documentation (except in those shots where lighting plays a very significant role). The following PSS should, therefore, be seen as comprising only the minimum amount of information necessary to allow for the comparison in part three of this essay.

Shot	Location	Characters	Camera movement/ Composition	Dialogue/ Audio	Action	<i>Kafkaesque</i> Elements

1 See Kanzog , p. 8.

2 For a detailed look at some of the PSS models currently in use, turn to the chapter entitled "Protokollierungsprobleme und ausgewählte Protokollierungsmuster". Kanzog, pp 136-151.

3 Unfortunatley, the film used for this exercise did not include time-annotation.

1	Hills outside (snow covered) village	K.	long shot (L.S.) / wide angle (W.A.)	music: background (BG)	K. walks from right (R) to left(L), leaving shot to the left.	the individual in isolation-dwarfed by his surroundings.
2	Hills (snow covered) outside Village	K.	L.S./ W.A.	music:BG	K. walks from R to L , disappearing behind hill.	man alone between earth and heaven
3	Hills outside village	K.	L.S./ W.A.	music: BG	K. looks around; walks toward camera	
4	Hills outside village note: ground tilting to left; woods on either side	K.	L.S./W.A.	music: BG	K. slowly appears from behind hill in center of shot	
5	Hills outside village; castle in background	K.	L.S./W.A.	music: BG	K. walks from R to L disappearing to L of shot; castle remains.	note: castle visually dominates character. Indication of hierarchy?
6	Hills outside village; houses in background	K.	W.A/ L.S.	music: BG	K. moves from center to the R	
7	entrance of village; houses to R.L.	K.	midshot: left profile, back of K.	music: BG	K. walks from R to L , then away from camera.	
8	village; church to left	K.	W	music: BG	K. walks at R of shot towards camera.	
9	village: in front of inn	K.	midshot; low angle	music: BG	K. moves away from camera from R to L; up the stairs towards inn door	camera angle gives inn a domineering element; note: human quality of inn facade.
10	Inside inn, center	Guests (6) K. innkeeper	midshot; focus on K.'s head	K. << Kann ich hier übernachten?>>	Guests turn towards camera; K. enters shot from L to R; innkeeper stairs towards camera	K.'s outsider status is emphasized

11	inside inn; R side of main room (MR)	K.	midshot		K. sits down on bench in front of table	
12	MR; L side	guests (6)	midshot		guests sitting at table, staring (presumably at K.)	the watched individual
13	MR, L & center	innkeeper guests (6)	midshot; panning R to L	innk. << Ich hab' kein Zimmer frei>>	innkeeper stares (at K.)' puts down glass; walks towards table of guests	the rejected individual
14	MR , R side	K.	close-up of K.'s face		K. looks wearily at group	
15	MR, L side	guests (2)	close-up : foreground - guest 1 R profile. Backgr.- guest 2, half profile		guests staring, motionless	
16	MR, R side	K	midshot	footsteps	K., sitting on bench, slowly slumps forward until head rests on bench.	
17	MR, R side ; back of MR; back room(BR)	innkeeper older woman / (his wife)	dolly shot (Hand held?); camera follows innkeeper;stops;zooms out.	footsteps	innk. walks by K..., looking down at him; opens door to BR, crosses BR until he reaches the doorway of another room where he converses briefly with his wife; turns around and walks back towards MR door.	delegation of power
18	MR, L side	guests (3)	midshot; static	footsteps	peasants sitting, some turning towards pre. the innkeeper.	
19	MR; R side	innkeeper K.	midshot; panning left to right; focus on K. 's profile	innk << Holen sie sich 'nen Strohsack vom Boden>>	innk. closes door behind him;walks past K; addresses him while walking away; K. looks	

					straight ahead.	
20	MR, L. side	guests (3)	closes-up on guest's face		guests staring towards camera	the watched individual
21	stairs leading upwards	K.	midshot low angle	footsteps	K slowly climbs the stairs, hugging the right wall	-disorientation?
22	M.R., bottom of stairs	innkeeper	midshot, high angle	footsteps	innkeeper stairs up (at K.)	-subtle shift in power: K. shot at low angle (21) , while innk. at High angle. note size differentiation.
23	upper hallway	K.	midshot, low angle	footsteps, door opening	K. opens door to the right of hallway	
24	upper level, room to the R	woman	midshot, high angle		woman shown lying in bed through half-opened door; she turns towards camera (door)	K.'s disorientation; possible indication of K.'s dominance
25	upper hallway	K.	midshot, low angle	shuffling, door closing	K. closes door, turns left, looks up	
26	upper hallway	K.	midshot panning upwards	footsteps	K. climbs up ladder, opens hatch; turns towards camera; grimaces	
27	upper floor, center	woman	midshot		woman opens door, steps into hallway; looks up (at K.)	the watched individual
28	upper floor, ladder	K.	midshot low angle panning down slightly	noise of K.'s actions	K. pulls a straw bag from attic; drops it from ladder onto floor; pain expression on face	struggle bag of straw <i>fuses</i> with K. for a moment (?)

29	upper floor	woman	midshot	noise of K.'s action	woman, staring (at K.) slowly backs into room ; closes door	
30	upper floor stairs MR, R side	K. Unterkastellan (UK)	med. close up dolly shot or hand held shot focus on UK	UK << Hier können sie nicht übernachten>> footsteps	K.> with strained face descends stairs, dragging sack; passes UK; UK turns towards him then addresses K.	confrontation with authority
31	MR, R side	K.	midshot	K. << Warum nicht?>> UK << Weil dieses Dorf...>>	K. walks towards center of MR with back to camera	
32	MR , R side	K. UK	midshot panning L to R zoom on K.	UK <<.... Besitzt des Schlosses ist und weil hier niemand ohne Erlaubnis übernachten darf>> K.<< Ist denn hier ein Schloss ?	turned to K., the UK addresses him; K. turns his head towards official without looking directly at him	rejection of authority; lack of eye contact accentuates <i>distance</i> between the two figures
33	MR , center, L Side	innkeeper guests	midshot panning right to left.	guests: slight chuckles	innkeeper looks away (from K.) with slightly amused expression; guests show amusement as they stare (at K.)	absence of knowledge divided individual from rests of society. See Kafka's <i>Gibs Auf!</i> .
34	MR, R side	K. guests (background)	midshot	UK (off) << Verlassen Sie sofort das Dorf! >>	K. slumps to the ground, on top of straw bag.	resignation
35	MR, R side	UK	midshot low angle	K. (off) << Was wollen Sie denn von mir?"	UK sternly looking down at K.	power distribution indicated through the use of camera angles : UK towering over K.
36	MR, R side	K. UK (background)	midshot, panning up then to the R	K. << das Schloss hat mich herkommen lassen [pause] als Landvermesser]	K. gets up; turns around then walks towards entrance of MR; with his back towards the camera he pauses, turns face left, addresses UK, looks around	

					MR.	
37	MR, L side	guests	Long shot		guests staring at camera	
38	MR, R side	UK K.	midshot panning L to R, zoom on K.'s face	sound of telephone being cranked up	UK walks towards telephone, picks up ear piece and starts dialing; K. looks up then turns to UK	
39	MR center	innkeeper	long shot	UK (off) << Hier ist der Unterkastellan.. ..>>	innkeeper cleans glasses, looks (toward UK)	
40	MR , L side	guests	close up	UK (off) << ... Bitte Erkundigen Sie sich in der Kanzelei..>>	guests looking (towards UK)	hierarchy of power: guest - > UK-> castle
41	Outside the inn	K.	wide angle panning left to right; zoom on K.'s face	UK (off) << ... ob heute noch ein Landvermesser erwartet wird.>>	K. has stepped outside; looks away from camera.	Distance between castle and village is indicated by the telephone wire which disappears into horizon
42	MR, L side	guests	close up	UK (off) << Ja, ich warte..>>	guests stare (towards UK)	
43	MR, R side	UK	medium close-up of UK, low-angle	closing of door	while on the phone, the UK nervously replaces his hat.	
44	In front of inn	K.	long shot high angle	UK (off) << ein Irrtum? Ja, wie soll ich das jetzt dem Herrn Landvermesser erklären? >>	K., outside the inn starts to walk away; slowly turns towards inn. as door opens the light of the inn falls upon his face.	light imagery- acceptance, warmth?

45	doorstep of inn	UK	long shot low angle	UK << Ich bitte vielmals um....>>	UK steps into doorway and yells down (to K.)	UK position has once more been restored -> camera angle; he is now in the position to save K. from the cold night.
46	Outside, in front of inn	K.	long shot high angle	UK (off) << ... Entschuldigung >>	K. slowly ascends the steps of the inn, a grimaced smile on his face.	
47	Doorstep of inn	UK	long shot low angle	UK<< Sie sind als Gast anerkannt.>>	UK addresses K. from steps	
48	Outside, in front of inn	K.	long shot low angle		K. continues to climb steps to inn	
49	doorstep; MR	K. UK innkeeper innk.'s wife	midshot focuses on K., then pans L to R finally focusing on innk.'s wife as she advances towards camera	innkeeper: << Sie sind Gast des Schlosses>> music: BG	The UK backs up to let K. in; K. enters and walks towards innkeeper; his wife advances	Acceptance of villagers is linked to that of castle-- inability of individual to set up independent decision making process.
50	MR, L side	guests	close up panning left to right	music: BG	peasants stare	
51	MR, center; back	innkeeper Wife K.	midshot pans left to right zooms out while following K.'s progress to the back of the room	music: BG	K. grabs his sack of straw, grads it to the back of room	acceptance completed; journey from outside to inside ends in the depth of MR.

III: The 'Night Sequence': Comparison of Noelte's and Kafka's Work

This section will be divided in the following way. Part A will deal with any significant variation between the text¹ and the film, while in part B we will take a closer look at the invariant; more precisely, the *kafkaesque* elements found within the film.

1 The text used here is the following: Franz Kafka, *Das Schloss*. (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1994).

A) The Degree of Variation

In part two of this essay, the night sequence, as laid out in the film, is documented shot by shot. The corresponding passages in the text are paragraphs one to nine in the *Kritische Ausgabe*. The following chart outlines some of the more significant variants found in Noelte's film.

Text: Paragraph # (Page #)	Film: shot #	Significant Variants	Possible Explanations
Paragr. 1 (p. 9) " Es war spät...."	1 to 9	- castle is visible	- need to set the stage right at beginning of film.
Paragr. 2 (p. 9) "Dann gieng er..."	10 to 29	- K. does not fall asleep	- time parameters do not allow for K. to sleep. Tiredness however is already indicated in K.'s facial expression.
Paragr. 3 (pp9-10) "Aber Kurze Zeit..."	30 to 43 - the	-tone and manners of "Unterkastellan" more aggressive.	- the attitude of the U.K. towards K. immediately emphasizes the upcoming confrontational nature of their relationship, which in turn will mirror K. relationship with the authorities throughout the film.
Paragr. 4 (p10) " >>Und man muß...<<"	35	- paragr. captured in one line: " Was wollen Sie denn von mir".	- shows need to stay within time parameters.
Paragr. 5 (pp10-11) " Nun geriet....."	36 - K.	- K. moves towards entrance ready to leave: more docile	- Film early on wants to emphasize K.'s powerless position.
Paragr. 6 (p11-12) " >> Landvermesser<< .."	37 to 44	- K. is outside the inn	- see above
Paragr . 7 (pp 12-13) "Dann war es..."	37 to 44	- one telephone call instead of two	- compression used to save time

Paragr. 8 (pp. 13) " K. horchte auf..."	absent	<----	- this paragr. illustrates K.'s thought processes. Cannot be illustrated in film , due to lack of a narrator.
Paragr . 9 (p 13) " Dem sich schüchtern..."	absent	<-----	-none
absent	45 to 51	- K. shown dragging sack of straw : end of Night sequence.	- need to round off the night sequence in logical manner: K.'s movement start outside and end in the 'heart' of the inn.,

Summarizing the 'explanations' (far right column) we see that there are two main factors that seem to contribute to the variants. These are as follows:

1 Process dependent variants: variants that are dictated by the nature of the film medium.

2 Subjective variants: variants that occur when the director chooses not to follow some aspect of the original work.

Note that this dichotomy is provisional and should be expanded at some point. Furthermore, it is at times difficult to distinguish between these two types of variants, since the point at which the director is 'forced' into a variant by the nature of the media, versus the point at which he freely chooses to introduce change, is blurred. Regardless of these difficulties, this model can help us to categorize the variants in the night sequence, as can be seen below.

Process Dependent Variants	Subjective Variants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K. not sleeping • Dialogue compression of paragraph four • One telephone call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle visible in opening shots • Aggressiveness of UK. towards K. • K.'s leaving of the Inn before termination of phone call • Shots 45-51 • Paragraph 9 of text

The absence in the film of the content of paragraph eight of the text is harder to classify: having

chosen not to include a narrator in his work, Noelte cannot reproduce some of the more complex thought processes within K.. Without getting into any more detail, it can be summarized that the variants found in the night sequence of Noelte's adaptation are a relatively balanced mixture of the two types discussed previously.

B) The Invariant

In order to discuss the invariant it is necessary to set some boundaries, for it is clear that, like the variants, the invariant could be subdivided into a number of categories, e.g. dialogue, imagery used, etc.. Such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this paper and it is for this reason that I have chosen to narrow the line of inquiry to one major point; namely, what *kafkaesque* elements/signals are found in the opening fifty-one shots of Noelte's work.

This narrowing-down process is itself plagued with difficulties since the term *kafkaesque* evokes a multitude of possible definitions. It could even be argued that the term's definitions may vary from individual to individual, given that Kafka's work can evoke highly emotional, hence highly subjective, responses from its readers. Given this problem, I have chosen to shorten the line of inquiry to include only those elements of the *kafkaesque* that seem to be of greater significance in the work at hand. Three of the dominant themes that reoccur throughout *Das Schloss* seem to be as follows:

- i) The isolated individual;
- ii) The bureaucracy as a dehumanizing force;
- iii) Hierarchy and authority.

Although selective and not complete, this list of elements can serve as a tool with which the invariant between film and text can be recognized. What follows, then, is an exposition of how these elements have been incorporated into the film.

i) The Isolated Individual

Shots 1-6

K. is shown wandering in a desolated, wintry landscape, void

of an human activity.

- Shot 9** Clear dichotomy between the outside and the inside, magnified by the light from the windows vs. the darkness of the night.
- Shots 10-20** The spatial division between K. on the right side and the guests on the left side of the room reinforces the notion of K. as an outsider; he does not belong with the 'others'.
- Shots 23-25** K. walks into the wrong room: signals of confusion, disorientation that can be linked to his outsider status.
- Shots 32-33** K.'s question "Ist denn hier ein Schloss" and the resulting amusement on the part of the guests and the innkeeper contribute to the sense of K.'s isolation; a lack of knowledge acts as a separator between K. and the villagers.
- Shot 44** Seemingly rejected by the castle, K. is shown leaving the Inn; the village is lifeless.

ii) Bureaucracy as an inhuman force

Although this aspect becomes more prominent as the film progresses (with a climax in the last sequences) some indicators are nevertheless present in the night sequence.

- Shots 30-32, 34-36** Through the dialogue between K. and the U.K., we find out that no outsider is allowed to spend the night in the village without the permission of the castle. Bureaucratic authority, thus, regulates the most basic of human needs, i.e. shelter and sleep. This in turn points toward an inhumane element within the authority apparatus
- Shots 38-47** The telephone signals the distance between the affected and the affector. Further, the reversal of the decision to let K. stay

as well as the reference to a mistake foreshadow the general inefficient and ineptitude nature of the bureaucracy.

iii) Hierarchy and Authority.

The position of K. within the village and the position of the villagers in reference to each other are important aspects in both the film and the text¹. At times this aspect merges with the other two Kafkaesque elements discussed previously.

- Shot 5** Image of the castle towering over the head of K.. Thus, the film, early on, clearly indicates the differential in power between K. and the authorities.
- Shot 9** Using a low-angle shot, the hierarchical relationship between K and the village is also established, i.e. the Inn is physically above K..
- Shot 17** The Inn-keeper's dependence on his wife is shown when, in the longest shot of the opening sequences, he shuffles to her, asking her for permission for K. to stay (see shot 19).
- Shot 35** The U.K. is shown standing next to the slumped down K.: this serves as a visual indicator of the dominance of the authority over K. .
- Shots 38-44** When the U.K. phones the castle for permission, it becomes clear that the bureaucratic apparatus has its own hierarchical structure. Further, it becomes apparent that the castle influences decisions within the village. The opening sequence thus sets up the power relationship that will form one of the main focal points of the film.
- Shots 45-47** Again, K's position relative to the authority (here the U.K.) is visually reinforced: while K. stands at the bottom of the steps,

1 See Klaus Kanzog, *Zusammenfassung der 5.-8.- Stunde*. (Unpublished, 1995).

the UK. is towering over top.

Through the use of various cinematographic devices, Noelte manages to capture some of the more important elements of the *kafkaesque* early on in the film. The night sequence thus serves as an effective lead-in to the rest of the film. At the same time, the use of these elements allows for a connection to be made between the film and Kafka's text, which in turn highlights the role of the invariant in film adaptations.

IV: Conclusion

Having briefly introduced the similarities between translation and film adaptation (an aspect which will require further study) we moved to the exercise proper; namely, the analysis of the 'night sequence' in Noelte's Kafka adaptation and the investigation of its relationship to the original. Further, by examining the variants found in the film, it was demonstrated that Noelte's work, though based largely on Kafka's text, nevertheless includes some elements not found in the text. As we have seen, these variants can be subdivided into those necessitated by the parameters of the film medium and those that can be linked to some form of choice made by the director. Finally, by studying some of the *kafkaesque* elements found in the film's opening sequence, it has become clear that these form a fundamental link between the text and the film; thus, they should be considered as an integral part of any film adaptation.

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