

of *The Trial*. Only the villagers can dispense grace, only they can accept or ostracize. Therefore the irony of the novel, as well as the implied criticism of the "divine" school, lies in the fact that K.'s sole possibility for grace rests in himself, in his willingness to become like the villagers in order to be accepted by them, in his readiness to accept the village superstitions, the Castle cabalism. In short, he must give up his dependence on justice related to logic. Obviously this is not what Kafka advocated; therefore the book can be read only as a satire on what he did *not* advocate, a satire on the particular search for grace which K. represents. This the mystical school does not see, since it is blinded, by its obsession with the Castle as the divine, into as ready an acceptance of the Castle cabalism as the villagers themselves. The mystical interpreters, in short, manage to adjust themselves very nicely to the village; and it is they who find the state of grace, not K. Nor does the fact that Kafka yearned to belong controvert my explanation. At the same time that he yearned to belong he despised belonging.

Walter Kaufmann

In the usual exegesis, Kafka's castle stands for God: the hero is remote from God, while the people in the village are nearer to God, and the problem is one of divine grace. At the beginning of the novel, however, we are told that the castle is the castle of Count Westwest, and after that the count no longer figures in the story. The German "*west*" means "decomposes." I suggest that in *The Castle* God is dead, and we are faced with a universe devoid of sense.

From Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The World Publishing Company, Meridian Books, 1956), p. 122. Copyright © 1956 by The World Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Hans Joachim Schoeps

. . . The ultimate reason for K.'s failure is perhaps only this, that he cannot have faith and commits the error of trying to force Grace

From "The Tragedy of Faithlessness" by Hans Joachim Schoeps in The Kafka Problem, ed. Angel Flores (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp.), pp. 289-90.