

To: The Global Collaborative Research Fund

A Proposal: to establish a Princeton Kafka Network in collaboration with Humboldt University (Berlin) and Oxford University.

Network Director: Michael Jennings (Department of German)

Vice-Directors: Stanley Corngold (Departments of German and
Comparative Literature)

Joseph Vogl (Department of German)

Core Faculty:

Stanley Corngold (Princeton, German & Comparative Literature)

Carolyn Duttlinger (Oxford, German)

Manfred Engel (Oxford, German)

Daniel Heller-Roazen (Princeton, German)

Michael Jennings (Princeton, German)

Malte Kleinwort (Humboldt, German Studies)

Katrin Kohl (Oxford, German)

Ernst Osterkamp (Humboldt, German)

Anthony Phelan (Oxford, German)

Anson Rabinbach (Princeton, History)

Ritchie Robertson (Oxford, German)

Erhard Schütz (Humboldt, German)

Joseph Vogl	(Princeton, German; Humboldt, German Studies)
Burkhardt Wolf	(Humboldt, German)
Michael Wood	(Princeton, English)

The Princeton Kafka Network aims to build on two pre-existing communities to establish a capacious system for scholarly collaboration and exchange on the intellectual life and work of Franz Kafka. The Princeton Kafka Network (henceforth, PKN) will draw on the intellectual resources of Princeton University in the field of Kafka scholarship, as indicated by relevant work published by Professors Michael Jennings, Stanley Corngold, Joseph Vogl (German); Michael Wood (English); and Anson Rabinbach (History), among others.

Why center this network on the writings of Franz Kafka? As the representative writer of European modernity, Kafka's work offers an ideal site for interdisciplinary and international exchange. Within a wide range of fields, approaches, and national traditions, scholars have organized much of their thinking on modernity around Kafka and his work. An international network—consisting in collaboration and exchange between scholars and graduate students—can draw on intellectual and human resources in literary studies, cultural history, sociology, religious studies, political theory, economics, philosophy, psychology, and law. To take only one recent example, the eminent legal scholar Jack Greenberg has recently offered an annual seminar—co-taught by Stanley Corngold—on “Kafka and the Law” at Columbia University Law

School. The results of this and related work in America and Germany have been published by Princeton University Press under the title *Franz Kafka: The Office Writings*.

The PKN will build on established communities in Germany and in the United Kingdom. The first is the program in Literature and Media Studies at the Humboldt University (Berlin). Princeton's Department of German already enjoys a close scholarly association with this group, allowing selected graduate students to matriculate at both Princeton and Humboldt. This association is sustained from the Berlin side by Professor Vogl, who in addition to his appointment as Visiting Professor at Princeton is also Professor of Literature and Media and Cultural Studies at the Humboldt University.

The PKN will also build onto the very active Oxford [University] Kafka Research Center. The Center aims to pursue the very aims that the Princeton Kafka Network has in mind: to advance and co-ordinate scholarship on Kafka and more generally on German-language and especially German-Jewish literature and culture in the period of Modernism. A similar research partnership already exists between Princeton and Oxford, centered on the work of the critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin, but that connection is due to expire in summer 2009. We at Princeton would very much like to sustain the momentum of this cultural exchange.

Oxford has a very significant relation to Kafka studies. Its collection of Kafka manuscripts draws scholars from different universities across the globe. On this point, Princeton's collaboration with Oxford will give our membership privileged access to this collection--by far the most inspiring collection of Kafka

manuscripts in the world. Aside from encouraging the study of Kafka's papers, the Oxford Research Center, like the Princeton Kafka Network, aims to serve the whole spectrum of Kafka studies, ranging from biographical and historical research via literary and cultural studies to methodological and theoretical inquiries. The PKN, which is equally to be envisioned as a Princeton-Humboldt-Oxford consortium, will construct and maintain an up-to-date research network establishing points of contact for Kafka scholars in at least the three countries involved.

I. Introduction to Kafka Study

Franz Kafka is a towering figure in German-language literature in the modern period. More secondary literature is published on Kafka worldwide than on any other writer except Shakespeare. Last year (2008), the 125th anniversary of Kafka's birth, saw a plethora of books and conferences devoted to this great writer. In our view, it would be most timely to capture this intellectual momentum in a near-permanent structure of intellectual exchange between three great universities—Princeton, Humboldt, and Oxford--on whose faculties are some of the most productive Kafka scholars now writing.

Kafka is extraordinary in the sense that for almost a century now he has attracted virtually endless interpretation. The power of his work to compel interpretation seems inexhaustible. In the words of the critic Theodor Adorno, "To read a story of Kafka's appears to require from the reader that he or she interpret it." This challenge has tended to produce answers involving vast quantities of information. The largeness of response is owed to the depth and

scope of Kafka's thought and knowledge. This small, seemingly introspective body of work turns out to have responded seismographically to a wide range of intellectual, cultural, political, and social real-world forces. Hence, interpretations that might be characterized as theological, economic, biographical, existential, gender-political, psychoanalytic, neo-Gnostic, Marxian, etc., have all proved rewarding in their own way.

This interpretive dimension has made Kafka a virtual center of modern cultural and literary study, especially in German and Comparative Literature and to some extent History and English and Judaic Studies. Scholars studying Kafka must heed this history of Kafka interpretations; not to do so is to risk repeating errors or boasting of achievements that knowledge of the tradition only mocks. In essence, Kafka the writer--who read voraciously and was able to read seven languages--has served as an integral sign of our knowledge of modernity.

Our general plan, then, at Princeton, Humboldt, and Oxford, is to organize research on Kafka's work, especially as it is enriched by the study of the culture of writing and reading he knew, with much emphasis on German-Jewish literature during his lifetime. We will be including in our stock of information not only the ways many disciplines of thought (psychology, sociology, medicine, theology, law) have "invaded" Kafka's work but the many ways that Kafka's work, fairly read, has in turn substantively entered the thought of these disciplines.

II. Program Plan

We envision a three-year plan from fall 2009 through June 2012. It will include, first of all, an intensive organizational and planning meeting of the various Chairs and participants, to be followed by two international workshops. The first workshop will be held at Princeton in spring 2010: its purpose is to review our accomplishments in the way of consolidating and additionally fostering our exchange, which will include assessing such digital resources as “Das virtuelle Kafka Bureau,” a project that sprang into life with support from Princeton. We envision this workshop as an occasion, too, for an exemplary exchange of materials on the special topic of “Kafka’s Late Style.” We envision a book-length publication of the results of this conference, which we believe will be greeted by Kafka scholars as a desideratum. A second major workshop with similar aims will be held at Oxford in spring 2012, with costs to be borne by sources from the three countries. Each of these workshops will bring together three distinct scholarly cohorts: senior and eminent scholars in the field, younger colleagues developing new approaches, and graduate students and post-docs at the beginning of research projects.

These workshops and the exchanges and publications that will undoubtedly arise from them will offer decisive opportunities for professional development for graduate students and younger colleagues in these various disciplines. As the scope of the consortium widens, graduate students and younger colleagues will have the opportunity to present and publish their work as part of an international community of scholars.

III. The Committee

At Princeton: Michael Jennings, Chair. Stanley Corngold and Joseph Vogl, Vice-Chairs.

Michael Jennings is the author of “Between Allegory and Aura: Walter Benjamin's 1938 Reading of Franz Kafka,” *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* (1989), nos. 1-2, 42-50 and “Eine gewaltige Erschütterung des Tradierten: Walter Benjamin's Political Recuperation of Franz Kafka,” in Stephen Taubeneck, ed., *Fictions of Culture: Essays in Honor of Walter Sokel* (Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 199-214. Stanley Corngold is author and editor of seven books on Kafka, including, most recently: *Lambent Traces: Franz Kafka* (Princeton University Press, 2004), *Kafka's Selected Stories* (Norton, 2007), and *Franz Kafka: the Office Writings* (Princeton University Press, 2009), recently awarded Honorable Mention for the PROSE awards from the Association of American Publishers. Joseph Vogl is the author of the full-length Kafka study *Ort der Gewalt. Kafkas literarische Ethik* (Fink, 1990) and many articles on Kafka; his most recent book, *Über das Zaudern* (On hesitation) (Diaphenes, 2007), contains a lengthy section on Kafka. A 4th year graduate student, Tim Attanucci, has demonstrated expertise in Kafka studies and will be writing a doctoral thesis with Joseph Vogl including work on Kafka's representation of professional life.

At Humboldt: Joseph Vogl, Chair. Professor Ernst Osterkamp, Professor for Modern German Literature, has published in depth and variety on many relevant topics in his field. Dr. Burkhardt Wolf, an assistant professor, has contributed several articles on Kafka's professional activity and office writings;

and Malte Kleinwort, the author of *Kafkas Verfahren* (Könighausen & Neumann, 2004), is at work on a larger study of Kafka under the direction of Professor Vogl.

At Oxford: Manfred Engel, Taylor Professor of German, and Ritchie Robertson, Professor of German, Co-Chairs. Manfred Engel is expert in modern German literature, has edited *Franz Kafka und die Weltliteratur* (Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 2006), and is at work editing, with Bernd Auerochs, the forthcoming *Kafka-Handbuch* (Metzler). Ritchie Robertson is expert in modern Austrian culture and is the author of two very important books on Kafka: *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature* (1985; German translation: *Kafka: Judentum, Gesellschaft, Literatur*, 1988) and *Kafka: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2004). The Oxford Center will also benefit from the participation of Professor Katrin Kohl, who is currently discussing with Oxford University Press the plan of editing a *Companion to Kafka* with some 40 contributors, as well as Dr. Carolin Duttlinger, University Lecturer in German and author of *Kafka and Photography* (Oxford, 2007). Ms. Emily Troscianko is one of several graduate students at Oxford working on Kafka; her projected doctoral thesis is titled “Seeing and Feeling in a Kafkaesque World” (directed by Prof. Kohl).

IV. Envisioned expenses:

General policy.

1. Participants in the Kafka Network visiting one of the three institutions involved in the Network pay their own transportation. The institution they visit provides hospitality (room, meals, etc.).

2. Members of the Network do not receive honoraria. (Honoraria are reserved for other specialists invited on occasion to workshops organized by the Network).

Specific program.

1. expenses for an organizational meeting in Oxford in **late spring 2009** for Jennings, Corngold, Vogl, and Kleinwort. This will be the first opportunity for members of the consortium to sit down together in one place and plan the Network in greatest detail. During this visit, Robertson and Engel will organize opportunities for the Princeton and Humboldt delegations to speak substantively on Kafka and confer with Oxford Kafka scholars. Oxford will provide housing and meals for a stay of three nights; Princeton will cover transportation costs for Corngold and Jennings.....

2. first presentation at Princeton of the workings and achievements of the Oxford Research Center by Professors Engel and Robertson in **fall term 2009**.

Three nights' lodging + per diem for food.....

3. first major workshop, including an international colloquium, at Princeton on "Kafkas Spätstil/ Kafka's Late Style" in **spring term 2010**. The Princeton contingent will consist of 3 faculty members + one graduate student. Princeton will provide 3 nights lodging and per diem for 2 Oxford scholars, 2 Humboldt scholars, and 3 invited guests from other European and North American institutions, including transportation for the latter and honoraria.

[The costs to be reckoned as follows: for a 3-day stay for 4 members of the network from Oxford & Humboldt and for 3 distinguished invited scholars, we

allow \$250/ day for lodging and \$100/ day for meals & incidentals =

Transportation for the 3 distinguished scholars @ \$1200 =

Honoraria @ \$500 for each of the 3 distinguished scholars =

Add on hospitality costs (coffee & banquet) =

Total.....

4. pre-publication costs for a book of the proceedings

5. **spring term 2111**: workshop. incl. conference at Humboldt (Berlin), with reports from Princeton members. Tentative Title: “Research Avenues into Kafka’s *Das Schloß/ The Castle*.” (This subject matter arises organically from the **spring 2010** Princeton conference on “Kafkas Spätstil/ Kafka’s Late Style”).

Transportation costs for 4 Princeton participants (including one graduate student) @ \$1200/per participant.....

6. pre-publication costs for a book of the proceedings.....

7. second major symposium as part of a final workshop in Oxford in **spring 2012**. The title of the symposium will emerge from joint consultation as the Network develops (Princeton will send 6 participants (including 2 Princeton graduate students) @ transportation costs of \$1200/ per participant....

8. pre-publication costs for a book of the proceedings.....

GRAND TOTAL for 3 years:

not finalized