Aus: Brecht, Bestolt:

Collected plays London: Methuen Drama
3. St. Joan of the

Stockyoods

Bol. 3: Lindbergh's Flight. The

Baden-Caden Lesson on

consent u-a. - 1397.

S. [21] - 43

Collaborators: SLATAN DUDOW, ELISABETH HAUPTMANN

Translator: GEOFFREY SKELTON

Characters:

THE AIRMEN [THE CRASHED AIRMAN and THE THREE MECHANICS]
THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS
SPEAKER
THREE CLOWNS
CHORUS
THE CROWD

Seven scenes or numbers from this work were set to music by Paul Hindemith for performance at the Baden-Baden music festival in 1929 under the title 'Lehrstück'. As in the parallel case of Lindbergh's Flight, the additional material introduced later by Brecht, but not set to music, is distinguished by use of a different typeface. Scene numbering is that of the final eleven-scene script; figures in brackets are those of Hindemith's score, where the order of scenes from 3 on is not the same as ours. Apart from scenes 7 (Instruction) and 8 (Examination) all other scenes after scene 3 were new, so that there is no music to them. And Brecht shifted some of the others, and made the clown scene become part of scene 3. Throughout, the Airman now became plural, a collective figure performed by four singers: three mechanics and one pilot.

On a platform corresponding in size to the number of participants the Chorus is positioned at the back. The orchestra is on the left. In the left foreground there is a table at which the conductor of the singers and instrumentalists, the Leader of the Chorus songs and the Speaker sit. The singers of the Airmen's (or Mechanics') parts sit at a desk in the right foreground. [The offstage orchestra should be as far away in the hall (gallery) as is possible.] To clarify the scene the wreckage of a plane can be placed on or beside the platform.

I(I)

THE STORY OF FLIGHT

[CHORUS] THE FOUR AIRMEN report: At that time, when humanity Began to know itself We fashioned carriages Of iron, wood and glass And in these we went flying. And that with a velocity that no hurricane Has been known to ever exceed. And such was our motor: Strong as a hundred horses, though Smaller than a single one. Ages long all things fell in a downward direction Except for the birds themselves. On the oldest of tablets No one has come on drawings Of human beings flying through the air. Only we, we have found the secret. Near the end of the second millennium, as we reckon time Our artless invention took wing Pointing out the possible Without letting us forget: [The unattainable.] The yet-to-be-attained.

THE CRASH

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS addresses the Crashed Airman:

Fly no longer.

Now no more do you have need of swiftness.

The lowest piece of earth

Is now high

Enough for you.

Lie there still and be

Content.

Not high above our heads

Not far from us

And no more in motion

But immobile

Tell us who you are.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN answer[s]:

I was sharing in the researches of my comrades.

As our airplanes grew ever better

We flew yet higher and higher

The oceans were soon mastered

And even the mountains humbled.

I had been seized with the fever

Of building cities, and of oil.

And all my thoughts were of machines and the

Attainment of ever greater speed.

I forgot in my exertions

My own name and identity

And in the urgency of my searching

Forgot the final goal I sought.

But I beg you

To come to me and

To give me water

And place a pillow under my head

And to assist me, for

I do not wish to die.

THE CHORUS turns to the Crowd:

Hearken: a man calls you

To assist him.

In the heavens

He went flying, and

Now to earth has fallen

And will not perish.

So he's calling to you

To assist him.

And here

We have a beaker of water and

A pillow.

Now you must tell us

Whether we should assist him.

[voices, repeated by the Crowd:

Why should we now assist him?

He has not given us assistance.]

THE CROWD answers the Chorus:

Yes.

CHORUS to the Crowd:

Have they assisted you?

CROWD:

No.

THE SPEAKER turns to the Crowd and says:

Across the body of the dying man the question is considered: whether men help each other.

3(2)

INQUIRY: DO MEN HELP EACH OTHER?

First Inquiry

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS comes forward:

One of our kind went sailing across the sea, and

There he discovered an unknown continent.

But many came after

And built there in that place mighty cities, with

Boundless effort and cunning.

CHORUS:

The price of bread did not get cheaper.

CROWD:

Tear up the pillow!]

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

One of our kind once made an engine in which the Pressure of steam made a wheel turn, and that was The mother of many more engines Yet many men laboured a lifetime to Make them perfect.

CHORUS:

The price of bread did not get cheaper.

[CROWD:

Empty the water out!]

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

Many of us have been drawn to meditate
On the passage of the earth through the solar system
And on a man's inner feelings and the laws
Governing all people, and the properties of air
And the fish in the ocean.
Very many

CHORUS:

The price of bread did not get cheaper.

Great things they have discovered.

Rather

Did poverty and need increase within our cities

And long years have passed since

Anyone knew what a man is.

For instance, while you flew above

Creatures like you crawled on earth

Nothing like men.

[CROWD:

Tear up the pillow, thrown the water away!

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

And so he is not to be assisted?

CHORUS:

Let us tear up the pillow And empty the water out.

The Speaker tears up the pillow and empties the water out.]

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS turns to the Crowd:

So does one man help another?

CROWD: No.

Second Inquiry

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS turns to the Crowd:

Look on our pictures and then say

One man helps another!

Twenty photographs showing how human beings slaughter one another in our times are shown.

THE CROWD shouts:

No man helps another.

Third Inquiry (6)

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS turns to the Crowd: Watch now our clowns' scene, in which

Some men help another man.

Three Clowns mount the platform. One of them, called Mr

Smith, is a giant. They speak very loudly.

CLOWN I: Lovely evening today, Mr Smith.

CLOWN 2: What do you say to the evening, Mr Smith?

sмітн: I don't find it at all lovely.

CLOWN I: Wouldn't you like to sit down, Mr Smith?

CLOWN 2: Here is a chair, Mr Smith. Why don't you speak to us any more?

CLOWN I: Can't you see? Mr Smith wants to gaze at the moon.

CLOWN 2: Tell me, why are you always crawling up Mr Smith's arse? You're inconveniencing Mr Smith.

CLOWN I: Because Mr Smith is so strong; that's why I crawl up his arse.

CLOWN 2: Me too.

CLOWN I: Please, Mr Smith, come and sit with us.

sмітн: I'm not feeling well today.

CLOWN I: Then we must try and cheer you up, Mr Smith.

The scene continues without music.

sмith: I don't think I can be cheered up any more. Pause. How does my complexion look?

CLOWN I: Rosy, Mr Smith, nice and rosy.

sмітн: Really? And I thought I was looking rather pale.

CLOWN I: How extraordinary! You say you think you are looking

rather pale. Now I come to look at you, I must say I think you do look a little pale.

CLOWN 2: In that case you should take a seat, Mr Smith, looking as vou do.

SMITH: I don't feel like sitting today.

CLOWN I: No, no - no sitting. Whatever you do, don't sit. Better remain standing.

SMITH: Why do you think I should remain standing?

CLOWN I to Clown 2: He mustn't sit down today, otherwise he'll never be able to get up again.

smith: Oh, God!

CLOWN I: See? He knows it himself. That's why Mr Smith prefers to remain standing.

sмітн: Do you know, I rather think I've got a pain in my left foot.

CLOWN I: Bad?

SMITH suffering: What?

CLOWN I: Is it hurting much?

SMITH: Yes, it's hurting a good deal.

CLOWN 2: That's what comes of standing.

SMITH: Shall I sit down, then?

CLOWN I: No, no, you mustn't. We must avoid that at all costs.

CLOWN 2: When your left foot starts hurting you, there's only one way: off with the left foot.

CLOWN I: And the sooner, the better.

SMITH: Well, if you think -CLOWN 2: No doubt about it.

They saw off his left foot. Music plays.

smith: A stick, please. They give him a stick.

CLOWN I: There. Can you stand better now, Mr Smith?

SMITH: Yes, on the left side. But you must give me back my foot. I wouldn't like to lose it.

CLOWN I: As you please - if you don't trust us.

CLOWN 2: We can go away, if you like.

SMITH: No, no. You'll have to stay now. I can't walk on my own. CLOWN I: Here's your foot.

Smith puts it under his arm.

SMITH: Now I've lost my stick.

CLOWN 2: But you've got your foot back.

Both laugh loudly.

sмітн: Now I really can't go on standing. The other leg is beginning to hurt.

CLOWN I: What did you expect?

sмітн: I don't want to put you to more inconvenience than is absolutely necessary, but without that stick I find things rather difficult.

CLOWN 2: By the time we pick up the stick, we can just as well saw the other leg off, if it's hurting you so much.

SMITH: Yes, maybe that would be better.

Music plays. They saw off his other leg. Smith falls down.

SMITH: Now I'll never be able to stand again.

CLOWN I: That's terrible, and just when we didn't want you to sit at any price.

SMITH: What?!

CLOWN 2: You can't stand up any more, Mr Smith.

SMITH: Don't say that. I can't bear it.

CLOWN 2: Say what?

SMITH: That.

CLOWN 2: That you can't stand up any more?

SMITH: Can't you keep your mouth shut?

CLOWN 2: No, Mr Smith, but what I can do is unscrew your left ear. Then you won't be able to hear me saying that you can't stand up any more.

SMITH: Yes, maybe that would be better.

They unscrew his left ear. Music.

SMITH to Clown 1: Now I can't hear you any more. Clown 2 goes over to the other side. My ear, please. Growing angry: And while you are about it, the other leg too. This is no way to treat a sick man. I demand the immediate return of all missing parts to their rightful owner, which is myself. They put the other leg under his arm and lay the ear in his lap. If you think you can play tricks with me, then you are utterly mistaken. - What's the matter with my arm?

CLOWN 2: It's because of all that useless junk you're carrying around with you.

sмітн softly: Yes, that'll be it. Couldn't you take it off me?

CLOWN 2: Yes, or we could take off the arm. That would certainly be better.

sмітн: Yes, please, if you think -

CLOWN 2: Of course.

They saw off his left arm. Music.

sмith: Thank you. It's kind of you to take so much trouble over me.

CLOWN I: There, Mr Smith, now you've got everything that belongs to you. Nobody will be able to rob you now.

They place all the amputated limbs in his lap. Smith examines them.

SMITH: Funny, my head's so full of unpleasant thoughts. To Clown 1: Say something nice, will you?

Story? There were these two men coming out of a pub, arguing furiously. Then they began to pelt each other with bits of horseshit. One of them got a lump right in the mouth. So he says: 'Right, that stays there now till the police arrive.'

Clown 2 laughs. Smith does not laugh.

sмітн: That's not a nice story. Can't you tell me something nice? I told you, my head's full of unpleasant thoughts.

CLOWN I: No, Mr Smith, I'm sorry, but apart from that story there is really nothing I could think of telling you.

CLOWN 2: But we could of course saw off the top of your head, to let those stupid thoughts out.

sмiтн: Yes, please, maybe that will help.

They saw off the upper part of his head. Music.

CLOWN I: How does that feel, Mr Smith? Is that easier?

sмith: Yes, much easier. Now I feel much, much easier. Only—my head feels rather cold.

CLOWN 2: Then why not put on your hat? Bawling: Hat on!

sмiтн: But I can't reach.

CLOWN I: Would you like your stick?

sмiтн: Yes, please. Fishing for his cap: Now I've dropped the stick. I can't reach my hat. And I'm feeling so terribly cold.

CLOWN 2: Maybe if we were to screw your head right off?

sмiтн: Well, I don't know.

CLOWN I: Oh, come on.

sмith: No, really - I just don't know anything any more.

CLOWN 2: All the more reason, then.

They screw off his head. Music. Smith falls over backwards.

sмітн: Stop! Someone, put a hand on my brow.

CLOWN I: Where?

sмiтн: Someone, hold my hand.

CLOWN I: Which one?

CLOWN 2: Are you feeling easier now, Mr Smith?

SMITH: No, I'm not. There's a stone sticking into my back.
CLOWN 2: Now really, Mr Smith, you can't have everything.
Both laugh loudly.

(Fnd of the Closur Num)

(End of the Clown Number.)

THE CROWD shouts:

No man helps another.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

Shall we tear up the pillow?

CROWD:

Yes.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

Shall we empty the water out?

CROWD:

Yes.

4

HELP REFUSED

CHORUS:

So they are not to be helped.

We tear up the pillow, we

Empty the water out.

The Speaker now tears up the pillow and empties the water out.

THE CROWD reads out:

Here for sure you have seen

Help of some kind

Given here and there within conditions

As yet indispensable, of

Force.

And still we advise you to meet cruel

Reality

Even more cruelly and

To lay aside the claim
Together with the conditions
That give rise to the claim. Thus
Not to count on help:
To refuse help requires force
To obtain help requires force also.
As long as force reigns help can be refused
When force no longer reigns, there is no need of help.
So you should not demand help, but abolish force.
Help and force form a single whole
And this whole must be altered.

5

CONSULTATION

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

Comrades, we

Are about to die.

THE THREE CRASHED MECHANICS:

We know we are about to die, but

Do you know it?

Listen, then:

You will die for certain.

Your life will be stripped from you

Your achievement wiped out

You die alone

No one else is concerned

You die finally

And so must we too.

6

CONTEMPLATION OF THE DEAD

THE SPEAKER:

Contemplate the dead!

Ten photographs of dead bodies are shown. The Speaker then

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says: 'Second contemplation of the dead', and the photographs are shown again.

After the contemplation of the dead, THE CRASHED AIRMEN begin shouting:

We cannot die!

[(4)]

LOOK ON DEATH

From the centre of the Chorus a dancer comes slowly forward and performs a dance of death. As the music ends, the Airman cries out:

AIRMAN:

I cannot die!

CHORUS to the Airman:]

7(5)

INSTRUCTION

THE CHORUS turns to the Crashed Airmen:

We have no help to give you.

Just a book, just a single thought, just a word of guidance

Can we give you on your way.

Die

But still seeking, seeking

And in seeking learn truth.

AIRMAN:

I have but little time:

Not enough for much learning.

CHORUS:

Though your time is short

Still it is enough

For the way of truth is easy.

The Speaker steps forward from the Chorus, a book in his hand. He goes to the Crashed Airmen, sits down and reads from the commentaries. THE SPEAKER reading:

1. He who takes something away will keep hold of something. And he from whom something has been taken will also keep hold of it. And he who keeps hold of something will have it taken away.

Whoever of us shall die, what does he lay aside? Surely he does not lay simply his table or his bed aside. He of us who dies knows this: I lay aside all that exists. I give away more than I have. Whoever dies lays aside the street which he knows, but also that which he does not know; the treasures that he has and also those that he does not have; poverty itself; his own hand.

Yet how shall he who is not practised lift up a stone? How shall he lift up a large stone? How shall he who has not learned to lay aside, lay aside his table or - even more - lay aside everything that he has and everything that he does not have? The street which he knows, and also that which he does not know; the treasures that he has and also those that he does not have; poverty itself; his own hand?

[AIRMAN sings:

So I learn to see:

What I have done was wrong.

Now I learn to see that a man

Must lie prostrate and not strive

For heights, nor depths, nor yet velocity.

THE SPEAKER reading:]

2. When the thinking man was overtaken by a great storm, he was seated in a large carriage, taking up much room. The first thing that he did was to descend from his carriage. The second was to take off his cloak. The third thing was that he laid himself down on the ground. Thus he conquered the storm in his smallest dimension.

AIRMAN addresses the Speaker:

Did he thus outlast the storm?

[CHORUS and CROWD] THE SPEAKER:

In his smallest dimension he outlasted the storm.

THE CRASHED AIRMEN:

In his smallest dimension he outlasted the storm.

THE SPEAKER continues:

3. Encouraging a fellow-being to face up to his death, the thinking man bade him lay his goods aside. When he had laid them all aside, there remained to him only his life. Lay yet more aside, said the thinking man.

[CHORUS and CROWD:

Lay yet more aside.

THE SPEAKER continues:

4. When the thinking man conquered the storm, he did so because he recognised the storm and agreed to it. Thus, if you wish to conquer death, you may conquer it by recognising death and agreeing to it. But let whoever has the wish to agree hold on to his poverty. Let him not cling to objects. For objects can be taken away, and then there is no agreement. Similarly, let him not cling to life. For life can be taken away, and then there is no agreement. Nor should he cling to his thoughts. For thoughts too can be taken away, and there too there is then no agreement.

8 (7)

EXAMINATION

The Chorus examines the Airmen in the presence of the Crowd.

CHORUS:

How high then were you flying? [AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

Unimaginably high was I flying. CHORUS:

How high then were you flying? [AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

Over twelve thousand feet was I flying.

CHORUS:

How high then were you flying? [AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS: Fairly high was I flying.

CHORUS:

How high then were you flying?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

I raised myself but little over the earth's surface.

[CROWD] THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS turns to the Crowd: He raised himself but little above the earth's surface.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

I flew unimaginably high.

CHORUS:

And he flew unimaginably high.

ii

CHORUS:

Was your deed acclaimed?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

No, it was not enough acclaimed.

CHORUS:

Was your deed acclaimed?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

It was acclaimed.

CHORUS:

Was your deed acclaimed?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

It was enough acclaimed.

CHORUS:

Was your deed acclaimed?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

I for my deed was vastly acclaimed.

[CROWD] THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS to the Crowd:

For his deed he was vastly acclaimed.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

I was not enough acclaimed.

CHORUS:

And he was not enough acclaimed.

iii

CHORUS:

Who are you?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

We are those who have [I am he who has] flown across the

CHORUS:

Who are you?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

We are ones [I am the one] like yourselves.

CHORUS:

Who are you?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

I am no one.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS to the Crowd:

They are no one.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

I am Charles Nungesser.

CHORUS:

And he is Charles Nungesser.

CHORUS:

Who waits for you now?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

Many over the sea wait for us [me] now.

CHORUS:

Who waits for you now?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

Our fathers [My father] and our mothers [my mother] are awaiting us [me] now.

CHORUS:

Who waits for you now?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

No one is waiting now.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS to the Crowd:

[He is no one, and] no one waits for him now.

CHORUS:

Who therefore dies when you die?

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[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

We [He] whose deed was acclaimed too much.

CHORUS:

Who therefore dies when you die?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

We [He] who raised ourselves [himself] but little from the ground.

CHORUS:

Who therefore dies when you die?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

We [He] whom no one waits for.

CHORUS:

Who therefore dies when you die?

[AIRMAN] THE THREE MECHANICS:

No one.

CHORUS:

Now you [he] have [has] seen it:

No one dies when he dies.

[CROWD:

Now he has seen it:

No one dies when he dies.

CHORUS:

Now is his smallest dimension attained.

CROWD:]

Now is their [his] smallest dimension attained.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

But I with my flight

Reached my greatest dimension.

However high I flew, none flew

Higher.

I was not enough acclaimed, I

Cannot be acclaimed enough

I flew for nothing and for nobody.

I flew for flying's sake.

No one awaits me, I

Do not fly towards you, I

Fly away from you, I

Shall never die.

FAME AND DISPOSSESSION

CHORUS:

But now

Show what you have achieved.

For only

Achievement is real.

So now lay aside the engine

Wings and undercarriage, everything

With which you flew and

Together made.

Lay it aside.

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

I will not lay it aside

What is

The aircraft without the airman?

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

Take it!

The aircraft is carried off to the opposite corner of the stage by the Crashed Airman. During the dispossession, the CHORUS acclaim

the Crashed Airmen:

Rise up, airmen, you have changed the earthly laws.

Ages long all things fell in a downward direction

Except for the birds themselves.

On the oldest of tablets

No one has come on drawings

Of human beings flying through the air.

Only you found the secret.

Near the end of the second millennium, as we reckon time.

THE THREE CRASHED MECHANICS suddenly point to the Crashed Airman:

Look, what is that?

THE LEADER quickly, to the Chorus:

Begin the 'Completely Unrecognisable'.

CHORUS groups around the Crashed Airman:

Completely unrecognisable to us

Has now become the face

ls no longer human.

Die now, you No-Longer-Man!

THE CRASHED AIRMAN:

I cannot die.

THE THREE MECHANICS:

Man, you have dropped out of the flow.

Man, you were never in the flow.

You are too big, you are too rich

You are too self-contained.

That is why you cannot die.

CHORUS:

But

He who cannot die

Will yet die.

He who cannot swim

Will yet swim.

Was he. .
THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

Had need of him: for such

This

Of him who

Needed us as we

Holder of a function

Though but self-assumed

Took from us what he needed, and

Denied us that of which we had need.

Thus his face

Was extinguished with his function:

He had but one.

Four members of the Chorus discuss him over his body.

THE FIRST:

If he was here -

THE SECOND:

He was here.

THE FIRST:

What was he?

THE SECOND:

He was no one.

THE THIRD:

Had he been someone -

THE FOURTH:

He was no one.

THE THIRD:

How did one bring him into sight?

THE FOURTH:

By giving him something to do.

ALL FOUR:

By calling on him he comes into existence.

When one changes him he is there.

Who needs him recognises him.

Who finds him useful enlarges him.

THE SECOND:

And still he is no one.

CHORUS all together, to the Crowd:

What lies there functionless

10(3)

THE CHORUS SPEAKS TO THE CRASHED AIRMAN

CHORUS:

One of our kind
In his body, face and his thinking
To us all akin
Must now take leave of us, for
He has been branded overnight and
Since this morning has his breath been stinking.
See how his flesh decays, and his face which
Once we knew, is now strange to us.
Come, speak to us now, we await
From the usual place the sound of your voice. Speak!

He speaks not. Not a word from His mouth. Be not afraid, for you Must go now. Go at once! Do not look round, go Away from us.

AGREEMENT

CHORUS addressing the Three Mechanics:

You, however, who have shown you agree to the flow of things

Do not sink back into the void.

Do not dissolve like salt in water, but

Dying

Rise to your death

As you worked at your work

By revolutionising a revolution.

So in your dying do not

Observe death's demands

But accept from us the charge

To rebuild our aircraft.

Begin!

So as to fly for us

To the place where we have need of you

And at the necessary time. For

We call on you

To march with us, and with us

To change not only

An earthly law, but

The basic law

Accepting that all must be altered

The world and all mankind

Above all, the disorder

Of human classes because there are two kinds of people

Exploitation and ignorance.

THE THREE MECHANICS:

We agree to the alteration.

CHORUS:

And we request you:

Alter our engine and improve it.

Also increase safety and speed

And in the swifter outset do not forget the goal.

THE THREE MECHANICS:

We improve engines, safety and

Speed.

CHORUS:

Then lay them aside.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

March on!

CHORUS:

Having improved the world, then

Improve the improved world.

Lay it aside.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

March on!

CHORUS:

If in improving the world you have fulfilled truth, then

Fulfil this fulfilled truth.

Lay it aside!

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

March on!

CHORUS:

In altering the world, alter yourselves!

Lay yourselves aside!

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS:

March on!