



Inside the Skeleton
of the Whale

ODIN TEATRET

Inside the Skeleton of the Whale

Variation over 'Before The Law' by Franz Kafka

Kafka's parable 'Before the Law' tells of a man from the country who, out of subjection and obedience, does not dare to pass through the Door of the Law.

Into this theme the performance weaves metaphysical and nihilistic urges, subterranean plots and black apocryphal versions of the Holy Books. Despair disguises itself as hope, and spiritual extremism assumes an appearance of mocking scepticism. The public space of the theatre turns into a paradoxical space of shared solitude.

The title refers to a verse of the Gospel according to Matthew: Our evil and adulterous generation demands a sign. But no sign will be given to us, except for the sign of Jonas.

Inside the Skeleton of the Whale

JULIA When you will come into this world,
 seven times you will be born.
 Once in a burning morgue,
 once under icy waters,
 once in an endless sea of corn,
 once in an empty monastery,
 once in a mental hospital,
 once among the pigs in a farmyard.
 Six times you will let out a cry,
 but what can you do?
 You will be the seventh.

JULIA AND THE ACTORS SING IN CHORUS

 Before the Law stands a Doorkeeper.
 To this Doorkeeper there comes a Man from
 the country, and prays for admittance to the
 Law. But the Doorkeeper says
 that he cannot grant admittance at the moment.
 The man asks if he will be allowed in later.
 "It is possible," says the Doorkeeper,
 "but not at the moment".

JULIA AND THE ACTORS SING IN CHORUS

 Before the Law stands a Doorkeeper. To this
 Doorkeeper there comes a Man from the
 country, and prays for admittance to the Law.

ALL SING If you can afford to write verses,
seven poets will go to work.
One builds a city of marble,
one is born in deep sleep,
one calls the Word by name,
one measures the heavens and nods,
one gambles away his soul,
one dissects a live rat;
four scientists and two bold warriors.
You will be the seventh.

DONALD Look, I follow my own road,
at the pace of a free man, with no sect, no tribe,
to the song of the sand-glass,
under an empty sky, while I whistle to
my people, whistle to my people of unbelievers.

KAI Yo pregunto a los presentes
si no se han puesto a pensar
que esta tierra es de nosotros
y no del que tenga más.
A desalambrar, a desalambrar,
que la tierra es nuestra, es tuya y de aquel,
de Pedro y María, de Juan y José,
de Pedro y María, de Juan y José.

JULIA He asks you, who are present here,
if you have ever thought that this land
belongs to you and not to us
who already have more than enough.

Cut the barbed wire, tear down the fences
because the land is yours, it belongs to you
and to the others. It belongs to Peter and
to Mary, to John and to Joseph.

IBEN Five are the Gospels,
 and the fifth is incomplete.
 We are all of us writing it with our deeds
 and each generation adds another word.
 The cloud is in the ocean,
 the fire is in the timber.
 Recognise what is in your sight
 and it will reveal to you what is hidden.

I am the stone rejected by the builders.
I am the corner stone.

ROBERTA Show them no mercy.

IBEN He has not come to spread peace.
 Show them no mercy.
 He has come to spread swords.
 He has come to spread fire, war.
 Five people will be in one house:
 three against two and two against three.
 Father against son and son against father.
 And they will dwell in solitude. Alone.
 Show them no mercy.

ROBERTA Maran Ata!
 The Lord is coming.

IBEN He is coming to spread fire, blood, swords, war.
Glory to the day,
when man will stop hating his neighbour
and will hate himself.

JULIA Glory to the day when all things
will have lost their coherence.

ROBERTA A child was born in Jerusalem.
He will destroy Bethlehem.

IBEN Glory to the day when all things will lose
their coherence, when there will no longer be
a relationship between a man and his face,
between the question and the answer.

JULIA Glory to the day when there will no longer be
a relationship between a man and his face,
between the question and the answer.

IBEN One goes out of one door in order
to enter by another.
It is the door which chooses,
not the person who enters.

ROBERTA Most things in the world,
as long as their inner parts are hidden,
stand upright and live. If their insides are
revealed, they die. In fact, as long as
a human being's viscera are hidden, it is alive.
But if its viscera are exposed and come out,

it dies. So also with a tree: while its roots are hidden, it flowers and grows, but if its roots are exposed, the tree dries up.

So it is with everything in the world, both that which is hidden and that which is shown.

DONALD There is no need for haste.
Our time has still not come.

JULIA AND THE ACTORS SING IN CHORUS

The Man from the country thinks that the Law should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone. But as he takes a closer look at the Doorkeeper, he decides that it is better to wait until he gets permission to enter.

The Doorkeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down at one side of the door.

There he sits for days and years.

DONALD Our generation has teeth that are like swords,
and jaws that are like knives to devour the poor
and the needy of the earth.

KAI Yo pregunto si en la tierra
nunca habrá pensado usted
que si las manos son nuestras
es nuestro lo que nos den.
A desalambrar, a desalambrar,
que la tierra es nuestra, es tuya y de aquel,
de Pedro y María, de Juan ...

- JULIA He wonders if you have ever asked yourselves
 what your work on earth is worth,
 and if the hands are yours,
 then what they do is also yours.
- JAN SINGS He fought against injustice,
 with the Law in his hand.
 He fought for peace.
 Corn was his name and one day
 he went under ground.
- IBEN Do you think that future generations
 will be better?
- JAN No, they will be worse.
- ROBERTA Let the wind nourish you,
 follow the birds in their flight.
- IBEN In the beginning was the Idea
 and the Idea was with God
 and the Idea was God.
 God is an eater of human beings:
 so human beings are sacrificed to God.
 Who is bravest? The mother who abandons her
 home or the wolf who comes into the village?
 The youth who confronts death or the old man
 who closes his eyes in sleep?
 He who goes away or he who returns?
- ROBERTA Who is bravest? The one who kills a tiger

IBEN or the one who tames it?
Do you know where God lives?
He lives there where one lets Him in.
It is the sword which decides,
not the human being.

ROBERTA I do not desire your heaven.
I desire myself.

JAN AND KAI SING
Nu er det længe side.

IBEN At the time of sowing, learn.
At the time of harvest, teach.
In wintertime enjoy yourself.

ROBERTA Blessed are the mourners,
for they will take vengeance.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will kill without cruelty.

IBEN SINGS Be naked, my soul and quiet.
This is the moment you and I have been waiting
for so impatiently. This is the moment
which will tear us from each other
and bring us home to ourselves.

JULIA Before the Law stands a Doorkeeper.

JULIA AND THE ACTORS SING IN CHORUS
The Man from the country makes many

attempts to be admitted to the Law. The man sacrifices everything he has however valuable, to bribe the Doorkeeper. The Doorkeeper accepts everything, but always with the remark: "I am only taking it to keep you from thinking, you have omitted anything".

DONALD The sweat makes furrows in my face,
I make furrows in the earth,
here where everything will soon come
to an end, and everything will begin again.

ROBERTA Come back and take me,
joy and perfume of my life.

DONALD If you know the way, you don't need eyes.
Oh, my body, remember how you were loved,
remember how the voices trembled with
desire for you. Remember, oh, my body,
remember. Get up and come back to life!

IBEN There are stories which make you fall asleep...

JAN ... and stories which wake people up.

DONALD Please, do not insist, woman.
Our time has not yet come.

JULIA It is written: the messenger is the message.

DONALD Seek! Seek for the uselessness of seeking,

- IBEN not for the usefullness of finding.
Which is more difficult?
To wake a man from the dead
or to kill one who is alive?
- ROBERTA Blessed are the pure, for they are
the dwelling place of temptation.
- JAN Blessed are the men of peace,
for they will butcher in the name of peace.
- DONALD Seed! Sand! I cast the seed on the sand
and turn it into fruitful land.
Talita kum.
- IBEN The trace of an eagle in the air,
the trace of a snake upon a rock,
the trace of a ship in the sea:
these are three difficult things to grasp.
- ROBERTA But the most difficult are the traces of
a human being who seeks himself.
- DONALD We are the light of the world:
let's hide ourselves.
- IBEN With mud, bricks are made.
With linen, sheets are made.
With grain, bread is made.
With grapes, wine is made.

- ROBERTA But what is made with human beings?
IBEN High and low, light and shadow,
movement and stillness are like brothers.
They cannot be separated.
- There once was a father who was eating bread.
His son asked him for the bread. The father
gave his son a stone and continued to eat.
- ROBERTA Which of you, when your son asks for bread,
will give him a stone?
- IBEN Then the father began to eat a fish.
His son asked him for the fish. The father
took out a snake and gave it to his son.
This was the first thing the father taught his
hungry son: to kill the serpent.
- ROBERTA The son used the stone to kill the snake.
- IBEN The son used the stone to kill the snake.
This was the first thing the father taught his
hungry son: to kill the snake.
- JAN Look down into the deep well over there.
I will call the names of two flowers
and you will see their future.
- IBEN The son who had learned to kill the snake
did not thus become less hungry.
Then the father took an egg. The starving son

did not ask this time: he clutched the stone and rushed at his father.

"Take it", the father said, giving him the egg out of which appeared the poisonous tail of a scorpion. So the son who had learned to kill, also learned to die and to save his father.

ROBERTA May your kingdom come.
The kingdom is like the shepherd who had one hundred sheep.
The biggest one went astray. The shepherd left the ninety-nine and looked for the one, until he found it. Then he said to it: "I love you more than the ninety-nine".
And slit its throat.

IBEN It was not I who sowed you,
not I who trampled you.
It was not I who mowed you,
not I who threshed you.
It was not I who kneaded you,
not I who burned you.

ROBERTA When he found it he said to it:
"I love you more than the ninety nine".
And he slit its throat. He slit its throat!
The kingdom is like a shepherd who had one hundred sheep.

JULIA For every enemy that you will meet
he will have met seven.

One who starts his day of rest,
one who ends his day at work,
one who teaches the poor for free,
one is thrown into the deepest water,
one is the seed that grows into a forest,
one is protected by a furious father.
But no tricks or deceptions will help you.
You will be the seventh.

ALL SING Oh my son, white and vermillion

DONALD Look, I follow my own road at the pace
of a free man, with no sect, no tribe, to the song
of the sand-glass, under an empty sky,
while I whistle to my people,
whistle to my people of unbelievers.

JULIA AND THE ACTORS SING IN CHORUS

During these many years the man fixes
his attention almost continuously at the
Doorkeeper. He curses his bad luck, in his early
years, loudly and boldly; later as he grows old,
he only grumbles to himself. He becomes
childish. Now he has not very long to live.

IBEN Everyone strives to reach the Law.
How comes that during all these years
no one else has asked for permission to enter?

JULIA No one else could ever be admitted here,
since this door was made only for you.

I am now going to shut it.
There is a way of dying which is heavy, like
hoisting a sail. And there is a way of dying
which is light, like pulling a hair out of milk
with two fingers. This is death in a kiss.
Lord, grant my prayer.

When everything written will have been done,
seven will go together to the grave.
One is cradled by a loving bosom,
one reaches out to the breast of a virgin,
one throws away the empty goblet,
one incites the poor to victory,
one works as though possessed,
one only stares tacitly at the moon.
You walk under the tombstone of the world.
You will be the seventh.

TAGE

Our evil and adulterous generation demands
a sign. But no sign will be given to us,
except for the sign of Jonas.

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