

DOCTOR Lectures WOYZECK

The DOCTOR enters with a cat in a basket and ascends them to survey the audience, which he addresses as well as his assembled students.

DOCTOR:

Gentlemen, here I am aloft like David when he spied Bathsheba, naked; but all I see from here is the girl's boarding school and their frilly knickers hanging out to dry.

Now, we come to the important question of the relation between subject and object.

If we take one of those creatures in whom, gentlemen, the capacity of the divine for self-affirmation most clearly manifests itself and we examine its relation to space, the earth and the planetary universe. If, gentlemen, I take this cat, and I throw it out of the window - what will be its instinctive behaviour relative to its *centrum graviationis*?

Woyzeck! - Woyzeck!!

He runs forwards as the DOCTOR throws the cat at him, which he catches.

WOYZECK:

Doctor, it's trying to bite me!

DOCTOR:

And look at you, tenderly holding it like your grandmother. Fool.

WOYZECK:

I'm getting the shakes, Doctor.

DOCTOR:

Animals have no scientific instincts. - Therefore, I shall use another demonstration subject.

Clicks his fingers. WOYZECK brings in a box and stands on it.

Observe, gentlemen. For three months this man has eaten nothing but peas. Note the effect, it's clearly apparent. The pulse is irregular, thready. And the eyes: note the peculiarity of the eyes.

WOYZECK:

Doctor - everything's going dark on me again.

Teeters, almost falling.

DOCTOR:

Cheer up, Woyzeck. Just a few more days and it'll all be over.

The effect is palpable, gentlemen, palpable. Another case of progressive donkey-fication resulting from being brought up by women and the use of German as a *second* language!

You're losing your hair. Has your mother been pulling it out for keepsakes? It's become so thin, lately? Ah, no, it's the peas, gentlemen, the peas.

Well, we must conclude.

GRANDMA:

All right, Grandma'll tell you a story. Then home to bed. Sit, sit.

(they do.)

Once upon a time there was a poor little boy who had no father and mother; everything was dead and there was no-one left in the whole world.

The little boy searched everywhere. All day and all night. But everyone and everything was quite dead.

And since there was no-one left on earth he decided to go up to heaven where the moon shone down so kind. But when he got to the moon it was a dirty lump of rotten wood.

Then he went to the sun, but when he got there it was a withered-up sunflower. And when he got to the stars, they were little spangled midges stuck there, like flies on a spider's web.

So, he went back to the earth, but he saw that the earth was nothing but an overturned piss-pot.

He was completely alone, and he sat down and cried. He's sitting there still, all alone. The end.

Right off you go, before your mothers start crying for you.

JOURNEYMEN

*The tavern. Music. **The JOURNEYMEN** are drunk. There are musicians in the Tavern, playing a song - the patrons join in on this. Interrupted by the drunken journeymen.*

1st JOURNEYMAN (Johann):

I've got a shirt on, but it isn't mine
My soul is stinking with brandy wine

2nd JOURNEYMAN (Christian):

My soul *is*....my soul *is* stinking with brandy wine. Even money rots.

1st JOURNEYMAN (Johann):

Why is the world so beautiful? I could fill a barrel with tears at the sadness of it.

2nd JOURNEYMAN (Christian):

Brother. - I wish our noses were both bottles; we could empty them down one another's throats.

1st JOURNEYMAN (Johann):

Brethren - think now upon The Wanderer, who stands poised beside the stream of time and communes with himself, receiving the wisdom of God and saying, 'Wherefore is man? Wherefore is man?'

2nd JOURNEYMAN (Christian):

Verily, verily I say to you, how should the farmer, the doctor, the shoemaker live if God had not created man? How should the tailor ply his trade, if God had not implanted shame in the human breast? Or the soldier his, if man had not been equipped with the need for self destruction?

1st JOURNEYMAN (Johann):

Yes, it's all very fine, very wonderful, very beautiful in God's perfect plan - but the earth's corrupt, man is vain. Even money rots and decays.

2nd JOURNEYMAN (Christian):

So, in conclusion, brothers and sisters - let's piss on the Star of David and a Jew will die!

MARIE and the DRUM-MAJOR

DRUM MAJOR:

Come on, Marie.

MARIE:

Show me again, go around the room.

(He reproduces his parade ground march.)

The chest of an ox, with fur like a lion's mane. There's not another man like you. You make me proud to be a woman.

DRUM-MAJOR:

You should see me Sundays with my plume and gauntlets. That's really something. 'He's my idea of a soldier,' the prince always says, 'A real man.'

MARIE:

Does he now?

(Goes up to him, teasing.)

A real man...?

As he responds her mood changes and she moves away.

DRUM-MAJOR:

And you're a real woman. I'm going to fill your belly full of drum-majors, sire a whole damn stable of them. Come on.

Grabs her. She struggles, violently.

MARIE:

Let me go!

DRUM-MAJOR:

Wild, eh? Come on then, animal.

MARIE:

Just you dare.

DRUM-MAJOR:

Devil in you, isn't there? I can see it in your eyes.

MARIE (*relaxes and gives in*):

What does it matter anyway? It's all one.

MARIE AND WOYZECK

MARIE:

Franz? Come inside.

WOYZECK:

Can't. Got to go to work.

MARIE:

For the Captain? Again?

WOYZECK:

Yes.

MARIE:

What's the matter, Franz? You look so ill.

WOYZECK:

There was something in the woods.... Isn't it written, "There arose a smoke out of the pit, like the smoke of a great oven"? What does it mean?

MARIE:

Franz?

WOYZECK:

Got to go. See you at the fair this evening.
(*He leaves.*)

MARIE:

That man! So haunted by everything. He didn't even stop to look at his own little baby. Or me. Thinking. Thinking. He'll go mad with all this thinking one of these days.

.....

MARIE:

He gave your daddy an order and he had to go, just like that.

She examines in a mirror the ear-rings she is wearing.

Look how they catch the light. I wonder what they are?

She bends over towards the crib.

Go back to sleep, baby, shut your eyes tight Tighter. That's it. Now you keep still or else the sandman will come and get you. Here comes the sandman, skittering across the wall. Keep your eyes closed! If he looks in them, you'll go blind.

(back to the mirror)

They must be gold!

An old crack in the back wall of a corner to live in and a bit of broken glass to see with, that's enough for the likes of us. My mouth's as red as any lady's, though, for all her full-length mirrors and rows of fine gentlemen kissing her hand. And I'm just another poor girl.

WOYZECK *enters, MARIE starts and covers her ears.*

WOYZECK:

What's that?

MARIE:

Nothing.

WOYZECK:

Under your fingers - shining.

MARIE:

An ear-ring. I found it.

WOYZECK:

I never found that kind of nothing. Two at once, too.

MARIE:

So? What does that make me?

WOYZECK:

Nothing, Marie.

(checks on the baby)

Look at him. Shiny drops, all over his forehead. - Nothing but work under the sun for us poor folk; we even sweat in our sleep.

Here's some more money, Marie. My pay from the Captain and the extra from the Doctor.

MARIE:

God bless you, Franz.

WOYZECK:

Got to go back to the barracks.

(He goes out.)

.....
WOYZECK:

I can't see it. Why can't I see it? It should show! You should be able to see it, get hold of it with your hands!

MARIE:

Franz? What's the matter? You're raving.

WOYZECK:

Did he stand here? - Did he stand there? Then close to you?

MARIE:

What're you talking about?

WOYZECK:

And your lips are so beautiful. Such a sin. A swollen festering sin. It reeks to heaven, stinking the angels out. Your mouth's so red, Marie. Why're there no blisters on it? As beautiful as sin. Can mortal sin be beautiful?

MARIE:

You're delirious.

WOYZECK:

Did he stand here?! Did he stand there?! Did he lie here? I saw him!!

MARIE:

You can see lots of things, with two eyes when the sun shines.

WOYZECK (*goes to strike her*):

Slut!!

MARIE:

Don't touch me, Franz! I'd rather have a knife in me than your hands on me.

From the age of ten, my father didn't dare touch me if I looked him in the face.
And you won't now.

.....

MARIE:

The town's back that way. It's getting dark.

WOYZECK:

Stay a bit.

MARIE:

We've walked for miles. And I've got to get back to the baby.

WOYZECK:

You won't get sore feet from walking .

MARIE:

What're you on about?

WOYZECK:

D'you know how long it's been for us, Marie?

MARIE:

Two years this Pentecost.

WOYZECK:

D'you know how much longer it's going to last?

MARIE:

I've got to go, there's supper to get.

WOYZECK:

Are you cold, Marie?

(grabs her roughly)

No, you're warm! And you've got hot lips, hot breath, hot as coals! Hot whore's breath! Even so, I'd give heaven to kiss them again.

(he lets her go)

When we're really cold, then we don't feel the weather any more. You won't feel the damp in the morning.

MARIE:

What do you mean?

WOYZECK:

Nothing.

A silence.

The moon's up. 'All red. Like a bloody knife. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day.

MARIE:

What d'you mean? - Franz, you're so pale.

He draws the knife.

No, Franz! Merciful God. Help! Help!

He covers her mouth and stabs her three times.

WOYZECK:

Why don't you die? - Die, die!!

MARIE:

Franz?

(she gets up, notices the pile of belongings)

Oh Franz!

(goes and picks them up, puts them away, but keeps the bible. She opens the bible, turns the papers, finds the icon and reads from the page it's at)

' . . who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.'

Looks across at the crucifix.

Don't look at me, Lord.

She turns to another page.

'And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery... set her in the midst... He said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.'

Tries to hold her hands together in prayer.

I can't. - Can't. Dear God, don't take everything, at least let me pray.

Comes back to the Bible

' . . And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with an ointment.'

Strikes herself on the breast.

Oh my Lord, my Lord! If only I could anoint your feet.

SHOWMAN and his HORSE

SHOWMAN:

Roll up, ladies and gentlemen! Come and see a *minkey* walking upright like a man! He wears a coat, and trousers, and carries a sword. Art improving on nature: our *minkey's* a soldier! Oh yes! - Not that that's much improvement. Lowest form of animal life in fact.

No? Come and see the *h-astronomical* horse then. Admired by all the crowned heads of Europe. Tells you anything you like - how old you are, how many children you've got, what your illnesses are, when you're gonna die.

Hurry now, the show's just opening! Hurry now, roll up-roll up!

The tarpaulin is dropped revealing a horse, which is led forward by the Showman.

Observe: the unique phenomenon of the *h-astronomical* horse. Show your paces now, show them your horse sense.

Puts humanity to shame, this animal - four hooves and he's a member of all the learn-ed societies and, what's more, a professor at our state university; where he teaches the students riding and kicking. Now then, let's see this horse-sense at work - Is there an ass in this learned company?

The HORSE shakes its head responsively.

Remarkable. Reverse donkey-fication. This is no mute beast, I tell you; this is a person, a human being, an animalised human being - but still an animal.

The HORSE defecates and/or knocks off the barker's hat (possibly both).

Ah, that's it. Show me up. This animal's still in a state of nature, you see, Look here, how about this for the power of reason? This *hastronomical* horse can tell these here gentlemen what time it is.

(The HORSE stamps its foot to tell the time)

Eight o'clock! I ask you, is that not truly remarkable?! Ladies and gentlemen, this astonishing feat concludes the performance. Thanking you.

(collects coins in his hat)

WOYZECK AND ANDRES 1

The woods. **ANDRES** is splitting sticks and whistling the tune of his song. A perfect summer's day - for Andres. **WOYZECK** seems to be experiencing a different kind of day - dark, stormy, ominous. He's collecting wood for the Captain.

WOYZECK:

The place is cursed.

You see that light strip on the grass there, where the toadstools are so thick? A head rolls down it every evening.

There was a man picked it up once, he thought it was a hedgehog. Three days and nights after, he was lying in his coffin.

(Whispers.)

It was the Radicalised Extremists, Andres, I'm sure of it, the Extremists! They're not like us normal people. They hate us.

ANDRES: *(sings a folk song, unfazed).*

A pair of hares were sitting there

Nibbling the green, green grass . . .

WOYZECK:

Quiet!

Can you hear it, Andres? Can you hear it?

Something moving.

ANDRES: *(sings, unfazed).*

Nibbling the green, green grass

Until the ground was bare.

WOYZECK:

Moving behind me, beneath me -

(He squats and pats the ground, finds the spot, stands and stomps the ground)

Listen; it's hollow. It's all hollow under there. - It's them - They're underneath us.

ANDRES: *(unfazed)*

Oh, it's scary, that's what it is. Enough to turn you mad.

WOYZECK:

So strange. Makes you hold your breath.

(Woyzeck freezes - stares out across the landscape)

ANDRES:

What?

WOYZECK:

Andres! How bright! It's all glowing above the town, glowing . . . A fire raging in the sky, in the hands of an angel. A deafening noise here below like drums and trumpets.

It's coming closer! Closer! Behind you!...

(pause, nothing happens)

ANDRES:

. . . Woyzeck? Can you hear it? Is it still coming?

WOYZECK: *(whispers)*

Silence, nothing but silence; as if the world was dead.

(sfx: distant sound of an actual military trumpet, followed by the beating of a single drum)

ANDRES: *(resignedly)*

The drums are going, listen. We've got to get back.

Woyzeck exits rapidly, followed by a casual Andres

WOYZECK AND CAPTAIN

The **CAPTAIN** on his chair awaiting a shave. (In this, the Captain pronounces Woyzeck as "Woit-chek"). **WOYZECK** comes to him. Woyzeck lathers him up rapidly, clumsily, and is about to start with the blade.

CAPTAIN:

Slowly, Woyzeck, take it slowly. One thing *after* another. You make me feel quite dizzy. What am I supposed to do with the ten minutes you save rushing that way? What use are they to me?

(**WOYZECK** starts shaving him with an open razor, slowly and carefully, almost hypnotically.)

Better.

Think about it, Woyzeck; you've got a good thirty years left. Thirty years. That makes three hundred and sixty months - and all the days, hours, and minutes! What are you going to do with all that time? Eh? Space it out a bit, Woyzeck. Pace yourself.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN.

The thought of eternity - it makes me worried about the world. It's some business, Woyzeck, some business! Eternity . . . is eternity . . . is eternity - even you can see that. But it's also *not* eternity, it's a single moment, Woyzeck, yes, in the twinkling of an eye. It's frightening, how the world spins round in a day. What a waste of time! Where will it all end? The mere sight of a millwheel depresses me so.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

You always look so hunted! A good man doesn't look like that, Woyzeck, not a decent man with a clear conscience.

...Say something, Woyzeck. How's the weather today?

WOYZECK:

Bad, sir. Windy.

CAPTAIN:

There's a real wind out there, I can feel it, as if a mouse was running up and down my back...

(Slyly.) I should say it was a North-Southerly wind.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

Ha ha ha! North-Southerly. Ha ha ha!! - God, but the man's thick, horribly dense.

You're a good fellow, Woyzeck, but you've no morals. Morals are ... well, when a man is *moral*.... Well, you understand? You've got a child without the blessing of the Church, as our padre calls it - without the church's blessing; that's his expression.

WOYZECK:

Sir, God the Father isn't going to worry if nobody said "amen" before the poor worm was made. The Lord said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me'.

CAPTAIN:

What do you mean? What an odd thing to say. What you said, I mean, not what *He* said. You're confusing the issue.

WOYZECK:

Being poor. . D'you see, sir? Money! If you've no money -

Just you try getting one of our sort into the world in a moral way; though we're flesh and blood as well. We never get much luck, this life or the next. If we went to heaven, I'd expect we'd have to work making the thunder.

CAPTAIN:

Woyzeck, you've no sense of morals. Flesh and blood?! When I'm looking out the window after the rain has gone and I see all the pretty stockings skipping down the street, damn it, Woyzeck, I feel *love*. I too am flesh and blood. But Woyzeck: virtue! Morals!

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir. I don't think virtue's so strong in me, sir. You see, people like us don't have any morals, we just follow nature. But if I was a gentlemen and I had a hat and a watch and a big coat and all the proper words, I'd be virtuous alright. Must be a great thing, sir, virtue. Only I'm just a poor man.

(the captain pays him)

CAPTAIN:

Well, Woyzeck, you're a good fellow, I suppose, a good fellow. Doing odd jobs for me, helping the Doctor with his research. But you think too much. You're wearing yourself out, grinding away at things in there. You always look so worried!

(Stands.)

This discussion's upset me completely. Get along now.

(WOYZECK removes the chair and his equipment.)

And don't run! Slowly. Nice and slowly down the road.

WOYZECK AND DOCTOR

The street. **WOYZECK** against a wall, peeing. The **DOCTOR** strides over just as Woyzeck is doing up his fly.

DOCTOR:

Woyzeck! What do you call this, Woyzeck? A man of your word, are you, eh? You? You?!

WOYZECK:

What's the matter Doctor?

DOCTOR:

I saw you, Woyzeck, pissing in the street, pissing like a dog down the wall. And I'm giving you three groschen a day for that! It's bad, Woyzeck, bad. The whole world's going completely to the bad. Completely.

WOYZECK:

But, Doctor. When nature calls -

DOCTOR:

Nature! The call of *nature*? Haven't I demonstrated conclusively that the *musculus constrictor vesicae* is subject to Man's will? Nature! Hah! Man is free, Woyzeck. In Man, *Nature* expresses itself through *Freewill*. And you couldn't hold it in just a little longer!

Have you been eating your peas, Woyzeck, as I ordered? You must eat nothing but peas, peas, peas, remember, nothing but peas, morning noon and night. This is a revolution in science. It'll blow everything sky-high.

(notices the pool of urine, dips his finger and tastes)

Uric acid 0.01, ammonium hydrochlorate, hyperoxide - Woyzeck, can't you have another piss? Go inside and try again!

WOYZECK:

I can't, doctor.

DOCTOR (*upset*):

Pissing against the wall, though! And I've a written contract with you, in your own handwriting! I saw it, saw you with these two eyes - pissing down the wall! I saw you.

(Paces in agitation, then forces himself to be calm)

No, I shall not be angry. Anger is unhealthy, unscientific.

I am calm; completely calm. My pulse is its usual sixty and I'm addressing you with the utmost coolness. There's no reason for me to get angry with you, you're only a man, and a poor specimen at that. If it'd been a question of one of my experiments dying - Well! But really, Woyzeck, you shouldn't have pissed down that wall -

WOYZECK:

D'you see, Doctor? A man might have one sort of character, one sort of structure... But nature's something else, you see: nature's a thing -

DOCTOR:

Woyzeck, you're philosophising again.

WOYZECK:

Have you ever seen nature double-up, Doctor? When the sun stands still at noon and it's as though the whole world was going up in flames? That's when a terrible voice spoke to me.

DOCTOR: (*fascinated*)

You have an aberration, Woyzeck.

WOYZECK:

Nature, Doctor, when nature's out - When nature's out, that's - when nature's out. When the world gets so dark you have to feel your way round it with your hands, till you think it's coming apart like a spider's web.

The toadstools, Doctor, it's all in the toadstools. Have you noticed how they grow in patterns on the ground? If only somebody could read them.

DOCTOR.

Woyzeck, you have a beautiful *aberratio mentalis partialis* of the second order: fully formed, too. Beautiful. I shall give you a rise, Woyzeck! *Four groschen!* You're carrying on as usual, your military duties?

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir.

DOCTOR:

Eating your peas?

WOYZECK:

Nothing but peas, just like you said, sir. The money goes to my wife for the housekeeping.

DOCTOR:

You're an interesting case, patient Woyzeck. Give me your pulse. Mm, yes.

WOYZECK:

What do I do, Doctor?

(Doctor takes a handkerchief and mopes up the urine)

DOCTOR:

Keep eating the peas!

(Doctor and Woyzeck leave in opposite directions...)

WOYZECK DOCTOR AND CAPTAIN

The street. The **DOCTOR** walks briskly down it with the **CAPTAIN** puffing after him.

CAPTAIN:

Doctor. Just a minute, Doctor! You shouldn't go so fast, you know. The only thing you'll catch up with rushing like that is death himself! A good man with a clear conscience doesn't hurry that way.

(Snorts, breathes heavily to regain himself.)

DOCTOR:

I'm in a hurry, Captain. A hurry!

CAPTAIN:

My dear ghoul, you'll wear your legs down to the pavement.

DOCTOR:

I'll tell you something - your wife will be a widow inside four weeks. Inside four weeks - she'd better start getting used to the idea.

CAPTAIN:

(horrificed)

Please, Doctor, I get so depressed; it's making me imagine things. I can't look at my empty coat hung up on the wall without bursting into tears.

DOCTOR:

(examines him professionally)

Hm. - Puffy, fat; thick neck. Apoplectic constitution. Yes, Captain, that'll be the way of it. You're a certainty for a seizure of the brain. . .

Of course, you might only be affected down one side, hemi-paresis, then you'd still be able to move the unparalysed half of your body.

Or alternatively you might be even luckier and have simple local cerebral paralysis, in which case you'd become a sort of human potato, vegetating for the rest of your life. Yes, that's the outlook for you in the next month.

Though there's also the possibility that you could become a really interesting case by having just one half of your tongue paralysed. Now if that happens, I'll

be able to do experiments on it that will make you go down in medical history. You'll become immortal - in print!

CAPTAIN:

Don't frighten me like that, Doctor. People have been known to die of fright, you know, of sheer bloody fright. I can see the mourners already, getting the lemons out of their pockets to make them cry. Still, they'll say, 'He was a good man; a good man.'

(realises he'd been had)

Oh, you! I'm a virtuous man, but I can give as good as I get when I feel like it, Doctor.

WOYZECK *comes down the street trying to avoid notice.*

Hey! Woyzeck! Where're you dashing off to? Just wait there a minute, Woyzeck.

Come here.

You go through the world like an open razor. You'll be giving someone a nasty cut one of these days. Have you got to shave a regiment of eunuchs on pain of death if you miss one hair or something? Eh?

DOCTOR:

Pliny states that serving officers are to be discouraged from wearing facial hair. Or was that Plutarch?

CAPTAIN:

That's all very well, but - On the subject of hairs, that puts me in mind of the old saying - You know the one, Woyzeck - you know the one about finding a hair from someone else's beard in your "soup". - You take my meaning? Or perhaps we should say in this case, from someone else's moustache - a sapper's, or a sergeant's, or, maybe, a drum-major's? Eh, Woyzeck? But then, your wife's a good woman, isn't she? Not like some.

WOYZECK:

Yes, sir. What do you mean, sir?

CAPTAIN:

You might not find that hair in your soup, but if you popped around the corner you could just find it sticking to a certain pair of lips. A *certain* pair of lips, Woyzeck.

Look at the man's face! Good God, you've turned to chalk, man; you're stone white!

WOYZECK:

Captain, I'm a poor man - I've nothing but her in the world. Please don't make jokes, sir.

CAPTAIN:

Make jokes? Me, make jokes with you?

DOCTOR:

(intervenes)

Pulse, Woyzeck, pulse! Short. Hard. Skipping. Irregular.

(makes notes)

CAPTAIN:

What are you doing, staring at me like that? Do you want a bullet in the brain, man?! Your eyes are like knives. I'm only doing you a favour, it's for your own good. Because you're not a bad fellow, Woyzeck, not *such* a bad fellow.

DOCTOR:

(continues notes)

Facial muscles taut, rigid; occasional twitches. Manner tense, strained, excitable.

WOYZECK:

Fine day, Captain, isn't it? With a grey, stone sky. You could just hammer a nail in it and hang yourself on it. All because of the little pause between 'Yes' and 'No'. Yes and No, Captain. Is the No to blame for the Yes, or the Yes for the No? I shall have to think about that.

Moves away, step by step at first then increasingly quickly.

DOCTOR:

A unique aberration. Superb!

(Goes after him.)

Woyzeck! Another rise, Woyzeck!

CAPTAIN:

People, they make me dizzy. Look at them. Thunder following lightning. Crazy people! I'm not like that.