

A dynamic story

Translation: Eulenspargel

The time I spent as an employee in Wunsiedel's factory is one of the strangest periods of my life. My natural inclination is more towards contemplation and idleness as towards work. But, since contemplation brings in no more than idleness, every now and then financial difficulties force me to accept a so-called job. Once again having reached such a low point, I entrusted my life to the employment service and was sent to Wunsiedel's factory, together with seven other fellow sufferers. There we were to undergo a suitability test.

The very appearance of the factory made me mistrustful - it was constructed entirely of glass bricks, and my aversion to bright buildings and bright rooms is as strong as my aversion to work. My mistrust grew as we were immediately served breakfast in the bright, cheerfully decorated canteen: charming waitresses brought us eggs, coffee and toast, orange juice in tasteful carafes, gold fishes pressed their snouts against the glass of bright-green aquariums. The waitresses were so cheerful that they appeared about to burst with cheerfulness. It seemed to me only a strong will held them back from perpetually warbling. They were as full of unsung songs as hens full of unlaidd eggs. I guessed right away what my fellow sufferers did not seem to suspect: that this breakfast also belonged to the test. And so I chewed so devoutly, with the full consciousness of a person who knew exactly that he was supplying his body with valuable substances. I did something which normally no power of this world could bring me to doing: I drank orange juice on an empty stomach, ignored the coffee and an egg, most of the toast, stood up and strode back and forth in the canteen, bent on doing something.

Thus I was the first to be led into the test room where the questionnaires lay ready on lovely tables. The walls were tinted in a green that would have conjured the word "rapturing" onto the lips of interior design fanatics. No-one else was in the room. Yet I was so certain of being watched that I conducted myself the way someone bent on doing behaves when he believes himself not under observation: impatiently I wrenched the fountain pen out of my pocket, unscrewed it, pulled up a chair at the next-available table and grabbed the questionnaire in the manner of a choleric grabbing the bill in a restaurant.

First question: Do you deem it right that human beings possess only two arms, two legs, eyes and ears?

Here for the first time I harvested the fruits of my contemplativeness and without hesitation wrote: "Even four arms, legs, ears would not suffice to satisfy my thirst for action. The human endowment is scanty."

Second question: How many telephones can you handle concurrently?

Here also the answer was as easy as solving a first order equation. "With seven telephones", I wrote, "I become impatient, I need nine to feel fully occupied."

Third question: What do you do after hours?

My answer: "I no longer recognize the concept after hours - on my fifteenth birthday I deleted it from my vocabulary because, in the beginning was the deed"

I got the job. Indeed even with nine telephones I did not feel myself working fully to capacity. I shouted into the phone: "Do something at once!" or: " Do something! - Something has to be done - Something will be done - Something was done - Something should be done." Bit mostly - I thought

this was most appropriate to the atmosphere - I made use of the imperative.

I found the lunch breaks in the canteen interesting. There we ate vitamine-rich food in inaudible cheerfulness.

Wunsiedel's factory teemed with people who were crazy about telling you their life career, as dynamic personalities love doing. Their life career is more important to them than life itself. You have only to press a button and immediately they regurgitate it.

Wunsiedel's deputy was a man named Broshek. Broshek's reputation was earned when, as a student, he had supported seven children and a paralyzed wife by night work, at the same time successfully leading two sales agencies as well as within two years passing two state exams with honours. As reporters asked him : "When did you manage to sleep, Mr. Broshek?", he answered: "Sleeping is a sin!"

Wunsiedel's secretary supported her paralyzed husband and four children by knitting, at the same time received a doctorate in psychology and local history, bred alsatians and became famous as chanteuse under the name *Vamp 7*.

Wunsiedel himself was one of those people who, hardly have they woken up in the morning, are already intent on achieving something. While energetically tying the belt of their bathrobe they think: "I must do something". While shaving they think: "I must do something". And they look triumphantly at the hair they rinse off the shaver together with the lather. These whisker remains are the first victims of their zest for action. These people gain satisfaction from even the more intimate of chores: water flows, paper is used up. Something has happened. Bread is eaten, the boiled egg is decapitated.

With Wunsiedel the most trivial task has the appearance of an undertaking: how he dons his hat, how he - quaking with energy - buttons up his coat, the kiss he gives his wife. Everything is deed.

When he entered his office he greeted his secretary with: "Something must be done!" And she replied cheerfully: "Something will be done!" Wunsiedel went from department to department, voicing his cheerful: "Something must be done!" All answered: "Something will be done!" And when he entered my room, I too greeted him with: "Something will be done!"

Within the first week I stepped up the number of simultaneous telephone calls to eleven, within the second week to thirteen. And in the morning on the tram I enjoyed creating ever new imperatives, or chasing the verb *doing* through the various tenses, through the various genera, through conjunctive and indicative. Two days long I repeated the one sentence because I found it so beautiful: "It should have had to be done", two days later: "That should not have been allowed to be done."

As I began to feel myself at the limit of my capacity, something really did happen. On a Tuesday morning - I was not yet settled in - Wunsiedel barged into my room and called his "Something must be done!" Some inexplicable thing on his face delayed me from answering cheerily: "Something will be done!" as required. I must have hesitated too long because Wunsiedel, who rarely shouted, yelled at me: "Answer! Answer the way it's prescribed!" And I answered faintly and unwillingly, like a child that is being forced to say: I am a naughty child. It took me a big effort to bring out the phrase: "Something will be done!" and I had hardly spoken it as indeed something happened: Wunsiedel toppled onto the floor, rolled onto his side in falling and lay squarely across the open door. I knew it instantly, and it was confirmed as I moved around my table slowly towards the lying figure: he was dead.

Schaking my head, I stepped over Wunsiedel, walked slowly along the corridor to Broshek's room, and went in without knocking. Broshek sat at his desk, in each hand a telephone, in his mouth a ballpoint pen with which he jotted memos on a notepad, and with his bare feet he operated a

