

EUNTES ERGO DOCETE: A SCENE

INT. FOYER OF APARTMENT BLOCK, GLASGOW – MIDDAY

ELEUTHERIUS and ARSACIUS stand in the rectangular foyer of an apartment block. The décor is one of quasi-classical monstrosity; faux marble columns and flooring, magnolia walls and darkly regal blue doors leading off from the sides. Potted tropical creepers surround a pond filled with bemused koi carp, its fountain TRICKLES like a broken toilet cistern. Between them sits a large pressurized gas canister, a tripod and camera, and a small bag of unknown content.

ELEUTHERIUS

(prophetically/pathetically)

This weighty tank is to be only half used. And I shall never drink again.

ARSACIUS

(thoughtfully)

What we require is a South-Easterly wind. A small audience has already begun to gather on the grassy slope below. Shall we ascend?

Eleutherius hoists the canister onto his left shoulder, while Arsacius picks up the remaining objects. Both men move towards the richly red carpeted staircase, on the foyers right side, which is punctuated half way up by a triptych of stain glass window of inestimable age. Reaching the landing of the first floor they pause beside an unassuming door, unmarked by a handle.

ELEUTHERIUS

(unlocking the door)

Did you know Arsacius, that this building was once named Trinity College, and used for the teaching of theology? From 1451 to 1567, theology at Glasgow University was linked to the requirements of the Roman Catholic Church, whose Pope had issued the founding charter in 1451. After the Reformation in 1560, the provision of theological education was linked to the Church of Scotland – predominantly Reformed and Presbyterian. Here we begin.

The two men enter a dark portal, which quickly rises into a set of narrow wooden stairs. Their progress is slow, owing to the cumbersome nature of Eleutherius' metallic charge, and the dreadful alcohol-fuelled fug admonishing his brain. The walls around them are no longer of a carefully manicured precision, but rather a damp and crumbly stone. The top of the first flight of stairs reveals a square room, topped with a wooden planked ceiling. The

stairs hug the sides of the wall and spiral up in an anti-clockwise direction, disappearing into the ceiling at the rooms far corner.

ARSACIUS

(excitedly)

We find ourselves inside a brazenly visible secret. Two archaic heroes venturing through the theatrical guts of a man-made summit.

(looking flushed)

I am developing a stitch.

Oblivious to these comments, Eleutherius, head floorward, continues with his oration. The two men are walking single file up the CREAKING stairs, at a funereal pace.

ELEUTHERIUS

In the nineteenth century, a schism within the Church of Scotland occurred resulting in the creation of the Free Church of Scotland. The Free Church established its own colleges or seminaries detached from the universities for the education of its ministers, as well as for the theological education of female medical missionaries. The Glasgow College, funded by local subscription, was established in 1856. This multi-disciplinary institution of considerable reputation existed outside of the University Faculty of Theology.

As they climb higher, Eleutherius and Arsacius are given brief moments of reprieve by the punctuating plateaus of the bell-towers levels, each one gradually diminishing in scale. Both men use their right hands to steady themselves against the soft masonry walls.

ELEUTHERIUS

(appearing increasingly flustered)

In 1930, after the reunion of the main Scottish Presbyterian churches, the two teaching facilities in the University and the Church College were reintegrated, and this building was renamed 'Trinity College.' Following Trinity College's combination with the University of Glasgow's Faculty of Divinity, morning classes were held on the University site, with later ones at the College building. This practice continued, except for a period during the Second World War when the College building was occupied by the Royal Pay Corps, until Easter 1973.

Eleutherius and Arsacius stop to catch their breaths, both sweating profusely. Arsacius mops his brow with a small white handkerchief, and hoists his trousers up to conceal the cavernous cleft of his backside. The two men present clumsy, weighty apparitions in contrast to the infinite specks of dust illuminated by the occasional penetrations of daylight.

ELEUTHERIUS

(panting)

From 1976, when the Church-owned Trinity College buildings here at Park Circus... were finally vacated... all teaching of theology took place in the University Divinity Faculty. ...

Accordingly, while 'Trinity College' still exists... it is a body without walls. The decision was taken in 1970 that this building... could not be adapted economically for the needs of the faculty. The Church of Scotland... therefore, resolved that it should be disposed of... and the library offered to the University of Glasgow. The former College building... was subsequently sold and... transformed into the residential accommodation we... witnessed at the beginning of our climb. The interior of this wooden phallus... is the only aspect of the old college that has remained untouched,... a surprise considering it commands one of the finest vantage points in the entire city.

Finally reaching the top of the stairs Eleutherius and Arsacius find themselves in a room surrounded at all sides by windows. They step through a thin door into the outside world, onto a narrow platform that runs around the square top of the tower. Heavy, black iron railings, reaching beyond their head-height, envelope the perimeter. Dropping their burdens to the floor, Eleutherius and Arsacius slowly circumnavigate the dizzying pavilion, surveying the city that spreads out around them in every direction, slowly absorbing Glasgow's panorama of 1960's housing towers and cranes of the ship building dockyards, uncomfortably mingling with the glass hubs of new media enterprise, and the requisite condominiums within slouching reach.

ELEUTHERIUS

(glumly)

Look, the shabby, semi-redundant building blocks of a tempestuous child; like so many stolidly passed stools. It amounts to a faithfully rendered squalor, a lack of practical foresight shocking in its scale. Imagine the impossibility of communal fling cabinets and a motorway for a heart.

ARSACIUS

(dabbing at his forehead with the white handkerchief)

The evolutionarily later always subsumes and includes the evolutionarily former. How long this regimented and grappled swallowing lasts is anyone's guess. And how effective its hasty course, an ever more dubious rumination...

Settling at the North-west corner, Eleutherius begins to unpack the bag, taking out first the flattened bundle of a weather balloon, followed by a roll of white synthetic ribbon.

ELEUTHERIUS

(preparing the nose of the gas tank)

Right, let us get on with it. Once the balloon is inflated with the required helium, I shall float it out into the surrounding atmosphere. Then my prolonged gesture will begin...

ARSACIUS

...Reaching your arms out above the metal balustrade, longingly clenching for the orb until the moon appears?

ELEUTHERIUS

(triumphantly)

Precisely right!

Inserting the canisters nozzle into the teat of the balloon, the escaping helium shoots quivers through the fleshy material, rapidly developing a shape inside the smooth, creamy-pink boob. Dragging the tethered float to the guarded corner, Eleutherius slowly winds the ribbon out, allowing the balloon to ascend to its natural habitat, whilst denying its ultimate freedom. Arsacius settles the tripod and camera into position.

ELEUTHERIUS

(shouting joyfully)

‘Euntes Ergo Docete Omnes Gentes: Going out, therefore, teach all nations.’ Isn’t this wonderful Arsacius? All my finest ideas throw time to the wind. As soon as the balloon is a safe distance clear of the towers roof, I shall tie the ribbon to the railing and my gripping digits will begin.

ARSACIUS

(hopping from one set of toes to the other)

Pray that the South-easterly wind will prevail, and continue to push the inflated spectacle towards our expectant audience.

The wind changes its mind. The balloon is flung backwards onto the corner of the small, tiled roof. A flaccid POP is barely audible above the ambience of the traffic and city movements below. Eleutherius and Arsacius stand rooted to the spot in bewilderment, as the torn skin floats down to lie limply along the side of the tower. A slow, wheezing murmur emits from a place behind Eleutherius.

ELEUTHERIUS

(looking to the clouds)

I struggle with this medium.

ARSACIUS

(proffering a small treat to Eleutherius)

Here is an appetizing bundle of pulped Fig, encased in a sweet pastry. Would you like one?

Isn't it amazing how precise the edges of this snack are? One can almost see the machine that made the incision. Such a source of wonder.

Eleutherius reels in the white line, and flops the tattered dirigible onto the floor of the platform. A moment of silence is sustained.

ELEUTHERIUS

(looking down at the latex puddle between his feet)

Each has their own way of unraveling. My fraudulence is now exposed, as a crows winter nest.

ARSACIUS

(rooting a finger in his right ear, and exerting a vigorous wiggle)

Nothing seems to me the most potent thing in the world.

(looking skyward)

Your wind is picking up once more. Shall we descend?

Both characters are named after Catholic Saints whom share the same feast day of August 16th, the day in which the original performance was attempted, as part of a site-specific group exhibition titled Place 03: Pastoral, in Glasgow.

- Arsacius (Aug. 16th 358) was a Persian hermit and prophet. A member of the Roman army, Arsacius, or Ursacius, was imprisoned for a time for being a Christian. Released, he retired to a tower near Nicomedia. He warned the people of an impending earthquake on Aug. 24th 358, and some sought refuge in his tower, discovering his dead body lying there in the attitude of prayer.

- Eleutherius (Aug. 16th 561) was Bishop of Auxerre, France, from 532 until his death. Nothing else is known. He was a patron of the monastic movement and known for his care of the poor.