

Scheitern ist. Eine Bestandsaufnahme" / "Failure is. An inventory".

The German word „scheitern“ (fail) is related to the noun „Holzscheite“, which means „broken/splintered wooden pieces“, e. g. when you are cutting wood. The etymological origin describes „Scheitern“ (failure) as a ship that breaks into pieces of wood in a shipwreck.

SOUND:

failure collage.wav (4´43)

(Consists of very short interview-fragments > announcement embedded at 1´47)

female Speaker 1:

Failure is.

Radio-Feature

by

Rilo Chmielorz

Piotr:

You will never ever succeed in editing this material.

Adam:

If you fail, just tell us.

Rilo: -

Of course

SOUND:

falling and failing.wav

Peter:

A customer enters a tailor's shop. He is upset because he has already been waiting for months to get some trousers made and he says to the tailor: God created the world in six days and you are not able to finish a pair of trousers in six months!

And the tailor answers: well, look at the world - and then look at this beautiful pair of trousers.

Sound > WORSTWARD HO by Samuel Beckett

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Wiebke:

*So, let's start with the interview **00731B2A3C4F5A**, which belongs to the category 2, subcategory A, focussing on the measure of failure in its material consequences. Please, read the question!*

Rilo:

What does failure mean to you?

Wiebke:

If you have certain professional aims to achieve - and then you flop - that's failure - having failed in your job.

Peter:

And now there is the big question: who has failed: God, the tailor or the customer with his critic?

Wiebke:

I have never ever failed - and if so - no idea.... You make a mistake and that's it.

What can I say?

Well, this was a very short interview.

Timo:

I am Timo. I am 31. And I came to Berlin in 2008.

Lutz:

My name is Lutz.

Timo:

to start University - I could have moved to another German city, but I longed to go to Berlin

Lutz:

Before I became a homeless, I had been working for 15 years in the flower-market in Berlin. I worked in a permanent night-shift. After 15 years I quit.

Timo:

My parents didn't want me to go to Berlin. And my girlfriend neither. My mother still can't accept my decision. My father doesn't talk about it any more...

Lutz:

and I started a therapy for alcoholics. First detoxication and then psycho-therapy. After that I had a job in the Botanical Garden in Berlin with no permanent contract.

Timo:

My father is a lawyer.

Piotr:

And when we revealed ...

Lutz:

So, when the job was over -

Timo:

He wanted me to study law and manage his office.

Lutz:

I had nothing. I had no apartment, because I had moved to the apartment of a woman - a short love story. After six months the relationship was over and I was on the street as a homeless.

Piotr:

....society felt ashamed, because society had treated us so badly. (LAUGHING). Well, we all feel we are observed by the society. And many people have a

problem, because they try to behave in the way - they think - the others wish they should behave

Timo:

I studied German Philology

Sandra:

Yes - my college career was a big failure,

Timo:

And I shared an apartment with friends. And it was great

Marc:

Intelligent means in the Schwabian dialect „gscheit“.

Sandra:

Normally, a college career has a linear development. In my case it was significantly disparate. I asked myself, why do I have to attend a school?

male speaker 1 > over voice for Weston:

We had a dream - we wanted the Nobel Price for Peace.

Weston:

Y este sueño de ganar el premio Nobel de la paz que teníamos.

Timo:

I remember the first nights - we listened to music at maximum volume settings, drinking like alcoholics.

Roland:

My name is Roland Satterwhite. I am a musician and I have lived in Berlin for seven years now. I come from New York.

Sound: falling and failing.wav

Where none. Try again. Fail again. Better again. Or better worse. Fail worse again. Still worse again. Till sick for good.

Roland:

And then I went to Hamburg for a concert and played my violin - no words - no structure. It was all very abstract, what I played.

Timo:

And then we started to go to Clubs.

Roland:

And after the concert I asked myself: did I fail?

Timo:

And we went to Berghain or the Kit Kat Club.

Sandra:

I regard school as an institution as a big failure.

Female Speaker 1:

Sandra Schürmann is a social entrepreneur from Witten.

Timo:

I was fascinated by Berlin Freedom You could do, whatever you wanted.

Lutz:

I only attended grammar school. When I finished school I started to learn at the post office, but I quit - and then I started another job - but it was over after three months.

Piotr:

When we came to Germany, we tried to hide ourselves, because we thought, we were losers. We didn't achieve anything. All the other are having success - but we don't. Something is wrong with us.

Sandra:

I remember very well when I came round the corner and saw the school yard ... then I thought - it is impossible for me to stay inside there the whole day - till one o'clock - it was such an unbridgeable time, so I turned around and went into real life.

male speaker 1 > over voice for Weston:

we wanted to change the world with "couch-surfing".

Weston:

con COUCH-Surfing - p.e. queríamos cambiar el mundo.

Female Speaker 1:

That's Weston Hankins from Mexico. He is a computer crack.

Timo:

I have a girlfriend - since 2005. At that time she lived with her parents.

SOUND > holz hacken.wav (chopping wood)

Peter:

Maybe we should talk about the word "failure".

Timo:

she moved to Berlin in 2012.

Adam:

In Polish language there is only one word for failure „nieudacznik"

Timo:

She was not able to understand that I loved this city so much.

Sandra:

And then I used to go to a coffee shop, to meet people and talk. That was quite more interesting than sitting in a classroom.

Adam:

In Poland as well as in Russia the word as such “failure” does not exist - I mean with this negative connotation. „NIEUDACZNIK“ and „nieudacne“ mean “you have not succeeded”. And there is a likeable connotation. A Polish failure is somebody who really tried his best. And this exerting is enough. So we are real Polish NIEUDACZNIKS in the field of failure!

Female speaker 1:

Adam Gusowski and Piotr Mordel inaugurated their “Club of the Polish Failures” on September 1 in 2001 in the heart of Berlin.

[SOUND > club atmo mit hammondorgel.wav](#)

Piotr:

In Berlin such a revelation is quite easy. You can do everything. So, that means, we are not heroes. In the city of Braunschweig we couldn't do it

[SOUND > club atmo mit hammondorgel.wav](#)

Adam:

The “Lieutenant Show” (in German it sounds like “Late Night Show”) is a very successful show. It makes fun and everything is fine. For this little moment the club is a story of success. But we cannot make a living with the Club. The success is only a second, not a month, not a year, neither 15 years.

Timo:

The Clubs, we used to go, were very special Clubs.

Peter:

The word „scheitern/failure“ has a strange origin - it comes from the ship that breaks into pieces of wood in a shipwreck.

Timo:

Never ever before had I been able to imagine such Clubs in my lifetime.

Peter:

A ship which breaks into its wooden planks - a fragmentation.

Female speaker 1:

Peter Bexte is Professor of Aesthetics at the University for Media and Arts in Cologne.

Peter:

Therefore “shipwreck” is such an archaic metaphor for failure - “a project went down” - “was sank”.

Timo:

The girl at the door told me to take my shirt off. I didn't understand anything - why should I take my shirt off. But when we entered the Club, we saw that nearly everybody was naked. That night for the first time in my life I had sex with a man.

Sandra:

The teachers couldn't give me grades because of my permanent absence. And I couldn't sit for the exams.

Timo:

Everybody is living in a never ending ecstasy ...

Peter:

another metaphor comes from the English language, where the two words “falling” and “failing” are so close together - crashing...

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Timo:

This kind of experiences were the Berlin experiences - ecstasy and this feeling

.....

Weston:

con COUCH-Surfing teníamos un sueño muy grande: poder atraer a gente, que es distinta- y acercarla - esta gente que no se habría conocido en otras circunstancias. Acercarla de una manera que crearan amistades largas.

Male Speaker 1/overvoice Weston:

we had a dream: Couch Surfing should bring people from different cultures together. You travel to a foreign country and you don't stay in a hotel - you stay in a private home with locals and you sleep on their couch. People eat together, go out together and become friends.

Weston:

También me gustó mucho crear una situación de intimidad - una experiencia íntima: en una casa, para cenar, o en un evento o hasta tomar copas en un bar. En una situación en la que se conocieran más cercanamente, gente que no se habría conocido.

Sandra:

It was the time, when I started my life as a social entrepreneur, when I really became aware of my personal school failure.

Female speaker 1:

Sandra Schürmann was kicked out of school three times, got countless admonitions. Finally at the age of 20 she received her final high school diploma and started at university studying a "social worker" grade.

Sandra:

After 13 half year terms I finally graduated.

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

Timo:

I had a lot of visitors from my hometown -

Lutz:

I was in a "MOTZ project of living" for over nine years.

Timo:

but none of the old friends was able to understand my craziness about Berlin. They still don't understand, that I am not married.

Lutz:

MOTZ is an association for homeless people. They edit a weekly newspaper, run an overnight shelter and a social warehouse.

Timo:

My old friends married quite young and then got children immediately. Before I came to Berlin I was sure to do the same: marry my girlfriend and have children soon. But I changed my mind. My girlfriend noticed my change. She is a smart person.

Lutz:

Since November 2007 I stayed with MOTZ and made my living by selling the MOTZ-newspaper. And later I started to work at the overnight shelter. But then I relapsed into alcohol; the overnight shelter was full of addicts to all kind of drugs. It was not a clean overnight shelter.

Sound

Wiebke:

This record is number 00541B2C3C4C5X. Failure is defined by its temporal consequences.

Rilo:

What does "failure" mean to you?

Wiebke:

Failure is an active way of living. Not being afraid of failure and accepting failure as a part of life.

Rilo:

Under what kind of circumstances did you fail?

Wiebke:

I failed a lot, even before I could fail, because I am afraid of exams and then I'm blocked. I am sitting at my desk thinking that I should study, but then I am doing other things: cleaning up the room, surfing the internet - whatever.

Female Speaker 1:

Wiebke Frerichs and Sara Kuhnt are co-founders and archivists of the IANS, Institute of the Appropriation and Sustainability of Failure.

Sara:

Well, it's a very minimalistic setting: a record office/room, a table, boxes with the records containing the transcribed interviews. The idea was to open a space of reflection, where people can ask themselves what failure means to them and at the same time they have the possibility of reading other people's records and their experiences on failure. That was the reason to create this archive.

Wiebke:

We are used to record the interviews on a tape recorder. To make them anonymous we transcribe them on paper and file them in the boxes and you only can find them using our card index.

Piotr:

Who is your boss?

Rilo:

I am a freelancer - this is a commission for the Southwest-Radio SWR. I tried hard to fail by commission.

Piotr:

We want to encourage the others.

Timo:

I became an addict. When I went home for Christmas, it was terrible.

Roland:

I am afraid of getting frustrated myself - I don't finish what I have started

Piotr:

Failure is

Adam:

A car ?

Timo:

Two different worlds crashed. And I knew both of them very very well.

Piotr:

No, maybe that sounds a bit flirtatious, but I think that Germans don't have a sane attitude to failure. The same in the U.S. Everybody wants to be successful, that's a main wish.

Timo:

I received text messages and I was on facebook, I saw what my comrades were doing, in which Clubs they were and who was fucking with whom... while I was sitting under the Christmas tree at my parents' house back in my old life.

Piotr:

There exists a deep anxiety to fail in Germany.

Timo:

And I experienced that I really needed this kind of life full of ecstasy. I was addicted and I needed to live the city.

Piotr:

After moving to Germany we were sure that something was wrong with us. We didn't behave the way we should.

Adam:

I had the feeling that I didn't fit in here, because I am an immigrant. Only years later I recognized that Failure doesn't have a nationality.

Timo:

The lifestyle and the spirit of city - totally different from the fucking village I come

from.

Wiebke:

There are five categories: environment of failure, proportion of failure, place of failure, the degree of linguistic distance. But while we were founding the archive we realized that we needed a fifth category which was “no failure”.

Roland:

I like improvisation, because there is no way to fail. The aim is to have no aim.

With care never worse failed.

Male speaker 1/overvoice Weston:

We were a bunch of idealists. We really believed in changing the world. We were generating data on the couch-surfers over a longterm period: before meeting, during the meeting and after the meeting. There was one question: would you trust this person with your life?

Weston:

con couchsurfing éramos un grupo grande de idealistas, que realmente creíamos en una oportunidad de cambiar el mundo. No había nadie en el mundo que generara la cantidad de datos que nosotros generábamos sobre las interacciones de dos personas a lo largo del tiempo que se conocían. - Antes de que se conocieran, una vez que se conocían. Teníamos una pregunta muy clave: "would you trust this person with your life?" qué tanto confiarías en esa persona - y allí teníamos 7-8 escalas diferentes. Y a lo largo de las interacciones, podíamos ver si eso cambiaba o no cambiaba.

Timo:

Well, we didn't go to the University that much - but luckily I finished my studies - not the best grades. My job is not the best one. But it was cool not to do things with a fixed agenda.

It was the feeling of being free.

Weston:

Yo trabajaba con Universidades en Tel Aviv, en Stanford y en Montreal. Porque nosotros no teníamos en nuestro equipo gente que pudiera analizar los datos exactamente, científicamente . Entonces había estudiantes que estudiaban un doctorado para analizar nuestros datos.

Male speaker 1/overvoice Weston:

We collaborated with Universities in Tel Aviv, Stanford and Montreal to analyze the data scientifically. There are PHD-thesis done. We wanted to create something like a “happiness-index” - we would call it “index of intercultural

acceptance". I was working for five years in this project - and it was my baby.

Weston:

Y lo que queríamos hacer al final era algo similar a lo que tiene Canada como "el índice de la felicidad" del país, - Nosotros queríamos generar "un índice de apreciación intercultural" entre diferentes culturas y poder publicarlo a nivel global. Allí trabajando en un sueño idealista. Eso era el objetivo principal. Al que no llegamos. Yo trabajé cinco años y lo sentía como mi bebé.

Timo:

Actually, I still go out with these friends, but not that frequently and it's not the same as in the old days, when we had just arrived. They use to call me to ask me to go out with them.

I am not that honest - my girlfriend usually doesn't know about that - I mean, what I am doing at the Clubs

SOUND > chopping wood

Sandra:

When I finished "social worker" I worked in an education institution and I had time enough to think about how you can bring teenagers into work. And it turned out that I had a certain ability for management. So after two years I became the head of the department.

SOUND

Wiebke:

This is record number 01061A2D3C4B5X.

Rilo:

What does failure mean to you?

Wiebke:

Do you mean professional failure or personal failure? In general failure means to me - when you focus on an aim and then you don't succeed - that is failure.

Rilo:

Would you please give an example?

Wiebke:

Well, on the personal level I could mention my choice of profession. I wanted to enter the German Bundeswehr (Military Service) and become a pilot. And then I had to pass several exams and I was quite successful till the very last, when I had to pass a medical check and it turned out that my legs were too long.

Or better worse.

Timo:

My girlfriend moved to Berlin in 2012. We have twins now. They are really sweet.

Weston

*Al final yo creo que con couchsurfing hubo muchas decisiones allí que no necesariamente estaban alineadas con los valores que teníamos. Y los valores eran de idealismos, de cambiar el mundo desde abajo. Y cuando creció el proyecto y se profesionalizó, cambió. Se hizo mas **START UP** - recibió dinero de inversionistas.*

Timo:

We are a pretty cool family, but ... sometimes I wake up in the morning and I believe my mother lies next to me in the bed. My girlfriend usually tells me that when I have to get home, I should not drink that much

Male speaker 1/overvoice Weston:

But all of a sudden the company started to make decisions, which no longer reflected our ideals.

The project became commercial and a typical START UP working with the money of investors. New employees came in and out and people like me went out. After a year there were only two colleagues left from the original team. Our dream of the Nobel Prize was over. There was no space left for such aims in the new company. A lost opportunity. We achieved a lot, but we could have achieved more.

Weston:

Y empezaron a entrar gentes que no entendían los valores que tuvimos al principio y esto lo cambió. Cambió la empresa y gente como yo se empezó a ir. Y después de un año quedaban dos de los que éramos. Y estos sueños de ganar el Premio Nobel de la Paz que teníamos. eso ya no fue prioridad y no formó parte de la gente que está al frente de Couch Surfing ahora. Y para mí es como una oportunidad perdida, allí. Como si logramos muchísimo, pero habríamos logrado más.

Timo:

When she told me that she is willing to move to Berlin - it was shocked. ...but I cannot separate from her - that would be the worst for me - with the two kids

Sandra:

And then I became pregnant and I had time enough to think about the future. And I was sure that I couldn't go back to my job. I didn't have enough freedom to do things I wanted to do.

I was 34 at that time - and I wanted to change.

Timo:

Separation is no option at all - if we separated now, my life would completely fail.

Sandra:

And then a heavy blow happened. I saw a theater play in a school - and all of a sudden the idea stroke me. I felt the whole energy, the enthusiasm - we had been all in the same space for that moment - a spiritual space. And that's learning, education. Mediating knowledge - that's no learning and no education.

Timo:

I had to say good bye to this life and I can't enjoy it as before.

Lutz:

When I was unemployed, I had to attend a training course organized by the Labor-Office to become a fitter.

Sandra:

Professional qualification is not longer in the center, but we give young people the opportunity to enter such a space together with twenty other people. And they all have the feeling of failure. Every day they are told that they have failed in the society. When they wake up in the morning they feel like failures.

Lutz:

This training course was a joke - the paper they gave us was worthless. You had no chance on the employment market.

Sandra:

I believe that a certain power, a strength, is created among young people and inside each of them. And this strength is necessary to go ahead with their lives.

And it was this power I felt, when I discovered theatre. And we have applied this concept for ten years now.

Female Speaker 1:

These projects are called “JobAct”, organized all over Germany with the support of the Labor-Office.

Sandra:

We are quite successful with JobAct - organizing these projects with longterm unemployed young people. They play theater for six months, full-time. I was honored with awards, already immediately after we were founded.

Female Speaker 1:

Sandra was also honored with the Federal Decoration Medal and obtained a scholarship from the J.P. Morgan-Foundation, 3.5 million US-Dollars.

Timo:

My father wanted to buy an apartment in Berlin to make an investment and then he bought real estate in Berlin. And we are living in his apartment for free.

Weston:

El fracaso no es un absoluto. Con Couch Surfing mi historia personal no terminó lo mejor posible,

Male speaker 1/overvoice Weston:

There is no absolute failure. On the personal point of view “couch surfing” was not a happy end, but “couch surfing” was a marvelous period in my life. I traveled to sixty different countries. I lived in nine different countries. I was the head of the programing team. We didn’t earn anything, but we believed in changing the world. The boys wanted to learn surfing. So we went to Costa Rica and moved to the beach. At breakfast time everybody was programing with their laptops. And later they went to surf for a while and then we continued working. In Costa Rica we celebrated the one-million-user! One million people had made friends around the world. A great success!

Weston:

pero couch-surfing claramente fue una de las mejores partes de mi vida. Viajé por 60 países, vivi en 9, puse oficinas en todos los lados. Mi equipo decía "hay que aprender a surfear". Y fuimos todo el equipo de programadores a Costa Rica: detrás de las palmeras estaba el mar. Y desde allí estábamos trabajando en esto aunque no nos pagaran, porque creíamos realmente que iba a suponer una diferencia en el mundo. Y realmente queremos que se despierte la gente, no solo yo. Yo soy el manager del equipo, pero es muy fácil ser el manager de un equipo que está intrínsecamente motivado para hacer su trabajo. Ya estaban todos programando en la mañana con los laptops en el desayuno. Y luego era la hora de surfear y surfeábamos un poco y luego seguíamos trabajando. Fue una de las mejores épocas de mi vida. Allí celebramos un millón de miembros en coachsurfing, mientras teníamos la casa en Costa Rica. Es un éxito total, crear un proyecto donde un millón de gente se conoce físicamente alrededor del mundo.

Timo:

I felt guilty all the time. But at the same time she made me upset. She penetrated my life, I was not faithful. I lived a double life - and then children were born.

SOUND > Holz hacken.wav (chopping wood)

Try again. Fail again. Better again.

Timo:

When she came out of the hospital, I felt sick, had terrible pains
I felt terrible.

Piotr:

We are specialists in all the Polish stuff in Germany and German stuff in Poland, because we came from Poland and we live in Germany. We rent this knowledge.

Timo:

And then I went to see a doctor, but there was no diagnosis.

Piotr:

For a very short time many Polish were in favour of the EURO.

Timo:

And the doctor told me to see a psychologist.

Marc:

The EURO was really a bad idea ...

Timo:

Even now I still go to the psychologist.

Piotr:

But now it is impossible to introduce the EURO in Poland.

Marc:

It is proved that the EURO is an experiment of currency which failed. But nobody has the balls to bring it to an end.

Piotr:

It has nothing to do with reason, everything is changing so rapidly.

Marc:

Since 2008 we are living a crisis, billions of EUROS and Dollars are pumped into the financial system, but there is no change for better.

Female Speaker 1:

Marc Friedrich is co-author of the book “the crash is the solution”.

Marc:

The problem is that our financial system has a limited life duration and its durability expired in 2008.

Timo:

Everything was a shock, because it all happened so rapidly.

Adam:

I can't see when money gets 'ruined'.

Marc:

Money that needs to be saved, isn't money any more.

Adam:

Somebody may need it.

Marc:

The crisis started with low interests and cheap money. And how do they try to stop the crisis? With even lower interests and a lot more of cheap money. So they try to cure similar with similar; but homeopathy doesn't work in the financial market, never ever.

Adam:

One has to handle money with care, otherwise it will never come back.

Marc:

For us as economists it is a real nightmare - and it's doomed to fail.

Piotr:

When we founded our Club, everything was fine. There was no financial crisis at all. The IT-business was at its highest point. Computing students dropped University and got very well payed jobs. But 2 - 3 years later everything had changed.

Marc:

We had the "new market bubble" and then the "real estate bubble", and now the financial market bubble. One bubble follows the next one. The bubble is pumped with low interests and cheap money, to maintain the system.

Piotr:

During the worst crisis Polish people learned to manage life with very little. Polish lived for years like being in a jungle camp. They were able to survive with nearly nothing.

Marc:

The market is a drug addict. The monetary and financial system needs to get its money injections permanently, just like a drug addict.

Piotr:

Who knows? Maybe in the future the Polish will be survival strategists for the rest of Europe. Then the Polish will be the experts.

Marc:

But the mass of cheap money doesn't go to the customer, no, it is the benefit of the stock exchange dealers and the real estate market creating new bubbles.

Adam:

In former times we received parcels from Germany. Maybe we will receive parcels from Poland in Germany in the future time. We received margarine, salted butter and cheese during the crisis in the eighties. Nothing is done in this world, everything is possible.

Timo:

I was sitting with her in this shitty apartment - a brand new block in Friedrichshain - here in Berlin. A city, which I loved, where I knew every single place ..

Marc:

2008 was a historical change, a change of paradigm: the banks who had caused the crisis were the winners of the crisis and were saved by taxpayers. The theme was "relevant to the system" or "too big to fail". And now the banks do whatever they like, because they know that they will be saved, because they are relevant to the system.

Lutz:

In times when I didn't receive any social welfare; yes it was charming in a way to depend only on you and nobody else. That is not easy. You needed some savings.

Marc:

Risk and liability come close together in the free market. That's binding for the small customer as well as for the businessman next door. But it is not binding for the big banks and insurance companies for being relevant to the system. They are the only ones - beside the Mafia - who are acting outside the law and order

and will be saved anyhow. That should not be possible. It is a capital mistake in the system.

Timo:

So I didn't go to the Clubs as often as before.

Lutz:

It was necessary to have enough money for the overnight shelter and then to have money for public transport, for cigarettes and for eating. The money for the overnight shelter includes a hot meal and breakfast, but during the day I had to eat something, while I was selling the newspaper MOTZ.

Timo:

But when I went to the Clubs I was looking for more extreme experiences.

Marc:

Naturally this is a very profitable business concept. You can play to the limit - nothing will happen. If you make a profit, you receive nice benefits and if you make a loss, the government will save you, and everything will be regulated. For years, profits are privatized and during the crisis losses are socialized.

Timo:

I am not homosexual, but during her pregnancy, when she went to see her parents, I was looking for such experiences and went to Clubs, where everything was possible.

Lutz:

You learn to live on savings. That's in a way an advantage.

Marc:

Capitalism was abolished in 2008 and was changed for planned economy.

Timo:

It was the highlight of ecstasy and a total outbreak from the small bourgeois shit I

come from.

Marc:

Due to the rules of capitalism and the free market one should have led the power of the market work, and the market would have cleaned itself. But all the banks would have been bankrupt.

Timo:

Family, clubs and therapist.

Piotr:

The end of communism and the change from Polish socialism to western Germany showed us the evidence of the problem so clearly, that we started to be busy with this topic.

SOUND > Holz hacken.wav (chopping wood)

Marc:

Game over!

With care never worse failed.

20, 30 years after the end of communism, capitalism has come to its end and failed - it's only kept alive artificially. Since 2008 we bought very expensive time, but the final collapse is to come. Since the crisis in 2008 The Federal Reserve System, FED, interfered in the market in 85% of all commercial days. The German EZB in over 70% of all commercial days - The Bank of Japan the same.

Timo:

My therapist knows quite well all the Clubs. Whenever I mention them, he knows exactly what I am talking about.

Lutz:

No I receive social welfare.

Marc:

Actually 1-2% receive benefits from the financial system and become richer every day. The allocation of property is concentrated in very few people.

Timo:

The first therapy was terrible.

Lutz:

In case that they discontinue social welfare, I would go back and sell the newspaper MOTZ.

Timo:

I had the feeling my mother is sitting in front of me

Marc:

Every state is financed by two columns: tax-income and debts. And the bonds are sold on the financial market. And up to 99% of the purchasers are banks or insurance companies.

Lutz:

When you are living in the street without ID papers, you should be aware, you are blatant; robbery or not paying public transport would be a high risk.

Timo:

Finally I had a nervous breakdown.

Marc:

So who determines the rules? The creditor or the debtor? Naturally the banks set the rules. Every state is in debt and the creditor put the rules not the debtor. Our financial system has failed, because there is no regulation.

Timo:

I work in a small advertising agency

Lutz:

You can make it by selling the newspaper MOTZ, but you never know how it goes... more success or less success.

Marc:

We say that a catastrophe -a big failure- is necessary to achieve a real change of paradigm, a new system of economics, humane economics. At least through a failure something new can be created. That's essential in every system.

Timo:

I failed in the one world -in this hedonistic world, excess and ecstasy- in the very moment I lived in. And I really believed, that that moment would be endless and that I could repeat it whenever I wanted.

falling and failing.wav

Where none. Try again. Fail again. Better again. Or better worse. Fail worse again. Still worse again. Till sick for good.

Timo:

yes, I failed, but I think it was good to have that experience.

Peter:

I think that Beckett is quite cunning. It all starts with the title "Worstward Ho" - which is impossible to translate, because it's a parody of "Westward Ho". You can't translate this "western parody". The German translation „Auf's Schlimmste zu" takes over only the word "worst", the comparison of "bad". So the whole joke is gone, but it is important to think the joke while reading the whole text - when Beckett is turning the words back and forth and bring them into countless repetitions. And then comes "fail better" and then "fail worse again" - also this possibility is considered. And then he takes the language to a point, where language can't speak any more.

*But never so failed. Worse failed. With care never worse failed.
..... At most mere minimum. Mere most minimum.*

..... A time when try how. Try see. Try say. How first it lay. Then somehow knelt. Bit by bit. Then on from there. Bit by bit. Till up at last. Not now. Fail better worse now.

Peter:

Such a statement is fragmented in itself and the whole sentence is becoming crazy and at the same time it's affirmed as it's contrary. This "fail better" is a nice paradox. On the one hand it speaks about failure, which has a negative connotation in society, but then he adds "better" or "best" and that seems to be even a malice. He doesn't say "fail good" or "fail best" - no it's "better". So he brings us into a loop or an upgrade of making something better. That's a special Beckett trick.

On back better worse to fail the head said seat of all. Germ of all. All? If of all of it too. Where if not there it too? There in the sunken head the sunken head. The hands. The eyes. Shade with the other shades. In the same dim. The same narrow void. Before the staring eyes. Where it too if not there too? Ask not. No. Ask in vain. Better worse so.

Peter:

And there is no way out of this loop. Such a program of improvement is absurd. But if you regard it as an aesthetic credo it becomes a certain logic, because failure forms part of the aesthetic production. In the artistic work failure is often an important experience, in the sense of crossing borders and failing.

Best worse no farther. Nohow less. Nohow worse. Nohow naught. Nohow on. Said nohow on.

Timo:

For me it is unthinkable to fail with my family. I can't imagine that.

Sandra:

In 2008 we started to presuppose a higher principle to this project-idea. We say "art is a principle of education". We try to transform the principles of art into human life.

Female speaker 1:

2012 the “school for art, communication and economic design” is founded.

Sandra:

That’s the point, the effective principles of art. And one principle is definitely “failure”.

SOUND (chopping wood)

Sandra:

For example this image of the “broken ship” that falls apart into pieces fits quite well, because out of thousands of broken pieces, you have countless new perspectives of creation.

Peter:

When the Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader presents his fallings, it is exactly this “falling and failing”. He uses to bent down over the borders, where he is no longer able to keep his balance - and then he is falling and failing.

Sandra:

Failure is something that you can exercise perfectly in the arts. I think the most important thing is to be able to stand failure, because we are failing continuously, again and again, and it’s part of life.

Peter:

And this moment in between is the artistic moment of the experiment to hold on or not.

Timo:

Sex in a partnership is different from sex in a club.

Roland:

So every morning when I wake up and look in the mirror I see a failure. I think of all the ways that my life could be considered - a failure - the fact that I have so little money, the fact that very few people know my name as an artist outside of my bubble, my small circle; I couldn’t compare myself to

David Bowie, of course.

Timo:

I experience quite clearly the ambiguity between hedonism and my family life, I fail on both sides

Peter:

The whole project of failure is a question of describing a situation. Failure as such is no reality. It can change.

Lutz:

No. My life is not a failure; I failed sometimes, that's all.

Timo:

It is like a ping pong ball, which jumps from one side to the other.

Peter:

In life maybe you could play with the word and keep failure distant and close at the same time and keep it in suspense. So while speaking about failure you could break apart your own language. The future will show us whether it was failure or not. But right now we don't know.

Roland:

But then I wink at myself. And I know it is not just that what I see. Yeah, Selbstironie/self-irony ... in the end it's like an oscillation inside of me and exists at the same moment: the feeling of failure and this feeling of amazing happiness and success. I think "ah, that's beautiful, because that means that I can succeed now".

If I had already succeeded, I would be in the prison of my success. And I could only then fail - before then succeeding again somehow.

Peter:

It is a philosophical exercise to describe your life - and could be helpful. One should enter the meaning you give a scene of your life to future 2. And so you

have a flashback from future - sometimes you will know what is going on, but while I am inside the very moment, I don't know.

Sandra:

In failure something reveals - a complete different level, a new space. It is freedom.

Roland:

So I think failure is freedom in the society. Definitely.

Something there still far so far from wrong. So far far far from wrong. Try better worse another stare when with words than when not. When somehow than when nohow. While all seen the same. No not all seen the same. Seen other. By the same other stare seen other. When with words than when not. When somehow than when nohow. How fail say how other seen?

SOUND > failure collage.wav

Peter:

In so far we need a cunning culture of failure, which doesn't jump into success, but stays and is accepted without being tired of success or obsessive of success. Integrated in life.

Female speaker 1:

Failure is.

Feature

by Rilo chmielorz

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Tom Morton

Daniel Montoya

Co-operators:

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Roland,

Weston,

Timo,
Piotr Mordel and Adam Gusowski from the Club of the Polish Failures,
Professor Peter Bexte from the University of Art and Media in Cologne,
Marc Friedrich, book-author and economist from Stuttgart;
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Fail better worse now