

## Bert Tells What He Reads



## Robert Musil Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften

BOOK ONE  
Chapter 1-74

**Cover:**

*... Franz Josef, emperor, king and supreme commander of the Austrian Hungarian Monarchy, speaking to an aviator ...*

*... the awareness thatsw the progress of our understanding of nature from the times we ran after rabbits with clubs of wood until the moment we took the air would fit in a moderately sized private library, whereas all religion, philosophy, morality, patriotism and the like neatly stacked side by side would span the entire earth, while yet the larger part of it was not communicated through books but through stakes, sabres and bullets ... (Chapter 61)*

About Ulrich's Vienna

[http://monoskop.org/images/1/13/Janik\\_Allan\\_Toulmin\\_Stephen\\_Wittgensteins\\_Vienna.pdf](http://monoskop.org/images/1/13/Janik_Allan_Toulmin_Stephen_Wittgensteins_Vienna.pdf)

Robert Musil  
**Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften**

FIRST PART

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A KIND OF INTRODUCTION

- I -

*1. Some things going, remarkably, without consequences.*

Though when our nose is a bit red we could not care less about the exact wavelength of its particular colour, we always seem to be adamant in wishing to know exactly where we are. Well, this is, in august 1913, Vienna, the capital of the Imperial-Royal Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. All around us, in this traffic artery, objects and people move along each other in complicated streams, and no one is in any doubt that this will remain for ever - though we now know it would stay in existence for only 63 months more. A huge tangle of carts, horses, trams, pedestrians and even cars and motorbikes.

Closer inspection reveals that a truck just stopped at the side of a man who lies, motionless, on the pavement. People approach like bees at their hive. The driver's widely moving stretched arms suggest desperation and innocence.

An elegant couple, clearly of a standing warranting personalized wash marks sewn into their underwear by their staff, approaches as well. The woman senses an uncomfortable feeling in her stomach that indicates compassion. The man comes to her rescue by telling her he saw the victim moving a little when it got lifted into the ambulance. To take no chances, he adds some technical remarks about brake paths and traffic statistics, thus giving the woman the impression that the accident is, outside her horizon, firmly under control, as really, by the orderly way it took place, it seemed like having happened under regulatory orders of the local authorities.

*4 If there is a sense for reality, there must be a sense for possibility.*

The general belief in the existence of a sense for reality endowing blessed people with "realism" especially shows itself where head-shaking people discuss others unfortunately less blessed with it. This type of head-shaking is consistently observed if a case is discussed where someone - rarely indeed the speaker himself - fails to reach his objectives by choosing methods inspired by sheer phantasies based on hope or desperation. If it, I mean this sense for reality, really exists - and that is rarely denied - then there must be a sense for possibility as well, by which one is aware of reality, but only as a part of all possibilities that can realize themselves, others among which might do so tomorrow, or even might have done so already at another place.

Someone endowed with a sense for possibility sees reality though, but he is not limited by it for he sees it only as one of those many possibilities, the one that accidentally realized. And if your talents stretch that far you might go all the way to consider what qualities you could possibly have had. And if

you consider that well, you might, in the end, as a thinker about all those possible qualities, feel like you have none whatsoever.

And this book is about such a man. His name is Ulrich, he was 32 when this book starts, and mathematician (though, yes, all of this could have been totally different). Ulrich had just returned to Vienna from abroad to find out if he could fill a gap in himself: he had no roots. He was pretty sure of that since he had learned to find the roots even of very difficult systems of equations - if they had any, which not always is the case, and now he had found he fell in that latter class.

So he rented a shabby little castle, swallowed by the suburbs of Vienna, started to make and dispose of a lot of sketches for futuristic furniture, then decided to leave it to the taste of the suppliers in order to give way to tradition and thus have a good look at it within his own home, all this at the expense of his father, a wealthy, successful and influential lawyer - who, by the way, as a bourgeois with a lot of clients in the nobility, thought of this funny castle as slightly inappropriate.

After which he went living there and started to receive the girlfriend that in the meantime he had met, Leona, a properly shaped cabaret singer with a good appetite and a healthy commercial sense of carnal pleasures.

One evening he came home rather bruised and bleeding, deprived of the objects of value he had on him. Pondering how the disparities and forces of human society naturally tend to equilibrium, and having just been involved in some of that dynamism, what technical errors he had made (1. too slow, been in thoughts, 2. in counterattack started with the wrong adversary, 3. counterattack not surprising enough by failing to

mimic fear) he checked his injuries which turned out not serious.

After dwelling on the vanity of individual heroism in the light of the relevant social laws of reaction, it dawned again on him that next to his body, stretched on the street, an automobile had stopped, the driver of which had tried to lift him at the shoulders, after which a lady with a angel-like gaze had bent herself over him. On her question whether she could bring him somewhere for first aid he had given the address of his castle. On the way there his brains had started to function again and he had given the motherly sensual, warm being next to him, of roughly his age, a deeply carving lecture about body and mind in the martial arts, with some appendices concerning related philosophical subjects.

When dropped he failed to get her address. Now the next morning, while with some relief he realized that had protected him from another vain adventure, she reported at his door, heavily veiled, and they became lovers.

Bonadea. That was her name. She turned out married, upper class, endowed with elevated morality, but charged with an uncontrollable sensuality for which she had created an underworld hermetically closed off from the rest of her life, in which she had worn out a lot of men - or the other way around.

Then Kakania, the Imperial-Royal Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, an oiled bureaucracy that granted the citizen as much freedom as possible, under the patronizing leadership of a noble political elite. They cunningly exercised the tough job of governing a huge realm containing palm trees, glaciers, palaces and clay huts, where everybody had nine identities at least: an ethnical, a geographical, gender-, class- and

professional identity, conscious and subconscious identity, and finally everybody had its own private one in reserve. Those little waters streamed, intertwined, merged, split, but failed to reach every part of the estuary, so there were dry places. And this triggered a tenth identity: the way your mind formed ideas about those unfilled spaces and what could be done with them.

So is it everywhere, of course, but in Kakania it was all still a little bit smaller, a little bit less extreme, less feverish than in the other big cities of civilization.

### *9. Attempts to become a man of significance.*

Already three times Ulrich had made the attempt to become a man of significance. The first time, out of admiration for Napoleon, he had registered as reserve officer cadet in a horse regiment. There he soon discovered that his choice of profession would not bring what had inspired him. He left the service to learn the heroic trade of a technical engineer, who, with macho gaze and a pipe, sports cap and elegant horse boots travels between Cape Town and Canada in order to execute the daring designs of his company. But then his first colleagues turned out not to appeal to his imagination in being quite satisfied in the small jogtrot of their uneventful lives, easy-going curved backs grown around their design tables showing no sign of any frustration that the glory of their technical capability had failed to reach their souls.

Ulrich still thought his third attempt not too bad: mathematics, the foundation of science, of the feverish activity of the ever larger ant hills of people all around the world, not like the dead principle of a machine made by one of those design-table zombies who had memorized some rules without understanding, no! Alive, in your own brains!

He still liked it because he had thus far failed to realize that science would be unable to replace the old fashioned human soul, that the resultant of the two forces would lead smoothly to poison gases and bomber planes, and that mathematicians are totally unaware of this since they are, like racing cyclists, peddling industriously, looking at the rear tyre of the man in front of them.

He admired math and science as a revolutionary alternative (to the thinking of the past, God, family, fatherland, obedience, discipline etc.). As a permanent revolution even, for science kept putting itself upside down and thus regularly gave another boost to knowledge and technique.

This bizarre motivation had been unable to prevent him booking some results.

A "man of significance". Even that third time he had tried to become one, and acquired the status of "hope". "Talent", surely, "genius" maybe. But then came a dramatic moment in which he fell at odds with his own very purpose: newspapers started to write about genial authors and tenors, and when that shelf got full, genial mid halves and boxers appeared. But Ulrich finally broke when the first genial horse was reported. He had left his horse regiment in a bid to find a new direction in which now a bloody horse turned out in front of him!

But to be serious, the real thoughts this incident inspired him to were that solving a mathematical problem in fact does bear a strikingly resemblance to, say martial arts: you can attack left, or right. You can go in full attack, or test and explore the enemy with limited skirmishes. Going, which is a trifle, from there to hurdle racing, you see the profound similarity of man and horse. To make matters worse: horse performance allows



better data collection, so any conclusions about horses tends to be better founded.

This regrettable - but possibly promising, for this bulky book about him has just started - incident made him realize, only a few weeks ago, that he really was not keen to stay a mathematician for the rest of his life. It had taken place well beyond the Austrian borders. And now he lived in this silly little castle in the outskirts of Vienna.

He tended to think - and as the author of this book I opine the exaggeration in that not to be too exaggerated - that he had all talents to engage successfully in whatever he would choose. Moreover, he was tall, blond, muscular and trained like a panther. Nor did he need money. What to do?

He had decided to devote this year to consider what use of his capacities could give true meaning to his life.

#### *14 Old friends.*

Back in Vienna Ulrich could again regularly visit his old friends Walter and Clarisse. Walter was of his age, a youth friend. Clarisse, eight years younger, somehow joined them later on and married Walter, which Ulrich had regarded as a selfish disturbance of the group. But everything had changed: Walter, who had done many different things and, contrary to Ulrich, consistently got extolled for it, and was considered promising in many areas, everywhere sooner or later had acquired a fear for attachment and thus now had reached a state of stalemate and isolation. Clarisse thought she married, as she was ambitious to, a genius, but now was the only one left believing in him. In no respect she had stranded together with him, and thus had gained Ulrich's respect and interest.

Walter had shown to be able to take root and grow everywhere, but always had torn himself loose for fear of impurity and delusiveness. Fear for half-hood had now made him half himself, with an easy job, a sketch-book of which every used page immediately got thrown away, a house at the far edge of town and a grand piano on which to play for consolation like a method of stupefaction.

A second consolation for Walter was his thought that Europe was on the way down. Hopelessly. So for that, fortunately, he himself carried no blame either.

Now, without, like Walter, searching our footing in pessimism, we have to concede there was something with the times. Technically and economically the second half of the nineteenth century had developed fast, but in creative respect most efforts had been exercises in repetition. There had been great artistic innovators but they had been standing at the side line.

Then, suddenly - Walter and Ulrich happened to be young - something started to shake and move, but whether it was a new art, a new human being, a new morality, or maybe even a new social order, everybody had different thoughts about it. But loudly so! And practical men came along to go into action. And though of every new thing you heard about the contrary was to heard as well, from a distance you could see it was a huge fire.

Well, let us not exaggerate, for we speak only about that thin layer of the populace called intellectuals, the layer that, as we now all have been reminded of in the harsh way, shortly after got cleared by that familiar type of men descending upon them who have those decided and rough handed opinions and a natural talent in eradicating diversity.

Such a splendid moment of creative budding of course never could have had any major significance in the history of a biological species like mankind, but all the same it was a remarkable little happening, and Walter and Ulrich had witnessed it. When they were young one thought led them to the next, and often it seemed like they had invented them personally, at least the two of them together. Splendid thoughts giving you that glorious feeling "Here am I, look at me!". The imagination seemed to have risen to power.

It is a pity that no important thought is useless for stupidity. With the petrol-combustion engine you got those motorbike drivers passing before you with that weighty mimic of a roaring toddler. And if there had been lady swimmers somewhere having their muscles treated by one of those masseurs, you know, those ones who know how to keep looking like butchers in the face of cameras, then a few hours later a newspaper would get dropped in your box featuring a sharp picture of it all. And, don't forget: genial race horses. All of this should be accepted by everyone who embraces his own time, just like electricity, wireless communication and high rise. Ulrich could feel the occasional amusement, but he did not succeed to give himself to it.

Sometimes Ulrich imagined how the great church philosopher Thomas Aquinas, d. 1274 after having pressed, in loads of volumes, all frightful enlightened Greek-Arabic thoughts newly imported in his times in the Procrustean bed of Catholicism painstakingly and not without shedding some blood, so well that he would not have to wait long to become a real saint, would suddenly stand here, and then *wofffff!!* a tram along his nose. He could have started all over!

While Ulrich planned in the coming year to search for himself by means of participating observation, Walter wanted, it seemed, walk the jogtrot of his easy library job his father had found for him and for the rest be at home with as few thoughts as possible, which, he had found, was best achieved by playing the piano.

Clarisse, of course, should have been Walter's main consolation but she did not feel the vocation. As far as music was concerned Walter judged Bach the top after which things had gone down, but he played a lot of Wagner, which even deprived Clarisse of her corporeal lust for him.

It will not be a surprise that Walter imagined that his suffering could be alleviated by having a child, and that Clarisse did not share the ambition at all. More generally, Walter utterly failed to convert Clarisse to his pessimism. She even stubbornly kept believing in his genius, after all that is why she married him.

Something in her scared Walter. And this got more serious since the return of Ulrich. "I do not want to know what Ulo told you" he once said after she had returned from a walk with Ulrich, "that so called power of him that fascinates you so is nothing but emptiness". While saying that he sat down at the piano by way of protection.

Clarisse smiled.

"He is a man without qualities". This expression suddenly pleased him.

"What is that", Clarisse giggled.

"Nothing. That is nothing at all. In everything bad he sees some good somewhere and the other way around. The whole thing has no fixed shape, what he says is determined by accident, and a little later he says something else ... well you probably do not understand me".

"O I do, but that's what I like about him".

"You can't be serious"

Meanwhile Clarisse had started eating a cheese sandwich, so she could only laugh with her eyes.

In these attacks of rivalry, old frustrations popped up in Walter, from the times they were small boys and he was the weakest of the two.

#### 8. *Moosbrugger.*

Moosbrugger was a broad-shouldered always benignly smiling carpenter, whom many a woman would follow without hesitation if he told her he knew the way she had been asking for. But he had murdered a prostitute, and the remains did not look like he had killed the victim in the most efficient way within reach.

He got in the newspapers, which turned out to boost sales, so now he was an Austrian celebrity. To maintain this happy combination as long as possible, his earlier murders, detainment and psychiatric treatments got played down. And psychiatrists maintained, both in court and press, interesting disagreements about Moosbrugger's *compos mentis*. He became proverbial and essential newspaper amusement.

For Ulrich as well. He studied the news carefully. From early age, Moosbrugger had roamed around in towns and countryside, hunting for jobs as carpenter aid. But often they were not to be found and he ended up sleeping in stealth on the straw of some barn, to be thrown out by a furious farmer, to go look for something edible badly watched by its owner. The lifestyle regularly led to confrontations and every time he won one it got added to his police record.

No use for him to approach women of course. His forced abstinence twisted his mind. Voices would call him day and night, he had already told the judge after his very first murder.

He had profited from his sojourn in jails and madhouses by learning high German judicial and psychiatric jargon, so you now could hear him say: "this should be regarded as the basic tenet underlying my brutishness".

In sum: Moosbrugger was ideal popular entertainment. And he enjoyed it himself.

Psychiatrists who preferred to quickly label him with some multisyllabic terms of Greek etymology to lock him up in a madhouse were, of course, the enemy of the people. But no worries: with broad approval - not to use the word "ovations" - Moosbrugger showed himself on top of these professionals, and showed them all corners of court. They did not stand a chance and he proved irrefutably that he did not belong in a madhouse.

And thus it ended, Ulrich went there and witnessed it, with the death penalty, after which Moosbrugger, while taken away said: "I am satisfied though I have to concede you did sentence a psychiatric patient".

Which in Ulrich popped up the thought that if humanity as a whole could have one single dream, this would be Moosbrugger.

*19. A letter to Ulrich from his father.*

My dear son,

... months passed ... not much news ... hear speaking about you in laudatory fashion ... but first steps always boisterous ... after which ... forgotten ... at you age now ... high time ... no neglect of social and scientific relationships ... His Excellence Count Stallberg ... would like you to ... provided you manage to win him for you ... future reassured. The issue is this:

At the end of 1918 Emperor Wilhelm will celebrate the 30-year jubilee of his office. News reaches Vienna that preparations have already started. It would be a disaster if those Prussian celebrations would throw the 70-year jubilee of the office of our own Emperor in the shade. That is why, though we still have five years to go, in our own Empire a movement has started ... our jubilee is a few months later ... hence the fortunate idea has come up ... to make the entire year 1918 a Austrian Imperial Year ... a for your age highly honourable place in the committee ... and please, as I told you so many times ... I am almost ashamed when I am asked again about you ... do visit Sectionschef Tuzzi. His wife, as you know she is almost a niece of you, has an important role in the committee.

Father

## SECOND PART



## AND THUS IT HAPPENED

*20 For thoroughness and ardour, qualities seem not required.*

Well, with nothing to do except a single court case of a lunatic murderer, Ulrich decided to follow his father's recommendations. Curiosity. That was about it. But yet, it happened: Ulrich decided to allow reality to touch him.

It already started with the driver, who stopped before entering the Hofburg area, for "inside he was not allowed to stop". The first thing Ulrich felt of the power he was approaching was by failing to change the driver's mind on this. After passing all those yellow uniforms and helmets, silent and straight in the sun like birds on a sand bank, he was led, walking in one of his best suits, to Graf Stallberg. Short inquisitive looks from left and right made clear to him he was nothing here.

There he arrived at the count's room. It turned out that at this level of portliness one wears his whiskers shaven at the chin, just like the ordinary Kakanian is used to see it of official receptionists and station-masters, suggesting that this is what you tend to wear whenever your profession is based on subservience.

After politely having answered some questions about himself Ulrich suddenly thought of Moosbrugger and said: "Your Excellency, could I use this occasion in favour of a man who recently unjustly got sentenced to death?"



That surely made the count's eyes open widely. And he immediately saw how embarrassed Ulrich was by his own initiative, which prompted the count to a truly magnanimous benevolence, for he conversed for a while about it as though two gentlemen were engaged in state affairs.

But in a tactical, yet decided way he conducted the conversation back to Ulrich's father and the Imperial jubilee, while at the same time writing a letter to the president of the committee stating: "... we are fully entitled to hope to have found an assistant with thoroughness and ardour ...", and in no time Ulrich stood on the corridor again, with the letter, as a child that got a sweet at goodbye.

Flabbergasted he looked at the letter and mumbled in himself: "f...k!, this made me land somewhere I did not want to be at all".

There was something here. What the hell was it? Ulrich tried to trace it on the way out, and he succeeded: this was a surprisingly real place.

(He should have realized that a few years earlier, when at the age on which Napoleon, so admired by Ulrich, made his first visit to the Emperor of Austria and beat his army so thoroughly that the latter, in gratitude for being allowed to get off with his life, loyally did what he was told for a decent number of years)

*21. A count with vision (vision under construction).*

In another room of the Hofburg, at least as beautiful, His Serene Highness Count Leinsdorf, the spiritual father of that noble jubilee initiative in the meantime having become known as the "Parallel Action", had a passage read to him of Fichte's

*Reden an die Deutschen Nation.* He had ordered to collect the book because this passage might be suitable to win over parts of the nation who identified themselves as German rather than part of the Imperial-Royal Austrian-Hungarian Empire. But unfortunately the passage contained something protestant. He told his assistant the book would no longer be needed and could be returned to the library.

"So we keep thing things the way we have them", the count ordered, "four points: Emperor of Peace, European Milestone, True Austria, and Property and Education. You can write the draft".

Now the passage had turned out unsuitable, the count felt a bit relieved not to be forced to make the bow for that type of subjects. They would come by themselves. His Serene Highness was still deeply hurt by the Austrian defeat in the war of 1866 against Prussia, that made Prussia the leading power in the German sphere and had forced Austria to satisfy itself with what was lying behind, full of alien nations, and in as far as there were Germans there, it had become fashionable among them to despise the fatherland of His Serene Highness, since, after all, the German Nation was about to be constituted under the leadership of Prussia.

No, here was a noble job for the Austrian nobility. The Austrian Imperial jubilee was a God given occasion to repair and reinforce the unity of the fatherland.

*22. A giant chicken busy to spread her spirit.*

When at last out of the Hofburg no hair on Ulrich's head longer thought of visiting count Leinsdorf, but he remained curious

about his "big niece", whom his father almost begged him to go and visit.

The inconsistency of the results of his different enquiries were puzzling: "beautiful and shrewd", "amazingly stupid", "simply the ideal woman". Wherever he could ask whether she had a lover, he got answers in the vein of: "strange, I never asked myself".

A beauty, but of spirit, Ulrich had suspected, a second Diotima.

But she called herself Ermelina (while her name just was Hermine). At the time she had met Tuzzi, who had still been a civilian officer somewhere down in the entirely feudal Foreign Office, hence without any perspective, her parents had considered him a good marriage partner. Miraculously, Tuzzi rose to become the right hand ("and head", gossip went) of the minister of its most important section, which had made Diotima's disciplined secondary education fruitful in her contacts with all those important people now frequenting her house for need of Tuzzi's favours.

At entering her house Ulrich was surprised. She turned out a highly attractive lady, tall, of about his age. At meeting he held her hand, fat and weightless, a bit too long. It felt like a thick leaf in spring, so it seemed that the long pointed nails could fly away into the improbable any moment. The hand, after all basically a rather shameless organ touching and probing everything like a dog's snout, had overpowered him for a second.

Diotima started with an explanation of the Parallel Action. A lot of spirit passed but in between Ulrich regularly spotted the black-yellow tape that the servants of the Emperor use to bind

their official files. But she did not need much time to reach the: "We must and want to realize a very big idea".

"Do you have anything specific in mind?"

Well, you know, Ulrich should really not have asked this. First: of course she didn't. Second, he knew very well that in being told such a thing one ought to nod with a deeply impressed mimic. And in silence.

He had put Diotima on the back foot, tried to restore her with a joke, but utterly failed to make her smile.

Not much later he understood his audience had expired. He said goodbye with the impression that the corporeal part of their meeting had fared better. From both sides.

### *23. First interference by a great man.*

Dr. Paul Arnheim, about forty, son of one of the richest steel magnates of the Prussian Empire, a jew, had just arrived in Vienna.

He was thought to have the ambition to surpass his father and prepare for the office of government minister. Tuzzi, with his excellent foreign contacts, knew that would never succeed, unless the world would perish first.

(and even Tuzzi did not yet know that the world would soon adopt this daring project so successfully that within five years all non-Austrian parts of his beloved Empire would be within the competence of his very own department of foreign affairs).

Rachel, Diotima's chamber maid, called "Rachelle" of course, was talking excited about all she had heard: Arnheim was told to have come with his own train and have hired an entire hotel. And his boy was a negro.

Diotima believed nothing of it (though the last was true), but she let her talk since she could be pretty sure this great man would soon be at her doorstep.

She was not at all nervous about that prospect, for in the last years she had become the shining host of her own salon, now chosen by His Serene Highness Count Leinsdorf (an "office" he even said) in directing the Parallel Action. So here could and had to be a warm welcome for every loyal citizen of the Empire: the Czech, Slovak, Silesian, Galician, Transylvanian, Hungarian, Croat and Bosnian who would be enabled to express his positive feelings for the Emperor-King and ponder the ways in which to give solemn and celebratory shape to them in the coming Imperial Year. 1918. A salon for all, so why not for an exceedingly rich Prussian jew?

#### *24. Property and education.*

An "office", as Leinsdorf said. Naturally, a *reichsfreie* count (directly under the Emperor) like His Serene Highness, was and ought to be of the deepest religiosity, but, being the owner of quite some factories, he realized that not all skills crucial to these modern times were exhaustively explained in the Bible. Yet he was deeply convinced of the utter necessity to cherish the tie between business and the eternal truths in profound general civil education, and in that sense His Serene Highness not only was a religious, but also a civilian idealist.

And it was from this perspective that His Serene Highness viewed Diotima's salon, where you could meet Kensinists and Kanists, you could see a linguist of Bo searching for words in a conversation with a physicist of elementary particles, hear a toncologist excuse himself for nearly spoiling his caviar on a quantum physicist, not to mention the representatives of literature and poetry, who always had to be selected carefully and in moderate quantities, and hence could wait in vain for their next invitation when the newspapers had started to employ more superlatives to some colleagues.

But the non-professional aspect was important as well: in these times in which economics and physics started to press theology from behind, this aspect related more and more to bank directors, politicians, top government officers and their spouses. And they were far from rare in Diotima's salon.

Finally: the women. In this wide realm Diotima did not primarily think of intellectual women, but had, from her elevated idea of the "unbroken woman" a preference for "ladies", who understood that being a lady is a full and complete vocation that only pales when it comes with side activities. This guideline made, as a collateral advantage, her salon, in which a lot of the conversation was *à deux*, very fashionable in circles of young men of high nobility.

Count Leinsdorf did stop short of calling the resulting salomix "true distinction", so he used the keywords "property and education". And the reason he called it "office" was that in His view "office" was not limited to staff of Imperial ministries: literally all roles in society, worker, ruler and craftsman, you name it, essentially were "offices".

An evening convention in a salon is prone to look like a unity, and that was what Diotima called "culture". She enormously appreciated Leinsdorf's intense interest, especially since she did not know that His Serene Highness had been hesitant to receive all these people from quite diverse backgrounds in his own palace, for reasons of monitoring and security.

Yet, Diotima was not problem-free: the spirit turned out not only great but it chiefly was a huge lot and difficult to grasp in its variety. Count Leinsdorf could easily walk in, say something about profound education, and go home again. The chief bulk problem was the width, not the depth. If you only just witnessed that even discussing the simplicity of ancient Greece or the meaning of the prophets while that night you invited two experts in the field instead of one, the case got crammed with doubts and unconfirmed hypotheses. And that was one of the reasons the company tended to split up in groups of two: thus one could at least keep an overview of the differences of opinions rising in conversation.

Moreover, the warmth between the nobility in her invitation lists and the nobility of mind that her ambition had inspired her to herself, did far from always develop to her satisfaction.

All these problems she had bundled, in the analysis of the adverse forces in her life, in the awareness that not only do we live in a time of culture, but also in a time of civilization, by which she meant everything that sadly resisted her attempts to elevation. And her husband was part of that.

25. *Diotima's concept of civilization (or: the suffering of the married soul).*

To Diotima, it felt like she had no soul. If she had one, it felt like being hidden totally out of reach.

She had the impression that in her youth she still had regularly caught a glimpse of it. She had browsed the Bible but those mysterious and vague words had not given a clue. It would have cheered her up had she ever dared to discuss the matter with a less unfortunate human being. For she would have learned that it is generally sensed as a flimsy being that creeps away as soon as you start about algebraic progressions.

Maybe what she had in mind was a little capital of power to love that she had still been the owner of when she married, and for which Section Chief Tuzzi, a cerebral utility-person, had not been a suitable investment: a hard working man with a strict day schedule in which everything had its place, who, when returned home, swiftly went to his study to keep his superiority in knowledge over the rest of his department on the desired level. Erotics had its place as well: once a week before sleeping. *Just* before sleeping.

Before his marriage Tuzzi had been a brothel client of the non-annoying and calculable sort and he had taken that protocol into his marriage. Once every week Diotima betrayed, as it were, her body to him, and that subjection, though she knew it was not held immoral, filled her with disgust. Tuzzi was unaware of any problem.

And thus she had become a fervent and ambitious idealist. She sensed that her social expansion was not taken very seriously



by her husband, which fanned her fire by some grudge and rivalry.

It was in this time that Dr. Arnheim and his little negro arrive in Vienna and shortly after got received by Diotima.

*26. The unification of soul and economy. The omnipotent man wishes to enjoy the Baroque magic of old Austrian culture, which triggers the birth to the Parallel Action of an idea.*

Diotima had sent Rachel out and enjoyed having the little negro all for herself for a while. Her thoughts (and polite questions) touched his benefactor Arnheim, heir of a world wide steel concern, writer of books she had read with approval, about the unification of the economy with the soul and about the power of ideas.

With approval indeed, for Diotima heard everywhere that politics and diplomacy of the ancient nobility stood with one leg in the grave and that the disgust of scientific experts also started to be felt more and more.

What she liked as well was that he did not look jewish at all (while her physical appearance had made on Arnheim a slightly corpulent but otherwise Hellenistic impression, with just that little bit of extra flesh to not make it too classical).

And then his motivation to visit Austria. That had charmed her enormously: he had said he had needed a repose of all that calculation, the materialism, of the empty rationality, in the Baroque magic of ancient Austrian culture!

Hearing that she had been unable to prevent herself telling him hear total endeavour was to liberate the soul of civilization, an

issue "all notable circles in Vienna nowadays were occupied with".

Arnheim just managed to let her finish and said at once that, yes, "new ideas urgently had to be brought into spheres of power".

By which an idea was born that had thus far lacked in the Parallel Action.

*27. Essence and content of a great idea.*

In the first instance, this great idea showed itself to Diotima in the form of the certainty that the Prussian Arnheim should be charged with the leadership of the great Austrian initiative, though since the Parallel Action was partly based on some undeniably Austrian-Prussian rivalry, this would require some magnanimity. But wasn't this exactly what the great initiative was about?

But this first appearance was merely the body of the idea. As far as the soul was concerned, Diotima's first feelings were chaste and decent, and there appeared in her innocent mind the muscular body of Ulrich: in the vicinity of an Arnheim something might grow out of this young man!

*28. A chapter to skip if you do not have the work at thoughts in high esteem .*

Ulrich once got the idea how to use some types of differential equations to describe some specific physical processes. It still regularly resurfaced in his mind and so he sat in beautiful weather, inside behind closed curtains at his desk, messing around with mathematical expressions.

But his test example, a state-equation of water, distracted him. His mind jumped to all water on our planet and the misunderstandings about it from the times of the ancient Greeks until, well, today, really. And how dangerous it had been to point at them. Even today, those who had learned that some could change it in wine, and that it can be used to baptize people, and whom this information had endowed with a profound feeling of security, could get so unbearably sobered by scientific truth that to monitor subsequent events the contribution of close police alertness would be prudent if not required.

He opened the curtains and wondered how this scientific thinking could have made this astonishing progress in the last few centuries, especially when you consider that every thought immediately disappears when someone says that somebody else has a pimple on his nose.

Dreadful.

*29. Bright moments and interruptions of normal consciousness.*

Ulrich had agreed a sign with Bonadea to indicate he was at home alone. He always was, but did not make the sign, though he knew that sooner or later she would announce herself anyway, and she did.

When angry she was much more attractive so in short notice everything had happened again.

Half in his thoughts, he hoped she would dress herself quickly and part, driven by obligations. But she did not, as he noticed, checking in stealth. She even interrupted dressing entirely, apparently piqued by his lack of attention, waiting for him to

take an initiative. Half dressed she now lost herself in an art book.

Suddenly Moosbrugger submerged in Ulrich. An entire piece of the interrogation, literally, as if a recording got played in his head. Did he hear voices? He first got haunted by some anxiety, but if indeed this was a first experience with such a thing, he decided, it was not so bad after all.

When Bonadea finally had put away the book, to cash in, half dressed and in hurt pose the reconciliation she aspired, instead of that she had to elaborately endure Ulrich's view on Moosbrugger. She tried to get rid of this scary carpenter by swiftly choosing the side of the lady whose untimely decease he had caused, hoping that Ulrich's interest in the murderer would cease now he was the only one of the two left, and the way would be cleared for a conversation from woman to man.

But Ulrich wanted to know if it was her consistent habit to choose for the victim, and if so, how she morally justified her breaches of marriage.

Breaches of marriage! Especially the plural offended Bonadea. She sat down and directed her gaze to the ceiling with a despising facial expression.

*32. A forgotten, history of utmost importance with the wife of a major.*

What was this Moosbrugger doing in his brain? What affected him, Ulrich asked himself, in that hassle, that yellow press issue, virtually restricted to Vienna, about how and where exactly with his knife he ... this gruesome game with a willing

victim of the media. He did not consider for a moment to interfere in it, at whichever side.

The whole thing touched him somewhere else. He thought of that sentence: "Even if the souls would be visible a sodomite could walk through the crowds without any sense of evil". He had read it in Maeterlinck, whom meanwhile he had come to judge worse than perfume on bread, but it rendered that opprobrious feeling never in his life to have returned to those other, those real sentences of that mysterious language, of soft dark innerness, so contrasting to the authoritarian voice of math and science.

He had been around twenty when something weird had happened. He fell, well, let's face it, he fell in love with the wife of an army major, not any more so young, with some artistic talents that she, for reasons of her social standing, only showed on weddings and parties. To Ulrich his feelings for the woman had been disconcerting for thus far he had identified love with fucking. So it felt like a disease.

To the woman in question it should have been disorienting as well: hearing a twenty year old lieutenant inform her, as through a funnel filled with turbulent thoughts, about stars, bacteria, Balzac, Nietzsche en things like that.

Some totally undeliberated horse stumbling during a ride had degenerated, before any of them realized, into serious kissing. Only after that had started both sides started independently to wonder what one suddenly was doing.

When Ulrich wrote her he had to leave for strictly unavoidable travel, the wife of the major felt, under her tears, at once relief. Ulrich took the first train to the nearest coast, to take no

chances boarded a ferry to an island, where fortunately the whole thing went over.

Well, and now this Moosbrugger ...

*33. Breach with Bonadea.*

But we left the story where Bonadea was lying on the divan. After noting that was to no avail, she had given up her demonstrative ceiling staring. After some more irritated talking past each other she brusquely resumed her dressing, with had no effect either. From her movements Ulrich inferred that she would not come back

And indeed, with some effort, but bravely, she kept her sadness to herself, put her veil back on and walked out of the silly castle, correctly accompanied by Ulrich.

*34. A warm jet and a wall that got cold.*

That done, Ulrich had lost his appetite for math. He resolved to visit Walter and Clarisse in the evening, though they never came to him. In his hall he wrote a postal notice to announce himself. The objects at the wall of course always hang still, but now they seemed to do so only because the time had been stopped, especially those antlers that looked like Bonadea when she did her hair.

Everything there seemed to have stopped to take leave of its role for a moment: I am purely accidental, necessity spoke. With pimples and pustules I would have been equally attractive, said beauty.

Which was the feeling of all moments in Ulrich's life that he remembered to have been decisive.

He took to the street to post the message. There everything moved again and he was between all those people doing their people-things, like a wave between the waves. A nice tickling feeling after several days among differential equations.

Ten, fifteen years ago, when at grammar school and with that passionate and feverish Viennese cultural revolution going on, it had felt even better on the streets, though there immediately had been that oppressing suspicion that the false and empty slogans echoed in the most powerful and profitable way, as a result of which most heroes of that time indeed had let themselves be smothered in one or other soporific role.

Most people love to see the world being prepared for them, stuffed with all comforts. And in most periods of history this is catered for: the world, the simple range of options clearly indicated, so well finalized and complete, like chiseled in stone, making you feel like being a superfluous haze blowing over it. But few are aware of it, while most people in middle age no longer know how they found themselves, their wife, character, profession and success, while at the same time they realise very well that there is not much anymore that can be done about it. They call the whole complex their qualities, and would not like to hear that they simply lie waiting, like glued on the sticky bottom of a carnivorous plant, for their end.

In that stage the memory of one's own youth has largely faded. That was the time where counterforces seemed at work, the will to break loose, fly, be different, if necessary by endangering one's own life.

But even the targets for youthful movements one likes to find ready to pick: whether it is a new beard fashion or a new thought, once on display, the youth throws itself on it like sparrows on breadcrumbs. Napoleon already knew how to make youth aspire to die in battle by the millions, and now entire platoons of scientists set out to find how to derive unprecedented economic advantages from adolescent energy.

Ulrich reached a little square where during the Viennese cultural revolution his friends had lived (though he had not known them all in person, they were all his friends). But these people, now professors, celebrities and names, stranded in petrification, already for a long time lived elsewhere, and the little square now was like a fossil as well.

But everyone telling its history will say: there were ...

*35. Director Leo Fischel and the Principle of Insufficient Reason.*

On that very square he encountered Leo Fischel, an old acquaintance, now "managing clerk with the title of director" at Lloyd's Vienna. He was irritated since he had put aside for too long a letter from count Leinsdorf, which most probably had something to do with his healthy commercial opinions concerning patriotic actions instigated from higher circles: "stinks".

And in this he felt vindicated by the frequency of occurrence of an adjective he fortunately never encountered in his business correspondence: "the true ...".



But Leinsdorf was not merely from high circles. He was an important business man as well. Lloyd's did his stock exchange transactions. Leo had to do something.

Ulrich might be of help now, Leo had heard, he had something to do with it. Though in a hurry he quickly approached him: "Hello, Ulrich! Listen. I know what are patriotism and Austria, but what is true patriotism and true Austria? Tell me."

"The PIR", Ulrich answered.

That fell well: in Leo's world it rained abbreviations all day. But the distrust was not taken away: "No, be serious for a second, I am late for a meeting".

"The Principle of Insufficient Reason", Ulrich said, "as a philosopher you know what it is, and how man goes straight against it by creating only what has insufficient reason".

Leo felt tempted to argue against this but his hurry won it: "listen, I have to do something, I got that letter, please help me a little".

"OK. The best is to think of an enzyme or catalyst", Ulrich ignored Leo's hand, which made a throw away movement, as well as his glance on his watch. "It starts a process but at the end nothing of it is found in the result. Think of the fertility of wars, and all dirty tricks and malice it produced, in boosting human progress".

"Oh, please", Leo whispered.

"I assure you, nobody yet knows what 'the true ... ' is, but you bet: it is on the verge of becoming real".

Thoughtful, Ulrich saw Leo running away from the square, to his meeting.

*36. In line with to the abovementioned principle the Parallel Action exists tangibly before it is known what it is.*

Leo Fischel believed, like all bankers in the world in august 1913 did and would keep doing for exactly 16 years to come, in progress.

But he felt he could not trust this to be the same thing as Leinsdorf's progress. And since he had developed the habit to equate expertise in some issue with the daring to invest capital in it on your own account, he considered himself not an expert in the issues that Leinsdorf dealt with in his letter.

"Not knowing" meant, in Leo's banking routines: finding an expert adviser. In this case his first thoughts went to his director-general, who fortunately also had received the letter, had discussed it with his boss, so Leo could limit himself to listen for a while with the facial expression of awe, and modestly retire.

This consultation did not remove his first impression of things, but made clear to him he should keep this impression to himself, also at home - his quarrelsome wife was from circles of high bureaucracy, and he now understood her background had made him the only one in his modest ranks who had received an invitation - and that this issue would not burden him in any way as long as he kept showing himself impressed whenever the Parallel Action was discussed.

Meanwhile in Lloyd's, high above Leo, von Meier-Ballot, the governor, had concluded that this, if he managed to talk and

donate with some agility, could lead him to an appointment as minister, which would constitute not a small windfall for himself and his bank.

Von Meier-Ballot's impression got reinforced when he met the ex-ministers von Holtzkopf and Baron Wisnieszky, who had been requested to serve as provisional ministers during attempts to form another government that could count on sufficient support in the Empire, and that done, had been relieved to receive the request to vacate their functions for the next failed attempt.

Thus Holtzkopf and Wisnieszky knew the problem from within and who knows something like Leinsdorf was trying now ... von Meier-Ballot decided to closely monitor the developments of the Parallel Action.

Thus even here Leinsdorf's method, that he himself called "first give people knife and fork, then teach them how to eat decently" worked.

*37. A journalist invents the "Austrian Year": count Leinsdorf in trouble. His Serene Highness longs vehemently for Ulrich.*

Ulrich, we bring back to mind, had decided not to use the letter he got from count Stallberg in which the latter had expressed himself positively about Ulrich's "thoroughness and ardour" and proposed him as the honorary secretary of great initiative. Which means he would not visit His Serene Highness count Leinsdorf, though you could almost say that as a subject of the Empire he got the order to do so. Ulrich had limited his interest to Diotima, as he had baptized her.

Also we remind the reader of Diotima's sudden view of Ulrich, at the moment the pervasive importance of Arnheim had started to twinkle on her firmament, as a minor but well-shaped star in the same constellation.

Now we shall learn below how count Leinsdorf, who merely had heard about Ulrich, desperately started to long for him, yes, even one day prayed he would surface - though the next day he already felt ashamed about it.

Something had gotten out of hand: a journalist had heard something and had, to fill his article, produced some meritorious fantasies about and "Austrian Year" that would be in the making. This had triggered lots of reactions from all kinds of sides. Whoever encourages the public to be "Austrian" may meet little enthusiasm but an "Austrian Year" turned out, for many, a good occasion to bring all kinds of issues under the attention, such as a vomiting pan that can be shut with a simple grip, the abolition, in public places, for reasons of hygiene, of salt pots from where one takes salt with his knife, the general adoption of the stenography of Öhl, the return to a more natural life style, a metapsychical theory of the movement of celestial bodies, the simplification of the system of government and the reformation of sexuality.

Count Leinsdorf had hoped to trigger: a powerful message arising from the bosom of the people, a message of unity and patriotism, under the guidance of scholarship, the clerical world and those high industrial names well known from charitable manifestations, but this popular creative frenzy of world improvement, this sudden cacophony of screams from innumerable ignoramuses demanding to be liberated from their spiritual dungeons filled him with outright horror.

His Serene Highness ordered for a search of Ulrich, whose connection to his silly castle had not yet reached the population register. Neither could Diotima help him, who, by the way opined now to have a much better candidate for the post of honorary secretary of the initiative. But Leinsdorf curtly told her he could not use a Prussian, not even a reform Prussian, and that things would get tough enough without something like that. And he (the idea to simply contact Ulrich's father should in this novel, for reasons that will become clear below, not come up in his mind) told her, he suddenly got that idea, that he would go at once to his friend the President of Police, who after all should be able to find every citizen of the Empire.

38. *Clarisse and her demons.*

*Quatre main* was raging again when Ulrich's announcement arrived.

"That is a pity", Walter reacted being read the message.

Then the piano piece rolled off again as a steam train, before it a multiple series of busy staves, behind a sounding landscape to listen to.

It went very well. "Would this be the day?", Walter asked himself. He did not want to get Clarisse back by force. The awareness had to surface in her spontaneously en then she would softly bend over to him.

But even before the last keystrokes her head had already parted elsewhere. In an unstable cloud images rose in her, melted, merged, overlapped, disappeared, that was normal to her. Often many thoughts at the same time, a little later none at all, but then you could feel the demons, standing behind the stage. And

the order in time of experiences, so helpful to many people, was a kind of veil to Clarisse, with it folds sometimes densely together, then dissolving in a hardly visible little haze.

Now she was suddenly encircled by Ulrich, Walter and Moosbrugger (whom Ulrich had told her about).

One should really never stop playing piano, she thought. She threw the score back to the front and started the piece all over again.

Walter laughed and joined.

"What is Ulrich doing with all that mathematics?", Clarisse asked.

Walter shrugged his shoulder while playing on, as if he was driving a car.

One should play on till the very end, Clarisse thought. Suppose you would not stop until you died, what of all contrary things people say about Moosbrugger would turn out true?. She had no idea.

She knew that some time she would do something tremendous, but she had no clue what it would be. She felt it most clearly in music and she hoped Walter would become an even greater genius than Nietzsche, not to talk about Ulrich, who long ago gave her Nietzsche's work.

She had already proved her mettle: she had learned to play the piano, now better than Walter. She had read an awful lot of books, now suddenly appearing as black birds flitting around a girl in the snow, changing into a black wall with white islands

painted on it. The black scared her. "Is he the devil?", she thought, "has the devil become Moosbrugger?"

Her fingertips plunged back in the waterfall of music. On the bottom of the creek snakes, twists and coils. She entered Moosbrugger's cell, her heart trembling, but when that resided she relaxed and filled the entire space with herself. She put her hands on Moosbrugger's eyes and he changed into a handsome young man. She now stood next to him, very beautiful herself, not so skinny and weedy as she really was.

Walter's playing got a bit unsure and she immediately knew the cause: the child. He wanted a child. That was her daily battle.

She jumped away from the piano and threw the cover down. Walter was just quick enough to save his hands. He knew: this was Ulrich. He awakened something scary that deep down in her was pulling at its chain. He feared it.

No she did not love Ulrich, Clarisse answered him angrily. But Walter sensed a stupefying collateral that had nothing to do with anger.

It got dark.

*39. A man without qualities consists of qualities without a man.*

Ulrich did not go to Walter and Clarisse, for his conversation with Leo got him submerged in thoughts. That extra social echo that consistently lacked in case of truth, and then always sooner or later lies would manage provoke it, "only lies produce progress", he thought, "I should have told Leo".

Ulrich had no qualities but this of course did not mean he had learned nothing. He did things, in a sense even passionately. That is how he learned B would follow from A and how to do specific things like boxing, horse riding, mathematics. But this had merely built itself up in him as a huge catalogue of qualities without a man, in which this man without qualities could browse without sensing any personal involvement.

It is not so difficult to describe the basics of this thirty-two year old man Ulrich: an astonishing mental agility indicating a wide range of talents and a dominant instinct of attack. His method of learning consists of using others as inspiration for experiments with himself but he will never identify with anyone under some banner like "I want to be like him". He does not acknowledge general rights, only local personal rights he judges some individual has earned. Nor does he recognize the existent view on duties, instead, and sparingly, his thoughts touch on one he decides he should adopt, many of which later on he discovers were not good and he should drop them. He never trumpets them forth.

Or: had Ulrich died as a single fertilized egg-cell, his life would have been perfect. Now he was wrestling with all those bits and parts.

Everything seems to have a spirit: the spirit of loyalty, of love, the male spirit, the educated spirit, the greatest spirit of our times, we hold high the spirit of all kinds of things, we act in the spirit of our movement, but it is hard indeed to encounter a spirit on its own, unconnected to anything. In this book we do.

(In case the reader vaguely senses that what we just called "the basics of Ulrich" are in fact his qualities, I do hope this came in your mind (like in mine) together with Clarisse's black wall,



that a slight fear similar to hers is coming up in you, and that you can keep this slight fear at safe distance by finding some frantic activity comparable to Clarisse's life long piano playing, and my life long writing).

*40. King of spirit arrested, secretary of honour found for the Parallel Action.*

As said: it got dark.

For quite a while Ulrich had sauntered on in that dark, while thoughts had streamed through his head that would be too much even for a talented author to put down in a few pages, when he, yes, we have to say, got attacked from behind by a quality.

It went like this: a workers' newspaper had written critically about the Parallel Action, and a bourgeois newspaper had done so with approval. As a result, two bourgeois walked along, on their way home dealing positively with the great initiative, while a worker, on the way home in the opposite direction after having consumed the alcohol equivalent of his wage, appeared inclined to give shape to his contrary feelings about the subject in a corporeal fashion whereby he - and his state may allow us to understand and forgive this - overlooked an officer on duty charged with the maintenance of public order standing in the background, but moreover, on approach of the said officer, swiftly changed his target and landed his fist on the chin of the profoundly loyal state institution, and so at a speed well above that required to tear skin ... to make a short story even shorter, two more officers hurried to the incident, the worker, on the ground already, engaged in prolonged and fierce resistance, at which, as said, Ulrich suddenly got haunted by a quality which made him claim, right in the middle of the escalating

excitement, that the workers' alcoholic state put him beyond capacity to commit crimes or trespasses of insult, affront or offence, and should just be put to bed, whereby, unfortunately, either Ulrich's body language or the majority in numbers now acquired by the Empire caused the arrest of our young, or at least not yet really middle aged, promising scholar.

There he stood in front of a desk at which an officer sat, who did not look up from his job of writing on papers and storing them in files. Besides Ulrich, one of his three arresting officers stood in military pose of attention. That is how it remained for a while. At a distance, he heard the snoring of his protégé, already locked up, and some more sounds suggesting efficiently stifled protest and the tinkling of large metal rings sporting lots of keys.

But then things went in motion. Name? Age? Profession? Address? He had no hope his name would ring a bell here and sadly could not expect to be inquired for his list of publications. Instead there was interest for his color of eyes, his length, his hair, the shape of his face ("oval") and his peculiar characteristics ("none"). But then came the profession of the father. Member of the House of Lords, yes, that changed things a bit, but to Ulrich's feeling insufficiently, so he lied being a friend of count Leinsdorf and be secretary of honour of the great patriotic initiative, which even should now be known in this shabby police hut.

The immediate effect seemed counterproductive. He caused some shyness to the highest officer around, a sergeant, who did no longer wish to risk burning his fingers at this case, nor to disappoint his three still deeply indignant watchmen by sending the suspect home, and shrewdly escaped from the dilemma by claiming that someone who not only had insulted officers and

hindered the proper execution of their duty, but also claimed to be a high dignitary should immediately be forwarded to the Police Presidency.

At arrival at the Presidency the meeting room light were on, there was an urgent meeting of the leadership. At the building's reception Ulrich got the impression that the futility and lack of interest of the case got immediately recognized but one deemed it unfortunately impossible to drop the case there and then. Some discussion arose behind the scene, Ulrich's shabby police hut file got read again, and curiously enough, a broad smile appeared on the face of Ulrich's judge. He jumped off his chair and disappeared, returned after ten minutes and said: "Herr President would like to speak you personally".

"A misunderstanding Herr Dokter", the president said, "I have been informed about the incident and ...", here he started to look a bit naughty, "I am afraid I have to sentence you to a small punishment ...", and there he waited a bit to see if Ulrich would get the point. But Ulrich did not. The president continued: "... His Serene Highness ...", and he paused again, looking at Ulrich, "only a few hours ago count Leinsdorf has inquired about you in a most pressing fashion! ... And your not in the address book Herr Doktor". The president said so jokingly in a voice as if he read the charge.

Ulrich bent with a controlled smile.

"I do assume that early tomorrow morning you will visit His Serene Highness in a matter of public interest, and please do me a favour and do not repent your intentions".

The next morning His Serene Highness appointed Ulrich to the function of Secretary of Honour of the Great Patriotic Action.

*41. Rachel and Diotima.*

For quite some days now, Diotima's excitement had grown: she had been preparing for the constitutional meeting of the Parallel Action. This was the day. She had done everything so in the morning she could sleep a bit.

The dining room, dining hall one should call it at the Tuzzis, was transformed into a meeting room. Small furniture was taken away. The table was extended with other tables. Rachel had covered their total surface with a green cloth, without any fold to be seen. Official government writing paper had been brought and distributed over the places, at each chair there were three pencils of different hardness. One of those modern pencil sharpeners that automatically loose resistance as soon a the point is sharp, had been brought by a boy of the ministry yesterday.

Rachel was looking forward to the advent of the nabob and judged this day solemn enough for him to take his negro boy Soliman as well.

After a last deep check it was Rachel's time to awaken her mistress.

Rachel was now nineteen years old. Her poor jewish family had expelled her after a young man had succeeded to seduce her to the evil. Pregnant, lonely and desperate she managed to reach Vienna, though she did not know why that had become her travel destination. And a miracle had happened. Diotima had adopted her in her household, and had thus become the object of almost religious veneration. Rachel's little daughter was now one and a half years old, in the care of a foster-mother

whom she brought, every first Sunday of the month, a substantial part of her wage, when she came to see the girl.

Veneration. Softly she touched the sleeping hand and held the slippers out for the searching feet. Then to the bath, bringing the water on the proper temperature. Let the soap foam. A last discussion about the pencils, and the proper chair to give His Serene Highness. When she was allowed to dry Diotima's statue-like full body as if it were hers, Rachel felt filled with moral significance. And, as if this was not enough, Diotima said: "Rachelle, we might be making world history in this house today".

Thus Diotima got armed for the big day.

#### *42. The great session*

Count Leinsdorf had limited the invitation to the governor of the State Bank, von Holtzkopf, baron Wisniecky, some ladies from the highest nobility, some prominent representatives of the charitable world, and, faithful to the banner "property and learning", some representatives of the university, art clubs, industry, real estate and church. Most of these circles had sent discrete younger people fitting in this upper class environment.

His Serene Highness had been so restrictive mainly because of those frightful zoo noises that had prompted him to his desperate search, with involvement of the Policy Presidency, for Ulrich.

Through the key hole Rachel saw the sabre-knot of general Stumm von Bordwehr, sent by the Ministry of War, though it had not been invited, since, as one courteously had written

Leinsdorf, "one did not wish to show negligence to this high patriotic occasion".

But Leinsdorf surprise peaked when he was introduced to that reform Prussian that his friend Ermelina had dared to propose for the function of secretary of honour of the great initiative as an alternative to Ulrich. What was this man doing here? And why had she not discussed it first? This was the very first time Leinsdorf had to wonder about the tactlessness of his bourgeois friend.

Leinsdorf kept his sway, but Arnheim, who had not expected to be a surprise to Leinsdorf, got gripped by irritation as a ruler missing his red carpet at reception.

Diotima's face stood red and inexorable as that of a woman in her own house when she deems herself morally impeccable.

She was already in love with Arnheim but due to lack of experience with such feelings she had no idea of it whatsoever. She simply opined that the treasure of feelings harboured by Austrian culture and history could be enhanced by Prussian spiritual discipline, that in general the Austrian year could only succeed if it would not restrict itself to Austria in the strict sense but would become a true World Year etc. etc.

Arnheim did not sense it exactly as it was, but he was not far off, which made him reconcile himself with the incident.

Diotima opened the meeting and the word was Leinsdorf's. His speech had been finished already days ago, he only had to skip the most notorious allusions to the Prussian breech loading gun, which, new at the Prussian side in the German-German war of 1866, had turned Austria, that otherwise would have

been militarily superior, from an ... - he had not planned to say "leading German state to hinterland", but yet this section of the speech had to be modified by improvisation - ... so now the coming jubilee year would provide the opportunity to show in peaceful manner that despite all this bad luck Austria should not be thought light of.

Ample considerations had made him decide to talk about his fatherland as "a rock". Earlier speech drafts sported, in order to comfort the Hungarians, "two rocks".

Another passage followed that His Serene Highness decided to modify *à l'improviste*: "the ignorance in the foreign world concerning the Austrian condition ..." and the wish to contribute to "good international relations of mutual respect and esteem for each other's power".

Diotima grabbed the word to clarify the words of the chairman. "We must ... find a great aim ... that rises from the middle of the people". And she opened the discussion.

After a painful silence a professor took the floor to give a survey of the general state of the world, which showed, in his opinion, clearly what a happy moment this was for a patriotic action to start.

Another silence. Even the prelate assumed an air of inconspicuousness.

This time the representative of the Imperial Civil Chancellery saved the situation by starting to read a long list of organisations, under which a nodding of approval and mutual eye contact could fortunately be resumed.

The representative of the Ministry of Culture and Education now judged the moment had come to report the extraordinary enthusiasm he had noted in his ministry for the production of a monumental work *Emperor Franz Josef I And His Time*.

Stimulated by this Frau Fabrikant Weghuber proposed a "Great Austrian Franz Joseph soup kitchen".

After some more general nodding of approval of these proposals Diotima hastened to announce the pause.

*43. Ulrich's first encounter with the great man. In world history nothing irrational happens. According to Diotima, "true Austria" is the entire world.*

Pause.

Arnheim stood next to the man from whom - though neither of them had the faintest idea of it - he lost the race for the post of secretary of honour of the great action and immediately was of the opinion that the organisation should be kept small if one were to force an entire people to reflect on will, inspiration and essentiality, for it all goes beyond reason, didn't it?

"Do you think it can succeed?", Ulrich asked.

"No doubt, for are not events the expression of a general state of things?". The simple fact of this event here, today, according to Arnheim proved its necessity. "In world history nothing irrational happens".

"But do not many such things occur in the world itself?", Ulrich asked?



"In world history never". Arnheim was visibly nervous, but this might partly be explained by his view on Diotima and Leinsdorf and his ease to guess that the subject was Arnheim and Prussia.

He was perfectly right: Diotima claimed that True Austria was the entire world and smothered with pacifistic fervour Leinsdorf's last reservations relating to the reform Prussian by appealing to her female tact and insight.

Arnheim stood concentrated, prepared for the smallest sign he could join them, while the rest curiously crowded around him and Ulrich, who continued: "Rationality is in those thousands of specialized professions that arose. If now you would set all the professionals to trace general humanity again, they simply return to the old stupidity, money and ...", he wanted to say 'superstition' but swallowed it and said: " ... religion".

"Indeed, you're right, religion", Arnheim said, loud enough for Leinsdorf to hear, for being a Prussian and a Jew he knew in his disadvantage, but he deemed his Catholic sympathies a trump, "Do you think it is already has disappeared, root and branch?"

It seemed that Diotima and Leinsdorf had reached some kind of accommodation on the issue of Prussia. They approached. The circle of the curious dissolved politely, and suddenly Ulrich stood alone and sank into deep thoughts about Pepi and Hans, the two horses of Leinsdorf's coach that he had been introduced to when leaving together for the meeting.

In that coach Ulrich also learned that Stallberg had informed Leinsdorf that his confrontation with Ulrich's "fire" had been occasioned by Moosbrugger. Wobbling with the coach over the cobbles Leinsdorf had showed himself charmed by Ulrich's

Christian passion, suggested that Moosbrugger could get another medical check, but admonished him that now greater issues were at hand.

What an absolutely terrible man, this Arnheim, was Ulrich's next thought. There were no details to be singled out for responsibility. It was the whole. This unbearable connection of spirit, business, wealth, scholarship and then that air of certainty in agreeing with everybody whom he could use. Ulrich had to take care not to look in an overly conspicuous way.

*44. Further proceedings and ending of the great session. Ulrich likes Rachel, Rachel likes Soliman. The Parallel Action obtains its fixed organisational shape.*

This Rachel! Ulrich liked her, the way she totally lost herself in her tasks, fiercely running around with those sharp dark beads of eyes, offering drinks everywhere. Even though she had forgotten to offer him one.

The meeting continued. Diotima tabled the "Great Sign" that should be given, for which His Serene Highness already had given the keyword "Emperor of Peace". In this matter, one could of course wonder whether a people in these times still would be capable to ... etc. etc.

The discussion did not start any easier but Diotima interfered again and claimed that the power of salvation was primary and that the portfolios of the Imperial Ministries already suggested a division of the world that could be used to shape the organisation of the great action: religion, education, trade, industry, justice ...

The silence was undeniably approving, but general Stumm von Bordwehr, whose ministry had not been mentioned since Diotima had not meant to engage in a complete enumeration, and only had listed a few by way of example, took the floor and quoted Treitschke: "The state is the power to maintain itself in the fight between people" and he pleaded for a wide popular attention for the question of the army - the armament of which was in a worrying state.

Quite some couching and moving left and right indicated a modest show of the original inspiration of the Parallel Action "better than Prussia".

Behind the keyhole Rachel whispered to Soliman: "Now they talk about war!".

On behalf, no doubt, of all present around this table Leinsdorf expressed profound gratitude for Stumm's heart-felt contribution from the side of the Ministry of War, but for the rest he now wished to concentrate on the setup of the organization, which was of the utmost importance since, though it was the Emperor's wish that everything would come out of the midst of the people, a solid assistance of the second constitutional factor should absolutely be provided for.

And thus, after the appointment by acclamation of a weighty list of committees, the meeting got closed in a general sentiment of satisfaction and relief.

#### *45. Silent meeting of two mountain tops*

In the goodbye hassle Arnheim restrained himself so he was the last. Tuzzi kept a safe margin for returning home not to force committee members to greet him.

While staff was running around to bring the dining back into order, Arnheim's eyes followed Diotima with a smile.

This gave Diotima the remarkable feeling as though her house were trousers that Arnheim had put on.

Though there was nothing visibly objectionable in Arnheim's impeccable trousers, his fascinated gazing at the busy Diotima again demands our attention to the concept of soul.

The soul already has been discussed quite some times: as what got lost in modern times, what is inconsistent with civilization, what is contrary to corporeal passion and marital habits, what is touched by news concerning sex-murderers in a far from involuntary fashion, what is to be liberated by the Parallel Action, and, religiously, as *contemplatio in caligine divina* in the thought of His Serene Highness Count Leinsdorf.

Youth totally fails to voice the word, older people sooner or later start to reach for it, in the first instance with dislike, to name everything that gradually got felt more solidly, for instance the contrast between what one planned in his youth and what came of it, and the awareness that not all had gone in a flawless manner, and how understandable that is in the bad world we live in.

Finally quite some are under the impression that a God exists who can be supposed to have under him those parts of it that so often seem lacking.

Here, love takes its peculiar place, for the loved one occupies that empty place where otherwise part of the soul would be missed. The agreeable feeling of love stems from the process whereby souls, united in love, cancel each other out.

About these issues Diotima nor Arnheim knew anything, since neither of them had ever loved. We dealt with Diotima in the above. The soul of the giant financier was chaste in an even wider sense: he always had avoided women and friendships for he feared that the attraction did not originate in him but in his wealth. That is why, even in corporeal activities with women, he adhered to the format of business relations, where things are no different, but conform the principles of bookkeeping.

*46. Ideals and morality are the best substance to stuff the soul.*

There they stood, Diotima and Arnheim. Well, on such a moment you do not immediately have the urge to say something but after a while, Arnheim's was the first, the silence starts to embarrass the souls. At such a moment the options are 1. Start raging as a brute or 2. Support the situation with a solid construction of thoughts and convictions. Option 2. of course has practical advantages. It can, of course, not seamlessly cover the underlying reality, but, though one kills the soul, one cans it, as it were, in manageable portions, for general use.

Arnheim was known to have a hall filled with Gothic and Baroque catholic sculpture that was regularly studied by experts. Now, as some readers may not know, the catholic church consistently depicts its saints and other bearers of the Banner of Good in postures of blissfulness and ecstasy. In Arnheim's hall their souls were shown proudly jumping out of their bodies as if a smooth laundry wringer pressed them out, while their arms were crossed like sabres, heavily wounded necks with heads on top of them in odd and agonizing positions, and when you see so many of those collected in one hall one fancies oneself in a clinical department of hopeless neurological disorders.

And he occasionally went there, Arnheim. It always gave his orderly world of thoughts and convictions a weirdly frayed black little edge.

And then that story of a trusted gardener who once turned out to have stolen one. Arnheim had not stopped reproaching the man for the profound wrong way he had chosen to live his lust of acquisition, had gone on the entire night, before having him deported by police. This curious fervor had arisen from his jealousy of the man's passionate kleptomania.

*47. What all, in all their differences, are together, is Arnheim, united in one person.*

In the weeks that followed, Diotima's salon rose in status and size. The Parallel Action might have contributed to that but no doubt, Arnheim was the chief attraction.

He spoke with everyone in the other person's own language. He wisely did not attend any more official meetings, and attended the salon only occasionally, for he continuously traveled though Europe. But he kept coming regularly.

Economics, molecular physics, mysticism, pigeon shooting, Arnheim knew it, had the professional terms readily available in his vocabulary and even chamois hunters, horse tamers, holders of a personal loge in the Hoftheater, who all came to see a silly rich jew, left Diotima's house at the end of the evening shaking their heads by impression.

It made Leinsdorf think of the shortcomings in the education of contemporary nobility in comparison to the bourgeois, to such a vehemence that Ulrich had to console him by pointing out how now the intellectuals in their turn had left the bourgeois

behind: "Just look at their silly gazes while they hang at the lips of Doktor Arnheim".

But Leinsdorf did not need such a recommendation. He too had stopped looking anywhere else.

"But", Ulrich went on, "for the rest this is no spirit any more, this is a rainbow that you can touch. He speaks about love and science, chemistry and canoe navigation, he is a scholar, an owner of unprecedented wealth, a man of the stock exchange, in short, united in one person he is the total of everything everyone of us can contribute, and no wonder that witnessing such a thing, our mouth falls open and eyeballs are in danger to fall out". Your Serene Highness shakes his head? But I am convinced that the cloud of the so called progress of time, too thick for anybody to see anything, has put him right before us on the carpet".

"I was not", said the count, "shaking my head about you. I thought of Arnheim. All in all an interesting personality".

*48. Three causes of Arnheims fame and the Secret of the Whole.*

Arnheim was active on every continent, in every layer of every society and in every field of science, craft and technology.

Others whose storage capacity remotely resembles his, fail to have results of their own. Not so Arnheim! And not only as a business man. Every now and then he retired on one of his estates and wrote best selling books. Their recommendations were widely read and sought, for this was written by someone who did extremely well himself. That was the first cause of his fame.

Secondly: the typical professional who devotes his life to, say, academical research into the metabolism of the kidney, every now and then likes, nay, certainly is determined, to show, certainly once in his splinter specialism he has become one of the great of the earth, that he is aware of the broader setting such as the relation of the metabolism of the kidney to the nation, the world and the universe. He likes to be interviewed like Einstein about God, has a small stockpile of Goethe quotations and part of such people's strategy had become ... reading Arnheim. Whoever saw, in a split second, his own specialty passing by in high speed did spot some errors and misunderstandings, but the far greater distance most readers had from most passages made an Arnheim-quotation always do well in company.

The third cause lay in the economy. In his companies he was much less an authority than his father, mainly by coming up with theories and reasonings that were judged partly unprofessional. But in those circles the utility was overlooked of the publicity he got for his elevated convictions. And with that publicity came a power over public opinion, which in that period became more and more important for consumption, and private and public investment. Steel was the core business of the Arnheims. The Prussian Navy recently got an enormous boost under the leadership of a good friend of Arnheim Jr., the German Emperor who admired the English spirit, hence liked navy ships and listening to a businessman with vision, always browsing as he was for useful phrases and keywords.

*49. A first beginning of contrast between the old and the new diplomacy.*

With Arnheim, Diotima's little despairs about her salon were totally gone. The conversations were of the same whimsical



detail but with Arnheim they seemed to form a Great Whole, and the cold distance she had felt from the side of nobility got warmed up by Arnheim, who, bourgeois and Jew though he was, knew how to get treated by nobility as if he were one of them, and was delighted to serve as *trait d'union*.

Arnheim warned Diotima that if the organization would grow to big the action could strand in lobbies and self interest. At one time this issue was raised, Tuzzi happened to be there and asked whether the opposite tendency would not result in an abyss of talking.

To an outsider, Tuzzi and Arnheim would have looked like a Levantine bag thief next to a Bremer patrician, but in social position Tuzzi was not at all the lesser. He understood that Arnheim should somehow have a curious type of talent, but thought of him as a naive chatterer of his wife's sort.

We were happy to be well informed, Tuzzi said. In his last briefing of the Emperor, the minister had asked His Majesty whether he wanted to be put at the head of an international pacifist action. After all, Leinsdorf's latest ideas about a "World Austria" hardly could be seen as anything else.

His Majesty had said in his characteristic scrupulousness and modesty, with a gesture resembling that of someone who tries to keep something at a safe distance: "Don't get me pushed in front", and now one was wondering whether or not this had been an articulated expression of the Highest of Wills.

This was, we should add, Tuzzi's characteristic way to deal quasi openly with little secrets of his office, as a man whom you would never hear about the more serious ones. And in this style he continued to say that all Austrian embassies were now

engaged to sound the foreign reactions to the Parallel Action, for if things were unclear at home one should find some hold elsewhere. Did Arnheim know something about the opinions of the Prussian Court?

Arnheim, the man who liked so much to talk, claimed to be uninformed, for he felt that towards Tuzzi he should show himself to be a man who could shut up in state matters. But Tuzzi did not fail to see how much that strained him.

Thus Diotima was in the company of two opposed types of distinctive personalities, styles of state and of life, that showed themselves to her not entirely without rivalry.

Though all this had made her somewhat uneasy and prompted her, to Arnheim's relief, to get back to the spiritual greatness of the Parallel Action, Arnheim suddenly heard himself asking her whom she would invite for the envisaged summit of great minds.

Of course, Diotima had no idea. Arnheim's presence and contribution had given her so much inspiration and ideas that she had somewhat neglected the personnel aspect, and whenever Arnheim had stressed that the organization should stay restricted to a few strong and encompassing personalities, she had filled that in for herself, not on a piece of paper, and even largely unconsciously as: you and me.

Tuzzi's question whether not a bishop could be useful launched Arnheim again. A short summary of world history ended fiercely, with the claim that all those things nowadays thought to be important had nothing to do with the inner force of our lives.

And when Tuzzi showed himself curious to know what that was, he said: "Nobody can say that at the moment. Only the heart can solve it. The appearance of a new person, the inner face of pure will. You don't know. Any moment can be the moment of world wide revolution!".

*50. Section Chief Tuzzi decides to procure absolute clarity concerning the person Arnheim.*

No one could read anything from the face or body language of top diplomat Tuzzi, but this silly Arnheim was extremely repugnant to him, personally, but also, so to say, on principle.

It did not fit the profile of Tuzzi's person, profession and office, to believe a word of the reasons and motivations for Arnheim's frequenting of Vienna as provided by his wife and the man himself. Not a word, certainly not after Diotima had started to push the man in a leading role in the Parallel Action, and even started to complain about Leinsdorf's resistance!

And another issue was that Diotima's total lack of tact in this matter deeply disappointed him in the result of his years of attempts to learn his wife just a few elementary things. In as far as that had seemed to have succeeded it had now collapsed like a "house of cards" - which shows the seriousness of his disappointment for Tuzzi hated metaphors like plague.

Moreover, Diotima was cross-grained and stubborn when at specific points he recommended her moderation in boosting Arnheim's influence on the Parallel Action.

Last but not least, a nocturnal incident occurred. While sleeping next to him she appeared to make a bit of sound reminding of crying. She had been lying with her back to him.

She seemed not to sleep. He asked her what was wrong. She did not react. He asked again and put his hand on her shoulder. Her face turned. She looked angry, proud and she had cried.

Tuzzi turned, half asleep, on his back and asked: "What is it?"

"You are so restless when you sleep, nobody next to you could close an eye!"

This evident injustice done to him made a profound impression. He immediately knew this had something to do with Arnheim. He went to sleep again, but did so resolved to procure absolute clarity about Arnheim.

### *51. House Fischel*

Leo, director Fischel of Lloyds Vienna, or rather "managing clerk with the title of director" had been removed from the list of the Great Action after that invitation by count Leinsdorf which to his own irritation he had put aside for too long.

As related, his position in the bank had not warranted the invitation, so its must have stemmed from the high bureaucracy family background of his wife Klementine.

She had married him twenty four years ago for two reasons. First, her family, as usual in those circles, was growing faster than its wealth, so money should be more important in her choice of a marriage partner than status. But this restriction had combined agreeably with a romantic aspect in her that was alien to her background: the spiritual freedom and modernity she experienced when she got into contact with Leo and his banking circles, in which people were not, as in her family, judged by whether they were catholic or, for instance, jewish

(like Leo). Thus her marriage had an edge of complacent distance-taking from her family, and a show of superiority over primitive anti-Semitism.

But in no time the poor girl would get confronted with Europe's growing nationalism that was so fond of showing its élan by attacking jews, and turned, so to say, her husband in her very arms from a libertarian into the poisonous mind of a despicable alien contaminating pure German soil.

While more and more forced into the defense she tried to shrug her shoulders over it, but there was a proliferation of small irritations in the house, all the more since the same development seemed to lock Leo's career on the level of, as said, managing clerk with the title of director.

Though she stopped short of openly abjuring the image of modernity and liberality that she had so proudly worn since her marriage, for herself she started to explain the increasing irritations between her and her husband by the obvious fact that in the end "his character of course was totally alien to hers".

Ever more huffish, Klementine started to brief her husband about how he might start again looking, as she saw him in their early days, like an English lord, and not like this cynical bourgeois master in counting. But Leo still shaved his whiskers as he always had done, he still had the same pince-nez as in the times she thought he looked like a lord, his language and gesturing had not in the least changed, neither did he need his wife's opinion about such things, nor did he feel any need to change anything whatsoever in these matters.

Moreover, Leo understood that the carping served to hold something before him: the esthetical ideal of a Christian -

Germanic underminister vital to the social outlook of Klementine's family, the family-nest-odour-nostalgia of his wife, boosted by the time's change of wind.

Lloyd director Fischel did like to philosophize but not more than ten minutes a day - and then it was about reason, progress, liberalism and free trade - but in the meantime saw the entire Western world tack and head for race theories and street slogans.

In the first phase he had seen it like a temporary deviation, in the spirit of count Leinsdorf, who used to refer to it as the "less amiable phenomena of public nature".

But in phase two, the appearance of these thoughts, if they could thus be named, in press, literature and politics, it became really less funny, for those are marks set in matter itself. And that was not where it had stopped: in phase three the little drops and spouts had joined to form a permanent acid rain that could overpower any Jew who has, for philosophy, only ten minutes a day.

Thus that newly created and ever sharper front line between these two conceptions of the world ran right through house Fischel. In the end the subject of a quarrel ceased to matter: whether or not a chamber maid had to be fired, or whether or not toothpicks belonged at table, it all consistently ended up grounded in aggressive and defensive social philosophy.

Daughter Gerda, seventeen, was a cherished subject of elderly quarrels. Leo insisted she should start to think of an advantageous marriage, but Gerda had chosen her friends among a swarm of Christian-Germanic peers with little career perspective, a low esteem of Jews and contempt of capital.

Leo preferred not to receive them, but Gerda said: "You don't understand, dear Daddy, it is all symbolic". At such occasions Klementine would stay silent and Leo felt sure that behind the scenes the ladies would emphatically agree about him. As if Klementine, who, when dealing with Christian-Germanic ideas, put on a face as if he was a kind of savage, knew what symbols are!

Thus, weal and woe of house Fischel became a function of what daily boiled over that stinking pan filled with thick, viscous uncontrolled dregs of public opinion.

To make matters grim, Leo had the bad luck not to be interested in card games or attractive young ladies, and liked to be home in the evening.

Thus Leo, this industrious cell of the social body, doing his duty honestly and well, got harassed from all sides by more and more acid and, in his daily ten minutes of philosophy, got ever deeper convinced about the vanity of the soul (as a philosophical concept that is), and this explains how he had put aside Leinsdorf's letter until it was too late, and now realised with regret that the opening to that salon could have provided for a chance to organize a good marriage for Gerda.

He had been lucky as well in this incident of forgetfulness: Klementine and Gerda, who always disposed of the latest gossips concerning the Parallel Action and especially of Arnheim, whom Leo, Arnheim being a colleague, a Jew even, could not part sides with at home, knew nothing about the forgotten letter.

Anyway, the Parallel fundamentalism of the two ladies really was irritating enough as it was, he realized, and he hoped there

soon would come an incident proving the total hollowness of this initiative and cause the high rate of it in house Fischel to collapse like a pudding.

*52. Section Chief Tuzzi discovers a flaw in the operation of his ministry.*

A well oiled machine of power and oppression like the administration of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy of course has complete anthills of obedient and conscientious civil servants in all ministries in charge with continuously updating all files of people in well defined target groups, and stores the information in systematic and accessible fashion, for a man like Tuzzi should be provided with every recent side remark of every member of parliament and every foreign minister within ten minutes, and those of the past half year within half an hour.

But there was no file of Arnheim.

Tuzzi did not want to stir up the issue in a way that might land in Prussian ministerial files, but this was a quiet day on the ministry, appropriate for a relaxed philosophical conversation with the chief of the press department about the present standards for official information gathering in which Arnheim could pop up by way of accidental example.

This led to the creation of a fascicle, empty for the time being with on the back Arnheim's name and a system code under which Tuzzi could order his Berlin embassy to rigorously collect all information about Arnheim.

Tuzzi, sympathetic to Voltaire's dictum that people use words to hide their thoughts and have thoughts to justify their crimes,



felt slightly alarmed now to deal with someone using so many words.

The next day, a book shop delivered the complete works of Arnheim to the ministerial library.

*53. Moosbrugger transferred to again another prison.*

Moosbrugger got transferred to again another prison. He enjoyed the honours: a lot of police, loaded guns, hand- and footcuffs.

His lawyer had demanded additional research, the execution of the death sentence had been adjourned for an indefinite period.

It mattered little to Moosbrugger. He did not fear death. The hanging could never score high on the list of what he had already experienced in his life. And what difference was there between living a few years more and less?

He remembered the first police officer in charge of his case: "Look Mr. Moosbrugger", he had said, "I have a big wish: why don't you grant me my success?".

And he had answered: "If you like your success so much, let us carefully agree about the protocol".

The judge had refused to believe this and had send for the officer. His deposition had obtained nothing but praise by Moosbrugger, though "At goodbye when his job had been done Mr. officer had said that we probably would not see each other again."

That had been very satisfactory. Moosbrugger smiled.

*54. Ulrich, in conversation with Walter and Clarisse, assumes a reactionary posture.*

"We have to do something for Moosbrugger", Clarisse said, "he is musical!"

Ulrich laughed and asked some clarification, got it as: "Well, haven't you now become an influential man?"

Then he had to tell what was in Arnheim's books. The three of them were on a walk. Ulrich bravely attacked the matter, mentioned the automobile HATA 606, relativity theory, benzene rings, and that according to Arnheim it did not really matter that only few understood all those things for the key was the essence, for which the attention had unjustly been lost and which was very simple and straight from the heart. Normally, Ulrich continued, no one in his sense would believe that, but when told by someone who owned a HATA 606, he surely would have, incredibly rich as he was, have a decent load of benzene rings on his fingers ...

Clarisse wanted to know what benzene rings were.

After Ulrich's explanation Walter agreed with Arnheim that it was a blessing that not everybody had to deal with that nonsense.

"Let me explain", Ulrich said, "what I have against this Arnheim, look you can't want *not* to know. That does not work. But scientists do not search for sense. They are, as it were, addicted to truth and can't stop pursuing it. And nobody knows what will be the role of man in the world that will get shaped by that knowledge".

"So we should just give up?", Walter asked.

"Well do we really need the meaning of life?" Ulrich asked, "are we now doing so badly without it?"

Clarisse giggled.

"You are just an ordinary Austrian", Walter said, "you preach the Austrian theory of wrestling on!"

"Now you say so", Ulrich said, "Congratulations! You discovered Austria's world mission!"

### *55. Soliman and Arnheim*

There was another heart that Moosbrugger had stolen: Rachel's, who believed that he, had he met her on her way to Vienna instead of a girl murderer would have become her very own gorgeous highway man.

And apart for Ulrich and Leinsdorf, Arnheim had another foe. He would have been totally surprised to hear about it: Soliman. He was small but already sixteen, seventeen years old. Arnheim had bought him as a small boy from a circus in Italy and had started his education until, not long ago he had called him to say that he, Soliman, now was reaching the age to learn about responsibilities and consequently his status as spoiled rich man's adoptive son today would be changed into that of a chamber boy with full board and a modest wage.

Arnheim at once had his day, but had noticed nothing of it, though since then left and right things got stolen, and even, when Soliman judged his stealing insufficient to express the

full extent of his rage, objects disappeared of no utility whatsoever to the boy.

When Rachel had confided him on whispering volume that in the meeting of the Parallel Action a war was being prepared, she had won his trust and learned the most terrible things about Arnheim, and that his name was not Soliman at all, but something very long and unpronounceable, let alone memorizeable, a king's son, stolen and sold.

Though Rachel would never give up her veneration of nabob Arnheim, these stories were an exciting extra dimension to the Parallel Action.

*56. Lively activity in the committees of the Parallel Action. Clarisse writes His Serene Highness and proposes a Nietzsche year.*

Count Leinsdorf had become too busy for the great idea itself, for his agenda was now crammed with meetings and appointments.

The committees, defined in line with the portfolios of the Imperial ministries had launched, to the satisfaction of Leinsdorf, a stream of coded correspondence filling, at high speed, the systematic archive set up by experienced administrative officers. Incoming letters got routinely classified "Ass." , which meant, in Kakanian administrative language "asserved", that is, held over for deliberation.

From many high official sides Leinsdorf heard he could expect support and readiness. This was often said while adding that elsewhere - the finger pointing usually was done off the record, so it usually felt like a special service - qualms and even

outright opposition were suspected. One tended to pledge being ready behind the curtains and to appoint a younger representative.

Meanwhile Ulrich had reached a frequency of three routine meetings a week with Leinsdorf, for clarifications with which some incoming letters might be less furnished.

In one such meeting a letter surfaced written by Clarisse, who, basing herself on Ulrich, proposed a Nietzsche year in the ceremonies of which Moosbrugger would be freed, since he was a psychiatric patient like Nietzsche. Leinsdorf observed Ulrich's withheld anger, told him that for a private letter as this good lady had sent there was no code in the archive, but that Ulrich, now he turned out to know her personally, might return the letter to tell her how intensively it had been under the attention of His Serene Highness.

*57. High trajectory. Diotima's extraordinary experiences with the essence of great ideas.*

This was also the moment at which the activities of Diotima's salon threatened to get the better of her. But she kept a brave face. She surely would have collapsed had not Rachel, who was clearly aware of her state, protected her, by dealing, on her own initiative, independently with most of the incoming phone calls.

It was not all grief and misery though. To her husband, for instance, it appeared she had acquired a new kind of value: his questions no longer betrayed amusement but the alertness of an officer on duty. And he started to serve her with unsolicited advice, presented with a serious mimic as if he addressed a colleague. In carefully chosen words he lectured about

distinctions that were deemed of basic importance in his ministry, and even, parting, going to the ministry, returned in the room to adjust one of his formulations of the moment before, and conjured her to consult him in any upcoming matter that touched on foreign policy. Diotima loved it.

But the problems always take the foreground. Especially that ice cold wait-and-see policy of the high offices, as if they all wanted to say: "finally tell us what exactly you have in mind".

Leinsdorf touched upon the problem as well: "I really like the idea of an Austrian year, I brought in in the press myself", he told Diotima, "but did you think about what to do in that year? You see? And from the above we have to offer the helping hand there, otherwise immature forces take to the fore. And I have no time at all for such things"

Diotima took a deep dive in the books. That resulted in extraordinary experiences with the essence of great ideas. For instance that an idea while on the way up might get destroyed by another one: if you go to the utmost in inflating the pacifism of the Emperor of Peace, you face the question how henceforth to get a broiler hen and what to do with all those millions of unemployed soldiers. Way up there among high ideas the pressure on them is not lower but higher!

Now her husband was giving her some more reason to value him, she also realized that anyone who would in his ministry start to use terms like "ideal" of "eternal truth" would at once be sent on medical leave.

She failed to solve it. But neither did her longing for something Great reside. An Austrian year ... but really a World Year, a

World Austrian Year, in which the European spirit could recognize in Austria its true fatherland!

"Be careful, be careful!" count Leinsdorf called, "what are we going to do?"

That hit the painful point again.

"That question", Diotima answered, "that you have just been posing, is the most difficult in the world. I have resolved ... to invite, at short notice, the most important men, poets and thinkers, and I want to await their recommendations before I say something"

"Excellent, excellent!", His Serene Highness said, "we can't be careful enough. If you knew what I'm hearing every day!"

*58. The Parallel Action triggers qualms, but there is no voluntary way back in the history of mankind.*

"I cannot stand this Arnheim at all", His Serene Highness said to Ulrich. "A Prussian, and then look at how he is observing everything. Should such a man know everything about us?"

"And he sees things that foreigners should not see", Ulrich said, "the aim of the Parallel Action is to make people happy, but its effect is the reverse: qualms and sadness everywhere."

"Yes I noticed that too", Leinsdorf said, "we only help them realize that they deny each other the right to have light in the eyes. The big entrepreneurs scorn our taxes and politicians resent the way they evade them."

"Exactly, and everywhere so", Ulrich said, "the surgeons are convinced of the progress of their trade but complain about the poor contribution of the other medical and physical sciences. Even in theology, if you permit me, one seems to demand attention of the progress of the trade since Jesus Christ. The Parallel Action somehow awakens the irritation of people, and their letters tell us what should be done".

"My God", His Serene Highness exclaimed, "nothing but ingratitude".

"But the irritation", Ulrich went on, "can, in the human soul, be located in a wide range of places". I introduced two new systematic codes. First BT: "*Back to ...* " in which I order religion, Baroque, Gothic, the natural state, Goethe, German jurisdiction, pureness of morals and miscellaneous."

A silence ensued. The count paled while looking out of the window and said, after a significant interval: "there is no voluntary way back in the history of mankind."

After which he sensed he had wanted to say something completely different, which had failed, for Ulrich had first hit his own longing to the past, after which, though, the train, the count's newspapers and his hot morning bath had appeared in his mind, which he then had realized not to be willing to say goodbye to, and thus, just when he had opened his mouth to say something was overwhelmed by an eructation of resignation in the ramble of mankind.

The count judged this young man's rules of logic as important, nay, inevitable, even though regrettably they resulted in a loss of control over the outcome of things.



"And my second new code is FT: *Forward To ...* ", Ulrich resumed.

But His Serene Highness had to end the conversation and left with some speed.

At the door post he turned his head to said: "Your niece is going to convene with the most important minds on this subject. Attend it, for I am not sure whether I will have the opportunity to attend myself".

Then he added: "a great approach of course makes everyone despond; but we shall rouse them". His Serene Highness said so out of pure sense of duty. To keep Ulrich motivated.

Gone was he.

#### *59. Moosbrugger reflects.*

In his new dwelling Moosbrugger was solitarily confined, lovelessly painted with dirty disinfecting soap, threatened with beatings when he protested and the like. As an experienced prisoner he knew that most of what was done to him was prohibited, but also that the instances of appeal often are beyond reach.

The cleric of the institution was a nice old man but his awesome compassion with trespassing humanity - his celibate might have been part of the explanation - sported such an absolute blockade when it concerned sexual criminals that he even reproached himself when to his dismay he sensed somewhere inside him some pity for Moosbrugger. In panic he ran away to pray for his own soul.

The prisoner's medic judged it all not a big deal and had given him a genial slap on the shoulder.

With the court case his public role of glory had ended, he felt like a loose tooth. He squarely put all blame on that bitch he had to kill.

His lawyer had appealed and demanded Moosbrugger to be declared insane. Well, something small left to look forward to. But he would make sure that would fail and they would kill him, a worthy exit of someone who would be remembered as a man who had given and lost his life in the struggle for his Justice.

Justice. For he'd heard that had great value. But what would it be ... that you refrain from doing injustice or something? It did not satisfy him.

Suddenly he had it: Jus! Justice is Jus! When he was sixteen and worked for a farmer, he had been with the man's wife in the kitchen alone and had said he wanted to do something sweet with her. On being ordered out of the kitchen he had put up his fist with the thumb through the fingers. This had earned him a blow with the porridge spoon. It bled. In a fit of rage he had attacked to obtain his Jus and had been limping on the street three minutes later while his possessions, thrown from the yard, landed around him.

And no Jus once there, back on the street. All women already are someone's Jus. And so on.

He should of course tell the judge exactly but lacked words, and when he told them in court that it was all the fault of the

freemasons, Jesuits and socialists nobody understood him. Hopeless, all that, those lawyers understand nothing.

And then all those questions about ... well about what, that sometimes everything started to turn, cats jumped out of the bushes, music was heard, but also crying, sobbing, singing, rattling, or, sometimes also, shots, laughing, shouting, speaking and whispering. It was in the air, in his clothes, in his own body. A varied company engaged in saying what he just wanted to say, or the contrary.

And this should mean he was ill! A pack of monkeys, that's all! Sometimes they made him angry, but most of the time they were amusing entertainment. And in the court house you should call it hallucinating. He had no reason to object to that but he felt high above people without such experiences.

He was also a superior thinker for he could think outside and inside. Neither did they understand that adding 14 and 14 ends up somewhere between 28 and 42, since it all depends how quickly you can come to a standstill once you arrived, so the those who add fastest have the longest breaking path. And such answers prove he was ill! All nonsense. Those fools!

In the final analysis, that terrible girl bore the entire blame for his present situation. But what could he do? Dead she was already, and he was locked up. Quite annoying. This should now come to an end quickly.

*60. Excursion into the logic of justice.*

Had Diotima, after her despair about irreconcilability of pacifism with the moral foundations of broiler hen consumption, acquired the ambition to continue the art of

staying on top, or at least in the vicinity of those True and Great Ideas that, once in high places, tend not to assume relationships of mutual respect and solidarity, the practises of application of law, and Moosbrugger's case in particular would have been, so to say, ideal.

For though illness of the mind can cancel guilt, there is something like *partial* *compos mentis*. The owner of such a curious condition, like Moosbrugger, has an inferior health but an inferior disease as well.

Nature produces such people in the millions, but as long as they merely burden their loved ones and do not commit crimes, there is no logical problem. They are, when they consult a doctor, treated, with mixed results.

But when the doctor is called in to advise a judge in a case of crime, all those cases are strictly judged *compos mentis* and sentenced guilty. Medical science cancels guilt only in cases it could not possibly cure! This concerns people that a doctor, if they apply for therapy, strictly should send away for as yet science had no cure available. But that happens rarely indeed.

Only such a person, sent away from a medic when applying for treatment, can have no guilt. Like a horse in the army: in the army the most difficult, yes seemingly hopeless horse is obtaining the softest bindings, the best food and the best driver, for you do not easily give a horse up. But if the driver is substandard he gets locked up in a cellar full of rats and lice: guilt and penance.

*61. The maxim of the three tractates or the ideal of living exactly.*

And the small *encore* granted to Moosbrugger would be thanks to count Leinsdorf, who wished to do a favour to Ulrich.

Ulrich did himself not know what ought to be done with someone who should be in prison nor madhouse. Such a case should probably be classified, like the deaths in modern engine-propelled traffic, to the collateral damage of the ongoing metamorphosis of human society.

So you had to look at it from the side where the transforming power comes from. And that side came with a frame of mind in which one rather would produce three short articles describing, for the first time, how something small and clear exactly works, than a library full of other nonsense.

The astonishing fact that the progress of our knowledge about nature from the times we hunted rabbits with pieces of wood until the times of air traffic would fit in a manageable private library, while all religion, philosophy, morality, patriotism and all that, placed back to back, would span the earth while the main portion of it has not even been communicated verbally but in burning stakes, sharp metal objects and bullets.

No, the claim that larger sales of soap indicate more hygiene does not hold for morality. Quite the contrary: the morality gets pumped into society, the more reason there is to be on your guard!

Down with it! Live exactly! And about all you can't speak: stay silent!

Who was living exactly? It still had an air of utopianism, but many learned it a little, at least part of the day: when exercising their profession, if technical or scientific. During such moments, old fashioned considerations of the meaning of life were at least as far as your coat in the cloak room.

The most powerful impulses to the technical revolution of mankind were given by people who had no time to ponder its meaning. It simply happened to them.

But for these thoughts Ulrich rarely found a sounding-board.

*62. The earth, Ulrich at any rate, believes in the utopian maxim of essayism.*

In what follows below we have to sharply distinguish fantastic from pedantic precision. For does not fantastic precision stick to the facts and pedantic precision to fantasies?

The judicial analysis of Moosbrugger is an example of pedantic precision: Moosbrugger's mind is meticulously measured using law as a standard, that is: a total phantasy.

Moosbrugger's medical analysis is fantastically precise since the conclusion is whether or not Moosbrugger's case is one of the cases known in the literature. That's all.

This distinction corresponds to two attitudes of mind that exist today and not rarely - we have seen an example of this - in one house, viz. that which is precise and factual and always bases action on the latest techniques and ideas, and that other one which operates on grounds of so called Eternal and Great Truths. Former and latter lead, respectively, to success and obese dignity .

And in that zigzag of our history that will bring us, as we know since two thousand years, to the Last Judgment, it had been fantastic precision that in Ulrich's time had broken loose from its chains for a moment, then had disappeared again, now to be found only in workshops and studios of engineers and scientists, while the world that it had left dry in the ebb tide had reassumed its dignified and obese lifestyle, leaving Ulrich behind.

Or falling behind Ulrich? When he saw the first new lapses into dignity, he thought of them as people who had grazed something riding their horse and now, crying and limping, were begging to be oiled with soul.

But soon the fun was over, for in awesome acceleration human consciousness got completely out of touch with the state of the art, and it started looking like he was the only one left to scorn certitudes and firm convictions. For everyone he met seemed to have them again, though now there was a colourful diversity of them that human history had never been showered with before.

In his youth, in this short period where fantastic precision was on the loose, on the streets even, he got charmed by the idea of living "hypothetically", but now rather called it "essayistic", after the way in which an essay analyses something from many sides, but without the pretension of being exhaustive, hence without conclusion.

Ulrich felt like he was the only one left who saw which factual, accidental factors determined whether causing someone's death would get classified under the eternal truth of murder or that of heroic action, and even which great, true and absolute spiritual edifices were built in history to collapse only a few centuries later, while at the same time humanity was still profiting every

day from small attempts like a formula for the speed of falling bodies or the idea of the lift force that centuries ago someone had come up with after a while of solitary undisturbed thinking and trying.

He did not regard himself as a philosopher. Philosophers are violators that have no army at their disposition and in sheer frustration press the tiny part of the world they see in a system and then inflate that to ridiculous proportions.

And neither should we take Ulrich's idea of essay as a provisional, subjective impression that later could turn out true or untrue. In such a perspective an essay *à la* Ulrich would always be false: as a general truth, from the colourful body of a jelly-fish washed on the beach nothing is left. But that is far from the point: in vacuum even elephants would explode.

But where would he end up like this? What would be his own direction, destination? Of course from his own perspective he was not allowed to ask himself that question but nevertheless he felt that years had passed in some stagnation. And now he had adopted this ridiculous role as secretary of honour of the Parallel Action he stood, as it were, behind the eloquent figure he acted out, in waiting whether he would get an idea. In existential desperation.

At night he could stand at the window and suddenly long for going out in the cold. Then he would be outside and the leafless trees would remind him of Moosbrugger. He felt the inclination to embrace them. In tears. But we don't do things like that. After all we are not sentimental.



*63. Something appears to Bonadea.*

If you never saw a swan dance with a robot, this is a chapter for you.

The next morning Bonadea visited Ulrich's silly castle. She had judged the envisaged successors of Ulrich too light, and convinced herself that she could still do something about Ulrich's "pride".

Ulrich greeted her a bit detached but she managed to grab his hand and kiss it. Pensively, Ulrich caressed her hair.

Softly he pushed her into a chair and brought two whiskeys. Bonadea protested on grounds of time of day. Ulrich lit a cigarette.

She felt old. Her oldest had become twelve.

She had decided henceforth to limit her escapades to Ulrich and for that purpose wanted to be invited to Diotima's salon, since that, she opined, was the woman whom she should bleach a bit. Of course the request acquired a somewhat different formulation.

Ulrich took a sip while acting out another pensive moment, then said it would not be feasible.

Yes, she immediately wished a comprehensive explanation as to why this was impossible, offering her cordial cooperation in moving any obstacle and asking how long it would take to achieve it. She learned that she should have had close and profitable ties with art, science and charity.

There she sat, with stings in the heart and shaking knees. But she had a trump left, she thought: Moosbrugger! For her husband was a judge. And she could win over Diotima for Moosbrugger.

But Ulrich now told her that intervention in the case Moosbrugger made no sense at all.

Bonadea looked at him with beautiful offended eyes in which water flowed over the ice as in spring.

Ulrich had wished to keep this short but remembered how on the street at night she had bent over his bleeding body and decided to apply some palliative assistance: "suppose", he said, "you are walking in a park, there is nobody and suddenly two of those guys approach".

"Yes but I never go alone in a park".

"Well ... he was a carpenter, so ... say you are at home, he is working and suddenly his eyeballs start rolling around".

Bonadea's stocking had gone out of its proper position, she bent over it while looking up at Ulrich.

Quickly Ulrich took a second cigarette. "You can feel all kinds of things for Moosbrugger but you can do nothing. This is because these types of cases are like threads in the weave of society: pull and the entire thing falls apart".

Miraculously Bonadea's shoe fell from her foot. Ulrich took it, she extended her foot and said: "give it, I will do it myself".

Ulrich put the shoe back on the foot and smelled her diminished *compos mentis*.

"And then think of it", he continued, "that science already has developed useful recycling techniques for garbage, dead bodies, broken glass and poisonous chemicals and in no time could dispose of preventive drugs against sexual murders, but they spend their money at stupidities and for the solution of the most important moral problem they would not give a dime".

"Oh please stop!" Bonadea said. But Ulrich did not and continued while walking up and down, during which she caught his hand again and put it on her breast.

"OK", Ulrich said, while two hearts beat inside him, making him feel like a clock shop. But he had the will power, redressed the breast and continued: "let us approach the matter from the emotional perspective. Look, there are millions of cases of injustice that you are unaware of, but this one affects you because I told you about it".

"But I do not know the other's", she was about to burst in tears. "You're always the same!"

Ulrich got tired. Always the same. The inner acoustics of emptiness, in which every shot sounds twice as hard and keeps echoing. The "Baroque of emptiness" he had baptized it once.

Suddenly her entire upper body started to shake and she grabbed her calf. A flea! She was absolutely sure. Ulrich had to help. The stocking should be pulled down entirely and her blouse should be opened at once. From the tram, or from Ulrich!

But nothing was found.

"I don't know what it was", Bonadea said.

Ulrich smiled unexpectedly friendly.

Then she started to cry.

#### *64. General Stumm von Bordwehr pays a visit to Ermelina*

General Stumm von Bordwehr, a small man, potbelly and a roundish head, in sum: less fit to scare an advancing enemy, had paid a visit to Diotima.

He had repeated his testimony of understanding for the modest place that the Ministry of War would assume, for the omission of War in the appointment of committees though for the rest conforming to the Imperial ministerial portfolios, but that nevertheless ... etc. In doing so he delved up several quotations of his Gymnasial education.

Now, on military matters, in Kakania you had families receiving military officers because the daughters married them, and families who did not while the dowry was considered too high or out of principle, so there you also would not see young officers. Not only was Diotima a professing pacifist, but her family belonged - for both reasons - to group 2, so despite Stumm's reassuring use of Latin he scared the hell out of her.

Whether or not Stumm's visit did it we can't be sure - after all there were more stressful issues ongoing, she almost collapsed. Hate of course was beneath her dignity but it certainly could be called a feeling of cracking insult. And then,

how this fat officer like an onion made her tears jump out of her eyes ...

A sudden sense of lurking danger prompted her at once to send the invitations for the planned Meeting of Great Minds.

*65. From the conversations between Arnheim and Diotima.*

Diotima could relieve her sentiments about the general: Arnheim had returned. Where out of his soul had that man plucked the idea to come and visit her?

"Only a short time ago I had a discussion with your nephew about generals", Arnheim said with the mimic of a man who suspects a worrying connection.

But that's where he stopped and turned the conversation to the connection between business and poetry, the irrational, yes, mystical sides of big trade. "Simple people make the mistake to think that owning wealth is a pleasure, while in fact it is a frightful responsibility. And then I'm not even yet talking about all people depending on me, but, let me begin with my grandfather who started a garbage collection company ...".

(Diotima felt a slight shock, thought of this as a very personal confession, all the more since as an Austrian she associated it with the manure collector, she reddened).

" ... and even my father had only two classes of trade school before he went into business. With all my education and knowledge I cannot explain how he never failed in his projects. That is the secret of the powerful, simple, great and healthy life! But it is astonishing to witness how many artistic, moral

and political issues sometimes arise in my firms' policy meetings."

Because Arnheim had dealt with the garbage collection with such an unusually confidential voice, Diotima regretted the pure fright that had prevented her to stick to that subject.

"There are things over which the intellect has no power, this you can see at my father. Your nephew does not understand that at all".

In view of the general's initiative Arnheim thought it a good idea to swiftly continue with the Great Initiative. But the general did not need to be rigorously blocked. Even the army could use some spirit, why not use the opportunity?"

Diotima took his hand and said: "Thank you for your open-heartedness".

Arnheim held the hand for a while as if he had forgotten to say something.

*66. Between Ulrich and Arnheim some things are not as they should be.*

Ulrich considered updating Diotima about the incoming documents to be by far the most amusing part of his honorary secretarial function. Apart from te codes BT "*Back to ...* " and FT "*Forward to ...* " (the latter now contained a superb proposal to boost awareness of the vital significance of the cultivation of vegetables), Ulrich had now defined a third new code AF "*Away from ...* " (sub: Roman church, jews, socialism, capitalism, mechanistic thinking, race mixture, race separation, and miscellaneous)

Ulrich truly enjoyed on such occasions to call her "powerful niece" and say: "I have everything here from *Away from Rome* to *Forward to the cultivation of vegetables*", what is your preference?

"Powerful niece, one half of mankind searches salvation in the future, the other half in the past. His Serene Highness would opine the present is unfeasible."

"Does His Serene Highness have something religious in mind?", Diotima asked.

"At present he takes the position that there is no voluntary way back into history", Ulrich says, "But what slightly disturbs him is that we have no viable forward and the present is generally considered unbearable".

Diotima had become accustomed to her nephew and routinely hid herself in her tall body like a tower that in the travel guide has three stars.

But spotting an opportunity she asked with some pressing emphasis: "Why did you send that general to me?"

"Which general".

"Von Stumm"

"The fat one from the first meeting? Never seen him since".

Ulrich's surprise eyed totally convincing. But a man like Arnheim could not lie. There should be a misunderstanding, Diotima concluded. She told what Arnheim had said.

"With Arnheim about Stumm? Never ... wait, about generals in general, and by way of example that a general willingly causing the death of a thousand of his soldiers is a murderer in the context of those one thousand mothers, but something else in the context of the necessity of a sacrifice or the irrelevance of the duration of life".

Diotima wanted to know how that had ended.

"We big businessmen", Arnheim had continued, "I mean the leaders among them, we learn to see our really successful ideas as something defying calculus, just like a politician, and, by the way, the artist".

"This", Ulrich told Diotima, "ended by him expressing as his opinion that acting and personal influence were my real talents".

"And?", Diotima asked.

Ulrich told her he had said that indeed he ranked his talent to be himself as by far his worst.

"You keep mocking life instead of devoting yourself to it", Diotima said, still angry about the files and codes.

"He said I am a very active person in a blocking posture. For some reason he wants to win my esteem".

"He wants to use you", Diotima rebuked.

"O no, I am a pebble and he is a beautiful round glass sphere, but he seems to fear me".



Nevertheless, Ulrich gained again a bit more of Diotima's trust. Especially after answering her question what to do with the general: "Keep him far".

### *67. Diotima and Ulrich*

Ulrich and Diotima now dealt with each other on an almost daily basis which had made things, after all, they were almost nephew and niece, more informal. No longer did she always receive him in full armour from hair nots to skirt hem.

Often they had to go somewhere together. They became a bit of a team.

Her beauty stimulated Ulrich to redirect his irritation about her childish ambitious bourgeois mind, stupid superstition and "great" ideas to her environment that had pressed her in this lifestyle, so she herself could occupy a slightly better place in his mind.

Together they showed Arnheim the "treasures of Vienna's vicinity", as Diotima used to say, who herself learned by it sometimes, for instance when noticing that noble country houses, if bought by those bourgeois who were so much friendlier to her in her salon, suddenly looked much better: refurbished, painted and stuffed with quality furniture.

The familial atmosphere contributed to things: after all relatives can be unbearable but they always remain part of it. Ulrich even started some occasional "sister teasing". A fine example: the car drives through a beautifully forested valley and Diotima, delighted, strikes up the the poem: "Who withstood wind to put you, wood, up there so good I wish I understood ... ". Ulrich can't stop himself and says: "The Land

Bank. This is all Land Bank area. Look how they planted them in downward rows. That is to get them down easily after chopping. Cellulose production". And whenever Diotima shared her warm feelings for mankind with God, who after all, devoted his entire last day of creation to us, Ulrich always was tempted to pregnantly table an example of the largest phenomena of nature, quantifying and comparing energy release of volcanoes (killing us), galaxies (of no use to us at all), and the like.

Diotima underwent such things eyes upward with the resigned disdain for an *enfant terrible*. Quietly waiting until Ulrich was done she would retaliate for example with something like: "Fortunately there are still people who despite great experiences can believe in the simple". It cost her no energy for she really saw nothing impressive in Ulrich's knowledge which in her view only ranged over minor technical issues.

So it should surprise no one that Arnheim often was the subject, all the more since Diotima welcomed every non-suspect occasion to talk about him, and Ulrich, whom she knew was not charmed by the man but had no underhand reason to hide it, liked to deal some pricks every now and then in the man's direction.

When he was around, Arnheim took against Ulrich the posture of an older friend, which really was inevitable due to his status, but which irritated Ulrich by its patronizing edge which made the businessopher receive the occasional live technical prick as well.

Ulrich felt irritated by his own irritation and regularly found himself in heart-searching: how did the man manage to irritate him so? He was smart, aware of the contemporary double

situation of mankind, then blamed intelligence. The fraudulent combination of soul and coal price. And then the contrast of his effective and well conceived daily business practice with his writing, always kept so vague that he surely did not want to get a clearer understanding of it himself.

This again combined with that posh mentality deeming it normal to have the best quality and the most beautiful of everything.

Utterly useless to challenge this man. Ulrich had everybody against him in this environment, and a hit invariably resulted in some wings-clapping and flying up of the spiritual bird and there you stood in conversation with a pure businessman, whom you had not been able to lift off a penny, which was exactly what gave Arnheim the confidence to deal with Ulrich.

But what helped Ulrich was his pleasure in his own essayistic posture in the Parallel action, and that it was crystal clear that profoundly upsetting Arnheim could mean the end of the game, hence the prick, with, as it were, the training cover on his foil was the evident upper limit.

This expression of the "training cover", by the way, was Diotima's invention to describe that type of interaction between her boy and her gentleman. She saw there was no evil whatsoever in Ulrich, his lean athletic body made an excellent impression in the salon, and under her patronage something could grow out of him, despite those opinions, well, had he a bent back, black hair and a low forehead, she would have thought those opinions belonged to the person, but as it was she took them as temporary and of minor importance. And thus she was more at ease in the company of Ulrich than in that of Arnheim. In the vicinity of Arnheim her ever increasing

idealism had started to worry her by feeling as if it was heading for instability.

Thus Diotima and Arnheim managed to stay upright by using, whenever necessary, Ulrich as a shield, as a result of which Diotima started to get haunted by the pressing question:

*68. Digression: do people have to conform to their bodies?*

Diotima and Ulrich now did quite some traveling together, often in a slightly intimate position next to each other in a wobbling car under a common blanket.

Just as with his cabaret dancer and Bonadea, between Ulrich's head and Diotima's the cold was absolute, but the bodies behaved differently. Both Ulrich and Diotima withstood their bodies, though the causes were entirely different.

After that one single bewildering experience, long ago, with the major's wife, Ulrich had abolished love rigorously, and had restricted himself to sex. As long as both parties cooperate, such a procedure can go quite well. In Diotima's presence his habits opened his body for sensations he would never have had, had he engaged in some more exercise in love, but his cerebral control prevented all risks of going into action.

Diotima had agreeable sensations as well, but her moral impeccability totally prevented her spotting their origin.

In these two so different manners the two-headed god, the horse foot of the devil and what have you got kept at bay, and one did not moor at the lonely island of lust, where one is murderer, fate and god and where with determined glassy eyes

one stares at one's highest reachable degree of irrationality and adventure.

Ulrich may not have created his body from scratch but he definitely had shaped and maintained it with exercise. So it looked good and could perform quite well in a wide range of disciplines. Ulrich had discovered what the body required to keep performing, sex had turned out part of it, so he engaged in it on the very same technical grounds as in all else.

But all this is not to say he was particularly pleased with the result. Stronger even: he did not at all feel at home in it.

*69. Diotima and Ulrich, continued.*

This was a burden to him when in the company of Diotima. This woman who without her substandard brain function would have been so beautiful, triggered a kind of fear for himself, and in Diotima's company he felt inclined to return to the stage when as a young child he did not yet have such fears.

One time he was not even far off the threshold of actually saying so. During a small stroll in the mountains Diotima mentioned that Arnheim called Ulrich an "activist", then had come back to Ulrich's claim that all those people in his files "*Back to ...* " and "*Forward to ...* " would stop short of realizing their ideals were they given the opportunity. Whether that was not tragic?

But to her own panic she suddenly realised her thought was really about her and Arnheim. She reddened and hoped Ulrich had not noticed it.

"Arnheim's words show an overestimation of my influence at the Tuzzís", Ulrich said. "For you will never consider seriously what I am telling you. But now you are asking about it, you did start something dangerous, for people are pleased to be unable to realize their ideals".

"And you? What would you do?"

"I would have no other option than abolish reality".

"No, seriously", Diotima said. For once she would not allow him to bring things to the level of nonsense.

"Reality, that is that we are now here, the two of us. In a year, reality shall be different, but we shall remember quite some things of realities that passed, for instance that we have stood here. But what moves us, at least me, is a total contrast to this 'reality' type of experience. That sensation to have fixed ground under your feet and a fixed skin around your body seems obvious to everybody, but in me it is has not developed very far."

And there, after saying that, things almost went wrong (or right, if you will): "Just think of how you were as a child, look ... as an ant I might think my earlier stage as a larva was gruesome, but there is no objective criterion to determine whether an ant is a better or worse creature than a larva".

And there he stopped before something. He did not want to say it: embrace me, out of pure sympathy, we are relatives; not totally apart, certainly not one; but in any case things between us are different and totally contrary to a formal relation.

But he did not say so. And he was wrong too. He could not have made her do anything. She again had Arnheim in her head. She realized something somehow would happen. This "not doing what you really want" had shone for a moment, but that was gone now. Nobody could have seen whether that had made her happier or unhappier, it simply was the way it was.

And thus both of them had managed to swallow the most important outburst during this conversation, which prevented Diotima from learning about Ulrich's sentimental side.

*70. Clarisse visits Ulrich to tell him a story.*

The interior redesign of old castles was the trade of the famous painter van Helmond, whose most brilliant work was his daughter Clarisse who finally came to see Ulrich in his new dwelling. Surprise visit.

"My father requested me to ask you whether he could be recommended in those aristocratic circles that you are now so close to".

"Well, he shouldn't think too much of my ...".

"I know, it's nonsense, but he's broke once again and now I can truly say I asked you. D'you know the Pachofens?".

Ulrich only remembered a girl Pachofen whom he has seen in the company of Clarisse,

"Yes that was my friend. Papa would do their castle and we had all joined. Walter was there, for the first time, and Meingast".

"Meingast?"

"Yes, who later went to Switzerland, at the time he did not yet do the philosopher but did the cock in all families with daughters".

"O that one, I do not know him personally".

"Well Papa in a glorious role there of course and Walter mesmerized by him, more than by me! And Lucy ...".

"Cool down a bit. Who is Lucy?"

"That's the Pachofen girl, my friend. In no time she sat on such a horse, as an amazon, posing for one of Papa's paintings and she held him for a Titian or Tintoretto. Papa crazy of her."

"So Papa of her and Walter of Papa?"

"You wait. Walter of course thought he had to pass for an impressionist, and Papa painted the old fashioned way, you know, brown sauce with peacock tails. So Walter had to admire in stealth. Mama was there too, as a live advertising pillar for Walter, so Walter, in the middle of everything, felt his weight ... and then Lucy and me, can you imagine? She 18, I sixteen, my father in love with her, her head swelled. I had the tower chamber. There I got my daily updates from her, we did not sleep much".

"I do not think", Clarisse went on, "everything happened, but enough to make her father arrive and take her on holiday to Spain. Well, you should have seen my father. After a while nothing was left of him. And then one night I heard him



coming up my stairs - and there he was next to my bed, that was something!".

"Why did you not cry for help".

"That was the strange thing. First he stood outside for a while, then he opened the door and softly called my name, and some strange soft lamenting sound came out of me. He put himself on the bed and put his head next to mine on the pillow"

"Tears".

"No, nothing, nothing at all. An old deserted body. He only thought of sex and that ridiculous sound kept coming out of me, to my own utter surprise, and about this I wanted to ask you".

"You have not yet asked anything".

"I was appalled by the thought that he would interpret my silence as a consent, my silence was desperation and fear, what do you think?".

"At the moment I have nothing to say".

"One hand kept caressing my face, the other started wandering around. Then I got some power to turn around and made the weird sound again. I have a birth-mark on my thigh", she pointed at it through her clothes, "probably has magic power for it halted him, his hand went through my hair again and there he went. So now, if you find an occasion between your aristocrats could you drop his name?"

She prepared to leave. She was wearing her clothes for going to town, stretched her hand to say goodbye.

*71. The Committee to create a leading decision relating to the seventeen years' Imperial Royal government jubilee of His Majesty commences to convene.*

And not a word about her letter to Leinsdorf. Probably totally forgotten already.

Elsewhere the attention had turned as well. With the power of emergency, dislodged by general Stumm, Diotima had reached the stage in which the Parallel Action, officially known as *Inquiry to create a leading decision and determination of the wishes of the circles of population involved relating to the seventeen years' Imperial Royal government jubilee of His Majesty*, could convene the committee that had to take the leading decision, officially called *Committee to create a leading decision relating to the seventeen years' Imperial Royal government jubilee of His Majesty*.

The convocation had been written by His Serene Highness count Leinsdorf in person. Tuzzi had corrected it. Arnheim had seen and approved Tuzzi's corrections. Yet, the spirit of Leinsdorf still was discernable: ... powerful manifestations arising from the midst of the people ... political immaturity ... influence from above required ... peoples grouped around the Emperor in gratitude ...

The long list of candidates for the committee was desperately long. After firm and painful deletion the remaining few still by far did not fit around Diotima's surface of contiguous tables with that green cloth over it, so the pencils and government blocs stayed stored and it was going to be a somewhat informal

reception with a cold buffet. Without any hesitation, Tuzzi had given his wife a decent budget, which clearly showed how now he was won over for an exercise in trail-blazing diplomacy.

All relevant documentation had been collected with the help of Arnheim's private secretary, so Diotima could delight every guest with knowledge of his work. A small library had been purchased with a budget from His Serene Highness. Guests could walk in from the conversation rooms, for it was Diotima's boudoir, which hence exercised a considerable boost of her reputation, as well as of the guests' patriotism: the boudoir was carefully prepared to make sure everyone would see his own work there.

To Diotima's consternation most guests had appeared in the expectation to be facilitated to speak, say five or forty-five minutes in order to advise the Parallel Action in such a way as to make sure that other speakers could no longer be able to spoil the Parallel Action with misconceptions.

The problem was the high density, in the physical sense, into which Diotima had managed to compress spirit in just some rooms of her own house. In the air, swans gracefully fan out and form their admirable flight, but pressed together in a small space they wobble around and peck each other's feathers. Too much always is a relation between space and filling, between a museum and a junk shop.

And, now we are dealing with it anyway, how special is the Great Mind? Nowadays the Great Mind has become an institution like the prison system, the army and medicare: it must be full to run. Whenever undercapacity arises, the one in turn gets grabbed at the scruff of his neck and locked up in it.

And how does the Great Mind process that traumatic experience? Some get wealthy out of desperation, others start wearing an invisible crown and stress that their work will be liable to balanced judgment only in three hundred to one thousand years, all regret that the Really Great Minds will never be admitted to their ranks for they are too far ahead of their time.

Of course this is about all Great in the footsteps of Goethe and Michelangelo, Napoleon and Luther. The others, the heirs of Gauss, Euler, Maxwell, Lavoisier and Cardanus fare altogether differently. In those circles, when a death is to be mourned there never is that sigh while acknowledging that the deceased was unique and we all stay behind like orphans etc. For in those circles, others already took over a long time ago by the hundreds, continuing the unstoppable revolution of our world. And don't try to memorize their names, they are too many.

It is also curious how sharp the distinction is between these two types of human behaviour. In between, it strongly seems, is nothing.

On this evening there were some scientists but mainly an overdose of Unique and Great Personalities. Diotima suddenly shivered, not realizing she felt the grave wind that suddenly blew over the fields of spirit.

*72. About the smile in the beard of science or: the first encounter with the evil.*

The human phenomenon of smiling in the beard now deserves our attention, for that was what those leaders of the world of scientific research did who had accepted the invitation. It did not signify irony but reverence and incompetence, but that

should not, I repeat, *not*, divert us from the way in which these people are entirely glowing of an evil fire.

That seems improbable if you consider how such a university professor is presenting himself: tester of truth, pillar of progress. But beware of professional ideologies: a hunter will not call himself the executioner of nature; a leading entrepreneur is not squeezing workers like lemons but "feels a responsibility".

This is our moment to find the truth about science, if only because it is dominating our life to such an extent nowadays that even the illiterate should beware.

It is already more than four hundred years ago that one has left the armchair, in which one can read the Bible, or something like that, at his ease, to put his back side straight on the earth. Suddenly only *things* are relevant, persons no longer count. And once you sit like that you pick up amply enough things to make others feel the urge to hang or burn you.

And that is because what these people do is not as peaceful as they want us to believe. They have retained all that human sneakiness, yes the entire basic mind sets of the hunter, the soldier and the trader have remained, and transferred it to spiritual ground. Just think of the joy one derives in those circles to trip up everything elevated and holy. Is not that a desire of the very same nature as we feel when we see such an enormous preposterous glass vase, viz. that with one well-aimed strike of your stick you could destroy the entire thing which moreover would be accompanied with extremely satisfactory acoustics? Vandalistic passion. For instance, to devise an experiment which proves that goodness is egoism under special conditions. That mouth and arse are the ends of

one and the same channel. This lust in betraying the tricks of the magical phenomenon "man" to the general public. Making fun of the antiquated elevated believers. I say no more: science is the work of the devil.

By which we have established as well that the voice of the hard scientific truth contains a suspect hell-houndlike overtone. The whole business surely smells like fight, hunt and war.

Some peaceful scholars now present in Diotima's salon might be shocked when learning that their smile in their beard in the last analysis should remind of someone who senses another good moment to pull the trigger, with satisfactory results.

For most of them did not sense much more than slightly tickling legs, a bit of a relief when finding a colleague to discuss matters without danger and express some amazement under four eyes.

And that curious inclination as soon as back on the street, to do some foot stamping as if to check whether one was back on earth.

*73. Leo Fischel's daughter Gerda.*

Leo Fischel's wife Klementine had announced her visit to Ulrich by telephone.

It should have been some three years ago he had seen her, for since his return to Vienna Ulrich had not yet visited them. That was in part because he had not wanted to awaken some sentiments dating from an earlier period of intimacy with her daughter Gerda, and associated motherly disappointment of Klementine.

To be sure, this disappointment had been there, but Klementine had a "big thinking heart", and since in the presence of her husband that had to remain in the moth-balls it could lift her on a near heroic high of feelings on an occasion like this: Gerda had come seriously under the influence of a certain Hans Sepp, a peer and something like the guru of a christian-german anti-capitalistic, anti-socialistic arian symbolgroup. Leo had already wanted to deny him access to the house, but now even Klementine had enough of it. The guy had money nor family status, so was no marriage party whatsoever and Gerda lost precious time this way.

After Leo, irritated by Sepp's table lectures on the pernicious jewish thinking, had banned him, Gerda had lost kilos in a few weeks. "It's just a kind of hypnosis, a spiritual infection!", Klementine said.

To burn Gerda off the temptations of the forbidden, Leo meanwhile had made an arrangement with Hans: he could come once every three weeks provided he would avoid a list of subjects - Leo had taken the pen - neither in the company of Gerda alone, nor in the presence of her parents. Hans had promised accordingly.

But this seemed insufficient. And the parents felt judged too old-fashioned to make more difference. Could not Ulrich talk to her?

"I fear I will also be judged old-fashioned", Ulrich said.

But he went.

At the agreed time the parents were not yet at home, as he had expected.

"Why did you stay away that long?", Gerda asked.

Ulrich said to have become under the impression that her parents had not wanted their intimate intercourse without the perspective on a marriage.

"Mama is ridiculous and Papa very much likes you to come. Haven't you become something important in that big thing?"

"OK I will come", Ulrich says, "but what will be the result you think?".

Gerda did not answer but started to arrange some small things in the room.

Ulrich put himself next to her and kissed her lips. That was how they stood for a moment. Then she liberated herself.

"What will be the result you think?"

"Should it be like that then?"

"Tell me about Hans", Ulrich said softly, after they sat down.

"You are vain, you will never understand us youth"

"Gerda, I believe I give up science right now for it is only a special form of avarice, I switch to the new generation. But there are quite some vain words I would like to protect you against".

"You should know Hans better, but you will never succeed in understanding that a community without egoism is possible".



"Is he still coming often?"

Gerda shrugged her shoulders. She was unaware Ulrich knew the story. She and Hans of course suffered under the coercion but Gerda underwent it in a resigned way as if she herself was not sure of her position.

To be honest, she was not very much in love with the boy. He was more like a demonstration banner for her parents to read. And that was caused by all their quarreling. Had she been born a few years later, she would have reached this stage of half maturity after Leo had become so fed up with his wife that he had dropped his solidity and had, by speculation on his own account, become one of the richest people of Vienna with the collateral windfall of regaining the affection of his wife, and Gerda would have proudly considered herself a promising mixture of races. As it was, she had to come out as blond, free, powerful and as if she had nothing to do with her parents.

"Dear Gerda", Ulrich said, after some silence, "those so-called friends of yours are the most sinister extortioners I know"

"You do not understand us, you think like a predator"

"Well, let me tell you something", Ulrich said, and pulled her near. "Do you know the history of the catch of the moon? Do you know the earth used to have more moons? Many adhere to the theory that those were huge balls of ice coming from space and caught by the gravity of the earth to start circling around it. And our moon is the last of them. One by one the others fell on earth and that caused an enormous flood. Can you imagine how frightened people were? Think of it: the moon would circle nearer and nearer, and faster around the earth before making its terrible landing".

"Were there people already?"

"Of course, for that produced those deluges that are related in the traditions of the old people"

Breathless Gerda gazed out of the window.

"But this is all nonsense", Ulrich said. "In truth a moon, by generating tidal forces slows down the rotation of the earth. As a result the days have become longer and longer in the past four billion years and the distance of the moon increased. In the end this process will destabilize the rotation of the earth, the positions of the equator on earth and the poles will displace, and ever more and faster".

Gerda pulled her hand away. "Why do you tell me?" she asked.

"I don't know", Ulrich said, "shall I come again?"

Gerda started again to move some things on the table.

"OK I'll come back soon", Ulrich said, though that had not been his plan.

*74. The fourth century before Christ versus the year 1797. Ulrich receives another letter from his father.*

A long letter with a lot of enclosures: " ... your prolonged silence ... heard with satisfaction from many sides ... now I ask you to use your influence to ... ", after which father passed to the treatment of a draft modification of §318 of Criminal Law on the conditions under which lack of *compos mentis* cancels guilt. In parliament there was a sentiment to relax those. Since that could likely not be prevented, Professor Schwung and

father had carefully drafted a version that would prevent the gravest dangers of a relaxation of the law. Father had proposed: circumstances in which "the capacity to see the injustice of the act was not present". Schwung had proposed: "a free decision of will was impossible".

The letter went on with a careful analysis of the differences that made amply clear that Schwung's take had been in the history of law only since 1797, while father's version had gloriously withstood all attacks since the fourth century before Christ. Father confessed the magnanimity by which he had proposed to propose as follows: "the capacity to see the injustice of the act was not present *and* a free decision of will was impossible".

But then Professor Schwung had shown his true nature by proposing to replace "*and*" with "*or*"!!

It was Ulrich's impression that father and Schwung lately did meet less than they were used to. Here, roughly in the middle of the letter, Ulrich stopped reading, weighed on his hand the bundle of enclosures, scanned the end of the letter, where he learned his father expected him to make Leinsdorf and Stallberg aware of the lurking danger that the jubilee year might be taken hostage by irresponsible and incompetent elements treacherously posing as experts in order to force through an outright disastrous change of the law.

You are on 30% (book page 328) of the part published during Musil's life of "Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften".

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