

**Bert Tells What He Reads**



Robert Musil  
**Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften**

FIRST VOLUME  
Chapter 75-101

**Omslag:**

... *Walther Rathenau* ...

... *But Arnheim sported a moustache and a tiny chin-beard. Those little hairs, oddly attached to his head yet being part of him, reminded him - he did not exactly know why - when he got a bit overexcited during a speech for a fervent public, in an agreeable way of his money.... (Chapter 92)*

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*75. General Stumm von Bordwehr considers his visits to Diotima a beautiful diversion of his official duties*

Little fat Stumm had enjoyed his visit to Diotima. After a while he decided for another field day. Once on his chair, he unfolded his vision that only military power, though understandably not high profile in this initiative, was capable of maintaining peace.

"General", Diotima said, trembling with rage, "all life is based on the powers of peace, even business life fundamentally is a poem!"

Puzzled, Stumm lowered his head, but quickly sat upright again and said: "Your Excellency" - for in terms of army ranking Tuzzi would be called so, and out of politeness his wife as well - "of course War could not have its own committee in this pacifistic initiative, but you should know how we like such things - an international peace initiative or the donation of some paintings from our fatherland to the Hague Peace Palace?"

- you see, there are so many misunderstandings about the army ... I ... do not wish to deny that every now and then I see the odd young lieutenant wishing war, but the leadership has always been deeply convinced that the sphere of violence, that unfortunately is our hallmark, should be connected with the blessings of the human spirit, just like Your Excellency just expressed herself."

He took a little brush from his pocket and started doing his beard, a tic, it seemed, but kept gazing at Diotima with his big brown eyes.

Her rage resided.

And then Stumm started praising the order of spirit, "Geist", from a general theory of the order of things.

Diotima listened. She had no clue what to say herself and finally said that on short notice she would convoke the the greatest minds of Austria, for keeping order in all that got on her path in setting up the Parallel Action had been a challenge indeed. "But never could we", she added, "reach our goal by an act pure ordering. A flash, a fire, an intuition, that is what it should ultimately be. History may seem a logical development but its twists and turns remind me more of poetry".

"Please do not take it ill of me, Your Excellency", the general answered, "the soldier knows little of poetry, but if anyone should be able to provide flash and fire to an action, it surely is an old officer!"

*76. Clount Leinsdorf sports reservations.*

Something had occurred in His Serene Highness' mind that discomfited Diotima. His interest seemed to have shifted from the spirit of her elitist salon - and this transpired from the new expression "mere literature" he started to frequently employ - to that of the pastures, the farmers and the village churches of his fatherland, in other words, to, as it were, the cadastral register of spiritual legacy. To shape the festivities, he now thought one should primarily know how one thought in milk cooperations, hunting clubs and the like.

Diotima expressed to Arnheim her regrets about Leinsdorf's shift, but, Arnheim's love of the simplicity of the heart made him take His Serene Highness under protection, though he could not resist suspecting that Ulrich's ironic view of the flood of spiritual matter triggered by the announcement of the "Austrian year" could have had some influence on the count. "He is a charming but dangerous person by his combination of juvenile moral exotics and his trained mind, constantly seeking adventure without knowing why".

*77. Arnheim the media star.*

Diotima regularly got the chance to see Arnheim's simplicity in operation. On his advice journalists had been called in.

After his slightly unhappy appearance at the first official meeting Arnheim had restricted himself to receptions and avoided deliberations completely, but when journalists appeared, he turned out to be seen as the centre of the Parallel Action without further ado.

An icon. Without any effort. Like flies on the shit. His preposterous nonsense, especially that dictum that 'the sole rise of this initiative proved its necessity', went down like manna from heaven. Frantically nodding they all copied it in their little notebooks. Several journals featured it prominently. There were plenty of great minds that evening but when Arnheim spoke to journalists they heard the general spirit as a matter of fact.

And among all those great minds Arnheim did well too: they were pleased by his confidence-keen slightly pessimistic modesty in which he said that expectations should not be too high. That was generally preferred to a colleague managing to unexpectedly shine and steal the show.

#### 78. *Metamorphoseis of Diotima.*

Diotima's feelings did not rise as rectilinear as Arnheim's star in Vienna.

She did experience the occasional euphoria thinking of the growing reputation of her salon, especially now Arnheim's presence and weight had given stability to the intercourse and thus had taken away her nerves. Sometimes she looked at him while he was talking in some corner, then realized she had done so all the time but only now got aware of it.

And she could profit from his lessons in politics, for now she understood why the Austrian elite around her tended to scorn Germany but curiously enough, by way of brotherly obligation uttered itself in contrary direction when dealing with the French-German rivalry. This turned out to be a Gallic-Celtic-Ostic-thyreological problem connected with the Lorrainian coal

mines and thus in the end with the Mexican oil fields and the contrast of English and Latin America.

Those were issues totally beyond her husband Sektionchef Tuzzi - or he pretended ignorance about it. Tuzzi kept loudly asking himself in her presence what would be Arnheim's real intentions to play his suspicious role here. Thus Diotima got even more deeply convinced of the superiority of the new people over the methods of obsolete diplomacy.

She still considered her decision to bring Arnheim in the top of the Parallel Action to be her first great idea. Its conception had come with a miraculous state of dreaming in which all things that thus far formed part of her world simply had melted.

What a good decision had it been! For, to be honest, for the rest the Parallel Action had yielded failures only: a competition among the greatest of minds in producing useless ideas, and Leinsdorf's zoo noises, so neatly codified and archived by Ulrich. For the rest one thing only: Arnheim.

Improvidence, joy, not rarely reaching peaks in ecstasy, even triggering daring jokes, and resulting in plan lists too large for her schedule, as a result of which she occasionally could start the way an archduchess painting flowers - since for someone like that there are no other decent subjects - does when suddenly confronted with her immense stock of self made flower paintings.

Before this new life, had you woken her up in the middle of the night to ask about the essence of life, she would have said that the living soul should express its power of love to the world, and waking up a little bit more, regaining awareness of civilization, she would have spoken about something

"analogous the the power of love". For in those times she still divided herself in little drops of love that she tossed away, after which she got left with the empty bottle of her body that belonged to the inventory of Tuzzi's house.

But now the power of love had firmly regrouped in her own body. She had awakened by the thought her nephew had inspired her to, that she was on the verge of a Deed relating to Arnheim.

Her husband got confronted with this excitation, wild fun may be just a slight overstatement, in a rather special way. Her underwear got naughtier. Every now and then he got embraced in such a passionate way that he felt relieved when it was over. He got given a hiding for 'plunging' on her in the act of love 'like an animal'. He hardly managed to keep up with this revolution in the domestic part of his life, but the generally admired success of his wife had even pressed out of his conscience all options of dominant action or sharp ridicule.

Tuzzi read Arnheim and hated writing men as the cause of his suffering.

For Tuzzi's explanation of the phenomenon of writing was 1. boredom (the retired government officer writes his memoires), 2. dissatisfaction and ambition (one hopes to be heard where in one's own environment nobody listens - this in Tuzzi's mind included jews), 3. remarkable adventures (but only at old age and abroad), and 4. money (where he could even find justification for someone whose name had acquired poetical branding). But this Arnheim, why did this man write so much. Tuzzi was painfully aware to have no clue.



*79. Soliman loves.*

Soliman the little negro slave, or negro king, now wanted to involve Rachel in his noble mission to guard the entire house and prevent Arnheim's dark plans. In the proper negro king's oath both parties put their hands, opening a few buttons, on the other's bare chest but Rachel refused. She had acquired a taste for espionage though. It rose sentiments like bashfulness, veneration and admiration. So, when no one looked, she squatted to look through the keyhole, and Soliman stood behind her, holding her shoulder just to prevent losing his balance.

Soliman flatly refused to help Rachel serving the guests and sat in the kitchen waiting till she was done. If that took too long he escaped in quasi-stealth from the cook and sneaked through the corridors looking for her. He was good at surfacing before her at the most unexpected of places. Once Diotima had caught Rachel spying Arnheim and her and, outraged, sent her to her room. On her way there Rachel had already looked around for Soliman, but failed to see him for he was in her room already.

Rachel hesitated closing the door, but Soliman quickly relieved her from that job and said: "Give me your hand!"

He had a couple of cuff-links and tried to fix them on her sleeve.

"Gems", he proudly explained.

This was fishy, Rachel decided. Quickly she pulled her arm back. She thought of saying something like: "honesty is the best policy", but she rejected the option. Too simple. Pressure built. Then she said: "I do not steal from my house!".

"Why not", Soliman asked with all his white teeth.

"I just don't do it"

"I did not steal them, they are mine!", Soliman protested.

He grabbed her arm again, she resisted, he started to pull in rage but was no party to her, lost and bit her in the arm like an animal. Rachel got a scare, her fist landed on his cheek and he collapsed in a tantrum hiding his wet face in her skirt, she felt the tears dripping on her thigh. That was something new to Rachel and it came so unexpected that her fingers started to softly caress his frizzy hair.

*80. One gets introduced to General Stumm, who unsuspectingly reports at the council.*

The meeting of the main committee of the Parallel Action, in the meantime baptized "the council", had undergone a curious enrichment in the form of the unexpected appearance of General Stumm von Bordwehr, showing his feelings of honour, excitement, and gratitude for having been invited.

Over his head Diotima scanned for the possible suspect. Arnheim of course was absent and Ulrich stood near the pastry, looking extremely bored. She felt totally sure that someone like Stumm would never do this without an invitation. The cards left over were in a drawer in her writing table. Supernatural forces? She believed in them but this would be a stunningly concrete case.

Stumm had wondered as well, address and beginning were not totally correct and it had clearly not been the hand of Madame Her Excellency in person, but he was a cheerful man who did

not enter into suspicions easily, surely not if they would involve the supernatural.

For Major General Stumm von Bordwehr it all began, a few months earlier, as follows: the Chief of Ministry of War's Presidium Section had called for him and said: "You are such a kind of intellectual, Stumm, we write a letter and you just go there. Just keep your ears open and tell us what they want to do".

Stumm knew that his assignment involved making sure to get on the list of regular invitees, but this had failed despite his two visits to Diotima. Reluctantly he had confessed this to his chief, after which he could storm back in the man's room crying victory.

"Do you see", Fieldmarshal lieutenant Frost von Aufbruch said, "I never doubted it, sit down". The doorlight got switched to a red lettered "no entry, important meeting", and he continued: "We do not want anything special, you see, we don't care not to have our own committee, but we simply cannot fail altogether when a general spiritual gift to our emperor is prepared, that is why I take you, then no one can have anything against it. Go ahead!"

Delighted, Stumm had clapped his spurs.

Let's face it: everybody knows a few bellicose civilians, how on earth could we think that there would be no peaceful servicemen? And indeed there are many. Painters, stamp collectors, amateurs of history books. Stumm had failed in cavalry due to lack of grip and authority over the animal, got moved, grew a full beard, daring, but not prohibited, and became a collector of pen knives (both with and without cork

screw). They had found him a job as a military teacher. As usual, one rank followed the other, whether in the evening you fuck before you drink yourself under the table, or, as Stumm did, the other way around, and when high up in the ministry the chief of military education retired, a former teacher remembered his old colleague Stumm, they made him general, and it would be odd if he would now not end up as fieldmarshal lieutenant.

His full beard for long was replaced again by the usual side-whisker shrubs, but now he got bold, all in all (remember his belly), quite an intellectual appearance from a military perspective.

His craving for the non-military emanation of the married warrior had made him take a wife, and only after he got two children as well, he started to realize the rationality of his former life style, remembered a heap of photographs of beautiful ladies, collected in his youth, thus rediscovered his original view on the woman, and attached it extramaritally but platonically to ladies evoking his shyness - so it would not create any further disorder.

And this had led him by an invisible hand into this room of the council of this gorgeous Diotima!, Stumm thought in the best of moods. His little arms felt far too short to span Diotima's full circumference, neither would his mind be able to fathom hers as far as *The World And Its Culture* was concerned but who cares! His round belly felt like the globe itself.

Diotima had already given him an angry glance for staring at her from a distance, and he just had engaged in settling for a decorative position along the wall when he spotted Ulrich - still, and still with the same facial expression next to the pastry

- and realized this was the thoughtful restless lieutenant that had formed part of his horse regiment for a while.

"An excellent opportunity for me to get acquainted with the main civilian questions of the world", Stumm said.

"You will not believe your ears general", Ulrich said.

The general shook Ulrich's hand warmly. "You were lieutenant in the Ulanenregiment", he said, "and that will turn out to have been a great honour to us, though our old brothers in arms will not yet realize it!"

*81. Count Leinsdorf on pragmatic policy. Ulrich founds associations.*

No hope at the horizon in Diotima's salon-council but in count Leinsdorf's palace things acquired pace. Associations reported. Land-, water-, moderation- and drink associations, singing and football clubs etc.

You'r Serene Highness, Ulrich said, flabbergasted, "how on earth can it be that in an orderly state everybody belongs to at least one gang of robbers!"

"Yes, yes, and those are our handles", the count said, "no ideological fuss but pragmatic policy. This grandiloquence at your niece's is not without danger for our action".

"Does Your Serene Highness have directives?".

The count looked shrewd and said: "We should not do what they want. It already in Kant."

"Indeed!" said the pupil in surprise, "but don't we need some target?"

"A target? Bismarck's was to boost the Prussian king. This turned out to require war with Austria and France and the foundation of Germany. You can put a people on its feet but then it should walk. And those legs are its institutions, parties, associations, clubs et cetera, and not what everybody is babbling about.

"Your Highness! That is, though it might not sound so, a truly democratic idea".

"Well, yes, maybe aristocratic as well, though von Hennenstein and von Türkheim keep telling me it will only result in piggery, so be careful, be nice to everybody reporting!"

And they came. Ulrich received a stamp collector, and analyst of signposts and headers who had discovered that three letters each of them with four straight lines (e.g. WEM) had the smoothest relation to the human brain and that the use of especially O, S and C should be discouraged, advocates of mental arithmetic, of stenography etc. He recommended whomever did not yet have an association to found one, for it would have the support of the count. Other requests he told he would put to serious consideration: a football club solicited, in the interest of boosting contemporary body culture, the title of professor for its mid-half.

All went into his orderly database.

Leinsdorf, in dealing with border issues and anecdotes, turned out to have learned from seeing Arnheim operate: something is something when people think so. Wait and stimulate.

82. *Clarisse demands an Ulrich-year.*

Early afternoon seemed Ulrich the best time to see Clarisse. Walter would be jealous but on his job.

"I come to tell you never to write such a letter to Leinsdorf again".

"Never tell Walter, but tell me what's wrong with it. Wouldn't it be marvelous, a Nietzsche year? What did your count say?".

"Well what do you think, with that Moosbrugger in it. But he would have thrown it away anyway".

Clarisse looked disappointed, but after a moment said: "Well fortunately you are there to correct him".

"I told you you're crazy".

That visibly pleased Clarisse, she grabbed his hand. "Don't you think that entire Parallel Action is nonsense?"

"Of course".

"But a Nietzsche-year would be nice".

"How do you imagine it?"

"That's your business of course".

"You're a nice joker".

"To propose you to finally do something serious? Why?"

Ulrich pulled his hand loose. "Well, then why Nietzsche. Could be Christ or Buddha".

"Or yourself, make an Ulrich year, you!"

OK, so she had no vicious intentions Ulrich thought.

"Do it! But don't tell Walter".

"*A coup d'état?*".

"OK do a Buddha-year. I know little about him but if his ideas are thought important, then take him".

"Now listen. Suppose we do a Nietzsche-year. He is on your shelves for years. What to do?"

Clarisse started three or four times, stopped again and finally said: "Why should I tell you, you know that much better than me ...".

"I ab-so-lute-ly know nothing at all. Except that the best ideas are the worst to realize. Soup kitchens and dog clubs, those are things you can work at. Why is this so? No idea. But it's like that"

Clarisse continued but he looked at how her thoughts seemed to come out of her body as a whole. Everything moved when she said something. Hard, thin and boyish as it was she yet looked like a Javanese dancer. A splendid unity of body and mind, as he himself totally lacked.

"Ideas", Ulrich started to lecture, "are only like a talisman for people. It brings luck if you carry them. Every now and then



you touch them. Gives you power. But they are made of quickly decomposing material. In no time bacteria start to destroy them. quickly the get smelly. Fortunately fresh ideas are freely available everywhere".

But after an unclear moment in his head Ulrich defined the idea as "yourself but in a special state, as an oscillating string making a tone, something that at first seems to generate an infinite stream of beauty but after some time walks, like a soldier, to its proper place in the platoon to freeze."

"Walter is jealous. Not because of me but he thinks you could do what he would want".

Walter, Ulrich thought, had done too many things. It all got connected and now he is caught in its web. Connections deprive experiences of their personal taste. Bad as well as good taste.

"He has to kill you I told him", Clarisse said.

"What?"

"End your life. Des-troy. If you are so worthless as he claims you are and he is so much better, and if it would give him peace he should do it. I said. After all you can defend yourself".

"That's not a bad thing to ... " Ulrich hesitatingly started to answer.

"Well, that how the conversation went, what do you think? Walter says you should not even think about it."

"Well thinking, why not?", Ulrich said. Clarisse had a unique charm. Did she stand next to herself? She was there and not there, but the two were very close together.

"You and your thinking", she interrupted, "you are as passive as Walter. But my opinion is that if you can think something that means you can do it".

"Yes but there are two types of passivity: passive and active".

"Then what is the active?"

"Like a prisoner, waiting for the opportunity to escape"

"Only pretexts!"

"Well, ... maybe ...".

"The most immoral thing", Clarisse said, "does not come from mean people but from those others who let it happen".

*83. And thus it happens, or why does one not invent history?*

What could Ulrich have said?

He had stopped short of saying that God never meant the world literally. Its more a puzzle for us to solve. Would she have agreed to see life as a kind of Red Indian or robbery game? Sure. If one would take the lead and go she would push him aside and take over, like a wolf, nostrils wide.

Or think of a bunch of mathematical equations that have an infinite solution set. One isolated moment or period of mankind

gives no clue, but the more you have, the narrower the solution set gets.

On the way back in the tram his fellow travelers made him feel ashamed about his lack of clear plans. You could just ask all of them: what are you going to do? Even for high flying thoughts nowadays there were orderly bird breeding institutions, like philosophy, theology, literature ...

He had no doubt the progress in the division of labour was unavoidable, but though he was not aspired to be a professional philosopher he insisted on the frivolous action of thinking personally. Old fashioned. An ant hill works so well because nobody there deals with the thing as a whole.

Did we have a Balkan war or didn't we? Jouhoux had just brought the record flying height on 3700 meters, Johnson now was world champion boxing. A negro. The president of France was in Russia. According to German newspapers this was a threat of world peace. 1913-1914, an eventful period. Just like any earlier period. And how did those earlier times end up in our times ... a machine shaking people and throwing them over the earth's crust to see what happens. Would he become part of that? No way!

Hundred years ago in the post coach, now in the tram, in hundred years in some future machines, but people will sit in them in the same way.

He urgently had to leave the tram. But he hadn't yet arrived. Walking, he mapped out why Clarisse's (and Diotima's) idea of a year of the mind was so ridiculous.

1. World history is the result of historians successively copying each other.

Digression 1: if in Ulrich's horse regiment the exercise of transmitting forward was practiced of the message "Fill the ranks straight and ride" what reached the front was: "Kill the man to your right".

2. The difference between a cannibal and a philosopher is grossly overestimated, as well as misidentified.

3. Recreating and restarting Egypt 7000 years ago, would first show replication but gradually start to diverge.

Digression 2. History is wrestling on.

4. (or digression 3?) It is not a billiard ball but a cloud.

But now he really was in the wrong street. What would be the shortest way home from here? For a while he had no time to consider it for indeed history should be made, invented, she was right, but then why isn't it done?

Leo Fischel would say: "Your worries in my head".

No no Leo, Ulrich thought, it isn't as simple as that. I say history, but what I mean is life, which extends beyond getting wounded and seeing things getting on fire. Not only the emergency situations marked "history". But Leo believe that a kind of balance of power, an armed peace between ideas is the best. Such a stability allows us to relegate the matter to scholars, who keep it at bay so we can go to our jobs every morning, and do what we always do: creating chance.

And that ended the Ulrich year, for he had reached home ...

*84. The claim that common life is utopian as well.*

... where he found the daily bundle of mail from Leinsdorf. Ideas, quarrels about ideas, founding of associations, requests for funding, etcetera.

Etcetera.

He pushed it aside, called for hat and dress-coat and said he would be back in an hour.

He stopped a coach and returned to Clarisse

For the purpose of formulating a program to live history of ideas instead of world history. The difference was in the reasons why you do something. You do not just follow your animal nose, but leaving behind your instinct of personal acquisition you would turn things not in your own interest but upward and outward. Such should every individual do, but society as well. It would be like pressing and storing mental juice. The result would be the abolition of reality, just as he had told Diotima.

Well, little need to say Walter, after Ulrich's arrival hearing it, had no difficulties. Did not things go like that for ages?

But Ulrich said the juice thus obtained was accidental. It selected only ideas that happened to come up and rule. His type of juice, however, should be made void of self interest and as if nothing preexisted!

"You talk as if we have a choice", Walter said, "between the life of ourselves and that of our ideas, don't you know that saying: 'I 'm not a neat nice phantasy but something real annoying me'? Shall we abolish our bellies as well? We'll never be hungry."

"Yes we should" Ulrich said, "our life would be entirely literature".

"Better canned food than real?"

"Something like that", Ulrich said, "or that I would want to cook with salt only". He wanted to end the subject.

But Clarisse had not finished: "Nothing pleases you when you are the only one experiencing it. And mustn't there always be something in it that is new to you?"

Walter was fed up but thought he should support Clarisse: "If only the mental effects of action count, you are building up mental power and force."

"The aim of all states", Ulrich said.

"And should those people in those states make philosophy and literature or realize it? If they make it, that would be nothing new, if they realize it, they make art superfluous".

Ulrich hesitated, then said: "Isn't every perfect life the end of art? Aren't you abolishing your art to render your life perfect?"

He did not want to be mean, but Clarisse was surprised.

Ulrich continued: "In art you always have ambitions that do not match reality. Just add that up and you have the ultimate mismatch".

That was not Walter's style, this idea of art as a protest. Bohemien, young adults, bourgeois teasing.

And Ulrich knew he was now covering only a part of the issue.

"Well" Walter said, "in that case I ask myself what a man does if at some moment he fails to be the poet of his own life. Back to the animal instinct? Or just follow your hunches until you find the next good idea?"

"Then he should refuse to do anything", Clarisse answered mockingly on behalf of Ulrich, "That is active passivism, I just learned".

Ulrich heard the echo of Clarisse's "Pretexts!", but Walter's head got knocked the other way by her word "refuse", since refusals dominated their relation at the moment, and seemed to be decorated with Ulrich's "active passivism". He turned grey.

Ulrich saw it and asked whether something could be done for him.

"Stop the nonsense", Walter said, for whom the discussion had looked bright for so long before ending badly.

*85. General Stumm's ardour in bringing order in civil understanding.*

When Ulrich arrived back home it turned out to have lasted an hour longer.

There, he was informed that a military officer was waiting for him for quite some time.

It was general Stumm von Bordwehr. "My dear friend, I have to apologize for disturbing you so late, but I could not leave the service earlier and moreover I sit next to your alarming collection of books for two hours"

Stumm went down to business at once: impressed by the civilian discussions surrounding Her Gorgeous Excellency Frau Tuzzi, he had tried to map the world of civilian ideas, which had failed so massively that now he urgently needed, "well, I'm always saying nothing is urgent except the visit to a certain place, but, to be serious ...", help.

Stumm did not have a low estimation of his capacity to order, ... Ulrich, he asked, knew as a former reserve officer cadet of Stumm's horse regiment, the Ulanen, as well as he, Stumm, that when a soldier does something, he does it, and neither was Stumm stupid, or was he? "So you agree and I can talk to you in confidence: I am ashamed of the military mind. It is like a provisional report, you know: how much food, men, horses, state of health, but nothing about what explains the situation. What has the soldier and of which? We teach the newcomers to answer: two pairs of boots of which one pair under the bed. But why? And that is what the gentlemen of the civil I so often get sent to want to know and there I stand again not knowing what to say, you get me? Interrelations of higher order."

"Now I proposed my chief His Excellence Frost, or rather, I want to surprise him with it, to use my happy intercourse at present with the civilists, to do a thorough reconnaissance and map everything. We have specialists in the army in all fields, but civil mapping, that's just not yet there."



Only now Ulrich saw the sizeable briefcase Stumm had positioned leaning against a leg of the table. With some strain Stumm pulled it towards himself and opened its decisively military, heavy metal lock.

"As you see, I have not been idle", Stumm said, "but there are a few things that I failed to get in place".

"From your niece", he continued, pulling some sheets out, "I understood that we should surprise our highest lord the Emperor with the highest idea of all, and we are now searching for it. But in doing so I got into damned problems. One says this, the other says that and thus civil understanding reminds me of a bad eater, you will remember what that is, such a horse you can feed anything but it won't get any thicker."

"Well just thicker you might manage but ..." Ulrich said helpful.

"Yes, I mean", the general corrected himself, "it will get thicker but simply by getting this grass belly and bad dry skin, the joints stay small, well, you see that has my main interest now, why order cannot be brought into the matter".

"Here", Stumm handed over an impressive scheme, "is the consignment of main ideas I'm given there. But everyone puts another one on top".

Flabbergasted, Ulrich's eyes scanned the scheme. A grid in the format of a military survey. In martial calligraphy he read: Jesus Christ; Buddha; Gautama (or Siddhartha); Laotse; Luther, Martin; Goethe, Wolfgang; Ganghofer, Ludwig; Chamberlain, .... Second column: Christianity, Imperialism, Age of Traffic, .... The edges of the paper left no doubt

whatsoever that below and to the right other papers could be put in which the rows and columns were continued.

"You could call this the leaf of cadastral layers of modern culture", Stumm modestly said.

Answering Ulrich's question how he had achieved this: "I fielded a commander, two lieutenants and five under-officers. We could not do a poll to select staff, for that requires involving the top. Just relying on book knowledge is unfeasible for then after the Bible you get the New Year's book of the Post with the tariffs and old jokes, moreover, as I am now aware, in the civil world you are not an exceptional mind unless you have a huge lot of likeminded people. But somehow they managed, using an idea of Corporal Hirsch, in cooperation with Lieutenant Melichar"

Stumm took another leaf, while his face grew dark. "Here you see", he somberly told, "how those oppositions of great minds are fuzzy to such an extent that they are basically all saying the same. Not very helpful either". On this sheet common terms and assumptions were listed of individualism and collectivism, nationalism and internationalism, socialism and capitalism, imperialism and pacifism, rationalism and superstition. "In these cases", Stumm said, "I feel like seeing two electricians forging a huge network in peaceful cooperation, and only when the job is done they start quarreling about how to set the switches".

This would have surprised the general as little as limbs having a stretching and a bending muscle, were it not that his ambitions were motivated by his platonic admiration of a high standing beauty involved; for love hates quarrels, especially when, as in this case, the object of love continuously,

pacifistically and grandiloquently confides her fucking hate of it.

"This" Stumm pointed at another paper, "Is a list of commanding ideas, all names that, so to say, gained ground with large divisions, then here is the *ordre de bataille*, and here ...", Stumm took another sheet, "the plan of attack". Then he showed a survey of depots and weapon storages, used to retrieve later defensive and offensive thoughts. But those are frequently taken by the enemy and brought into contraposition, their personnel included, and this, you know, is what makes the front and its movements so confusing. Entire ideas desert and go over.

"All in all", Stumm said, "what they are in need of is a stage plan and clear lines of demarcation. The whole thing is, with all respect - I really cannot myself believe what I am going to say - a piggery".

Stumm dropped a few handfuls of papers on the table. Plans of advance, road lines, street networks, portéedrawings, troops signs, command posts, straight angles, shaded boxes; like in a professional survey presentation for general staff red, green, yellow and blue lines ran through each other, and colourful flags, each with their own meaning, as they would become so popular just one year later.

"Of no damned use at all", Stumm sighed, "I've even tried to transform the whole thing from strategic to military-geographical, for I thought may be I at least identify the space of operations. Forget it! Look, here you have the orographic and hydrographic versions".

Ulrich saw mountain tops from where lines branched out that came together elsewhere, sources, rivers and lakes.

"I have tried things that I'm not even going to explain! The bottom line is this: lice!! A second class train wagon upcountry, the kind of place where things start itching you everywhere, no rest, even if you scratch yourself until you bleed!

Ulrich had to laugh.

"Now don't laugh for a moment. This is what I'm thinking: you have become a prominent civilian, you understand these things, and you understand me too, so please help me, I have to much respect for the great civilian ideas to believe I am right!"

"You are taking it far to serious Oberleutnant". That had been Stumm's rank in Ulrich's horse platoon period. He apologized quickly: "You so agreeably put me back to when in the casino you would order me to the corner to philosophize. But you take it too seriously!"

"Say you don't mean it. I start choking when I think of how long since you left I lived on that parade and in those barracks between officer's jokes and sex-boasting and now I want order in my head!"

Meanwhile, Stumm had been invited for the evening bread and they went at table.

Stumm's stayed totally focused. Each piece of sausage dangled for ages at his fork. "This niece of yours is really magnificent. I am also married, but this is of course another league. Often I admire her female fullness from the rear side while the front

side is conversing with an eminent civilist in such a scholarly style that I regret I can't take my notes. And her husband the Sektionschef is totally unaware of it, just looks around with a face as if he knows where Abraham gets the mustard, and isn't going to tell us. Look, those civil officers are the lowest in the civil world, unarmed soldiers with the politeness of a cat looking at a wolf from high up a tree. No, then look at Arnheim. May be also hypocrisy, but it has a presence".

Meanwhile Stumm's wine consumption had made substantial advance without meeting any resistance. "And so it is with some relief that I note Her Excellency Miss Tuzzi is in love with him"

"Are you sure they have something?"

"Well, not sure, but I would not have anything against it. I am not gay but I do feel with the man if I think what she ... whether she really does so or only would like to. Once she took his hand and it went silent in that corner like they had commanded kneel down sjako off. Then she softly said something and he answered 'If only we found the saving thought'. And she again: 'Only a pure unbroken thought of love can bring salvation', which of course he took too personally, for she no doubt was thinking about the great action ... what do you laugh? I've always had my peculiarities and now I took it on myself to help her. And to do so I need you!"

Meanwhile they had lit the cigars. "General, you are on the wrong track. That is because you expect to find the spirit, Geist, in the civil, and the physical in the military. But it is the other way around. For thinking is order and order is military. Properly marching is the highest state of the mind!"

"Fool your grandmother!", Stumm said.

But Ulrich continued: "Science", he said, "is only possible with things that repeat themselves, such as they do in the military. The laws of the movements of planets are shooting orders, only with higher speeds and bigger calibers, that's all. Science needs events that repeat themselves, that's the problem with God for He appeared only once, at creation, when we did not yet have certified observers on the payroll".

Stumm did not let himself be wiped off the battlefield: "Good jokes all those, but we deal with the soul here and if I think of that I'd much rather stand in my bare arse than in my army uniform."

"Dear Stumm, listen! They are now seriously studying the soul and it turns out to consist of firing neurons! Conduction of electrical charge! Reflexes! Repetition! Fixation! Circuit building! You would feel at home at once: in our brains it's all barracks, battalion, uniform, rank and file, discipline, order and execution. What is the beauty of a woman? Its an inventory sheet filled out in your brains then electrically signaled to supply troops."

"Ok ok, honour to the truth, you have a point", Stumm said, "we soldiers might not think as different from the civilists as we presume, but those things that are so typically civilian from our perspective, soul, virtue, intimacy, mood, this Arnheim can talk about it like a wild beast, well, it might cause the odd post traumatic stress disorder left and right in his audience but it is flatly superior, are you going to deny that?"

"You step over my claim that Geist is essentially military and the physical is the realm of the civil".

"O not that again", Stumm interrupted. He felt no doubt whatsoever that his own round belly was far more solid than that of a civilist.

"Let me finish for a change", Ulrich said. His cigar had gone out. "Hundred years ago a civil fool in Jena thought to have proven the laws of the world as the propositions about the triangle. No paraffin lamp yet, no gramophone, no airplane. This hubris has backfired, for every time new truths got discovered, the gain in the order of detail was a loss in the order of the whole. That silly high flyer lost elevation even faster than religion".

"My research suggests the same."

"And what they lack is your ardour. If anything, they get even lazier. Look. If a man of significance brings an idea in the world, all those guys do is divide the booty. First admirers fight for what they consider good pieces thus tearing their master to pieces like foxes their prey. Then the bad pieces are destroyed by the opposition. In no time nothing is left but a bunch of aphorisms used by friend and foe, and that is what constituted the data of your mapping platoon", Ulrich said, pointing at all papers on table. He felt an urge to make a neat straight pile of them but suppressed it. "And this is why great ideas seem unclear: you don't see a tree! You see a heap of half burnt firewood that's left of it, used by all shades of minds for all kinds of purposes. As in love, hate and hunger, tastes have to differ so everybody can get what he desires".

"Excellent!", Stumm said. "I already have expressed myself similarly to Her Excellency Frau Tuzzi".

"You should tell her that, for reasons yet to uncover, God is starting an era of body culture, for the only grip for an idea nowadays is the body that has it. Tell her! As an officer you even have some extra leverage!"

"As far as body culture is concerned I am doing no better than a peeled peach and I think of her in an orderly way!"

"That's a pity," Ulrich sighed, "your intentions would not be unbecoming to Napoleon, though you would not have found the proper century". He lighted his cigar again.

The general had bravely withstood the derision, dignified, but also in pride of not stopping short of suffering for the lady of his heart.

After some thoughtful moments he said: "Anyway, thank you very much for your damned interesting pieces of advise".

*86. The king-tradesman and the fusion of soul and commerce. Also: all roads originate from the soul, but none leads back to it.*

Arnheim was well beyond the point where he should have decided to appoint a stadtholder for Vienna and leave for good. But he did the reverse.

It was 1913 and world politics was rumbling. "Ballhausplatz", the Austrian foreign office, Tuzzi's ministry had its lights on all through the night, discomforting every educated reveler passing. The volcano smoked, but wide public excitement still had to rise. Arnheim of course knew everything. The Arnheims had factories for armour-plate that worked on a near full capacity unmatched in history. Ammunition also produced at



record level. Every day he received coded messages and every now and then he received a man from his own intelligence department, with whom he liked to meet in his hotel's lobby in order to show his importance.

But he knew his Viennese jobs were marginal and slightly overdone just because he happened to be there.

He was in love. Slightly disconcerted he observed his slight unsharpness in his dealings. A sparrow on the window-sill. A waiter's friendly smile. Those were the things his reality suddenly seemed to chiefly consist of. The wide and fine net of his moral convictions was somewhat out of the picture and what remained of it had something corporeal. No, when love throws itself on a woman it loses some of its nobility. And it gets a bit childish as well: if you do not watch out you are in the middle of a abduction phantasy. Neither is there much elevating to be found in this urge that runs up and down in the background of the soul, to release all brakes, which even tends to acquire some moral attraction as a result of the fading of concentration on daily commercial routine, as if it would be the only thing mattering.

Such things make you think of your youth more often, in which he had been an intelligent child with intelligent educators. He had been endowed with a keen sense of good and evil, for he often was rolling over the street with other boys in defense of injustice. This required a sudden and lightning fast escape from his custodians. Since he always got retrieved within thirty seconds he kept convinced that he would have won, which partly explains the pathological excess of self-confidence of the adult Arnheim.

All this he could remember well, but another experience had petrified (If you agree to keep diamonds in the category of stones). And that one, the scare goes without saying, got awoken by Diotima. The issue is this:

In his youth he had become familiarized with love independently women, of people generally, and this had left him with an unsolved problem, to which he later learned some of the most modern of explanations. I have in all modesty to confess it was me who wrote about it in "Die Versuchung der stillen Veronika". And Arnheim held me high for at the time it was a token of expertise to know me, a hidden man, as I was seen already then. But of course he had not understood anything of it. He grew in a world of tennis, visiting, flabbergasting his father, labour meetings (for he had read about socialism), after which all the same he drove on one of his horses through labourers villages in swanky outfits, but some vague romantic feeling had been whispering that there was a second world floating in the first, with bated breath.

And this was what Diotima had pulled down under inside him from its chain. His soul seemed to have risen over its shores, no longer did the outer world end at his skin and no longer his inner world stood gazing out of the the window of deliberation and balancing. Inside and outside had united as a separate entity, mild, quiet and high as a dreamless sleep. He looked the same as ever but felt totally changed inside.

Religions and the like have the habit to see such a thing as an indication of change in an underlying reality, but most of us get haunted by it in the period of our first love affairs, and so we quickly recover from it as from all other unreal experiences, dreams and imaginations. But that was Arnheim's problem: in

his life there had been no personal love affairs that could have immunized him to this type of sensation.

So the experiences after his youth, notably his introduction in his father's business life, had only covered it, as a result of which he had started to see the results of his work like kind of poems, but not of the type forged by a poet who, on an attic with a pen in one hand, needs the other to keep the flies at bay, no no, poems created in the material of life itself!

This had kept him in the grip of a mission, a call for syntheses of ... and so on and so on, things which his fellow tradesmen, just normally quarreling with their wives as everyone, had to laugh about. Not that such things were altogether unknown in those circles. There was quite some soul in commercial circles, and their increased buying power had even made them the core of the art market. Even pen artists with no affinity to it, if not of the brooding sort, quickly adapted to this market segment, which actually was the segment where Arnheim, though a somewhat special case, had broken through. He had not done so for the money, but in less calculable ways he laid golden eggs there for his concern.

Arnheim. A rare plant that on most places would peter out but the seed of which fell - how Ulrich would love to stress *chance* - right where conditions existed to become great and spectacular.

Neither was he a snob. He did not want to be part of it, he was above it and looked mildly down on traditional aristocratic *grandeur* as a great leader of the new bourgeois class on the verge of taking over from tired and degenerated nobility. And his task as king of the new class was much more complicated: the old nobility only had to make minced meat of its opponents

and could leave the handling of spiritual weapons to the churches. Now, working with money, you have a weapon that is much more efficient than a knight's bludgeon, but it is dangerously spiritual and hence requires continuous concentrated devotion, or else in some moment of neglect the stock exchange swallows it.

Arnheim saw his royal duties as a tradesman as synthesis, power, bourgeois civilization, the symbolic shape of coming democracy, leadership, new state structure, the future in which the ideal does not break under the forces of reality but purifies and confirms itself, in sum a fusion of business and soul by the overarching idea of the king-tradesman, the sense of love, everything is fundamentally one in the unity of culture and human endeavour.

Such was his state of mind when he started to write books. With a lot of soul in them. Soul! a kingly concept. Old-fashioned rulers and generals do not have it. In the financial world he was the first.

The soul had several uses for Arnheim. First, it had some element of a crown prince in a commercial company getting older and rising against his pragmatic father. Second, in as far as the crown prince did not understand totally everything, the soul was a good method to deprive all he did not understand of its value. And, third, it made him relate, as a child of his time, to his public, by endowing him with a kind of female religious rage against the primacy that knowledge, calculation and balancing had acquired by the rise of money.

But though he issued his moral principles as if it were decrees, it did not get fully clear whether, when dealing with the soul, Arnheim thought of it like as real as his stock portfolio.

This had continued until, like every prophet, he ran into slight embarrassment by what started to look like a delay in the landing of his spiritual architecture on earth and he entered a period of mental cleft in which the mind forgets and switches off everything that does fit the concept. Inadvertently he started to take the air at the same place every time.

Once, for instance, he was dictating another book to his secretary posted behind a type writer. "We see the silence ... " That should have continued as (but the phone rang) as "... of the walls when we look at these buildings ...". But his secretary was on cruising speed and had typed already: "... of the soul, when, ...".

When at resumption the secretary had read the last lines the sessions got ended.

The next day the last sentence was erased entirely.

But! What was, compared to these great and deep thoughts the physical love for a woman? No, all roads to spirit leave from the soul but none of them leads back.

Diotima had grabbed him at his undermoral, secret sleeves. Every now and then he looked at her in a decidedly disturbed way. Just the wife of a civil servant! He could marry the daughter of an American magnate or a young lady of high English nobility! This incident of love made him feel like a rich family's boy dropped at school for the first day: now what is this??

At such moments he admired the cool pure rationality of money compared to the ways of love, but that only indicated that the stage had come in which the prisoner does not

understand how he has allowed himself to be deprived of his freedom without defending it, with his life, even.

For when Diotima said: "What are world events? Un peu de bruit autour de notre âme ... !" - then he felt the very structure of his life tremble.

### *87. Moosbrugger dancing.*

Moosbrugger, to Ulrich's surprise according to Clarisse a musician ("he just doesn't know music that's all"), sat in his cell in the investigation department. His lawyer's sails had filled again with new hope that the cow would give more milk before breathing its last breath. When Moosbrugger thought about it his face got a bored smile.

Very neat such a cell. You are everything yourself. Everything looks back as from a mirror. The barred window, that solidly locked door, it was all himself. True to life.

For after all, it was all there was, no God, only the papist, the judge and police, and those only walk in the way.

He had everything under control he thought. Just look how in a cell everything is exactly where it should be, how everything goes according to schedule, eating, airing etc.

"Yes but is that a reason to immediately kill someone?" How often had he heard that? Strange question. It would never have occurred to him to ask. But the mere repetition had raised his theoretical interest.

He was thinking. Pleasurably. Not that thinking in which everything collided all the time. He was in a good period: one

single thought, then the next one, and so forth. Not that waddling, like a toddler, no, no, like a dancing girl. A beautiful swell. Accordions, light in the night, daffodils. Kill, a little drop of Moosbruggerblood in the world. Look, if those girls were dancing so nicely in a row, they would not make him so angry. He danced with them.

And nobody saw it.

*88. Beware connecting spirit to big things.*

For nothing is as dangerous as that. What happens when, totally exhausted, you arrive at a mountain top and you look around? When you have your own child in your arms for the very first time? Probable an awful lot, but where? Probably everywhere but what?

At such a moment you do not know what to say. The mind does not like that, but how could you know at such a moment, it got locked and tied somewhere outside. By whom? Anyway, it is only afterwards that the mind comes back to sweep the floor and put everything back on its place. Then it's time to look at our watch and know again what is the hour and things like that. When the phone rings we again know what to do.

Here you see the law of the conservation of spiritual matter at work. To go to the extreme cases at once: the highest instances of the human spirit, peace, virtue, humanity, well just visit one of those shops where they sell those sport competition prizes that are battled for with that typical frantic ardour. The shiny silver stature of the boxer on a tiny bloc of gold inlaid marble, or so it seems. But you buy it cheaper than a cigarette lighter.

This is an instance of the natural order of the mind, a mathematical function: the higher the spiritual significance of what we deal with, the cheaper and emptier the words we use. In the reverse limit: if you want to see the mind in crushing action, go to the tower of Pisa when they discuss how these big stones they drop from the top develop their speed underway. That falling downward they pass every successive ring of pillars faster, but exactly how? Hear them decide to pay a boy to carry up some more stones and then wait there for orders. Hear passers by, on their way to church, joking how you can make a fool of yourself wasting time and money as well.

The first, the spirit's high end has other fascinating features. Just witness the pumping of spirit from one big thing into another that is judged to need some more of it. An academic chair for sport, a music conservatory for popular music. And novel questions of high spiritual value: who took the potato to Europe?

And to shine like a star in contemporary Europe one should be a synthesis of your own and your potato-significance and sing it out as a pop artist.

And I do not have to tell you whom we are talking about.

*89. One has to go with one's time.*

But now I'm going to mix a pinch of Ulrich in his character.

Arnheim's hotel. After some morning business skirmishes things were done. He lit a cigar and thought of the previous evening. After failing to achieve the breakthrough with the help of the greatest of the mind, Diotima had organized a special evening with somewhat younger spiritual talents. Arnheim had



suggested some young foreigners as well. Scare had been in Diotima's eyes, Arnheim remembered with a smile. Well, what this generation had stuffed its brains with had surprised Arnheim as well, he had to concede. Now we turned out to start calling for the control of sensuality and spiritual synthesis, others already got fed up with that and advocated the filtering of all intellectual pollution from the juices of life, all passionately so, of course. New keywords got tossed: "intellectual temperament", the "fast style of thinking jumping on the chest of the world", "the sharp-edged brains of cosmic people". One thing had been beyond doubt: everything had to start from scratch, and altogether differently.

Appalled by the thought of having to leave without conclusion, after ample deliberation it was: our times were full of expectation, impatient, wild and wretched, but the messiah on whom all hopes were focused and whom was waited for, was not yet in sight.

This brought Arnheim in silent private conclave with himself for a moment.

All night there had been a little circle around him. Every time when some who felt short of attention left, but others had taken their place. He had remained the centre of it due to his knowledge of everything that occupied them.

He lit a match for an unusual second cigar but had to postpone suction due to a smile he got while remembering how one moment yesterday night that little general came to him. Arnheim knew all about generals. He met with them regularly. Stumm: "Do you understand why these new people talk, without any expertise, about 'blood generals' all the time? I very well understand those older gentlemen who normally are

here, even though neither they have a sense of the military. For instance that older gentleman, the one with the belly who always comes, a famous poet our hostess told me. He deals only with the very biggest of things. That makes sense to me. We call such a man a strategist. Look, a sergeant of course cares for his people but in the calculations of a strategist a thousand is the smallest unit, and he needs to tell us how many of those units will survive under the different strategic options. What is the logic of calling such a man a 'blood general' in one case and a champion of eternal truth in another?"

Arnheim knew that poet but had said nothing. It did not matter anyway, Arnheim knew some more of those old heroes of human spirit.

It felt odd, yes, dismal to Arnheim to hear his youthful admirers ruthlessly scorn that past of which he formed a part. What did they want? They disagreed about everything except their disgust of objectivity, of intellectual responsibility, of the balanced person.

He could not suppress some amusement by yesterday evening's fate of some of his generation. And Stumm's fat poet indeed phrased ridiculously heavy, as the base copper in an orchestra, that's why he was seen as a poet, so why not as a general, a poet like that lends dignity to his life by dealing with death like a factory butcher.

Arnheim supported some of those. Why? If those heraldic heroes could not sustain themselves in their blown-up state they should be relocated in a park of endangered animals. He decided to take them off the list.

So his second cigar even saved him some money.

*90. Abdication of idiocracy.*

These heraldic men Arnheim just had erased opposed against the commodity market of spirits: pure poetry preaching greatness to their flock in deceased language. It had turned them into heroes, though a bit later they often got abjured again. Arnheim, who felt safely insured, did consider to join the game, for you never know.

But how? Everybody worked in some newly invented profession nowadays, truck driver, radio operator, pilot, you name it, and in leisure time one engaged in newly invented amusement: cinema, cars, motorcycles, sport. And everybody forged a new philosophy of life out of those new activities. The swarm of those millions of brittle and short lived ideas would make it hard for Arnheim to reach the chaotic, bubbling, pressure building inside of all those people, that they knew nothing about.

Had he been able to look ahead some years, he could have seen how after two thousand years of Christianity and a war with 37 million deaths the girls would publicly undress as if they were just peeling a banana, to mention only the least that would have surprised him. The point is not that it happens and how long it lasts, but the ease with which the couturier, the fashion editor and chance achieve this while the investment involved in doing this the official way, using philosophers, painters, poets and all that, would be insurmountable.

Though Arnheim could not think of such things in 1913, the abdication of ideocracy, of the human central nervous system, the displacement of spirit to the periphery, was in his head.

To be honest, of course life refurbishes man always from the outside to the inside. The foundations are, in such matters, the final touch. This, for instance explains why the Dutch still believe they are the descendants of Tacitus' Batavians. Thoughts are the end products of the vicissitudes of the limbs, muscles, glands, eyes, ears and the chimeric impressions the the skin-sack. Previous centuries overvalued rationality, shrewdness, intelligence, conviction, character and such things. That is the department of statistics, not the management.

Suddenly Arnheim felt he had it (but this could have been caused by his state of being in love): the increased sales in the sector of ideas and experiences reflected an increased efficiency of production, caused by refraining from time consuming mental digestion ... and this tremendous and tremendously growing mass of ideas twists and bubbles, thus causing the now emptied inside of the human being like a glow-tube to radiate, producing all those colours. Rational brains would be incapable of such a thing. And the individual is no longer master over it, it goes way too fast, nobody has time to ask what it all is.

Only ... does not this just deal with adolescent dreams of a glorious life or that speech we give in proud self-confidence to that huge mass, the lasts words of which, echoing in us when we wake up, make us drop out of bed of laughter?

At once he felt better: it could not be true.

*91. Speculation in ideas à la baisse and à la hausse.*

You can't just always keep looking around skeptically with a glass in your hand. To have a break every now and then Tuzzi

had the inclination - that by the way he distrusted and restrained - to say something to Ulrich.

That distrust was obviously a good thing to have for when you regularly find yourself in a ridiculous company you have to mind not, out of sheer boredom, sooner or later to go fishing for some understanding and appreciation of your judgment.

That the leak finally broke at Ulrich's side was partly because he often looked bored as well, partly because he seemed not to particularly like Arnheim either, partly, finally, for reasons Tuzzi could not fathom, which gave him reasons for prudence.

He opened by showing off some knowledge of historical detail, so Ulrich would know he could not be fooled with, but right from the start it was spiced with gentlemen's jokes about the spiritual fervour of neighbouring partygoers: "Without responsible official leadership these lads already had killed Christianity".

Ulrich readily agreed: "Religious government officials are right not to allow tampering with the rules and regulations, indeed we generally underestimate the value our lower instincts for they are the driving force of history. Higher urges are too windy, inconsistent and unreliable".

The eyes of the Sektionschef, in mocking overview of the room over a cigarette, turned to Ulrich for a short distrusting glance. "My wife does well to be careful with your cooperation, you tend, if I may say so, to speculation in ideas *à la baisse*"

"Well said!", Ulrich was serious, "but my market offers are always late, for history itself is always ahead of me. *A la baisse* with cunning and violence, *à la hausse* like your wife and

Arnheim are doing. So I am always too late for an offer that would earn me some money, and it would be a booster for me to learn some of your secrets as professional *baissier*".

Tuzzi pulled his cigarette pack to draw another one. "Why would I not think like my wife?" That was meant to block a personal turn in the conversation, but even before he finished, an unspoken swearword tossed through his mind, for he realized it would have the reverse effect.

"The masses acquire a shape by pure chance and that stabilizes for a while", Ulrich said.

"That's too high for me".

Ulrich enjoyed Tuzzi's taciturnity in opposition to his own *flux de bouche*, not in the least since you familiarize yourself with such a person like you do with an animal, not the worst way at all!

So they stood quite some time together in agreeable silence.

"Well" Ulrich finally said, "I should of course not have started to teach you about diplomacy, but I thought, you might repair some errors in my view. So my claim is that a reliable social order rests on mendacity, cowardice and cannibalism, in short, the lower urges of man, in terms you just taught me: idealism *à la baisse*".

"Too romantic. Diplomacy isn't intrigue, though many think so, at least nowadays it is no longer so. Our diplomatic conscience demands optimism, and we prevent cannibalism because we believe in something higher and ..."

"What do you believe in?"

"Do you expect I can tell you in a two words like a child can? One has to know the currents of thought in one's own time and the more of those you have the more work it of course requires"

"Of course? But then you agree with me! The sudden and erratic rise and demise of eternal truths causes you more work than the lower urges!". Ulrich barely succeeded to keep assuming the pose of two reserved gentlemen in undercooled conversation.

That prompted another inquisitive gaze but this time Tuzzi's entire body followed his eyes. He was fed up and scanned for a stopper. "You see, philosophizing should be subjected to a strict system of permits".

Ulrich took his time to ponder what would be the best retaliation. Tuzzi, rolling a cigarette, waited for it.

"Yes", Ulrich finally opted, "In this matter the churches, socialism and you have a point".

Not bad. Tuzzi thought best just to wait for Ulrich to continue the oration, and already got irritated in anticipation.

But Ulrich stayed silent. Brilliant! But a bit lucky, since it was because of the pleasure with which he looked at this man who was not afraid to be old fashioned and be known for it. He lapsed into thoughts about how Tuzzi distrusted Arnheim, abhorred Arnheim's influence on his wife, but had no clue whatsoever about her second spring of love.

That is why it escaped him that Tuzzi sensed his benevolence and like a cowboy spit from between his teeth out of constrained irritation, even stepped back a bit, then returned to mask his emotions by asking: "Did you ever ask yourself what this Arnheim is doing here?"

Now it was Ulrich's time to panic and search, putting aside his acute embarrassment, for a wrong answer that could be one for Tuzzi to believe to be honest. In vain. He resorted to a question: "Do you really think he has a special reason? Then purely commercial I presume?"

"What else?", Tuzzi said.

"No you're right, what could it be", Ulrich conceded, relieved, "though for a second I thought of his literary ambitions".

"Then explain me those ambitions".

"Have you noticed", Ulrich started - which made Tuzzi already lose his interest - "how many people nowadays mumble in themselves while on the street? This an overflow of impressions. It drains the surplus. That's why they write too".

"I read Arnheim, for some see him rise, but he can't possibly think he is boosting a political career that way".

"Yes, a rich man venerating simplicity, it is a bit ... look, poor people write about the rich in admiration, or they create phantasy wealth to have something similar ... "

"Have you ever written something?" Tuzzi asked, hoping for the leverage an affirmative answer would give him.



"No for that disastrous fate I have been saved, even though I am unhappy enough for it, I will prevent it with all means, even if I have to kill myself".

Thus the stream of the gentlemen's conversation petered out and a rock had surfaced. Tuzzi sensed it and came to the rescue. "It seems to me like when I am saying civil servants start to write only after they retired. But Arnheim?"

After this elegant rescue by Tuzzi they continued a little bit. Tuzzi managed to push Ulrich slightly out of balance again by calling Arnheim "essentially a pessimist", but failed to draw cash by it, the gentleman parted, both with the memory of a stern conversation.

*92. Some maxims of the rich.*

Another man might have become suspicious and unsure by the attention and admiration that Arnheim got snowed under with. But Arnheim held firm control over it for he stood above it. From such a position the quality of the admiration you harvest is irrelevant. The admiration itself is what matters. You boost it everywhere you feel the ground is fertile and you avoid ground that isn't.

You simply have ideas and challenges different from those of the average person when you, as a rich man with vision, are endowed with the routines to control events with your money, spent with the perspective of seeing it flow back in a cascade of future installments.

A poor man does not have the faintest idea that one can buy thoughts, knowledge, loyalty, talent, prudence. It's all there, eagerly waiting for a man with money and vision. Sure, the

man with the money and the vision cannot afford any lapse of attention: a small error and a large chunk of wealth is gone. But even lavish parties can pay off, if you know whom to invite, and focus on the long run. Who knows such things? Arnheim's admirers did not even realize what exactly was the admirable in him, nor should they, for one does not allow strangers a glimpse in your kitchen, that would make things only harder.

How do you deal with whomever wants money from you? The hopeful usually has no clue. He wants to do something, sees a man with a lot of money who might be ready to cede some to ... and oddly enough the Great Men of the "Geist" are no exception in this, for they never think of such things and only see that your wallet gets thin while good, not to say eternal ideas lie, unsold, on the shelf.

So how are they dealt with? Most of them will never realize that somewhere, if only in a niche, with a limited probability, they fitted in the strategy of the concern, and that somewhere in the line somebody's nodding did the job.

As everything in nature, money's endeavour is to survive and procreate. To just give some money to a nice person would be totally inconsistent with its nature. Was there such a merely praiseworthy goal, Arnheim would always say money should be spent. But not his.

Thus Arnheim had earned his reputation of a man who participated with power and creativity in the cultural development of his times.

And why are you admired and loved? Isn't that an impenetrable mystery, as round and tender as an egg? Are your side-whiskers a more legitimate target than your car? In this period, a

year before the First World War, the man shaved. But Arnheim sported a moustache and a tiny chin-beard. Those little hairs, oddly attached to his head yet being part of him reminded him - he did not exactly know why - when he got a bit overexcited during a speech for a fervent public, in an agreeable way of his money.

*93. Civil understanding, even if underway to body culture, is hard to grasp.*

Already for quite some time the general sat on one of the chairs surrounding Diotima's spiritual gymnastic floor. With Ulrich, his "protector", as he liked to call him lately. His bright blue dress always crept up on his fat little belly in folds when he was seated and started to look like thinking folds as on someone's forehead.

Right before these two, slightly above them, the question was discussed whether Beaupré's tennis was or was not genial and Braddock's scientific. One started wondering about the mutual balance of matches. Nobody knew "Let's ask Arnheim". The group dissolved.

"If", Stumm said, "such a tennis player is a genius then why is a general a barbarian?"

*94. Diotima's nights.*

Diotima filled with pride when she compared her social glory with her limited middle class youth, but she could even reach a bit higher, she thought, even past World Austria. The highest of course would be marrying Arnheim, throwing herself like a girl into the arms of her father. Love and ambition continued to develop as two separate lines.

She should have opened herself to her husband. But what was there to say? Nothing had happened and he was not the man to address when the subject was the embrace of souls. Strange. Yes. Nothing to say. There was not even any prospect in the physical sphere. This she even would deem better imaginable in the direction of her broad shouldered muscled nephew, whom she thought of as younger than herself, certainly in mental respect.

Moreover, on the road to Prussia, Austria was in the way. The normal Austrian reservations against Prussia were based on the time honoured expedient to seek, for every irritation about the self, an external cause and Diotima had not shunned the use of this popular palliative, so the thought of burning Austria behind her left her unsure and inspired her to call the whole thing, rather than love: passion.

In her sleepless nights the Prussian blue of the sky was fighting with Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Prince Eugen and the black-yellow of her fatherland. Her soul found itself hopeless, in an endless blossoming landscape inside her tall beautiful body.

She suffered of her husband's hard-headed insensibility but she could not hate him for it for it formed an integral part of his sense of duty and his amazing diplomatic career. How could she destroy the life of this man? No, adultery was the best option!

But then again such a stealth mode of operation has this whorish flavour in contrast to which the Last Meeting, words of goodbye square in the throat, a renaissance love with the dagger in the heart, sin and overcoming the guilt, lust punished with suffering, compete not without merit.

Meanwhile, next to her in bed, Tuzzi had gone over things one more time, had concluded that in the coming eight hours of sleep nothing could get out of hand in Europe, and breathed regularly. Innocence itself.

Abstinence! Diotima thought. Goodbye to Arnheim!

And then continuing in this double bed? Vanished was Tuzzi's innocence, and there he was again that snake with that sweet little rabbit in his body. But no tears, no grabbing of his throat, no: Ulrich, who would, if he could, abolish reality - might he not mean something quite sensible with that? And Ulrich again, who clearly thought she overestimated Arnheim.

Well, what could one do really? Nothing! Another sense in which you have no say about anything. You can only wait and see what happens to you.

That thought drew a curve before her behind which the end point disappeared. She would sleep a bit after drinking some sugar water she always had next to her, but never thought of taking during her nervous mental slaloms.

*95 The grandauthor, view from the back.*

Since the celebrity guests had convinced themselves that the seriousness of the Great Initiative did not require a great strain from their side, and had become familiar with each other in a regular sequence of agreeable circumstances, one by one they had decided to leave their masks at home and started to behave like human beings, as a result of which Diotima chiefly started to feel haunted by noise and spirit. And relief, namely when at the end of the evening the last drunkard had waddled on the front side street pavement.

She even started to sense some disappointment about Arnheim's lively intercourse with these buffoons of the great Austrian mind even though, with growing amazement, she kept realizing these were the men the books of whom filled the bookshelves in her boudoir, and were found prominently displayed in quality book shops.

She should have realized Arnheim was no sovereign of the mind but a grandauthor. The grandauthor is on the verge to replace the sovereign of the mind, in the same way as the great merchant is on the verge to replace nobility. The grandauthor connects the mind with great things but in the modern way: he has a car, as long as this still is something remarkable, after which he will buy his own airplane. He travels, is received by ministers. He convinces the managers of public opinion of his power as *chargé d'affaires* of the spirit of nations.

His book will not be the book of the year for he is the chairman of the jury. He writes prefaces, is the one who does the speeches on all important birthdays, leads the opinion in important matters and is called in at every meeting meant to show how far you got. On behalf of the moderate future-minded he reassuringly addresses the backward.

History gave birth to the greatindustrial mind. And meanwhile we have overproduction and stagnating markets. The problem is that consumers experience excess private stocks of spirit and themselves regularly consider to advertise and get rid of some. Now this is the development that called for a grandauthor. To grab the post you should see it as one of the first, but understandably you will not be alone. In the converging horde things get decided: grand, grander, grandest. And you have to be the grandest. Who will remember number two's name? Moreover social efficiency requires one-head leadership.

How to reach that enviable top? The biggest mistake would be to add more spirit yourself. There is far too much already! Your first attention should be: fighting unwanted spirit. High places will be grateful so it is profitable business even in money terms. And a keen sense for this is likely when a would-be grandauthor happens himself to be a top merchant of international stature. Moreover, this consolidates a large part of the transaction inside one business house.

Once you start this you will immediately realize that to have good influence, the first requirement is to have influence proper. As soon as your publisher, who naturally has the habit to boast being in the tragic position to sell printed paper while clean paper is a far more profitable business, suddenly suppresses this urge, you know you are making an excellent start.

But that indeed is the start only. Courting the circles of the critics is a next step. An art in itself. For critics undeniably are minds considering themselves regarded as failed and second rate and opining not to deserve that. You should render them their self respect. Quote them! You will see they praise you into heaven. This is a booster indeed, for people who do not have the time to read everything - and who has? - will leave the bookshop with your book, and in no time you will be the national savings-bank for spiritual wealth.

Now you have pace, you do the same with essayists, biographers and suppliers of fast-history. They have the advantage to be in need of great men, so make sure you are the one! Quote! Review! They will converge from all sides, like, with all respect, dogs: do not dogs, for their excretions and absorptions of all kinds select a busy corner rather than a lonely place?

Thus a symbiosis constitutes itself around a grandauthor, a national, even international working community in the most tender sense of the word, a swarming that assures him - the most desirable certainty life has on offer! - that his flourishing is intertwined with the flourishing of uncountable others.

And this happened right before Diotima's eyes, but she did not notice. That is what would have explained to her the comfort of Arnheim while standing in her salon with all those people around him, his balance and benevolence.

Regularly, a grandauthor needs someone for some of his plethora of spiritual duties. He is constantly extending his list of profiles of people he meets and uses it to select the proper man for any job arising. Such a force should be properly selected, not too weak, not too strong, for the latter can cause damage. For Arnheim, Diotima's salon was a perfect market place.

Many younger ambitious minds practice Arnheim's business on a smaller scale: book reviewers, editors of serial stories, radio editors, filmmixers, and members of the editorial boards of literary periodicals, they all look like those inflatable toy donkeys and piglets with such a valve at the back to add pressure. And if the grandauthor represents all those lads and depicts them as a morally sound community, should not we all be grateful?

The grandauthor ennobles our lives. Just imagine the opposite, Arnheim thought: a writing man who would do nothing of the sort. Someone who would decline cordial invitations, would keep people at a distance, would not treat praise as the grateful and humbled subject of it but as a judge, would doubt the natural state of affairs, and would have nothing in exchange but



erratic hard to follow associations, and all that on the level of a ordinary author who would no doubt be skipped by a grandauthor, who after all, can choose whatever he wants from a affluent mass of spirit!

*96. The grandauthor, view from the front*

The problem of a grandauthor in that early period of grandauthorship was that he had to sell his modern philosophy, in which Life is Trade, coughed in traditional idealistic language. There are many different types of training for sellers, depending on the nature of the sector of operation, and this everywhere leads to sometimes awkward strategies to appeal to the past. You see shields reminding of weapons of nobility on cars, the image of a yellow cardboard file cover picture, as no longer used anywhere, as the icon for a digital file manager. Thus an ambitious money man should do his infighting into the social top elite using great ideas, even though he does not in the least take them serious himself. How to inflate ideas? You need some kind of traction, "wirkung" as Goethe said, for that is what nowadays makes sure that what should become big indeed becomes big. And this traction is: the media.

In Arnheims time of pioneering in grandauthorship, the press still got little excited by supply, demand and yield, and even less by logic. Whoever in those circles had tried it, immediately had seen sales plummeting.

Readers with a solid education could think of the Middle Ages: in those times a scholar ambitious to be influential should mind the church. And those scholars of that time still praised today all took great care to do so. Now if that did not stand in the way of Gothic beauty of thought - on the contrary, one often hears! - what could be wrong, in our times, with an advertisement

campaign and, if you have the money to invest in one, a solid public relations department? Nothing of course, that is just the contemporary version. At least that was Arnheim's view.

And good advertisement starts with a suitable message. The first requirement is not to be overly critical about modern times. The best driver founders with the best horse if he goes against it; a driver able to adapt his movements to the worst of nags is easily superior.

Take Goethe. Fichte, a colleague he admired, came into collision with the Jena authorities. Goethe abandoned him. What is the result: everyone still knows Goethe. Fichte is for the specialists.

Take Napoleon. Heine wrote: "he saw that the spirit of his time was not simply revolutionary, but a fusion of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary ideas, and his example shows how synthetic, intuitive minds are miraculously able to forge all different means of their times in such a way that they can readily be deployed for their purposes".

Arnheim liked that.

*97. The mysterious powers and callings of Clarisse.*

Clarisse in the room. Lost Walter somehow, now alone, in pyjamas with a apple. The two allowed a thin ray or reality to flow in her consciousness. She did not know why, but Moosbrugger was a musician. Sure. That was why she had written to Leinsdorf. According to Ulrich she was girly and heroic. It heated her cheeks up. It made her feel an obligation. But she did not bother what it would be. Her thoughts were in battle anyway, made peace again in good friendship but failed

to report her what the fuss had been about. She rose and put the apple away.

She felt sorry about torturing Walter so much. She had always done it, from her fifteenth. She only had to say something was not so and he would shrink, however true his words had been. Fun. No. No fun. He feared her. That she could go mad. She thought of that as very beautiful.

He even feared the child he wanted. That triggered her tenderness, though she could not even think of having sex. She had risen to go and find him, but forgot about it, for her breasts filled, the blood in her arms' and legs' veins thickened and there was a laughing baby in her arms, the Lord had born in the world!

But with discipline she shrank back to her thin tawny shape and said: "What I want to long for a child is your victory and freedom! Living monuments you will build surpassing yourself but first you should grow to the dimensions of my body and soul". She smiled, a little tongue of fire from under a stone.

And her father in his turn feared Walter! Very strange all that. The strange sound she made when he in his love spasms about Lucy appeared in her room that night. She took a mirror and tried to make the face she thought she would have had at that moment but judged her attempts a failure. Even the sound failed. Well, it should still be somewhere, there. She touched the birth-mark on her thy ("eye of the devil", she called it), and patiently waited.

No lust coming. Her arm got stiff, a strong man's arm, able to crush everything! Like her words could. Stones. When she wanted. Now the memory of that wailing sound of hers had

disappeared from her mind altogether. Instead: Marion, her little sister. When she was four one found her masturbating. She got her hands tied. Later she once had to pull Walter away from her. Her entire family was a bit on the horny side.

Walter had introduced her into modern plastic arts and had read Peter Altenberg to her. In a park with holiday houses, at a lake. All regularly visiting families knew each other. Late in the evening Dr. Meingast did his secret moonshine round and came for a chat in room of Marion and her. Fifteen of sixteen she was. Once he took his devoted pupil Georg Gröschl. Meingast had looked a bit distracted and had disappeared after a short lecture on moon rays. Then there had been some fondling. First Marion. Then she. She had frozen in fear. The sexual excitement only surfaced afterwards when safety had returned. For years it had been no subject between the sisters

Clarisse encountered the apple again. Georg now was a promising and elegant government lawyer. Dr. Meingast had left his cynicism in Austria and had become, in Switzerland, what outside universities is called a famous philosopher: someone with disciples.

To escape them Meingast had written to come to Vienna for a while and had asked whether he could stay with Walter and Clarisse.

Yes, that Gröschl-thing had been the summer before the Lucy-summer. Dr. Meingast kissed all girls all the time. And when he boasted about it to Clarisse, fifteen, she would say: "Dr. Meingast, you are a swine!" But she did kiss him for you don't want to be thought of as shy.

With Walter, later, the first kiss, she of course acted differently, said: "I have agreed with my mother not to do this". But then, Walter was several leagues higher, for a start: he only looked at her, even if all her female friends were around. "Your legs, Fräulein Clarisse" he said, "are more intimately related to genuine art than all paintings of your daddy". Quite a different piece of cake.

And then he gave her piano lessons. She should, she then started to think, "never let him go again", she wanted to become "his wife", and though she boiled with anger when he corrected her piano play again, lust won.

And not much later Meingast stood off side. And became a "philosopher". In Switzerland.

Thus Clarisse had passed her father, Meingast, little Gröschl, Walter would require some more force, Ulrich should be the next. When had that started? Walter had made her call him the man without qualities. That somehow had been part of the events leading up to this.

Maybe every mother can become mother of God, she thought, just don't allow them to walk over you, don't lie or scheme, but bring the deepest of yourself as a child in the world.

And achieve nothing yourself, her thoughts added sadly.

But she should not navigate on all these things Ulrich was saying. All crap. They had smelled each other out, now he had to appear. She should pull him out, wherever he was hiding.

She smiled, rubbed her nose. Something with this Parallel Action, she did not know yet.

*98 From an empire on the verge of succumbing due to its unpronounceability.*

Clarisse was blessed not to realize that on the river of history the shores float as well, so you might be unaware of any movement. It would have been quite scary to her. One traffic light gets red, another green, but in the meantime the entire town sinks or rises a few millimeters per year, and then suddenly quite a bit more, causing its walls and roads to tear.

Neither did Leinsdorf know. He forgot to ask himself how real his "Realpolitik" was. He was busy preparing his palace for some popular events.

Meanwhile the top of the Parallel Action got on the default list of invitees of every important Viennese festivity, usually emphatically invited and introduced to the other guests. Thus Leinsdorf, Tuzzi, Diotima and Ulrich were all present at the opening of the jubilee exhibition of the police, judged, by all guests, highly interesting and successful: objects that had played a role in the great crimes in glass show cases, like printing presses of fake money, tragic weapons of famous murderers, a photograph of a good policeman assisting an old lady to cross, a serious policeman next to a dead body washed ashore, a brave policeman controlling a horse that had gone on the run.

Ulrich got introduced, again, to the President of Police, this time formally, and there was a representative of the Imperial House, but when the minister of foreign affairs, Tuzzi's daily professional contact, in his speech touched on the contrast between this instructive exhibition and the sordid sensuality of modern art, Diotima looked at the ceiling with a kind of irreconcilable gaze. And Ulrich felt a hand on his shoulder. He

had to think of methods to avoid spreading wrong impressions for it was Bonadea, in her role as her husband's wife, a judge, hence invited. She clearly did not plan to leave Ulrich's side for the foreseeable period, kept joining him along all bloody murderers' knives though she would surely have been indignant to be asked to do so had the two been alone.

Ulrich resolved to introduce her to Diotima, if only in order to at least grab the editing power of the accompanying text ... and yes, there it was: Moosbrugger's knife. Bonadea set her surprise in echoing tone, so this was the moment to take her to Diotima.

This carefully assembled exhibition was not the only thing time had in stock for mankind. There had been spectacular gifts to the Queen of England, admired by everybody (an illustrated book of them was a best seller). Then the invention (by civil servants of the telegraph) of work-to-rule, by which for the first time awareness arose that things could not go according to the rules anymore for there were now too many of them. Then, a Prussian had been the first to rob a bank using the country's awe inspiring official uniforms. There were some new peace treaties made, pictures of smiling leaders shaking hands and, just in case one of the parties considered to defect, some sternly deterrent guarantees. All was judged OK when one did it oneself, and suspicious if others did it.

This multitude of events gave foreign diplomats a hard time. How would one have liked to divert the attention of own embarrassment by unmasking Leinsdorf. But no way. Leinsdorf had found his style: spot 1 wrote, spot 2 answered, one informed spot 1, harvested an oral answer. Spot 1 and spot 2 then agreed that one should still wait taking initiatives. so you occupied everyone and kept life in the network. One

should involve the church and the ministries, loads of work produced the hassle Leinsdorf needed.

His Serene Highness even expressed Himself about this every now and then to his "young friend". That often involved Bismarck. "Agility and no argument. Think in total silence then go into the action mode. And no hesitation".

It made Leinsdorf unfathomable for foreign observers. They allowed themselves to get distracted by Arnheim and Tuzzi, thought to conspire behind the handsome masking of Tuzzi's wife's silly pancultural dance.

In sum, Leinsdorf's "Realpolitik" proved some mettle.

But the problems Leinsdorf tried to address could not be hidden to anyone and was called the problem of the *unredeemed nations*. Kakanian was called "The Austrian and Hungarian Austrian-Hungarian Doublemonarchy". As a citizen you were supposed to be one of its patriots. That was more or less doable for the Austrians and the Hungarians. But the Czechs, Slovaks, Silesians, Galicians, Transylvanians, Croats and Bosnians were no Hungarians and hence got reckoned under Austria. What should be Leinsdorf's view, a count in the top of Austrian nobility? Since he absolutely refused to talk about different nations he put them to himself as "nationalities", or "Austrian tribes". And those nationalities or tribes were in need of one state in which they stood "gratefully ordered around the Emperor", an aim unfortunately not fully achieved, hence an Austrian year to have the Emperor celebrated by all nationalities or Austrian tribes, under responsible leadership from above, seemed Leinsdorf an excellent expedient to re-awaken the somewhat watery awareness of the unity of the Austrian et cetera. Even though,



we should remind ourselves as Leinsdorf did every now and then, his friends von Hennenstein and von Türkheim opined it would only lead to piggery.

But piggery was on the doorstep anyway: Leinsdorf's tribes did anything but stand gratefully ordered around the Emperor. They emphatically called themselves nations, ogled their ethnic brothers and sisters over the border, wanted to be redeemed of Kakania and saw Leinsdorf's action as a secret pan-Germanic assault. Foreign observers who wished to hear the most terrible things about the Parallel Action could savour their urges in those circles.

Never since the start of life on earth something died due to its unpronounceability but the Austrian and Hungarian Austrian-Hungarian Doublemonarchy would soon come to think about itself as such.

But for the time being no observer would dare to burn his fingers at such a suggestion. One limited oneself to suspecting that something general and unclear was happening which defied exact interpretation for the moment.

*99. About half-shrewdness and its fertile counterpart; about the similarity of two periods; about the lovely essence of Aunt Jane and the impropriety of what one calls the new times.*

No clarity was to be harvested in Diotima's salon. We felt above the past, but exactly what was part of the past, the present and the future, that was the subject of vehement differences of opinion.

Ulrich had the good luck to find family photo albums that somehow had landed in Diotima's house so there was some

diversion. He saw Aunt Jane, dead for ages, who started in the family as a piano teacher of the children of his great-aunt, but her role had, by her admirable flexibility after the children's total lack of musical talent had become clear, gradually grown into a constant in the household, totally indispensable to everyone. So they got older together and Aunt Jane still referred to Uncle Nepomuk as "der Mucki" when he was over forty. Thin, skin folds, Virginia cigars, black teeth hence, only one dress - everyone assumed she had more than one piece of the same but this never got confirmed - black, straight to the ground.

While looking in the albums Ulrich's ears heard the greats of the mind use words as bags to catch wind. He occasionally asked: "now tell me what do you mean by that?" This invariably led to scorn of his mechanical view of life. He impressed no one.

Aunt Jane would have said: "I understand them. You disturb them with you seriousness".

*100. General Stumm advances to the State Library, collects know how from librarians, library assistants in the field of the ordering of spirit.*

General Stumm would see it and comfort Ulrich as a comrade. "This is brainless verbal intercourse", was the military judgment of these spiritual celebrities, whose signature in their books was greatly sought by their admirers. "Let them".

"I thus far failed", Stumm continued, "to follow your good advice and set a course worthy to Napoleon. So I took things in my personal hands". The last weeks Stumm was no longer to be seen with his pince-nez. He had bought himself ear

supported horn reading spectacles, which despite his round and short shape made for a slightly martial appearance, which in turn made the spectacles look like an inverted field telescope. "I ordered a license for the Hofbibliothek, told the librarian who I am and the man does his utmost to help me penetrate the lines of the enemy!"

But during the tour of introduction I turned out to have underestimated the matter. I thought: one book a day, tough but doable, and after a while I will have made some progress. But what do I hear? Three and a half million books! First, I have to say, my knees got a bit weak but almost at once I stopped trusting the matter. Look. You can't kill all soldiers of an enemy army either, but yet, every single one of them has a function. Now you can tell me that with books this is the same but from what the librarian tells me about it, and this is the man keeping order there, this cannot be concluded!

Of course I am not going to ask such a man at once where to find the most beautiful of thoughts, this level I have reached in the meantime, but I knew that sooner or later I had to come up with a question in that vein. So first, I asked shrewdly on casual tone: "O, I forgot to ask you, how do you find here the best book on a certain subject?" I asked it on a somewhat admiring tone really, to charm him.

But then he asked me what I was looking for, "war history?". But you know, I am working for your niece, so I said: "no, peace history".

That seemed to puzzle him. "Historical? Or contemporary pacifistic literature".

"Do you have an overview of all great thoughts of mankind", I asked. This seemed to me the smartest thing to ask for my purposes, "or the realization of the most important things".

"Something like a theological ethics?"

"That would be fine, but it should have some Austrian culture and Grillparzer", I said and saw him loose colour, so I added: "with some rail in between so as to have smooth connections".

I must say he recovered quickly and offered to show me the catalogue.

Well, there I stood. Inside a gigantic skull it seemed. Books and drawers with cards everywhere. Nothing readable though. Every leaf only had lists of books. That of course smelled decently like brain phosphor, so I thought: I have arrived. The general staff! But the man told me he wanted to leave me "quietly alone" there. He probably saw my face so he climbed a ladder like a monkey, comes down with a fat foliant, and says: "General, here you have a bibliography of bibliographies".

Then he made an attempt to fly but I grabbed him. "Mister librarian how do I find in this ..." yes indeed I said madhouse, for I was beyond myself for a second, "... your book?". Says he: "I strictly abstain from actually reading any single one of them".

Good. So he runs away. At considerable speed. A doctor in library sciences. So such a man never reads books. No time for it. I took another look around me. You can't burst in tears. Smoking is prohibited.

From behind somewhere an old little man appears, smelling of book dust and tips. "Could I help the general with anything? Julius Caesar? Prinz Eugen? Graf Daun?". This is how he estimated me, so that already tuned me positively. He knew the visitors, even the Prelate, who I learned, is specialized in a certain beetle. He knew our military students as well, he would find the books for them they had to read and could exactly reproduce - and be sure I know such things - their scorn of the nonsense they found out to get fed with, but my case, he said, would be difficult. So I gave him a little something, after which he said: "Fortunately I have a related case, a lady you might know, the wife of Sektionschef Tuzzi of Foreign Affairs. Yet I managed to satisfy her with a list of books".

You can imagine my joy. Part of the reserved books was collected already. It felt like a secret marriage. Every now and then I write a small note with soft pencil and when she sees that the following day and asks herself what it could mean she has no idea its me up there in her head!

Blissfully the general gazed away in silence.

But his seriousness returned. "Suppose ..." he said. "you drink. Liquor. OK? But you do not stop. Drunkenness, delirium tremens, last sacraments, flat down. In the end you have little to imagine do you? OK. Now water. Just water. Drink it. Do not stop. You will die. Or food. Or some of those other things thought healthy, the newspapers say. Consume it. Do not stop. Good. Now take order. Same thing. Death by freezing, rigor mortis, moon landscape, geometrical epidemic".

*101. The enemy relatives.*

Diotima's salon. Ulrich sat behind the mental turbulence on a couch along one of the sides, where a lagoon of quiet had formed. There was Diotima. That had not happened since those walks in the surroundings of Vienna. Had those something to do with it? Quite a number of weeks. She sat down next to him like a tired dancer.

"How are you?", she asked, looking in front of her. Battered.

"So neither Arnheim makes you happy"

"A valuable friend! No this Stumm makes me crazy. What does the man want?"

"He is in love with you."

Diotima nervously laughed. "When I look at him I see death"

"That's then the life-friendliest death I've ever seen".

"A hyena"

Ulrich laughed.

"This creeps around here", she continued, "and waits for it to collapse".

"Yes the collapse is likely. I told you long ago".

Diotima tried to assume a superior posture but did not get beyond arrogance. She herself felt it hard to keep courage. "I experienced a lot and changed significantly".

"Will it be to my advantage?"

She did not look at him but smiled and shook her head.

"Then I am going to betray Arnheim. He was behind the general, not me, like you thought."

Weeks ago Diotima had already stopped thinking it could have been Ulrich.

"Stumm personally told me Arnheim is overly eager to please him. I know Stumm from long ago"

"He is like that to everyone"

"Just hear that nonsense snorting around us", Ulrich said, a bit loud, Diotima's eyes made a nervous sweep. "He allows himself to be covered by it because he is rich, he agrees with everybody for it will make them advertise him"

Diotima pulled him beyond hearing distance. "You can't stand his success, why do you bring me in such difficulties?"

"I you?"

"Yes, mightn't I like to talk with you about everything and have to abstain from it because you can't be trusted?"

"You have no reason whatsoever for such worries, you can say everything, I know the two of you are in love, is he going to marry you?"

"He asked me". Ulrich's lightning directness even had escaped her.

"And?"

She turned red. "That is a matter full of heavy responsibilities. But in truly great experiences your actions make little difference"

Ulrich, unaware of her use of this as a soporific in her sleepless nights, took it literally.

"And you're on the wrong track as far as Arnheim is concerned", Diotima said. "You call him vain but his wealth makes him feel an incredibly heavy responsibility that makes influence a deep necessity. That's why one sometimes thinks he gets involved with everyone".

They walked up and down the empty front room. Diotima put her hand on his arm and said: "He says the individual on its own is no stronger than an abandoned patient. Isn't he right? On your own you lapse into thousands of exaggerations". She looked down but felt Ulrich's eyes and continued. "I have experienced it myself lately but I see it in you as well. Don't be so jealous, he even openly complained about how you dismiss his friendship."

"Does he say he wants my friendship? That's a lie."

Diotima smiled a bit. "Now again you exaggerate. He says that one should employ all means time provides and keep the middle of everything. But not out of shrewdness, but because it is the synthetic-simple nature that unmask the apparent distinctions on the surface. It is the nature of the leader".

"And what have I to do with this?"



Suddenly she realized she had pulled him down with her on a shoe shelf and they were sitting next to each other. "Well, don't you do things the other way around? The world should be like you or else you engage in passive resistance".

Talking to Ulrich relieved her immensely but she continuously checked whether no guests entered. While talking she pulled him up again and took him to the only unused little room, that of Rachel. She got some fun out of it. Its frivolous edge she suppressed, without spoiling the agreeably confidential atmosphere of the moment, by decently chastising Ulrich for his refusal to take social responsibility and his inclination to scorn others who did, even Arnheim.

"If I am like that, what could you use me for?" He sat on Rachel's metal bed, Diotima on a reed chair.

"If I would behave mean and badly for only once, you would start behaving to me like an archangel". That was an admirable answer, but she understood that only after having given it, and with some consternation. It had been meant as a joke but had accidentally touched something that seemed to be part of her relation with her nephew.

Ulrich understood what had happened." Are you really in love with him, no limits?"

Diotima looked at the ground. "What a question, I'm not sixteen".

"I mean do you sometimes have the desire that everyone, even the dirtiest figures in the next room, undresses, puts the arms around each others' shoulders and starts to sing instead of talk,

and you have to kiss all of them straight on the mouth. If this is too much for you I am willing to allow pyjamas".

"Nice mess you make"

"I had it", Ulrich confessed, "once long ago. Quite some prominent authors have written that the world would be like that in the absence of evil".

"Than if you don't do it yourself it is due to your own defects, and you do not have to depict it in such a ridiculous way".

Ulrich offered her a cigarette. She accepted. Smoke filled Rachel's room. Air it, don't forget, Diotima thought.

Ulrich looked at her, surprised he had been so straight. Almost real. With whom did he ever do so? Neither was he able to stop it. "I will tell you what could make me so seraphic that I would not just tolerate a fellow human being but could sense so to say under the psychological loin-cloth without getting haunted by substitutional shame".

"Except when it concerns women". Diotima had heard enough about Ulrich.

"No including women, loving the human being in the woman, you see that rarely!"

It was not the first time Diotima found something decent in Ulrich's opinions, but there always would be something wrong somewhere. He sat, bent forward, smoked, his elbows on his muscular upper legs and looked down darkly.

In love without limits, Ulrich claimed, the partners in love cease to know what they were and are, since love triggers a metamorphosis. So you loose all grip, things can go right or wrong, a bee can keep flying against a window or suddenly pass through some opening. Only after passing you think O, I became a bee, and you convince yourself you planned it all the way.

"A disconsolate and undignified take of human feelings that are decisive for your entire life", Diotima said.

"You are", Ulrich explained, "sucked in an uncontrolled way into the unknown, like a criminal, only it's legal"

"What this crime stuff all the time with you?"

"Normal life is a controlled middle ground between crimes. That's were you can fool yourself into thinking you are personally doing something."

"How theological you are today, I do not know you like that". She thought she should have asked Ulrich how to proceed after that first proposal by Arnheim that he had not come back to later. She looked just as tired as at the start of the conversation. But physically she remained a stunner, she knew. She had avoided Ulrich quite some weeks. He looked handsome tonight. The Parallel Action was far. Passionate struggle was behind her. She thought: he wants and he doesn't.

Arnheim really wanted Ulrich's friendship, she was sure about it. And Ulrich was full of resistance, too full, something was wrong there.

Meanwhile not only her soul was in insurrection against her body married to Tuzzi: her body was getting fed up with her soul as well, doing nothing up there but languishing in a desert, gazing at what might be only mirages. In their subtle balance, Arnheims decisions of course were of higher nature, but Ulrich's one-sidedness had some charm as well. He would not stand and hesitate at the decisive moment.

Arnheim was a royal burden that covered your soul as a wholesale bag of potatoes, with Ulrich you lost your responsibility for hundreds of things and got launched into a light, suspect state of freedom.

Suddenly she remembered the little toddler that she, when still a child, had carried away from a danger. It had kicked around and screamed for it did not want. Unlimited? She thought. And she said: "But I am in love without limits".

Ulrich smiled: "You're unable to".

She rose, hands in her hair, and gazed at him with surprise.

"Removing the limits", Ulrich explained, "requires matter-of-factness and precision. Two I's, who know the I nowadays is endangered, hold each other. Then you should pay damned attention for you easily make a mistake. The more exclusive you focus on the facts the better. If you would be nothing but a scientific observer you would be totally love, that's not your hobby is it?"

He had planned to phrase the whole shit casually. To control his facial expression he even had lit another cigarette. Diotima made a playful-proud face and took another one as well. Out of shyness. She just blew out smoke, for of course she had

understood nothing, though she felt it had been something during which he could have grabbed her hand, or have started to caress her, but had stopped short of it.

Now if they ... but what could one do in a little room like this? She looked around. She'd never done such a thing before. She laughed a bit.

Ulrich as well. But his eyes looked like closed windows. He felt ashamed to have gone so far.

"My dear friend", she said, "we do something impossible; stay for a while, I'll return to the guests first".

You are at 46% (original book page 488) of the part published during his life time of Musil's "Der Mann Ohne Eigenschaften".

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