

# **The Man Without Qualities II: The Like of It Now Happens Study Guide**

**The Man Without Qualities II: The Like of It Now Happens by Robert Musil**

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## Plot Summary

This volume is the second of a two-volume series. The stories have been packaged as a unit entitled *The Man Without Qualities*. The first volume has its own book summary, and includes Books 1 and 2 of the novel. The entire volume is dedicated to *The Like of it Now Happens* which begins precisely where the preceding volume had left off with chapter 72. The previous volume concluded with a woman named Diotima hostessing an important meeting of the Collateral Campaign.

Many of the main characters are the same as those from the previous volume of the same novel. The Count Leinsdorf, the lady Diotima, and some of the others. Ulrich has at times hoped to be a man without qualities and has toyed with what this means now and then. Ulrich is one of the lower level characters in terms of rank and status, but he is not from the bottoms of society. He is a middle-class fellow. Ulrich is the man without qualities and the main question caused by this is whether or not the author shows this clearly. Can readers learn what this concept means through Ulrich's example or not?

Robert Musil uses the novel to showcase a number of ideas. As such, the novel is great reading for those who like this but is annoying to those who do not. The man without qualities has two affairs during the novel. He still sees his former lovers later, but he is not all that friendly about it. He has many ideas. He is introduced to some of the most prominent people in all of the Germanic nations but he does not consistently just do whatever he can to make them like him. Ulrich is not perfectly behaved nor terribly badly behaved.



# Chapter 1, Chapters 73 - 75

## Chapter 1, Chapters 73 - 75 Summary

Chapter 73: Leo Fischel's daughter Gerda. Gerda was introduced in the previous volume. She is a 23-year-old woman. She is the daughter of Klementine and Leo Fischel. She is engaged to be married. There is a certain amount of realistic assessment that she may not heed all that some of her elders might have to say. Ulrich has a meeting with Klementine, who is Gerda's mother. They briefly discuss anti-Semitism and two different temperaments are displayed in response to it. Klementine doesn't like it, but her reaction is not drastic in any way. Leo, on the other hand gets passionately worked up over the same issue - he has a more volatile reaction to it. They discuss Hans Sepp, the hopeful candidate for Gerda's husband and Ulrich asks quite directly whether or not this man has much of a future.

Chapter 74: Ulrich and Gerda had a certain kind of relationship with one another. They had grown close but they did not love one another. They were frequently exposed to one another's company in ways that nurtured their sense that they should be intimate. At times their boundaries were transgressed and they became almost as two who had fallen out of love when in fact they were two people who had not ever fallen in love with one another in the first place. Gerda is described as a somewhat vehement young woman. Later in the same chapter, Arnheim is reintroduced. There is another acknowledgment of the powers of natural forces expressed during this chapter. The Moon really is held into proximity by the power of the Earth. This is entirely natural and cannot actually be controlled or prevented. The author Musil points out to readers that this has happened to the Moon in relation to the Earth - it has been drawn in to a certain extent and is kept.

Chapter 75: Here a high military official visits with the lady Diotima. The General finds her to be delightful company, with a bit more upstairs than many of the other girls. This is in addition to her charm, good looks and excellent manners. There is some discourse regarding the reality of ranks and titles. These vary to some degree with the circumstances and locations that people find themselves in.

## Chapter 1, Chapters 73 - 75 Analysis

The second volume begins with the author and narrator making the presumption that the characters have become well known through the first novel. Anyone coming into it at this point will certainly feel that he or she has entered into a story that is well under way, which is correct. For those that do the tone of the work is consistent with what it has been before. For those new to the story at this point, what is actually happening is that the main characters are being reintroduced. The style of writing can be described in relation to painting. The author Robert Musil writes with well calculated brush strokes but he does not provide the rich and ornate level of details that one might find with other

writers just as some of the painters give ornate and minute details where others create wonderful impressions in other ways.

Readers are reminded that although this is the second book of the two-book novel, it is the first book of the second volume—although it has multiple parts. The summary for volume 2 will have different parts of The Second Book of the entire novel.



## Chapter 2, Chapters 76 - 79

### Chapter 2, Chapters 76 - 79 Summary

Chapter 76: Here comes Count Leinsdorf. This man is one of Diotima's best friends; they interact a great deal and have plenty of social intercourse. The Count is also rightly called His Highness. Diotima did have a few complaints regarding the Count's interests and she had only the Prussian Arnheim in whom to confide. The Prussian explained to her fairly well what was actually going on. The Count is a land-owner and some of his hobbies and other traits are a direct consequence of those actions. The Count preferred rifle clubs and co-op dairy farms over many other things. Arnheim simply showed Diotima how much these were customary side-effects of his land-owning. Chapter 77: For some reason during this chapter Robert Musil presents a charming but unrealistic idea to readers. He suggests that the ancient Grecian philosopher Plato could turn up to a newspaper, and prove his identity to editors. Once he does this, Robert Musil assures the readers that Plato would receive ample writing contracts. He goes on with profound realism to explain how things would change once the novelty of Plato's return in the modern era wore off from use. Robert Musil shows readers how much power the editors actually have and how differently they would treat Plato should he try to put forward some other idea of his that didn't fit with the market at this time. Essentially, the editors would treat him the way that they treat all of the other professionals working there as writers, and would shunt any ideas that were not so timely to occasional feature articles in the woman's or book sections of the newspapers or magazine.

In contrast, the narrator explains that Herr Arnheim's work is timely and that's what makes it so marketable. The narrator admits that for writers there can be something strange about their situation because they have been too far removed from the real world. The ability to write well was at some point about reality but after it has become their profession they run the risk of losing the thing but still having the word. During volume 1 this was referred to as relating to the sense of reality. Chapter 78: Diotima's Transformation. Here, Musil has the narrator emphasize that Paul Arnheim's role as the Prussian is that of a foreigner. The woman is very pleased to have prestigious people in her social circle and supporting her cultural campaign. Chapter 79: Soliman in Love. This chapter has the Negro fellow as its star. He was simultaneously a poor enslaved boy and one of the most fortunate of African princes because he lived with a very wealthy family. He was protected by them. It was here, during this chapter that he became enchanted with one of the other beloved and protected servants - Rachel, whom Diotima adored and called Rachelle.

### Chapter 2, Chapters 76 - 79 Analysis

Knowledge of aristocracy and the lack thereof, is used during this novel. Readers will notice how oblivious they are of many things, and will also rightly observe whether or not Musil was correct in the event that they do have knowledge of aristocracy, titles and



other formula regarding ranks etc. Two of the servants are highlighted in chapter 79. It was explained during volume 1 that a strange change came over Soliman when he was determined to be grown up enough to be hired as one of the servants. This way he was now treated like a man and kept in the bosom of the family. Soliman however, felt spurned and was not mature enough to really understand what was going on. As a direct consequence, he continued to help himself to things - this was interpreted increasingly as stealing. Soliman did it from a sense of revenge but it normally went unnoticed. The whole thing probably could have been cleared up by a few heart-to-heart talks with his master but it never was; at least not by chapter 79 of the novel. He makes a game of pursuing Rachel and they both have a lot of fun with this until he gives her some real jewels and she is outspoken regarding her own values. Mainly, she is upset because he is stealing from their employers whom she loves and respects. Conflict emerges. He ends up biting her and then crying profusely while on his knees.

The style is consistent with volume 1. The author is reintroducing characters in a manner that is palatable to the readers whether they know the fictional individual or not. So far, there is already more active drama than there was during the first volume, or perhaps it is more that the characters engaged in unruly behavior are other servants. The role of the servants in this novel so far is one of privileged humility. They are treated as though they are inferior yet they are simultaneously treated like they are quite special, and their employers do go to especial lengths to care for them.



## Chapter 3, Chapters 80 - 83

### Chapter 3, Chapters 80 - 83 Summary

Chapter 80: In this chapter a small General receives an invitation from Diotima. There is something mysterious about the whole matter, as the writing does not seem to have been Diotima's. He was rather thrilled and she was a bit surprised but took the event in the spirit of something supernatural. Diotima welcomes her surprise guest. The General's career development is outlined briefly. By the time he became a Major the others had noticed that he was what they described as a philosopher; because of this they made him a staff officer. Later on, but far from the finish the man had lost much of his motivation and turned more into someone lazy entrenched into the position and holding onto it, not out of any real interest, but for the sake of job security. This is important but this attitude is more like that of a supported wife well into her second or third decade of duty than anything else. He no longer cared about whether or not he was promoted, but at that point he was promoted anyways. For some reason he foresaw that he was going to end up a high ranking General and it happened. At some point, when on active duty he was attached to the line as it were and kept there were he did not get killed off for some time. Those final promotions that led him to the party at Diotima's come across more as what readers would say happens because of being in a lift more so than any definable achievements. The other main factor affecting this man, as Musil points out, is his attitude towards women. There is the allusion that he was disappointed because Diotima had not flirted with him or anything. For some reason, Musil explains, that the General tended to suffer from infatuations towards women he viewed as intimidating.

Chapter 81: Ulrich meets with Count Leinsdorf twice weekly. Ulrich is developing nicely in the service of Count Leinsdorf. Musil introduces the idea of associations and of counter-associations so that conflicts can be taken the sociological level. Count Leinsdorf begins to espouse practical politics to Ulrich. He explains that ideological politics has not been helpful to humanity up to the present day as far as he knows. Practical politics often involves not doing exactly what one wants. The Count also emphasizes that letting others have their way, at least in some minor ways is often very helpful to making allies. He then goes on to speak of the relationship between goals and events. He explains that Bismark wanted to make the King of Purssia great, and implementing this idea led to the development of the German empire and included leading Austria into war. The surrounding men seem slightly nonplussed.

### Chapter 3, Chapters 80 - 83 Analysis

Chapter 82: Clarisse has a chat with Ulrich about these special years. Ulrich is secretly quite sad that she has written to the Count about making a Nietzsche Year; he's a bit embarrassed that she did this. She does not see why this is the case or else she disagrees with him about it. Clarisse and Ulrich agree that the Austrian Year is





nonsense. Clarisse explains to Ulrich her view that this would mean that it is okay to request a Nietzsche, even though this is what they might want personally. Really, she means to say they are not themselves the most prestigious of people. To Ulrich these things cannot be equated in such a way. There is something inherently different about his mind. They discuss ideas a bit more. Clarisse emphasizes the conflict between Walter and Ulrich, because Walter is jealous of Ulrich's success.

Chapter 83: In this case, the title of the novel and of the chapter are relevant: The Like of It Happens, Why does one not invent history? Ulrich is with Clarisse and is exploring how life is a metaphor whether viewed as the game cops and robbers or some other conflict based game. The translator has used the British wording for this game, calling it Bobbies and Thieves instead of cops and robbers. Musil has the narrator reiterate the difference between good plays and ones that are still successful but not even good. Ulrich toys with the idea that Clarisse is right about something.



## Chapter 4, Chapters 84 - 87

### Chapter 4, Chapters 84 - 87 Summary

Chapter 84: This begins with Ulrich facing a pile of mail which he handles as part of his service to Count Leinsdorf. Someone is supporting an orphanage and there are carefully made descriptions of why they are not going to use an interdenominational approach in this case. Musil gives an account of Clarisse as behaving like a sexy intellectual: he writes that she quotes Nietzsche to her husband while dropping her nightdress on their bed. As is often the case, the men Ulrich and his friend Walter are struggling amongst themselves over something entirely different.

Chapter 85: Ulrich gets to visit with a General. General Stumm becomes infatuated with Diotima. He is not like Herr Paul Arnheim about this. Robert Musil writes that Nature creates unity by combining opposites together. Ulrich urges the General to not take thinking so seriously. Ulrich accidentally calls the General a Colonel, but then pleads for forgiveness and assures him that this was due to pleasant memories. They digress into how attractive and impressive Diotima is, and then General Stumm expresses his jealousy that she is so fond of Arnheim. He tells Ulrich something is going on between. When Ulrich presses him, the General admits that he doesn't mean that they have had an actual affair. This is the affect their friendship and frequent nonsexual intimacy is having on him. The General objects to Ulrich's comments about overrating the intellect by pointing out how much anti-intellectualism he had found in the soldier's mess hall over the years.

Chapter 86: General Stumm gave in to his admiration and affection for Diotima and Herr Arnheim instead of to his irritation that Diotima was not to be trifled with. The narrator explains that around this time it would have seemed more prudent if Herr Arnheim had ceased to return anymore to support the Collateral Campaign and to visit with Diotima. Instead, the Prussian was making arrangements to remain as a longer term guest. He writes about a love experience and about how it can fade, such that it is turned into the remnants of a dream or of some of strange otherworldly experience.

### Chapter 4, Chapters 84 - 87 Analysis

Chapter 87: Moosbrugger dances. Meanwhile, Moosbrugger was in prison, being held at a place called Landesgericht. He was very bored there. He tended to contemplate things and to have memories of enjoyable events during his time in jail. He also went before the judges again, more than once. At times he seemed to side with them and agree that they should lock him up. On other occasions he argued quite differently, that the whole problem was that the judges and jury were unsympathetic and lacked understanding for and appreciation of his point-of-view of the events, including the murder for which he was being tried.



During chapter 85 readers are presented with questions concerning how much men differ or how alike they are but that on the surface they can seem different. The basic message that readers have is that Herr Paul Arnheim is a true gentleman and neither he nor Diotima ever stray into inappropriate behavior with one another. They are good friends however, and undeniably support one another in many ways including the Collateral Campaign. The General Stumm is infatuated with her and makes it perfectly clear that although he might not be exclusively sexually interested in her, he is mainly interested in her because he is sexually attracted. The impression this gives readers, especially in league with his interpretation of Arnheim's friendship with Diotima is that he is not so much of a gentleman as the Prussian. Whether or not this is true or simply appears to be the case is not entirely certain by this chapter of the novel.

There has been some consistency of the way the author writes. The chapters vary to include different characters. For example, one chapter will be focused primarily on Ulrich, another on Diotima and then at some other point, the author concentrates again on Moosbrugger. These characters overlap and there is an interplay between them but a main character of one chapter may receive only the briefest of off hand allusions in most of the other ones.



# Chapter 5, Chapter 88 - 91

## Chapter 5, Chapter 88 - 91 Summary

Chapter 88: In this chapter Ulrich meets with the General Stumm. While there he makes an important observation. He tells the General not to take thinking so seriously. The General ends up acknowledging that he views it with great importance. There is another point the author makes which is undeniably true within the fictional context: the value of books seen through a lens that will surprise readers. In this case, it seems to be just like today. The books are deemed more or less important on the basis of how many sales there are. The sales must reach a certain point before they are considered worthy of certain kinds of attention. At that point they achieve a specific rank. Chapter 89: "One must move with the times." Herr Arnheim and Diotima are prominent during this chapter. From the beginning, the sense is that their activities in the top echelons of the society are effective. At this point it is very much about the emotional and psychological atmosphere. A number of individuals who are closely associated with certain kinds of ideas are brought into the Collateral Campaign and are proving to be effective. One of the ideas brought in, is that of a spirit of modernity. This group of people also criticized Impressionism. " 'Effeminate and muddle-headed' was what they now called Impressionism. What they demanded was a controlled sensuality and intellectual synthesis" (p. 119). It is revealed that Arnheim's family owns and can run a munitions manufacturing corporation which lends itself to Herr Arnheim and General Stumm into conversations that include some surprising mutual understandings.

Chapter 90: The dethroning of the ideocracy. In this chapter readers discover that Arnheim has traveled extensively throughout Europe and over in America. The narrator claims he did this for five years and it seems that he must have just gone ahead and traveled during the First World War. The narrator writes more about the relationship between the human being and the world. Nature has had a powerful influence on humans. Chapter 91: Bulls and bears on the market of the mind. Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason is mentioned as part of Robert Musil's parade of educational knowledge. During this chapter, the Permanent Secretary Tuzzi's inexplicable affection for Ulrich is mentioned again. During this chapter it becomes clear that Ulrich is not terribly naive. He knows that there must be some reason why Tuzzi is so tolerant of Diotima's friendship with Arnheim.

## Chapter 5, Chapter 88 - 91 Analysis

The issue of having a modern spirit and of a handful of ideas closely associated with it, are reintroduced during chapter 89. Modernity is a concept with which readers are familiar in an almost automatic sense at this point. The modern includes the idea of progress and involves the social movements to greater democracy, and more of a rise into the middle classes. This idea had an especial philosophical form during the 19th century. Technically speaking, within this same category, the world has progressed



beyond the modern. In the broader view, however, and in what is commonly called the third world, the effort is still towards the modern. For the general populace, the world is as likely to be referred to as modern more so than post-modern even though the literary critic and philosopher would correct the error of those who called 2009 purely modern.

The characters cast about numerous ideas for new movements, including ideas such as accelerism, wherein all human experience should be sped up as much as possible. Many of these were tied to real life, one person suggested a new movement using the American model of labor as a plan to implement on a global scale. For readers, this is a bit of a joy if only because it is a reminder that the Americans did exist to the people in the story even though they were never the main characters.

The English phrase, "I say!" sums it up well when readers are informed that Paul Arnheim apparently traveled widely during the First World War without that having disrupted his activities. There is a certain innate valiance involved with this. The impact of humanity upon the world's environment is entered into but not decisively during this chapter. This is a case where the reader in 2009 or beyond is apt to have a very different perception from that of the early-20th century. While in some ways the novel is much closer to home in the temporal and historical sense, in other regards it

The title of chapter 91 gives readers the feeling of how close to us in time this novel is. Readers used to contemporary works will not view this as a big deal whereas those who have read works from centuries or millenia ago will get an incredibly modern feel from this. This even is a reference to the stock market.



# Chapter 6, Chapters 92 - 95

## Chapter 6, Chapters 92 - 95 Summary

Chapter 92: This chapter opens with a further examination of what Herr Paul Arnheim is really like. He has some quality that impresses other people but he is also prone to attribute to this to the fact that he is financially wealthy. The narrator explains that in the case of Arnheim that isn't what it is. However, the same narrator then goes on to explain how it is that people have a tendency to view financial wealth as a personal quality. Rich people always want to feel that money has no real meaning and that the life of every human being cannot honestly be estimated in terms of dollars. Such people are also often troubled by virtue of their effect upon others who do not have as much money because they want to be wanted for reasons other than their money. At the same time, for those people who do not have so much, that is very often what is wanted. Similarly, money grows well and when handled properly will consistently lead to its own increase rather than to the loss of it. There are more people who have ideas than there are people able to execute their ideas.

Finally, members of the intelligentsia tended to give him the hardest time because they agreed that the value of a person goes beyond financial wealth and yet, members of the intelligentsia often wanted money. Chapter 93: At this point both the small General Stumm and the Permanent Secretary Tuzzi have concluded that they like Ulrich. There is some discussion of sports and then later on, more of a conversation about how the relationship between Arnheim and Diotima has remained entirely nonsexual. Diotima admits to herself that there are moments when this surprises her but it is actually true. They have not ever kissed one another. Diotima considers the effects of the working life and how it can virtually wipe out an individual's personality unless it is work so well suited to the individual's soul, that there can be identification through it. The difference in nationality adds to Diotima's sense of the differentiation between herself and the others, especially Arnheim. She has a dislike for both Prussia and Germany from which she does not suffer when it is her own country. Chapter 94: Diotima is the star of this chapter, which allows readers to revisit a number of the same characters from another perspective. Her emotions and sexuality have been somewhat inflamed by the circumstances. Her mind has found its way to adultery which she has been quite seriously considering. She feels her love for Arnheim and its limits. This is subjective psychodrama within a monogamous marital situation. At some point Ulrich comes to mind. What it was about him was actually that he had referred to reality. He had spoken about the perception of reality and about how he felt that reality should be abolished. She felt caught by marriage and the narrator writes that her husband suddenly looked like a snake that had swallowed a rabbit.



## Chapter 6, Chapters 92 - 95 Analysis

Chapter 95: The main idea is the contrast between the superman of letters and the man of letters. He writes of how many men of letters are ordinary enough but wish that they were supermen. The superman of letters is not the same as the man of letters nor is he like the superman of other types. The superman of letters sees real life greatness and then does something to enable others to see this well. They do this through their writing and they do this because they take a sympathetic interest in the well being of the people they are writing for and those they are writing about. The narrator explains all this. He concludes the chapter by asking readers to imagine what it would be like if they were not at all sympathetic. The narrator explains that this is Herr Paul Arnheim's view.

Thanks to the literary devices at his disposal Robert Musil has been able to use what is called omniscience so that readers can perceive both the inner world of the consciousness of some of the characters as well as being able to perceive the external world of events. This is customary in a great deal of literature. In this case, the author does this partially, much the same way that people deal with others in real life. When people get to know each other, what is perceived is external events with some shared awareness of the inner life. During this set of chapters, readers have been granted insight into the inner world of Diotima and also of Paul Arnheim, both characters who had been something of a mystery but something of a known entity.

The writing continues to be rich. The author is full of ideas and he is sharing both the ideas themselves and showing how they are orchestrated and implemented through the plot line and events of the story itself. The language is consistent in that it appears to be intended for a well educated audience rather than for a general readership. The limitation caused by translation is taken into account.



## Chapter 7, Chapters 96 - 99

### Chapter 7, Chapters 96 - 99 Summary

Chapter 96: This chapter is also dedicated to the superman of letters but it is very different. Here, Arnheim looks at the businessman. What is it that makes this man successful? The author brings up the Medieval relationship between science and the Christian, especially Catholic Church. The Church was so dominant that people such as philosophers had to watch it all the time in order to secure or to maintain funding for their projects and to avoid being attacked by the Church. Arnheim reports on the importance of teamwork. An excellent rider in right relation with a wonderful mount will go far, but if the two are in conflict then their progress will suffer terribly and it would be best if they would resolve this issue. Goethe is briefly discussed as having emerged as one of the greats of the German nation who arose from amidst the class of prosperous tradesmen. The narrator insists that only readers who are able to see it the same way that Arnheim does will agree with Arnheim's insistence of how great Goethe is. Finally, a calm temperament is described as being the result of the conjunction and peaceful union of two different tendencies and attitudes dwelling in a happy union with one another.

Chapter 97: Here, Clarisse is contemplating the "Man Without Qualities" and contrasting him to the murderer Moosbrugger. Clarisse actually believes that the murderer is musical whereas she feels that the man without qualities is not musical. She muses as to why this is, and what implications there might be of her feeling this way. The thought occurs to her that her friend Ulrich is actually the man without qualities. Clarisse thinks about how she realizes that her husband is afraid of her and that she torments him. This has been the case for many years. She does not posit any real reason for this. There is also a very strange reference to what sounds like actual incestuous activity or else some overt relationship to incestuous feelings, without any breaking of the taboo. There is then yet another story about how Georg accosted one or perhaps two sisters once, during the night. The girls were so shocked that it just kind of happened. They reacted with frightened silence - neither calling to each other for help, nor even discussing whether or not that had happened to both of them or only to one of them. Sometimes Georg looked a bit differently at one or the other of them after that, but other than that there was no sign of what had occurred.

### Chapter 7, Chapters 96 - 99 Analysis

Chapter 98: Events were moving right along which prevented things from getting dull. These included public charity engagements at the home of Count Leinsdorf. There is the idea of the Police Force serving as the Guardian Angel of the city in this chapter. Later on, there is a semi-private event for some prestigious personnel. Amongst these are both Bonadea and also Ulrich. Bonadea goes close to Ulrich despite his discomfort with this. She is attending the event as the wife of her husband but is nonetheless a bit





moody about her affair with Ulrich. At the same time, the woman has in mind to forge certain connections on both sides of some public debate and through the course of the evening's events she succeeds.

Chapter 99: Expressionism is introduced. This was the name for something like a cultural movement. In German it is called a "pressing out" of things. Aunt Jane is introduced. She is either middle aged or old, but is shown to be quite valuable within the limits of her activities. She had an incredibly intense relationship with an artist who was not monogamous and abandoned both women after only about a year of Jane. She had tried to rescue him from his vices but this had failed. She ended up making too many personal sacrifices if anything, but ended up rearing the other woman's offspring after her husband's abandonment with some success. That's not always fun but pretty intense for a girl's life. Musil acknowledges that this was not the easiest of lives.

Here is analysis for chapter 97. Robert Musil does not give any explanation of the sexual abuse or taboo busting that he describes in volume 2 of the novel. It appears to have been strictly knowledge held by Clarisse and is only known when her thoughts are revealed through the use of 3rd person omniscient narration. There is also some recognition that Clarisse has a power connected with her husband Walter that is not always nice. The traditions about how to handle such problems has entered into and retreated from literature. There is at least one Biblical story of a pair of brothers who destroy an entire town after they find that the people there seem to feel that their sister should just tolerate sexual assault without the perpetrator suffering a stiff penalty. For centuries, this matter is not discussed at all. During the 19th century, Sigmund Freud and other analysts began to more openly address the psychological difficulties and various reactions that people can have as a consequence of experiencing sexual abuse. The fact that Musil mentions it at all, is characteristic of his progressive 20th century attitude towards such problems.



## Chapter 8, Chapters 100 - 103

### Chapter 8, Chapters 100 - 103 Summary

Chapter 100: General Stumm begins to confide in Ulrich. This seems to occur almost against his will; Stumm does not struggle with the younger man but he also does not understand why this happened. The General tells Ulrich about how true it is that in warfare and in libraries, each soldier is necessary despite other appearances of unimportance. Every book is significant and needed, but the whole situation has changed because there are now more books than any individual can read all of. The General then takes Ulrich to the State library and permits the younger man to spend time in a location of privilege - a place where normally only employees are permitted to spend time. This seems to happen as a consequence of Ulrich suggesting that special arrangements could be made so that ideas can travel and interact in the best manner. Ideas and the ever increase of order are discussed. This leads to the recommendation of reading Immanuel Kant since he has addressed issues surrounding the limitations of intellectual concepts and also matters of perception. In the end, this causes them to need and to treasure, library assistants.

Chapter 101: Diotima and Ulrich have a chat for the first time since they went together for a drive. Ulrich ends up explicitly communicating with Diotima about Arnheim. This includes the love that has grown up between Herr Paul Arnheim and Diotima Tuzzi. She is able to admit this to her cousin Ulrich, but there is a great deal of blushing on her part and a sense that something hypersensitive and improper has been talked about. Arnheim is ultimately described as being both innocent and guilty. Diotima accuses Ulrich of seeking to undermine Arnheim. They move into a discussion of the personality and how it shows and how it is undermined by certain things. They talk about how workplaces can make it harder or easier for someone's personality. They talk about the disappearance of the personality altogether and that this is not necessarily the best thing. Her perspective on this is really quite different. That there are chapters showing how differently are the kinds of thoughts in the heads of some of these people the better. The chapter ends with Diotima returning to the other guests and telling Ulrich that they have hoarded more than enough time to be alone together.

### Chapter 8, Chapters 100 - 103 Analysis

In chapter 100, the friendship between General Stumm and the younger Ulrich blossoms. The narrator explains that the General isn't sure why he is becoming so fond of Ulrich. It may in part be that Ulrich has also read Arnheim's writings and that Ulrich naturally understands the General's true situation regarding his wife's friendship with that other man Arnheim. Unlike Diotima, Ulrich correctly ascertains that there is some kind of ulterior motive associated with the General's tolerance and as a consequence, there is an unspoken understanding regarding what the situation is really like.



Chapter 102: This chapter stars Gerda. Gerda finally meets with Ulrich again, but the truth is that he had forgotten all about a promise he had made to her. Eventually it came back to him and at that point, he determined to return to her as he had told her that he would. A man named Hans Sepp was involved in this chapter. He had entered Gerda's life as a tutor hired by her father. Over time he grew interested in saving the German nobility and also pursued the Collateral Campaign from the German perspective. This was supposed to be, according to that Campaign, although competitiveness amongst the trio of Germanic nations was also a source of conflict. There are some conflicts between differing age groups, some of which have to do with the roles assigned to people. Chapter 103: Ulrich is the character with whom readers are most intimately involved at this time. He acknowledges his own inconsistencies. He thinks that he has noticed that some inconsistency in his behavior has been consistent throughout his life so far, and that will probably not change. Ulrich also considers writing a book, but then observes that he was born of woman, not of an ink well. He has some long term friends. Amongst these are Walter and Clarisse and Gerda. The situation for Gerda is quite different in part because she is quite a bit younger than Ulrich whereas many of his other friends and associates are substantially older than he is.



## Chapter 9, Chapters 104 - 107

### Chapter 9, Chapters 104 - 107 Summary

Chapter 104: Rachel and Soliman. This title is one of the shortest chapter titles in the entire novel. Rachel has been affected by what happened between her and Soliman. She has become a bit of an informal spy - nothing more than a snoop actually, but she had not taken this attitude towards her mistress before the "affair" that she had with Soliman. During this chapter Soliman is doing well financially but only because he has been stealing from his employer, Arnheim. He only skims off the top, taking what Arnheim normally won't even notice has gone missing. Rachel and Soliman have a peculiar sort of rendezvous. In this meeting she and he sneak off to a hotel together. They behave as if they are running an errand for the Mistress or the Master. What happens is that Soliman displays Paul Arnheim's wealth to Rachel in privacy. This isn't so much terribly wrong as it is rude and sneaky. They do not take any of his things, but it is at this point only that Rachel realizes how rich Herr Arnheim actually is. His wealth is so great as to make what the Tuzzi's have appear very humble. This is relative to the reality that Permanent Secretary Tuzzi is the highest ranking commoner in the nation, and while middle-class people, they are at the top of the middle-class rather than the bottom of it.

Chapter 105: Being sublime lovers is no joke. In this chapter it is revealed that there is more drama in the friendship between Diotima and Arnheim than some would have thought. Meanwhile, others would be affronted by their lack of distance. The two have not become lovers in the physical, sexual sense. However, their affection and intimacy have grown to a level that can often very easily turn into that in real life. The two prove to be typically human in their limitations under these conditions. Arnheim ends up proposing marriage to Diotima although she is already married and has been so for many years. She harbors love for him and at least some desire. Chapter 106: Herr Arnheim contemplates the concept of redemption in this chapter. Arnheim did believe that moral and material wealth went together. The impression Robert Musil gives, is that Arnheim has been born into wealth rather than only having earned his way into it and that as such, he may be making some presumptions that defy rational explanation but are only the second-nature of familiarity. Chapter 107: Count Leinsdorf expresses some concern because of the signs of Herr Arnheim that are around Diotima Tuzzi. It is not that there is some sign, it is that there are so very many of them. The two are meant to simply be allies in the Collateral Campaign but Diotima Tuzzi may be amongst the only ones to think that is all it is.

### Chapter 9, Chapters 104 - 107 Analysis

In Chapter 105 something almost too typical occurs. A married couple interacts with some single people. In effect, the intimacy of a married woman and a single man becomes mingled with sexual desires and passions. Married and single readers alike might feel their own eyes grow as big as saucers, so to speak. The two do not cross the



line of actively sexualizing their involved. They maintain good form while also making their feelings clear. Hence, Arnheim offers to become her alternative husband. Hence, they do not have an adulterous affair. Diotima does not leave her husband but does suffer from fits and subjective drama and bouts of emotion about this matter. Ulrich is not even remotely surprised even though he doesn't know because he has wondered why Diotima's husband tolerated Arnheim's attentions of his wife in the first place. Ulrich was also right about the ulterior motives.

In chapter 106 Robert Musil continues to show readers that he is using this novel to display ideas to them. This novel is heady enough to be of interest to intellectual. Those who like simple dramas will still find some pleasure in it but are apt to grow relatively bored with it precisely because there are so many ideas being presented. Redemption is just one of the ideas that the author brings up during this chapter.



## Chapter 10, 108 - 111

### Chapter 10, 108 - 111 Summary

Chapter 108: Redemption is still the focus at the very beginning of this chapter. Soon thereafter, another location is mentioned; this is the Kakanians. This term is not explained by the novelist at all. What is clear enough is that it is some region, that seems to be something everyone would understand. This is a perfect of knowing that many things are very obvious to the initiated but still easy to mistake or to find confusing to those who do not know. Kakania is related to Austria - that much is clear, but what exactly the relationship is is not. The Kakanians are called "unredeemed nationalities" that are operating under one group. Diotima is credited with having nurtured an interest in redemption during the novel. General Stumm, the small General is included in this chapter. There is a claim that the people actually wished they could be a living generation to experience having a Messiah.

Chapter 109: Bonadea stars in this chapter. The double nature of her life is brought out for explanation at this time. What she led was not literally a double life, but mainly there is the difference between her married life and public presentations of her story and the reality of her extramarital affairs, the deceit for the purpose of maintaining a semblance of decorum and discretion in her life. She is married to a high status husband: he is a major of the military. She enjoys the lifestyle this permits. The true nature of her feelings regarding her husband are not fully disclosed. She may love him. Ulrich pushed to initiate the affair with her, but soon after they truly loved one another, he was also the one to end it leaving her in a strange predicament regarding her own feelings and behavior. She even tried to win him back but this did not work. Bonadea loves fashion and clothing, which is ideal given her social position although it is a good quality in all social classes.

Chapter 110: This chapter returns to the murderer, Moosbrugger. He is in prison. The reality of it is having a strange alteration of his own mind, but how it has this effect or why is not entirely clear. The passage of time and regimented structure of the place are noted. The only main interest outsiders seem to show about him is simply whether or not he is insane. The reason for this is simple - people will not be as harsh to him if they believe that Moosbrugger is insane than they will be if they view him as sane. Robert Musil seems to use Moosbrugger as a means to debate and to discuss the public perception of such people. Whenever he leaves his cell, Moosbrugger is bound in chains. He views this as over-caution on the part of the others. They tell him it is regulations.

### Chapter 10, 108 - 111 Analysis

Chapter 111: Sanity and criminal behavior comes to the forefront at the beginning of this chapter. Courts strive to establish whether or not circumstances were beyond the



individual's control at the time of any incident. The less control the criminal is viewed as having had, and the less sane that individual is perceived as being, the lighter the sentencing tends to be. The main concept referred to is that of "diminished responsibility." Another basic question is one of the amount of psychic energy that would be needed to maintain self-control under the conditions of the crime. Moosbrugger's crimes became an intellectual issue once it was at the level of the courts.

Analysis: For chapter 110: The fact that Moosbrugger is in prison and is handled by guards bound in chains is really society sending him a clear message that he is viewed as hazardous to others and that this is the real reason he has been separated from everyone else. Moosbrugger does not seem to really want to see it this way - he wants to see it as him being unjustly punished for something he did, but that's not really what's going on. Robert Musil shares with readers the truth of how little attention even such an entity as this gets in real life, once removed from the public community. There was a great stir during his trial, when people discussed the matter and were upset by what had happened. The consensus is that there is a sense of satisfaction involved with Moosbrugger having been safely removed from moving freely amongst the rest of the members of the community because of the fact that he is too unpredictable and too brutal in his behavior for others to wish to tolerate his company. As such, Musil has the narrator give readers the feeling that there is a generalized sense of relief that Moosbrugger has been imprisoned and that it is good that the chains will help make sure that he stays there so that the rest can go about their business without worrying about his presence. During chapter 111 the author writes in a manner that is designed for thinking people. Those not fascinated by ideas will not likely hold their interest when dealing with this novel. Readers are treated like intelligent people who are able to think for themselves and to figure out what their own views are who can enjoy the author's play of ideas. The characters are able to ensure that some of the differences in male and female perspectives are used. There is some sorrow that details of the author's style have been lost through the same translation that has enabled much of the meaning to be preserved and transmitted.



# Chapter 11, Chapters 112 - 115

## Chapter 11, Chapters 112 - 115 Summary

Chapter 112: Ulrich was working against Arnheim, and the Prussian knew this. The younger man was not even intentionally malicious, but this occurred through Ulrich's means of operating and his goals. A point had been reached at which Ulrich communicated so intensely to Arnheim that the latter felt he had been "cut to the quick" so to speak. Arnheim was sure that Ulrich spoke badly of him to others, even to Diotima herself. Robert Musil writes that a great man ceases to be great if no one takes any notice of him. Here is something that many women may well have believed or felt through the centuries - the feeling that they never amounted to much because no one took any interest in their talent and potential. Ulrich viewed Arnheim as vastly more influential than himself. He felt that there was no friendship between himself and either Tuzzi or Count Leinsdorf and that the friendship that existed between himself and Arnheim was quite odd at its best.

Chapter 113: In this chapter another important legal, political and social issue is discussed. This is the legal position of the child and the servant. Their condition as legally being considered as the property of their parents or Master respectively causes them to be vulnerable to being abused. The laws are not designed to cause abuses, on the contrary, the laws are devised to make sure that such individuals are protected by those to whom they belong. There really is a problem with the laws in the event that they do not provide protection from such people in the event that instead of being well cared for they are treated quite badly. Hans Sepp is introduced in this chapter. He is a young man actually. He is a German who in effect becomes The German in the novel. This serves as a counter-point to Arnheim who, though normally the Prussian, occasionally took up position as the German representative at Diotima's. Here Hans Sepp is the real German, rather than the foreign representative. Hans knew the Fischels, which gave him social access to Gerda. Hans is nearest in age to Gerda.

Chapter 114: Diotima takes advice from Count Leinsdorf. He has her study the Makart which was a highly successful cultural festival in the past. Diotima Tuzzi makes a day journey to the library together with both Arnheim and Ulrich, neither of whom is her lover "but..." While there they are met by General Stumm who has been more forthright about the simple reality that he is attracted to Diotima and views this as motivating. Chapter 115: There is a maxim that times of political and social stability are traded in for periods of upheaval. The passionate woman character Bonadea is suffering so severely from unfulfilled desires that she gets a severe headache. For some bizarre reasons, which are never made clear, Bonadea takes an interest in the welfare of Moosbrugger the murderer, whom she has never met.





## Chapter 11, Chapters 112 - 115 Analysis

Analysis: It is typical of Robert Musil to bring up an important point regarding society on the larger scale. He encourages readers to consider what the current state of the laws are in their lands, and in doing so to further responsible action with respect to such social concerns. This is simply one more of the many ideas that the author presents to readers in this novel. Another noteworthy feature of this story is that there are characters with some diversity of ages in it. There are older and younger people and those in between, and how the elder and who is the younger varies from one situation to another for much of the novel. The author does this in a way that comes off as quite natural.

The practice of sublimation is expressed by showing how some hobby's and interests really are efforts to usefully channel ones basic desires and instincts. Bonadea turns her attentions to a villain. She is amongst those representing the most tender mercies of the world, and as such she really cares. That she has some wish to obtain mercy for the murderer is shown somehow both as being meaningful and valiant yet at the same time, perhaps mere folly. Much of the challenge with the most dangerous people is that the majority of the others are not so different and yet are so very different from them. The rest are constantly challenged by how to deal with them.

Another point of ideas and of character differences turns up when General Stumm is contrasted with Herr Paul Arnheim. Arnheim speaks of ideas with a strong sense of realism. Those accustomed to science and many other theories will not find this to be surprising. However, the General is not really like that and so for him, Herr Arnheim comes across as extremely bizarre with his tendency to speak about ideas with the same clarity and sense of realism as if they were home furnishings.



## Chapter 12, Chapters 116 - 119

### Chapter 12, Chapters 116 - 119 Summary

Chapter 116: This chapter starts General Stumm. The General gives a speech. The Collateral Campaign is viewed as actually having great political significance at this point in the novel. During his speech, "The General [joked] through the thin web of the comical the menacing seriousness of the state..." (p. 353). In this case he was able to better show the connection between the Collateral Campaign and the state and domestic and foreign policy situation. It is in this chapter that Herr Arnheim suddenly speaks for the Germans as if he is one, although up to this point he has been carefully and clearly one of the Prussians and decidedly not a German. The characters actually mention America in this chapter, with respect to the challenge of keeping diverse forces united. Also in this chapter new truths come out about Arnheim: he is functioning as something along the lines of an informal spy-diplomat for Czarist Russia there is Austria. While it is very true that Arnheim is helping Diotima, it is also true that he may be abusing or misusing her trust in him. What's interesting is that Diotima's husband knows this and is clever enough to use this in order to forward his own agenda. The other main points of excitement in this chapter are about Ulrich. This involves Ulrich's subjective reality. Ulrich has a peculiar situation regarding his own personality. There is a portion of it which is in regular use but there is a great deal more of it which has been hemmed in and forced to be out of use. The problem is, that Ulrich's identity requires all of himself and so the stymied aspects of himself actually hold back the progress he can make through actively using only part of who he is. Robert Musil writes that what is missing has to do with Ulrich's moral development. Musil also indicates that there is some relationship at times between violence and deceit.

### Chapter 12, Chapters 116 - 119 Analysis

Chapter 117: Rachel's fateful day. In this chapter, Soliman has determined to seduce Rachel. This is an almost natural side effect of the intimacy between Arnheim and Diotima for whom these two work. The mistress and master actually interfere with this or else they create circumstances which have that kind of effect. Because of this, most of the so-called passion play between the two does not involve much "being together." After many near misses and minor comings together, Rachel and Soliman finally rendezvous. During this time period, Soliman's behavior actually grows quite bad because of how much he does want to include Rachel - he is getting rebellious is what it is. By the end of the chapter the two have spent time alone together in the darkness and while the author is not graphic the message is clear - Rachel is worried about whether or not she has become pregnant.

Chapter 118: The couple Walter and Clarisse have interpersonal drama at this juncture. Just one part of what happens is that Walter's jealousy towards Ulrich over his wife Clarisse, and other things emerges during a heated argument between members of the

couple. Ulrich is not present but has known both of these people for many years. Walter and Ulrich have known one another since they were children.



# Chapter 13, Chapter 119

## Chapter 13, Chapter 119 Summary

Chapter 119: A Counter-mine and a seduction. Gerda Fischel learns from her father of another of Arnheim's ulterior motives. Gerda decides to inform Ulrich of this. However, she has her own ulterior motive - she is going to test Ulrich. To her, he is an older man. She has an attraction for him which waxes and wanes, but for Gerda, there is some excuse for her to communicate with him.

The two smooch but it was never intended to go any further. They embarrass themselves when they try to force it further along sexual lines than it was really meant for. There is a lot of drama when the author explains through omniscience that Ulrich doesn't really want to go through with it, but he has taken her to a bed and now feels that he should. Gerda has a bit of a similar problem but fraught by some inability to talk about the subject she starts screaming in something of a panic. The two end up being alright and don't have sex with each other. Ulrich manages to comfort Gerda through at least some of her temporary terror. Readers have no idea whether or not Gerda is a virgin. Either way, readers come away from the episode relieved that they were not forced into anything more sexual than they were up for, although something strange about how people are socialized is observed. This is the matter of people feeling pressured to. This was a case where neither of them even wanted to, but both nearly forced themselves into it, out of perceived social pressure rather than out of any genuine desire or - perhaps some desire but no will for it.

## Chapter 13, Chapter 119 Analysis

For American readers it is quite something to see this nation from the outside view. The social and cultural context of the novel are part and parcel of it. The whole story is relatively true-to-life but of course, not true. In this respect, the comments about America are predominantly true even though it is a fiction novel. The author has simply showcased another of his ideas by using this opportunity have his characters serve as the mouthpieces for certain ideas.

The author does a wonderful job at using omniscience to show the drama that goes on about sexual fidelity and romance within monogamous marriage and amongst single people. One reason Walter does not trust Ulrich and vice versa stems from what has made it so that Walter is a married man whereas Ulrich is a single fellow who has more than one lover during the course of this novel, but not at the same time. In this, Ulrich commits serial monogamy. One of his mistresses is a single woman, whereas the other is married. He is not stopped by her being married. For some, this seems simply normative, but for others, this is quite obviously some kind of immoral activity. Ulrich naturally has no idea about Walter and Clarisse's argument, in which he figured largely, but he is treated by Clarisse more in accordance with her husband's jealousy than with



Ulrich's actual feelings. Ulrich is at least some times attracted to Clarisse but has also made himself quite comfortable with the idea that nothing of a romantic or sexual nature is going to occur between them. What is so wonderful about these chapters is how the use of narrative omniscience makes the sense of it show clearly to readers even whilst the limited knowledge and experience of each of the characters is still shown to reflect their own partial knowledge of events. The sharing of the inner life of these characters reveals how events are intermingled and how what doesn't make sense to one individual makes perfect sense to another.



## Chapter 14, Chapters 120 - 122

### Chapter 14, Chapters 120 - 122 Summary

Chapter 120. For the first time, there is observable political unrest. There are public demonstrations, which may or may not be viewed as being a problem. The gathered crowd has decided that it is against His Highness Count Leinsdorf. During these, Herr Arnheim is viewed by the public as representing Germany rather than Prussia. Ulrich watches from the distance; he is in a high place but does not have the responsibility for controlling this situation. Ulrich has another of his ideas, which the narrator lets readers in on. Ulrich believes that individuals can do wonderfully with life, but there this is some kind of control that the individual must give up in order for it to work.

Chapter 121: Talking man to man. This chapter begins on page 415. Ulrich goes to visit Diotima and finds that she is not in. He also discovers that Herr Arnheim is also there waiting to see her. The servant woman Rachelle brings Ulrich in to wait. The two men converse. By now readers are not surprised when Ulrich makes Arnheim's other motives seem 'unveiled' compared to what is exposed when Arnheim is with Diotima. They talk about the Galician oil fields. Ulrich is right that awareness about these is something Permanent Secretary Tuzzi also cares about. These two also discuss the murderer Moosbrugger. They essentially agree that it is more important to protect the community from Moosbrugger than it is to be concerned for his welfare. They do give some credence to caring about him, even though he is a villain. The two men agree that they should either imprison Moosbrugger or kill him off - not just personally but sociologically, for the sake of everyone else. Arnheim also makes Ulrich an offer of which he is somewhat suspicious but is also grateful. He considers it for some time and then realizes that it does not really serve his best interests, so he declines. This makes Ulrich seem again like some kind of counter-culture upstart only because he is being able to actually include extremely high status people. Two incredibly powerful corporations are mentioned: Associated Electrical and German Dyes Inc.

### Chapter 14, Chapters 120 - 122 Analysis

Chapter 122: Ulrich realizes that he is not going to accept Arnheim's offer, but not for the purposes of being antagonistic. Ulrich considers how real life seems to have some kind of narrative order. Ulrich happens into a prostitute and chooses to be kind - giving her money without requiring the exchange of services she would normally provide. He describes her as pleasant and attractive enough. Ulrich decides that he would definitely not release Moosbrugger if he had the choice. The narrator explains that Ulrich does not use the psychological function of repression. Finally, Ulrich notices that Arnheim uses Goethe as an authority figure whenever he finds the need for the artist's support.



# Chapter 15, Chapter 123

## Chapter 15, Chapter 123 Summary

Chapter 123: This chapter is rather sad, but not necessarily in the manner that was expected. This is the final chapter of the novel. Ulrich had been ignoring his father's letters for a while. His father often requested that he do something or attempt a specific influence, given the son's position. In this case, there is a telegram announcing the death of Ulrich's father. Something sad happens - the truth is revealed that the relationship between the two was so bad that Ulrich is not sad about losing his father. Ulrich's friend Clarisse is there, and she is so aware of this that she makes no pretense. She congratulates him on the death of his father. Ulrich admits that this gives him an uncomfortable feeling about being more alone in the world than he would like. The author diverts the topic back to the murder case and the question regarding responsibility and sanity. Ulrich has a run in with his friend Clarisse in which she comes onto him. He is a bit shocked because he does not know about Clarisse's and Walter's argument. Ulrich finds his experience with Clarisse to be rather intense actually although, in the end he succeeds in telling her no, with no insult intended. In the end, Ulrich suspects that his friend Clarisse is actually mentally ill.

Ulrich finishes his day and turns in. The final pages of the novel involve Ulrich greeting the first day of his life knowing that his father is dead. He wakes up feeling refreshed. He performs some exercises and later is greeted by a servant. With the servant's company he is able to head off to a railway station. What is mysterious is that it is not spelled out where he is going. Perhaps he is heading towards his father's funeral, or perhaps some other new adventure. This ending introduces readers to the use of the railroads, which remade the industrialized world during the 18th and 19th centuries.

## Chapter 15, Chapter 123 Analysis

The second volume of the novel is like the first in that the ending is somewhat surprising. What makes it such a surprise is how much it is a return to daily life. Ulrich begins a new day. This seems to be the first day of the rest of his life. Cliche as that sounds, this seems to be what the author is suggesting. This is the first day of his life knowing that he no longer has a living father.

The ending seems better fit to a long series of novels or better suited to a docu-drama than to any manner of adventure story. The Collatera Campaign is proving to be important. Ulrich is still "his own man" meaning here, nothing about a woman, but that he has not come under Arnheim. On the contrary, Ulrich seems like a minor champion in that he has been able to remain himself so well in the face of the impressive and imposing Paul Arnheim and that he has done this with an almost uncanny naturalness.



Overall the novel is inspiring. For Germanic people it is more about class and ideas and history. For foreign readers it is also a journey into the Germanic worldview. There are a great set of ideas presented through the author. There is also some intrigue and some romance. People of each gender will feel "clued in to insider information" about what it is really like on the other side of the gender barrier. This is not an action novel but for the genre it is in, it is a fine work. It defends ideas and idea people at a time when the intelligentsia met with mixed support and opposition. Robert Musil has helped bring literature into the 20th century.





# Characters

## Ulrich

This is the main character of the novel. He is a young man, but is presented as being neither the youngest nor anywhere near the oldest. He is used to model the idea of the man without qualities. Somehow there is the unspoken question of whether or not Ulrich really has no qualities or if he is just an idealistic young man trying to be or to become something that may be true but might also be false. The idea of what a man without qualities is does not seem to be shown or explained all that clearly in the novel. It is possible that the summary writer has not understood what has been presented, or that Robert Musil was attempting something rather challenging in the novel.

Ulrich fornicates. During the novel he has two romances, but these are not ongoing at the same time. Ulrich has been in a few fights during the novel. These mainly occur during volume 1 rather than in volume 2. Ulrich is bright enough to communicate easily with men such as Arnheim and the General and the Count and the lady Diotima. Ulrich has actually read Herr Arnheim's writings. Ulrich also meets Arnheim and knows him personally. Ulrich is not very naive; he seeks knowledge of Arnheim's actual motives refusing to believe that there is more to it than his willingness to assist Diotima with the Collateral Campaign. Ulrich is able to secure work amongst higher class people. He is also permitted to mingle. He is more of a clerk assistant than some of the other types of servant available. Ulrich is something of an upstart in that he tends to "be himself" rather than simply playing the other older people in order to gain more status. His motives about them are primarily personal, perhaps, rather than professional or something like that. Ulrich has some long term friends, including both men and women who appear in the story. Two of his friends are a married couple.

## Herr Paul Arnheim

This is the Prussian. He is well respected as a thinker and as an author. He is one of Diotima's best friends. He is a great advocate for the Collateral Campaign. His encouragement, directly applied helps to ensure that the lady Diotima does not abandon this task even though her husband is not the most supportive of people in this matter. He is also incredibly wealthy. He takes this as granted, but perhaps not for granted as the saying goes. The way he expresses his wealth might be caused by his being a single man. He is far richer than the Tuzzi family.

He is a major character and as such appears throughout the book. There are chapters that involve him and others that do not. Those that do not may have some indirect relation to him by virtue of his writings. In the previous volume, it was made clear that the character Ulrich has actually read Arnheim's writings.



Herr Arnheim proves to be a "typical male" later on in this two volume novel when it is disclosed that he offered to marry Diotima. He did this in part to stave off adultery, but he also did it to make clear that he has grown interested in her "in that way." He produces and gives gifts to her. Of the other main characters, Diotima's husband does interfere in order to prevent losing his wife to this alternate man, but far less so than many.

Herr Arnheim's family owns a munitions company, which does have something to do with the whole situation on the grander scale. He is also very interested in Galician oil fields but suppresses this knowledge for the sake of furthering his own interests. Diotima could be regarded as being partially used or misused by Arnheim, and in part having a great ally in Herr Paul Arnheim of Prussia. At one point in the novel, Arnheim speaks for and as "the Germans" although most of the time he is intentionally separated from them because he is "the Prussian."

As well as being a well respected thinker and well mannered gentleman, Paul Arnheim is also something of a schemer and is found out through the Permanent Secretary to be something of a spy. Here, he is not the exciting espionage agent that one might have imagined but is said to be in cahoots with the Czar of Russia and in that respect is serving as an informal spy.

## Moosbrugger

This character has come over from the first volume into the second, along with man of the others. He is a murderer. He has had some other violent outbursts which led others to die. He was tried during the first volume for the murder of a young woman prostitute. Moosbrugger has particular difficulty with women. He argues that he is easily frightened by women and that he can be quite timid. Moosbrugger was usually financially poor and therefore normally also celibate - this was customary within the culture.

Moosbrugger is also known to be a big handsome fellow. During his trial he appears to have normally justified his own behavior, even in extreme cases. Due to this, others have sometimes viewed him as sane whereas others has concluded that he was insane.

Robert Musil has also explained during volume 1 that Moosbrugger's sexual frustrations had worsened his feelings regarding them and his attitude towards them had grown twisted. Essentially, the woman he murdered had made the mistake of being friendly and making some sexual advances when he was broke and entirely unwilling to spend on such things. He ended up killing her because of this. This is the killing that he was tried for during volume 1.

Moosbrugger and his murder trial appear in a number of chapters of volume 2. While imprisoned, the main method for getting him some different attention is through his sanity being questioned. His sentences are apt to be lighter if others believe that he is insane and therefore that his capacity to be fully responsible for his actions is



diminished. Moosbrugger's sanity continues to be questioned in volume 2. The reason for this seems to be a public law debate regarding the sentencing of prisoners and the extent to which responsibility can or should be limited or "diminished." In the case of insanity, the perpetrator is viewed legally as having been less responsible for his actions than is the case in terms of the sane.

Moosbrugger's thinking changes while in prison, but the main difference the author describes is not some ethical renewal as one would hope but actually a breakdown of the chronological order to his thinking. This alteration greatly affects the general pattern of his thoughts. During the entire novel, there is only one occasion while he is in prison when the quality that has made him a murderer even shows, and when it does it does not lead to violence or murder. He develops trembles and loses patience with his captors. Readers are left with the simple knowledge that that really is why he has been locked up.

## Rachel / Rachelle

This young woman does not appear much in volume 1 but is frequently present in volume 2. She grew up in a family that did not have much money. There was a dramatic crisis during her teen years because she became pregnant by a man who had seduced her. She was cast out by her family because of it. After many travels she found her way to Diotima's service. Diotima adores her and calls her Rachelle and keeps her hired as a personal maid servant. Rachelle loves her to and is very loyal. She also does good work.

She also changes significantly during the course of the novel. Unfortunately not all of the changes are for the best. When Arnheim's servant Soliman develops an interest in her, there is some intrigue. Her attitude towards her mistress Diotima changes as a consequence. Up to a certain point Rachelle was full of love, gratitude and admiration for her mistress Diotima. Then, she becomes a bit strange, perhaps in some ways more like an adolescent towards her mistress. She becomes more critical of the things that she receives from Diotima. Her own desires are nurtured and her own wishes for relationship outgrow the limits of seeing Diotima's life.

Rachel's attitude changes in another way. She learns about the nature of the intimacy between Diotima and Paul Arnheim. She becomes upset because she had thought that it had been pure in the nature of a friendship, but learns that in fact, it was strongly mingled with sexuality and temptations associated with adultery. This freaks Rachelle out a little bit and she is somewhat sad or disappointed in her mistress and affronted by Arnheim's "typical male" behavior and approach to her mistress.

Rachel has a strange romance with Soliman but it mainly that she gives into him. Apparently Soliman is ugly, but Rachel has gone without any such ventures since prior to having come into Diotima's service and trouble involving sex and romance was why she had left home in the first place.



## Soliman

This is the only specifically black male in the novel. He is an unusual case. He was taken in when he was quite young. One might say that he was bought, or one might say that he was sort of adopted or simply that he was taken in by a European who was in Africa at the time. Soliman was a little boy at the time. The man who took him in was quite wealthy. He saw to it that Soliman received an education and that he was generally provided for by his benefactor.

When Soliman became mature enough, he was hired by Herr Arnheim in order to do a few things: 1) accommodate how grown up Soliman had become; 2) keep Soliman safe and close with the family; and 3) hire him so that he has a job. However, Soliman did not react to this all that well; he seems to have at least partially misunderstood this and part of his resentful reaction involved developing the pattern of being a petty thief of his employer. This employer is not called his Master, without any disrespect intended by this term.

Soliman's first recorded romance occurs in volume 2 and is with Rachel. Seeing as Soliman is the only character of his race most of the time it comes as no surprise that his first liaisons are with Rachel, who is of the white race which is prevalent there in the Germanic world. They are both servants. Her mistress and his master are spending so much time together that the two come across one another. Soliman is a bit aggressive about this. This is not consistently viewed as being a problem.

Soliman is not ever shown to have a surname. It is also not made clear whether or not he would be allowed to use his master's, which is Arnheim.

## Gerda Fischel

This is a young woman. She enters volume 2 at the age of 23. She is engaged to a fellow her age. She is the daughter of a prominent married couple: Leo Fischel and Klementine. Leo works in banking, whereas Klementine's family background is more in civil-service. At the beginning of volume 2 she meets with a main character brought over from the previous volume - Ulrich.

She appears in both volumes of the novel. As a minor character, she does not appear frequently. Her involvement is meaningful. Most of the time she does not figure in the story as a love interest, but she is often enough included as an attractive daughter of high status people. She has a friendship with Ulrich. Now and then, attraction comes up during their friendship, but only on one occasion does it get any "steamier" than normal. This leads to an extreme experience where Gerda ends up screaming; what it really is is that neither she nor Ulrich actually want to go through with having sex with one another although they enjoyed some smooching very much.

Gerda is presented as being very much her own woman, still within the bosom of her family. That being said, she is also described as being somewhat delicate and in need



of at least customary protections and safeguards. Gerda does not have a romance during this story, although she has a close call with Ulrich.

## Clarisse

Clarisse is a bright young married woman. She has no children, but her husband is starting to want to have children. During the time period of the novel she does not feel comfortable with this idea. She has married a man named Walter. They have a few things in common, but not everything. They both play the piano. They do this alone and they also do this together. They serve as intellectual companions for one another. Clarisse is very obviously not expected to have anything even vaguely resembling a professional career. She is shown as a bright woman within the limitations of this role through other means. It is assumed that she is financially supported by her husband Walter.

Ulrich suspects that Clarisse may suffer from a mental illness. He concludes this when she behaves towards him from the basis of other communication that he is ignorant about. He does not speculate any kinds of causes or possible causes for this. No other character gives any indication of agreeing with Ulrich about this. Her husband Walter does not seem to think his wife is crazy at all but the two certainly do argue at times.

Clarisse is friends with Ulrich. She received copies of Friedrich Nietzsche's writings from him for her marriage to Walter. For readers who do not know, Nietzsche was a rather radical 19th century German philosopher. He was a humanist in that he believed that humans could spiritually evolve and progress without God, particularly in the European Christian sense. He was known to have read widely, including Hindu philosophy. Nietzsche was also well known to have lost his mind due to untreated syphilis - something which antibiotics would have effectively prevented. He was brilliant when sane and when insane, but was later exposed as having committed incest with or against his sister during their youth - marring his reputation.

## Walter

This is a young man who is one of Ulrich's friends. His working life is not much described during the novel. He is viewed as being able to support himself and his wife, despite the lack of information about his profession. He does not fornicate, or else he has entirely or primarily given this up in favor of marriage. He is married to a woman his own age named Clarisse. He has a long standing disagreement with his wife about the music of Wagner. His wife hates Wagner's music so much, that when Walter plays it, she denies him sex as a punishment for weeks on end.

Although Walter is definitely affected by this, he does not actually give this up. So, their Wagner strife is simply an integrated part of their marriage. He is presented as a caring and considerate husband, so he probably does not do this as much as he would otherwise.



Walter is shown to be a good man, at least mainly. He and his friend Ulrich have a sense of mutual distrust that permeates their relationship. They have been friends since childhood and all that can be written of it is that the impression made is that they are right to have this limit to their trust of one another. One could argue that their distrust could be classified as a form of trust the way that one can trust that a stinging insect can be safe to be around but may also pose a very real danger - fortunately unless allergic, the danger is normally not life-threatening. They would do some things that the other does not wish to experience, and hence the mistrust. The author emphasizes that the mistrust between Walter and Ulrich is well earned through experience and not wrong or foolish in its nature.

## Count Leinsdorf

This is the most prestigious man in the novel, in both volumes. He is socially accessible to most of the main characters in the novel. As such, his role is partially real and in part it is symbolic. He is presented as a well mannered older gentleman full of wisdom as well as money. His social rank is treated as being taken somewhat for granted rather than as something to overtly make a fuss over. He is treated with great respect. He comes across as having some important advice regarding the 70th Jubilee celebration for the King and for the Collateral Campaign. He is shown as a pleasant enough fellow in actual fact. This man somehow manages to be both a minor and a major character at the same time. He is often an important part of the conversation. His social rank makes him a centerpiece but the actual conversations and actions show that he is not exceptionally prominent at all.

## General Stumm

This is a middle aged military General. He is noted as being rather small in physical stature and for wearing pince nez eyeglasses. The General is also attracted to Diotima. Although this is shown to be rather commonplace, even though she is fat, the General is less ambiguous or polite in his expression of it. The rest seem to have at least one other significant motive for wanting to be around her, but in the case of the General he is simply motivated by being attracted to her and is socially prominent enough to be able to be around her.

The General is like Ulrich in that he is constantly on the look out for ulterior motives and often enough is able to figure out what the actually are. He is not confused about proximity and friendship since the two can but often also do not go together. The General comes to the fore but appears primarily during volume 2 and he is a second string character.

As an Austrian, General Stumm is particularly suspicious of Arnheim.





## Diotima Tuzzi

This is the dominant woman of the entire novel. She is the wife of "the highest ranking commoner in all of Austria," the Permanent Secretary. While he attends to explicitly political work, she endeavors to pursue goals that are high, that also serve the country, and that are appropriate for a woman and for a woman of high status. This attitude has caused her to devise the Collateral Campaign. She is figuring out how to socially organize and to disseminate and to promote the idea of Universal Austria. She works with some of the wealthiest intellectuals in all the land, including Herr Arnheim. This wealthy Prussian is also well known for being an excellent writer and thinker. He is one of her strongest supporters. Diotima's husband is an excellent supporter in a number of other ways. However, when it comes to her Collateral Campaign he is really not that interested. No one mentions it, but Herr Arnheim is something more of a man of leisure whereas her husband is deeply entrenched into a great deal of work on behalf of Austria. It really might be that his interests in his own wife are narrower, as it were, when he is finally able to get time away from his job. Diotima is also Rachel's mistress. She is actually a very loyal and affectionate employer. She is wonderfully happy to have Rachel's service and does not quite understand what is happening when Rachel's attitude changes as a consequence of Arnheim's servant, Soliman's amorous endeavors.

## Permanent Secretary Tuzzi

This man is hailed for being the exemplar of the upwardly mobile possibilities for Austrians in the early-20th century. He is a middle-class man, and he has made it to Permanent Secretary of the Empire. He is long married, to the impressive and popular Diotima. He guards his wife wisely - neither too much nor too little. He exploits her naivete regarding some of the men's ulterior motives but he also watches out for her, along these same lines as well as regarding other matters.

He is important to the story but is somehow often operating as a background figure. He does not speak much throughout both volumes but his wife is financially dependent upon him the whole time, or such is the underlying assumption. There is also the assumption that it is safe for her to do this.

Herr Tuzzi is a hard working, reliable, shrewd upwardly mobile Austrian.

## The Prostitutes

There are actually two of these in the novel. One of them is Moosbrugger's murder victim. This apparently occurred because Moosbrugger over-reacted to being aroused by a woman when he was broke and had no such intentions. She was not exactly his only victim, but it was her death that caused Moosbrugger to be brought to trial and sent to prison. She was young and is viewed as having been quite an innocent victim if not "an entirely innocent person."



The other prostitute who comes up in the novel is another young woman who appears later in volume 2. In this case she does not run into Moosbrugger-the murderer, but rather Ulrich - the man without qualities. He chats with her briefly, then gives her some money without even trying to have sex with her and goes on his way. This is an example of Ulrich behaving well rather than badly and is liable to be seen as one of the correct ways for those opposed to prostitution to treat a woman - even if she is a prostitute.

## **The Czar of Russia**

This figure never appears in the novel as a character who is immediately present. However, he is known to be a real entity. Late in volume 2 it comes through intelligence services that Herr Arnheim is actually working for the Czar of Russia. He is a living political figure who is in office during the time of the events of the novel.

## **Bismark**

This man was head of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He does not appear as an active or live character during the story but is known of and is referred to during a conversation about greatness.





# Objects/Places

## Jewels

In this case, these are ones that Soliman took from his master Arnheim, who probably did not even notice that they had gone missing. They appear in the novel during volume 2 when Soliman gives them as a present to Rachel. Rachel realizes that he has stolen them and she is desperately unhappy about this.

## Underwear

In this novel the underwear presented is mainly in volume 2 and it belongs to the servant Rachel. She has been able to get it because Diotima is generous, and Rachel is not wasteful. So there is a sense in which this lady shares underwear with her younger woman servant. This is even though Diotima is well off financially and not because she is not. The underwear is rather complex compared to what readers may be used to. It appears when Rachel exposes it to Soliman, for whom feeling it is a bit different and something special.

## Diotima's bedroom

Rachel puts Ulrich and Bonadea in Diotima's bedroom late in volume 2. Bonadea has contrived a false reason for attending a party to which she was not invited. She is motivated mainly from jealousy because Ulrich is no longer her lover - and yes, she gets like this about him even though she is married to another man. There is no specification regarding whether Diotima has her own bedroom as a matter of course or whether she and her husband share one. Neither is in the bedroom during this episode, but the author explains that this is still some form of betrayal by Rachel of her mistress Diotima to have done this.

## The Marriage Bed

In this case, this means the bed that has the Tuzzi's in it as a the married couple that they are. This is referred to as the setting of one chapter that is all about the inner world of Diotima. It is while in this location and married situation that Diotima suffers from her intimacy with Arnheim - not just the parts of it that her husband approves of but also of the parts that he views as unacceptable. It is a lot of psycho-drama since the decorum of both people is excellent. Arnheim just gives her presents and proposes to her even though their physical interactions never go further than once holding hands and spending time around one another. Robert Musil shows Diotima going through this while in bed with her husband - such as many husband are anxious about, and many a married woman knows all too well, whereas those married women who are innocent of



such feelings can feel fortunate indeed to have been spared this particular type of subjective marriage fidelity torture.

## Herr Paul Arnheim's Hotel Room

This is the place where the character Paul Arnheim stayed for quite a long time actually. He stayed there for so long, that readers might wonder why he did not just buy or rent a house or something. The room is not ever featured as his location when he is there. The only time it even comes up in the novel is during volume 2 when Soliman takes Rachel there. The event takes place as an exciting adventure even though it is rather simple. They go there without their master's or mistress's permission or presence. They sneak off the job and pretend that they are following instructions when they go there.

It is a fancy hotel. Soliman shows off Arnheim's wealth in private and in a way that Herr Arnheim would probably not allow but would also not even think to do. Unlike the Tuzzis, Arnheim is from the upper class and is rumored to be amongst the rich-of-the-rich.

## Wealth

A few beliefs about wealth are presented in this chapter. The Count is assumed to be rich. Herr Arnheim is known to be rich, but the extent to which this is true is revealed only as time goes on. Financial wealth and some kind of private personal power are assumed to go hand in hand with the rich in this novel. Musil does not get into why commoners do not necessarily agree with this idea, nor does Musil explain the obvious reality that unlike Arnheim, Herr Tuzzi has somehow managed to be upwardly mobile. None of this is explained, but it is clear that Arnheim was born with a lot of money but has learned how to make sure that he does not lose it, but he might grow it.

On a minor scale, the servants are viewed as having been rescued from poverty by being hired. As such, they are generally grateful and loyal. How precisely this is true is also shown to vary during the course of this novel.

## Germany

Germany is viewed both inclusively and also like a foreign nation during the novel. Germany is intentionally included by the Collateral Campaign, and its idea of Universal Austria. Germany is part of the Austrian Empire; this is implied. Here, being an outsider makes it less certain knowledge. Normally it is viewed as being some kind of close relative with whom there are both pleasurable and challenging intimacies. Midway through the novel's second volume, the attitude towards Germany seems to change. In general, the attitude grows more antagonistic and separate. The one factor that is quite noticeable is that the Prussian suddenly speaks for the Germans and declares himself to be a German when through the majority of the two volumes he is The Prussian and not The German at all.



## Prussia

Prussia is one of the triad of Germanic nations consolidated in more than one way during the centuries. Prussia is Eastern and has reached a questionable condition after World War 1. Prussia had risen to great power during the 18th and 19th centuries. Prussia is represented by Herr Arnheim. Prussia has one front flush up against Russia, which explains the relationship between Arnheim and the Russian Czar. This is either true - Tuzzi's intelligence agency believes it to be the case, or else it is not true but is merely "believable." Pride is a keyword here.

## Austria

Austria is the Germanic nation that is the central location for the story and the nationality of the main female character Diotima Tuzzi. This is one of the 3 nations included as the Germanic countries. Universal Austria is an idea and an ideal that Diotima wishes to articulate and to cultivate throughout the Germanic nations as a unifying cultural and political principle. Austria is or is presented as being the main power of the triad of Germanic nations during this novel.

For Americans, the reality is a little confusing and harder to clear up without all the trappings of the culture surrounding the person.

## Kakanians

This is another Germanic reality that is more confusing to outsiders. They call themselves "unredeemed nationalities." One reason for this is that Kakanian is a composite of territories within the German speaking world that had great diversity during the Medieval times. Principalities and other places with some political organization but not to the level of the nation-state found in the beginning of the 20th century.

## Galician oil fields

The exact location of these is not clear. Galicia is not specified; presumably this is a location which is obvious to people familiar with the German world of today but one that foreigners might not know. It turns out that Paul Arnheim is quite interested in Galician oil fields, as a means for furthering his wealth and perhaps political power. Arnheim's interest in these is in fact one of his ulterior motives.

## The State Library

General Stumm, Herr Arnheim and Diotima Tuzzi all go together with Ulrich to the State Library. Ultimately, the General admits that he has decided that library assistants are the people who best understand the civilian mentality. Ulrich is honored when the General



permits him to spend time in a part of the library that only library employees are allowed to go. All of them feel that Diotima's Collateral Campaign is meaningful and all of the men with her agree that she is attractive as a married woman but not necessarily because she is a married woman.

## Social Classes

Social classes are definitely shown and partially described in this novel. Ulrich's father is proud of his son's high position, and repeatedly asks his son to further his interests amongst the prestigious company he is allowed to keep. The top has aristocracy and the General. The Tuzzi family is the pinnacle of the middle-class. The servants, Rachel and Soliman are another form of the middle class. They must be called this since it is specifically stated that they do not live in poverty because of their jobs as servants. Ulrich is amongst the middle-class but he has more of a clerical position rather than the other type of servant role. Herr Arnheim feels so much responsibility towards his servant Soliman that he has educated the boy, then given him a job and at least once talks to him about spending some money to get him more educated so that he can promote him into another position - still working for him, but something that will make more or better use of him. Aristocrats are differentiated from everyone else. Everyone else is called a commoner, rather the way that all non-Jews are lumped together as Gentiles.

## Diotima's Place or Salon

This is the way that certain space was used for meeting regarding the Collateral Campaign. In some way, it is simply the shared domain of Frauline Tuzzi's; the home of the Permanent Secretary of Austria. This is the way to describe it when it pertains to events specifically relating to her. The precise nature of the location is adjusted depending upon what types of events this lady will be hostessing.

The most frequent guests that the novel focuses on are: Diotima and her husband, Herr Arnheim, General Stumm, Count Leinsdorf, somehow Ulrich. At least occasionally there are other women there and the servants are often and unmentioned but real presence. Here is where the greatest on the Collateral Campaign takes place. This project is treated with some respect. There are times when it seems fairly irrelevant, which is the way her husband treats it, and yet, but midway through volume 2, the Count and Herr Tuzzi have ascertained that Universal Austrianism has become politically relevant.



# Themes

## Germanic Unity

The book focuses on the triad of Germanic nations: Prussia, Austria and Germany. The idea is that the group of nations should improve their culture as a whole in addition to making cultural efforts without including one another. This is a limited form of something called a sense of identity as "a European." Here it is in part also the idea that the unity created by using the German language gives them more reason to cultivate a united sense of culture.

Universal Austrianism is intended to create a sense of oneness of national and cultural identity. This is especially well suited to Imperialism, which was in vogue at the time, politically for Europe. Universal Austrian also obviously brings up that Austria is the center of the universe. At the dominant state of the Germanic nations of the time, this idea makes some sense. Germany, in 1918 when the story is set, was in no position to complain.

The book was originally published in German in 1930, but in Austria because in truth, Robert Musil was already not able to live safely in Germany. He relocated to the same place as the publisher. As such, it is quite timely, but there is something mysterious about it. Readers from America or of today in our post-Berlin Wall New Millennial world may not entirely see what the author was getting at that did not sit well in the Rhineland. It may have been about loyalties that, by 1940 created kinds of strife that were clear.

The novel is intended to participate in the fiction tradition of the time. The idea that there is some unity of culture amongst these three nations is supported for outsiders by the similarities. At the same time, it is quite obvious that there is a great deal of struggling for power amongst them - this may have proven to be their downfall. Austria, proud and dominant when this novel was published was taken over by the Germans five years later through a combination of annexation and infiltration.

## The Man without qualities and other philosophical ideas

The importance of ideas is one of the themes of this two volume novel. Each volume stands alone in this respect. This theme turns up in various ways throughout the novel. Ulrich, one of the main characters, is seen to be both a man of action and one of ideas. Ulrich is meant to show that the idea of a man without qualities is nothing but a vain aspiration or unfinished idea. Or else, Ulrich is there to model what a man without qualities is like. Ulrich is very aware and is rather shrewd. He is predominantly nonviolent but not purely. He is willing and adept to communicate through the spoken language as shown through how well does with men the stature of the Count and Herr Arnheim. He has affairs, but not a large number of them. He is shown to be passionate



yet imperfect. He is of the "both yes and no" nature which is so often the case with affairs of fornication, although some would argue that this same problem continues even with successful marriages. The man without qualities is one who is so perfectly balanced in the human nature that there is neither excess nor lack of any quality available to a human. This might have been a precursor to the idea of the "well rounded person" who has developed skills and knowledge in a wide variety of areas. However, the man without qualities is not a dilettante and rather than an undeveloped state there is the implication this is a perfected state of being. So, here is young Ulrich - he is perfect. He is neither the most nor least social powerful person in the story. He is neither the youngest nor the eldest. Is this true? Is this what Musil is writing about?

Another question relating to this is whether the man without qualities has any connection to the ubermensch. In the German, there are 2 dots above that "u." For those who do not know: the German term mensch is inclusive of both male and female. The Germans have an entirely different term for men exclusively as well as another word for women. This idea is also not spoken but is a "hidden key" to those who have heard of the main ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche. Those who do not know that philosopher's work would have no reason to see this connection at all. The only suggestion of this that Musil makes is indirect, simply because he does mention Nietzsche more than once, and one of the more important female figures receives copies of his work from Ulrich. Ulrich might be familiar with the contents, but this is also not so much made explicit as implicit because what is clear is that Ulrich has read Paul Arnhem's writings.

This means that Ulrich has insights into a character who he does get to meet in person: Paul Arnhem. None of the other characters have read his works, at least not in the beginning. So, they know him and a fair number of his ideas but not with that type of sand sifting clarity that can come from analyzing the written word. The importance of these ideas, and of the intellectual milieu that involves and surrounds Diotima are all indicative of the importance of ideas to the novel. The Collateral Campaign, both its importance with respect to the ideas it creates and promotes but also the power of organization.

## Relationships

There is more than one type of relationship being modeled by the novel. There are business and political relationships. In fact, the majority of the older characters both are and represent political ideas and social structures of Austria, Prussia and Germany in the early-20th century. The relationship of the aristocracy is clear. The aristocracy still form the top of the political leadership in the Austrian realm. However, they are not the entirety of the political leadership as represented by the Tuzzis. Arnhem embodies the dual functioning of cooperation and competition - of being both for and against the others as the representative of Prussia. This Germanic union is an excellent idea. Which nation should dominate is a matter of some debate. Universal Austrianism is one answer, but the Prussian has his ulterior motives and is nothing but a spy for the Russians.



The relationship between master or mistress and servant are shown in this novel. This relationship is shown through both volumes. Rachel and Soliman are the examples of the servants. They prevail precisely because they are the servant of Mistress Diotima and Master Arnheim respectively. The contacts of their superiors cause them to also come into contact with one another.

Robert Musil explains how loyalty, devotion and gratitude are a normal and natural part of this relationship. The higher ranking people are not described in anything but benevolent terms, and in this case, the mistress and the master really are benevolent to their servant.

There are also romantic relationships in this story. It has the usual heterosexual bias, not to be cruel, but simply because that is the norm. There are both married and unmarried romances in this novel. There is good behavior and bad behavior. There are extramarital affairs and drama for a woman who remains faithful to her husband and for a single man who - though quite a gentleman, proves to be "a typical male" in some respects. Herr Arnheim falls a bit further into love with one of his women friends than he had intended. He does not get sexually involved with her but ends up going so far as to propose marriage to her although she is already married which shows the sameness of his heart or intentions. In the lower social class, Ulrich has an affair with a married woman: a major's wife. Ulrich here is not presented as being such a gentleman. He never offers marriage, and his good manners only show when he retreats from the affair after claiming to love his mistress, leaving her tucked safely enough in a marriage which is actually doing more for her than he has even the hope of being able to do any time soon.



# Style

## Point of View

The author uses third person omniscient for the novel. Robert Musil is a man of the 19th and 20th centuries. He is a Germanic Continental European which makes quite a difference. There are times when this difference is not particularly pronounced but remains an underlying theme, rather like background noise. The author is a highly educated man. He likes ideas a great deal. This truth pervades the book.

The author uses a great deal of realism in the fictional account. The fictional story takes place in the real world. This is normal for a great deal of fiction although it is extremely alien for science fiction or fantasy fiction. As such, for foreigners the novel does give great insight to the Germanic cultures. The purpose seems to actually give greater depth to understanding this tribune of cultures for people who live in it as well as outsiders.

The center of the world, for this novel, is Austria. Germany and Prussia are the other main locations of interest. This occurred simply because the author wrote for the local audience. He was living in Austria at the time, and so Vienna is the location of the story. Robert Musil was pragmatic enough that he made these changes on the basis of the idea that the novel would sell better in Austria when the story was based there. This proved to be true.

There are certain characteristics of the novel that show how it conforms to the same literary tradition as Dostoevsky's novels. One of these is the complexity of the language. Another is the inclusion of debates concerning issues of the day - characters speak different opinions within the context of the novel. Another is marital infidelity, especially female infidelity and how to handle this. There are married people, there are monogamous people of both types. This could be interpreted as a plea on the part of women for more sexual freedom and also tolerance or for improvements in the activities of husbands - warnings against neglecting their wives. It seems also to some degree to bring matters of sexual jealousy and behavior into the arena for discussion. For whatever reasons, or for pure drama and escapist fantasy, this is one quality that is consistent with 19th century Russian literature.

## Setting

The setting of the novel is 20th century Austria. In the previous section it was intentionally shown how the setting is tied into the point of view. The place is the early part of the century, just after the First World War and the novel was published prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. The majority of the book takes place in an urban atmosphere. The city is Vienna, but it is not described in any way that would give away whether or not this is true. In other words, if you have been to Vienna, you could not say





"Aha! from this I can tell its Vienna" nor "Bah! That's not Vienna, where does that writer think he is?"

The setting seems more to emphasize the time and the social class system. There are characters of various social classes, but it includes people near the top. No one ever meets the King in this novel, but he does exist. In fact, there is a great deal of activity involved solely for the purpose of creating a Jubilee celebration for his ascension to the throne. It is not clear whether this is simply because of the common wish amongst the general populace to meet such people, or whether it is for some other reason. Part of what the author seems to wish to do, is to show some of the differences and commonalities that occur along with this. Two of the main characters are the most prestigious upwardly mobile members of the middle-class to be found in the nation. This reflects an aspiration which can almost be assumed in much of American culture, but has made some headway there in Europe as well.

Much of the story takes place indoors, within residences. There is some sense in which the story line is akin to the more modern soap operas in that there is a great deal of interpersonal drama and much of the action is intellectual and "white collar" as opposed to "blue collar" efforts. The characters are mainly articulate and intelligent. Both women and men characters are shown to be this way although the distinctions caused by gender roles are also emphasized. The bright woman Diotima runs the Collateral Campaign which is primarily cultural and artistic and secondarily political. Her husband makes the money and takes some care regarding intrigues she might miss and keeps out of the way of her endeavors. The lower middle class woman is also bright but in her case this shows in the fact that for a wedding gift she is given Nietzsche's writings by a friend rather than a painting or cutlery. Her husband provides intellectual companionship but she does not have her own career - even though they do not have children. There is a working woman in the story. She was rescued from poverty after having been abandoned by her family - so she really needs the money from working. She does not have a husband to support her and as such, she is extremely thankful to her employer - another woman, for taking her in. The employer also loves her and respects her in the face of the obvious class difference. Because of this, the social classes are treated as part of the setting of the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The language used has been most affected by the translation. There are nuances of German that cannot have been preserved. For those who do not know, the German language can be used to create incredibly long and complex sentences. The majority do not make much use of this; English is not normally used to the full extent of its complex potential either. However, in extreme cases, a German sentence can go on for pages of printed text without a single grammatical error. Translators invariably shorten these when they convert this into English. Even so, the English sentences are far longer than what many readers will be accustomed to. To use a metaphor from Star Trek: there is a game referred to, of a three-dimensional version of chess. Then there is "regular" chess.



It is safe to claim that the German literary author can produce language that is far more like the three- dimensional chess.

Robert Musil very intentional uses the plot of the novel to share ideas. He also includes the role of intellectuals and of ideas within the Germanic cultures as part of the novel. One of the main concepts is the title itself: The Man Without Qualities. What does this mean? Musil actually only provides a brief definition - that such an individual will exhibit all characteristics in such a balance that none of them dominate the personality, but all partake of the individual's identity. Very early in the first volume, which is not covered by this summary, it is explained using light as the metaphor. White light can be subdivided into the spectrum. Most people are like some part of this divided light, from which the rainbow of colors emerges. The Man Without Qualities is the undivided light so none of the divided colors show. Ulrich is this character and the author only rarely even writes about this matter of his having no qualities. Here and there it comes up. Ulrich actually just comes across as not the best behaved man, in many ways he is just a bright somewhat idealistic fellow who is not entirely above some imperfect behavior. This is but one of numerous examples of ways in which Robert Musil uses this novel to convey ideas. One other main way is through the character Arnheim, who is a well published writer of nonfiction. Diotima conveys ideas as well, but for her, the means are conversation and social organizations, such as her Collateral Campaign. All of these are involved in the ways that Robert Musil uses language to convey meaning throughout the novel. He also discusses ideas extensively as plot line. Meaning, then, is part of the plot in this Robert Musil novel. This would not be the case for most novels and as such, is well worth mentioning.

The author has intentionally written the book for an audience presumed to have at least the undergraduate level of education, beyond secondary school. Those who have not will either learn a great deal or suffer from a tremendous amount of frustration from the vocabulary. Those who prefer more complex language and works written for the highly educated and well spoken people will strongly prefer this novel to the vast majority of those produced for a more general readership.

## Structure

The novel is a bit unusual in its structure. First of all, it covers two volumes. Each volume has its own book summary. This is the summary for volume 2. There is a brief publisher's note at the front of this one. There is an exceptionally large number of chapters in the two volumes of this novel. The titles of the chapters are very long. The author is consistent on this point throughout the two volumes. There are a small number of chapters which have much shorter titles of only three words or so. Titles that run the length a short sentence are the norm for The Man Without Qualities.

The novel is entirely typical in that the order of the events is chronological. The author does not use flashbacks, nor other references that involve changes to chronological order except or unless this occurs in a social context. In this regard, during a meeting of the Collateral Campaign four characters may discuss some historical events in Austria,



or Prussia and Germany but will not generally do so in private. There is some variance of this with respect to the inner life, which is normally how things like this occur. The best example of this occurs when Diotima goes over some of the private events between herself and Arnheim. She covers them in their chronological order, but this does not occur in synch with the events of the rest of the novel. In this regard, the author communicates this to readers the same way that a friend might confide in another friend. For precisely this reason it comes across really well; the readers feel fascinated by discovering through Diotima's own thoughts some events that had not been revealed during the course of the novel as it had been presented so far. Mainly, this involves things like Arnheim giving her presents and going so far as to propose marriage to her - to propose himself as an alternative husband to her. The general trend, however, is for the novel to be more clear and ordinary in following one time flow. For example, when the new chapter brings a switch in which characters are central, the time frame is continuing along the same lines for everyone. This helps a great deal for comprehending the whole story as it is more like how real life works.



## Quotes

"In all this hustle and bustle it was long before Ulrich found time to keep the promise he had given Director Fischel and visit him and his family," (p. 3). Chapter 73 [the first chapter of volume 2]

"The contradiction embodied in the fact that her parents, although they were generally strongly impressed by everything that was said by many people, in this case made a peculiar exception, had early imprinted itself on her mind," (p. 9). Chapter 73

"Diotima showed herself mollified, even if she never was so completely in his presence, and deigned to give the General some information about what had been going on since the last committee-meeting," (p. 19). Chapter 75

"...it is now accorded the rank of a fact, with all the consequences involved," (p. 27). Chapter 77

"Incidentally, he had marveled a little bit at the invitation. The fact that it had come after all had surprised him," (p. 44). Chapter 80

"If there are civilians who are belligerent by nature, why then should there not be officers who love the arts of peace?" (p. 45). Chapter 80

"While in the Council there had not yet been the slightest sign of anything like a result, the Collateral Campaign had been making tremendous progress at the Palais Leinsdorf. It was there that the threads of reality converged, and there Ulrich went twice a week," (p. 51). Chapter 81

"Count Leinsdorf looked at him. He was wondering whether what he was about to reveal was not after all too audacious for the inexperienced younger man. But then he made up his mind," (p. 53). Chapter 81

"All this might be briefly summed up, he asserted, by saying that we cared too little about what happened, so that what mattered to us was not the spirit of events but their plot, not the making accessible of some new content of life but only distributing what was already in existence, in a way exactly corresponding to the difference between good plays and merely successful plays," (p. 74). Chapter 84

"But all circles round the solitary author in his room is, at most, the flies, no matter how much may exert himself. This is so obvious that many people, from the moment when they begin to create in the medium of life itself, regard everything that used to move them before as 'mere literature'," (p. 102). Chapter 86

"She laughed, rubbing her nose. She walked up and down in the darkness. Something must be done about the Collateral Campaign. What, she did not know," (p. 173). Chapter 97

"Then you get Arnheim, in all his innocence and all his guilt," (p. 203). Chapter 101



## Topics for Discussion

What is the most important event in this volume? Why do you think so?

Is Ulrich a man without qualities? Why or why don't you think so?

Are you for or against the Collateral Campaign based on the idea of supporting the German, Austrian and Prussian nations?

Which character is your favorite? Why is that?

Comment on the gender roles in this novel.

Was there enough action in this story?

Do you think it is Ulrich's or Bonadea's fault that Bonadea had an extramarital affair with Ulrich? If your answer does not fit "the box" then just give an answer that fits the issue.

Do you think Ulrich is right that Clarisse is suffering from a mental illness?

How do you feel about the way class differences are shown and described in this novel?

Do you feel any differently about "class" as a societal issue now that you have read this novel? Support your answer.