

Tape 5, dictated 1/23/06, revised April 3, 2006

Chapter

Late in January, five months after Adolf has begun his studies at the Realschule, Klara was requested to come to the school

Afterward, on the trolley, her eyes shut tight to control her tears, Klara did not know whether she had the courage to break the news to Alois. They had given her Adolf's report card and his were dreadful.

Indeed, when Alois did learn, it came on the second-worst day of the year for him, the first of February. He was trying to be ready for the anniversary of Edmund's death on the next day, February 2, and in the course of walking through Leonding, trying to think of nothing at all, he encountered Josef Mayrhofer on the street at midday. The Mayor then suggested something most unusual. He proposed that they go to the tavern for a drink. Rarely did he leave his shop in the care of his assistants unless he had work in Town Hall as Mayor, and now in the course of returning from there to his store, he made this offer.

At the tavern, they spoke first of the oncoming weight of this first anniversary. They clasped hands tightly—good men in the grip of sorrowful emotions. Then Mayrhofer did something he had never done before. He said: "You must promise not to punish the messenger."

Alois replied with confidence, "You would never be the bearer of ill tidings," but already he was feeling unseemly stirrings in his stomach.

Mayrhofer said, "You do have an older son with your first name. Is that not the case?"

Alois seized the Mayor's arm so hard that he bruised it. Mayrhofer freed himself with a most unhappy smile. "Well," he said, "you have punished the messenger already." He held up a hand. "Enough," he said. "Your son, Alois-Junior, is in prison now—a report came through today that circulates through the district. . ."

"In prison—? For what is he in prison?"

"Alois, it is for theft."

A low guttural sound emerged. "I cannot believe it," Alois said. He knew it had to be true.

Mayrhofer said, "You can visit him should you so desire."

"Visit him?" says Alois. "I don't think so." His back had broken out in a rash. He was full of sweat. He was on the edge of losing the last of his

good manners, but managed instead to speak calmly and ruefully, even, with a dignity that was as externally impressive as it was internally false. "The hardest thing I ever had to do in my life was to disavow this one of my children completely," he managed to put together. "But, Mayrhofer, you must understand, we are such a good family. My wife and I have been careful to raise them properly. Yet, Junior was the rotten apple in the barrel. Without disowning him, the other children would have been ruined. And now the two who are alive—" he catches himself, but does not sob—"yes, these two will turn out very well indeed, that much I know. They will be good children, just like yours."

Mayrhofer says, "I thank you. I have good children, yes."

They sit and drink, and Alois begins to think of Fanni and although he considers it highly inappropriate to have such thoughts on such a day, he feels horny. He is certainly at loose ends. Can Fanni be speaking to him from beyond the grave? Was she jeering at him because of Alois-Junior?

That evening, at Klara's insistence, Adolf came forward to show his report card. Alois caught his breath, then said to her, "I must break my vow." Klara had been infuriated with Adolf, but now, frightened by the expression on Alois' face, she felt as if she was betraying her son, for she said no more than, "I will not argue."

In tones sufficiently somber to pronounce the onset of a war, Alois stated: "I took a vow with your mother, at her request. I said that I would never whip you again. That was a year ago. We were thinking of the tragedy in our family. But now, you can be certain, I will break my vow. That is the only course to take when the vow has been dishonored by the person most protected by it. Come! You and me are going to your bedroom."

Once more, he was holding his temper. It broke, however, so soon as he took off his belt and placed Adolf over his knee. At the first last of the belt, Adolf told himself, "This will be my century. So, I will not cry out, I will not cry out!" The blows were, however, so severe that he began to shriek. Alois had never used a leather strap before. A tongue of flame was in the leather! Was this the hour of his death? He plummeted from one terror into another. He did not want to die! His heart began to feel as if it would burst. Indeed, he did not know what would end him—this scourge upon his buttocks or the galloping leaps of his heart, and at that moment, his father, seriously winded, eased off and stopped, pushed Adolf off his knee and said, "You can stop crying now."

Alois sat back, invaded by his own terror. He had begun to think of Alois-Junior on the ground.

The whipping was now engraved in Adolf's memory. There was no need for a dream-etching. Such whippings, we knew, were as powerful as dream-etchings. One could not alter them. One could only work around them.

In the aftermath of this beating, Alois went into his own depression. That was now fixed on Adolf's school marks. To live as long as he had, and to be able to feel no confidence in the poor remains of his male line. He even started going to the tavern in the afternoon—a risky business now. Would they hear about it at the Burger-Abends?

But the loss was too great to allow him to wait through the day and have no drink. So, for a time, he went only to the tavern. He no longer looked to dominate conversation, and that was his loss. He was one of those men who could feel in full possession of exceptional powers while experiencing the joy of dominating a bar. Now, such epiphanies were without interest for Alois. He even grew tired of drinking in the tavern. "I do not enjoy my beer now that Edmund is gone," he told Mayrhofer.

Chapter

Adolf was suffering as intimately as Alois, but not for the loss of Edmund. It was for the loss of self-esteem his drawings used to occupy in his thoughts.

He had dared to submit them to his art teacher. His assumption was that any number of his submissions would be chosen and thereby he would receive the honor of being tacked up on the cork wall reserved for students' work at one side of the art studio.

He had prepared himself for these honors. He had thought of the quietly confident remarks he would utter, always in the best of taste, when receiving the compliments of his new compatriots. There could be no question that his work would dominate all other student work. There was, after all, no comparison.

Those fine moments soon to come could make up for all the slights he had had to swallow. It would also compensate him personally for the marks on his first report card. Those poor marks could now be forgotten. He would yet be prominent in this school.

I must admit that I had a role in the judgment that was to follow. While Adolf did have talent, it was not remarkable—I could see at a glance that he could never be a great artist. (Young Pablo Picasso, for example,

was already by 1901 a young man in whom we were most interested.) By contrast, young Adolf Hitler produced drawings that were good enough to hang in his school room.

"Divert him," were the instructions I received from the Maestro. "The last thing we need is a pumped-up mediocre artist with a sour spirit at his lack of large recognition. Better to put him into a real slump."

I must say I was in position to accomplish this. Adolf's art instructor was one of our clients. Indeed, he bore a close resemblance to the mediocre artist described by the Maestro. So, I had to do no more than inflict a fearful headache on the man (by besieging him the night before with contradictory suggestions on how to deal with his rebellious son and his rude wife.) Adolf's work was seen the next morning through the haze and light-shafts of a migraine. None of Adolf's work was tacked to the cork wall.

He could not believe it. Not one drawing had been chosen. In that hour, he withdrew forever from the idea that he would ever look again for success in school. Like Alois-Junior, he would learn to live on his own.

Of course, he would not leave home, no need for that as yet. The thought of Toga-Boy still brought sweat to his back. No, he would have to

wait. He would live among others while possessing, unbeknownst to these others, a will of iron.

Such thoughts were reinforced when the author, Karl May, came to town. He revered Karl May more than any writer he had ever read. So when word reached the school that Karl May would give a reading in Linz on Saturday afternoon at the Roter Krebs, the hotel where he was staying, Adolf canceled the battle.

Having no money, he had to confide in Klara that he wished to go. She saw his wish to hear a famous author as a sign of future promise for his studies, and so gave him the two kronen he would need for admission. She had been feeling rueful ever since her implicit collaboration with Alois over the beating.

He had enough, therefore, to buy a ticket at the rear of the orchestra, but was soon disappointed by the appearance on stage of Karl May. The man was small in stature. He might be well-dressed, but his appearance was, nonetheless, lacking in elegance.

Such criticisms ceased, however, so soon as May began to read aloud from his work. He had a rich voice and Shatterhand might as well have been speaking from the podium.

On his return home, he swore his mother to secrecy about his trip. There was no need to hear his father's comments. But later that night, after he went to sleep, Alois, poking through Adolf's pockets on a good retired Customs' Officer's impulse, came across a ticket stub.

Next morning, his father chose to say, "I am not impressed with this Karl May. I hear that he has never been to America and makes it all up. Moreover, he is a convicted criminal just like your brother. Can that be why you were saving the stub?"

This stimulated the beginning of a number of imaginary conversations. Since Adolf could not trust his voice now when speaking to his father, he began to conceive of dialogues that took place entirely within his own mind.

This obliged me to take a risk. Imaginary conversations can degenerate into a psychic quicksand. Yet, Adolf's spirits were so low that it was now necessary to breathe a few fresh if imaginary triumphs into his ego. Even as starving humans will eat shoe leather, so will much-battered spirits sup on fantasy.

The first imaginary conversation was concerned with the subject of those young Czechoslovakians who were now living in Linz. Some were even going to class with him at the Realschule. Since Adolf was not yet

certain of his own attitude, I was twice concerned. Most often, we work to wipe out conflict in a client's opinions. Most of our men and women are at their most serviceable when there is little oscillation in their thoughts. We are not interested in developing an appreciation of nuance. Rather, we look to keep the majority of our clients squarely on the white or black side of the question chosen. Yet, here was Adolf, ready to enter his first imaginary conversation but not yet certain whether to join the pan-German position and fight against Slavization in Austria, or, to the contrary, speak favorably of the Czechs.

His teachers were certainly pro-German. Since his first impulse by now was to go against his teachers, he was confused because the teachers' position had also been taken over by the German students in the Realschule. As pan-Germans they believed that Austria should belong to Germany—which was equal to saying: Out with the Hapsburgs as well as the Hungarians, the Bohemians, the Jews, the Serbs, the Croations, the lot—all of that polluting lot. Good Austrians should become wholly German.

Adolf finally decided to take up this side of the argument. His father certainly disliked the Prussians. They had, he often said, exhibited intolerable arrogance toward Austrians, yes, he had encountered a good deal of such snobbery when working with German Customs agents in Passau

who happened to be Prussian. He had had to deal with them every day. So, on the given evening when he made a full speech at the Burger-Abends, he had even said, "It is not cultured to insist that we Germans are superior to all other races of people. Indeed, we may be, but is it not rudeness to rub the noses of others in our belief? In addition, I would say it is highly impractical. What good is likely to come from such a program?" Then he had repeated his speech to Klara, Angela, and Adolf.

Moreover, Alois was always ready to say that Karl Wesseley, a fellow officer with Alois in Customs over many years, had in the course of all that, become his oldest friend. So Alois would defend Czechs.

That was Adi's final guide. He would speak derisively of the Czechs.

Here is the imaginary conversation that took place in his head with all the force of a loud debate in a public theatre:

ADOLF: Your best friend is a Czech. How can you do that to our family? Czechs are not even worthy of being called stupid. I speak from my experience of the students I know.

ALOIS: You do not know the Czechs. They are interesting people. I have heard that Prague is a more beautiful city than Vienna.

ADOLF: Impossible.

ALOIS: You say "impossible" to your father?

How can you dare when you have not even seen Vienna?

ADOLF: I can, because I know. You, sir, have no taste.

At this point, the playlet was over. Alois merely stamped his foot and looked absurd.

It was easy, all too easy. Yet, this quick trip of the imagination had given Adolf a taste of what heaven might be like. Heaven would be the free play of one's imagination. No payment afterward.

So Adolf continued with his imaginary conversations. He recognized that if pan-German ideas prevailed, then the Hapsburg realm might cease to exist. At that point, the Austrian-Germans would become dependent on the Prussians. While Alois often repeated how much he disliked Prussians, Adolf sensed a certain weakness in him, a vulnerability. It was likely, the son decided, that Alois believed the Prussians would finally dominate Austria.

So for his next imaginary conversation, Adolf scoffed at Crown Prince Rudolf.

ADOLF: If I were a prince, I would never commit suicide. How weak! How shameful! Rudolf hurt Austria. We will never be the same. No Prussian would ever do such a thing.

That was not a dialogue but a triumphant monologue. In his mind, Adolf could picture Alois afflicted by breathlessness, asthma, fury—a wonderful, impotent fury for the son to witness.

I intervened. If these conversations were not to degenerate into self-serving slapstick, then Adolf was obliged to give them depth. He had the tools, after all. He had learned the arguments already from newspapers, authors like Treitschke and Erndt, and his father's meanderings at dinner. He was ready at last to build arguments for Alois as well.

ALOIS: These pan-German Austrians have suffered prodigious defeats in Vienna and in Lower Austria. Even here in Linz, and that is a German city in its sympathies. Yet these Schoenerites are idiots who have no chance to collect enough votes. They will get applause, yes, when they speak to a group of Linzers as young and stupid as boys like yourself, but serious people do not vote with their passions, but for their interests. For their bank account, not for their heart. Especially the people in Linz, respectable people who

shy away from the vulgarity of extreme change. The Pan-Germans in Linz offer nothing but ridiculous little newspapers that they print and distribute by hand. The fellows who do this job for them are so poor that their noses run in the cold. You, Adolf, are in such a hurry to support them but do you read their ridiculous offerings? Der Fliegilnzer Blatter—what a weekly! Absurd! Weak! Revolting. I can say even worse for the Alte-Deutsche Blatter—a weak sister, comes out only twice a month. There are not interesting political people. This is a cult. Filthy and secret.

ADOLF: You are totally mistaken, Father. I know better. In school, my fellow students are devoted to the Alte Deutche. They love the cornflower, which, as you may even know, is the emblem of the vigorous Schoernerist movement. But perhaps you are ignorant of why students wear the cornflower? It is our way of saying we have German hearts, not Austrian but German, and these hearts dream of a time when we can cross the border back and forth. So, we keep a secret in school. I'll even tell you what it is if you also agree to keep it a secret.

ALOIS: Well, you never offered anything like that before. All right. I must keep it a secret, unpleasant as that is for me.

ADOLF: Well, when they play the Austrian national anthem, we do not sing the words we are supposed to sing. We are in tune with the melody, but we sing "Deutschland uber alles." As you know, or maybe as you do not know even with all your bragging about all you know, these two musical anthems are the same. Which we see as a sign that all along, we Austrians have wanted to become Germans. German is the language we wish to speak.

Now, the imaginary conversations had become too bloated. So I brought Adolf back to recognizing that if these conversations had been real, Alois would have taken a club to his head.

Adolf, however, continued to do poorly in school. The report card of his first full year which he handed over to his father in June showed a failure in two courses, Mathematics and Natural History. That meant he would have to repeat this first year of class in the year to come, which also meant that school would take five years, not four. Poor Alois. He could not muster the energy to give Adolf a beating.

That summer, Adolf was equally depressed, but proceeded to tell himself (with my assistance) that the art of learning was something he comprehended far better than any top student. It was only important to

retain the essentials and ignore the non-essentials. Students were too ready to busy themselves with the endless study of details. Just like the teachers. They could only recite categories. They were bores. They spoke like parrots. They smiled as if they were truly intelligent whenever a teacher approved of what they said. These were the ones who pulled down the good marks.

He was considerably above such concerns. So he told himself. He was interested in the hidden core of each situation. That was the valuable knowledge for which to search, the knowledge that could fortify a will of iron. So he would not bend his mind to the methods others used. That could only damage his brain.

It was imperative by now to cheer him up. His best amusement these days had become his power to tease Angela. Physically, he was, at last, her equal in strength. So whenever she criticized him, he called her a "stupid goose." For Angela, that was a dreadful term. She would even run to Klara to complain. She hated geese. She had seen them landing in the town pond, but to her, they were filthy. Angela had watched those geese as they crowded along on the banks, leaving their droppings behind them. She was, she told herself, more like a swan.

I had to allow him one more imaginary conversation. I encouraged him to imagine himself as a teacher at the Realschule. He dressed in elegant style and was always clear-voiced, incisive, and regarded with admiration for his wit.

ADOLF: Here is the essential, young men. Do not try to remember all the facts of every historical event. That is a discipline many of my colleagues are bound to look to impress upon you. I would say to them as well as to you, "Protect yourself. You are swimming in clouded water." Some of these facts you have memorized are merely debris to contradict other facts you have memorized. You will be in a state of confusion. I can rescue you from that. The secret is to retain the essentials. That is all. From there, select those few facts which can clarify the issue. But remember—these facts must be derived from the principles which created them. That is because principles, if wisely chosen, are immortal, and facts at best are unreliable. At worst, they are false and treacherous. So it is that facts must never be allowed to dominate your principles.

B
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Chapter

Late in January, five months after Adolf has begun his studies at the Realschule, Klara was requested to come to the school

Afterward, on the trolley, her eyes shut tight to control her tears, Klara did not know whether she had the courage to break the news to Alois.

They had given her Adolf's report card and ^{his marks were} ~~his were~~ dreadful.

Indeed, when Alois did learn, it came ^{what was now} ~~on~~ the second-worst day of the year for him, the first of February. He was trying to be ready for the

anniversary of Edmund's death on the next day, February 2, and in the

course of walking through Leonding, trying to think of nothing at all, he

encountered Josef Mayrhofer on the street at midday. The Mayor then

suggested something most unusual. He proposed that they go to the tavern

for a drink. Rarely did he leave his shop in the care of his assistants unless ^{we were} ~~as~~ ^{as Mayor}

^{of Leonding} ~~tasks~~ ^{he was} ~~waiting him~~ ^(he had work) in Town Hall, as Mayor, and now in the course of returning

from there to his store, he made this offer.

At the tavern, they spoke first of the oncoming weight of this first anniversary. They clasped hands tightly—good men in the grip of sorrowful emotions. Then Mayrhofer did something he had never done before. He said: "You must promise not to punish the messenger."

Alois replied with confidence, "You would never be the bearer of ill tidings," but already he ^{could} ~~was~~ feeling unseemly stirrings in his stomach.

^{"I must ask you"}
Mayrhofer said, "You ~~do~~ have an older son with your first name. Is that not the case?"

^(so near my arm)
Alois seized the Mayor's arm so hard that he bruised it. Mayrhofer freed himself with ^{an} ~~a~~ most unhappy smile. "Well," he said, "you have punished the messenger already." He held up a hand. ^{"I have to tell you,"} "Enough," he said. "Your son, Alois-Junior, is in prison now—a report came through today that circulates through the district. . ."

"In prison—? For what is he in prison?"

"Alois, it is for theft."

A low guttural sound emerged. "I cannot believe it," Alois said. He knew it had to be true.

Mayrhofer said, "You can visit him should you so desire."

"Visit him?" says Alois. "I don't think so." His back had broken out in a rash. He was full of sweat. He was on the edge of losing the last of his

good manners, but managed instead to speak calmly and ruefully, even, with a dignity that was as externally impressive as it was internally ~~false~~ ^{caustic to his insides,} "The hardest thing I ever had to do in my life was to disavow this one of my children ⁴ ~~completely,~~" he managed to put together. "But, Mayrhofer, you must understand, we are such a good family. My wife and I have been careful to raise them properly. Yet, Junior was the rotten apple in the barrel. Without disowning him, the other children ^(taunted by him.) ~~would have been ruined~~ And now the ^{three} ~~two~~ who are ^{still} ~~alive~~—" he catches himself, but does not sob—"yes, these ^{three} ~~two~~ will turn out very well indeed, that much I know. They will be good children, just like yours."

Mayrhofer says, "I thank you. I have good children, yes."

They sit and drink, and Alois begins to think of Fanni and although he considers it highly inappropriate to have such thoughts on such a day, he feels horny. He is certainly at loose ends. ^{could} ~~Can~~ Fanni be speaking to him from beyond the grave? Was she jeering at him because of Alois-Junior?

That evening, at Klara's insistence, Adolf came forward to show his report card. Alois caught his breath, then said to her, "I must break my vow." Klara had been infuriated ^{earlier} ~~with Adolf~~, but now, ^{not a little stricken} ~~frightened~~ by the expression on Alois' face, she felt as if she ^{was} ~~was~~ betraying her son, for she ^{at this instant} ~~said~~ no more than, "I will not argue."

In tones sufficiently somber to pronounce the onset of a war, Alois stated: "I took a vow with your mother ^{It was} at her request. I said that I would never whip you again. That was a year ago. We were thinking of the tragedy in our family. But now, you can be certain, I will break my vow. That is the only course to take when the vow has been dishonored by the person most protected by it. Come! You and me are going to your bedroom."

Once more, he was holding his temper. It broke, however, so soon as he took off his belt and placed Adolf over his knee. At the first ^{lash} ~~last~~ of the belt, Adolf told himself, "This will be my century. ~~So~~ I will not cry out, ~~I~~ ["] ~~will not cry out!"~~ The blows were, however, so severe that he began to

shriek. Alois had never used a leather strap before. A tongue of flame ^{might as} ~~was~~ ^{well have been darting out of} in the leather! ~~Was this the hour of his death?~~ He plummeted from one terror into another. He did not want to die! His heart began to feel as if it would burst. ^{Indeed}, he did not know what would end him—this scourge upon his buttocks or the galloping leaps of his heart, and at that moment, his father, seriously winded, eased off and stopped, pushed Adolf off his knee and said, "You can stop crying now."

Alois sat back, invaded by his own terror. He had begun to think of Alois-Junior on the ground.

The whipping was now engraved in Adolf's memory. There was no need for a dream-etching. Such whippings, we knew, were as powerful as dream-etchings. One could not alter them. One ^{did best to} ~~could only~~ work around them, ^{or} ~~and~~ use them when serviceable to our purpose.

In the aftermath of this beating, Alois went into his own depression. ~~That was now fixed on Adolf's school marks.~~ To live as long as he had, and to be able to feel no confidence in the poor remains of his male line. He even started going to the tavern in the afternoon—a risky business now. Would they hear about it at the Burger-Abends?

But the loss was too great to allow him to wait through the day and have no drink. So, for a time, he went only to the tavern. He no longer looked to dominate conversation, and that was ^{true} ~~his~~ loss. He was one of those men who could feel in full possession of exceptional powers ^{when} ~~while~~ experiencing the joy of dominating a bar ^{with their voice}. Now, such ^{transports} ~~epiphanies~~ were without interest for Alois. He even grew tired of drinking in the tavern. "I do not enjoy my beer now that Edmund is gone," he told Mayrhofer.

Chapter

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His teachers were certainly pro-German. Since his first impulse by ^{take up a position} now was to ~~go~~ against his teachers, he was confused because the teachers' ^{point-of-view} ~~position~~ had also been taken over by the German students in the Realschule.

As pan-Germans they believed that Austria should belong to Germany ^{to} ~~and that~~ which ^{along with the} ~~was equal to saying: Out with the Hapsburgs as well as the~~

Hungarians, the Bohemians, the Jews, the Serbs, the Croations, the lot—all of that polluting lot. Good Austrians should become wholly German.

Adolf finally decided to take up ^{that} ~~this~~ side of the argument. His father certainly disliked the Prussians. They had, he often said, exhibited intolerable arrogance toward Austrians, yes, he had encountered a good deal of such snobbery when working with German Customs agents in Passau

who happened to be Prussian. He had had to deal with them every day. ~~So every~~
~~on the given~~ ^{eventual} evening when he made a full speech at the Burger-Abends, he
 had even said, "It is not cultured to insist that we Germans are superior to all
 other races of people. Indeed, we may be, but is it not rudeness to rub the
 noses of others in our belief? In addition, I would say it is highly
 impractical. What good is likely to come from such a program?" Then he
 had repeated his speech to Klara, Angela, and Adolf.

Moreover, Alois was always ready to say that Karl Wesseley, a fellow
 officer with Alois in Customs ^{there was a Czech named} over many years, ^{which had been} had in the course of all that,
^{at in their early} ^{In the last decade} they had hardly seen each other, yet Alois still
 become his oldest friend. So Alois would defend Czechs,
^{spoke of him as his oldest and best friend}

That was Adi's ~~final~~ guide. He would speak derisively of the Czechs.

Here is the imaginary conversation that ^{resounded} took place in his head with all
 the force of a loud debate in a public theatre:

ADOLF: Your best friend is a Czech. How can
 you do that to our family? Czechs are not even worthy
 of being called stupid. I speak from my experience of
 the students I know.

ALOIS: You do not know the Czechs. They are
 interesting people. I have heard that Prague is a more
 beautiful city than Vienna.

ADOLF: Impossible.

ALOIS: You say "impossible" to your father?

How can you dare when you have not even seen Vienna?

ADOLF: I can, because I know. You, sir, have no taste.

^{that}
At ~~this~~ point, the playlet was over. Alois merely stamped his foot and looked absurd.

It was easy, all too easy. Yet, this quick trip of the imagination had given Adolf a taste of ~~what~~ ^{such an Eden would offer} heaven might be like. ~~Heaven would be the free-~~
~~play of~~ ^{to} one's imagination. No payment afterward.

So Adolf continued with ^{these} ~~his~~ imaginary conversations. He recognized that if pan-German ideas prevailed, then the Hapsburg realm might cease to exist. ^{If so,} ~~At that point,~~ the Austrian-Germans would ^{have to} become dependent on the Prussians. While Alois often repeated how much he disliked Prussians, Adolf sensed a certain ~~weakness in him,~~ ^{there} a vulnerability. ~~It was likely,~~ ^{therefore} the son decided, that Alois believed the Prussians would ~~finally dominate~~ ^{eventually gobble up} Austria.

^{therefore}
So ~~for~~ his next imaginary conversation, Adolf scoffed at Crown Prince Rudolf.

ADOLF: If I were a prince, I would never commit suicide. How weak! How shameful! Rudolf hurt Austria. We will never be the same. No Prussian would ever do such a thing.

That was not a dialogue but a triumphant monologue. In his mind, Adolf could picture Alois afflicted by breathlessness, asthma, fury—a wonderful, impotent fury for the son to witness.

I intervened. If these conversations were not to degenerate into self-serving slapstick, then Adolf was obliged to give them depth. He had the tools, after all. He had learned ^{his} the arguments already from newspapers, ^{by way of} authors like Treitschke and Erndt, and his father's meanderings at dinner.

He was ready at last to build arguments for Alois ^{Alois' side of the argument} as well.

ALOIS: These pan-German Austrians have suffered prodigious defeats in Vienna and in Lower Austria. Even here in Linz, ^{which is already} and that is a German city in its sympathies. Yet these Schoenerites are idiots who ^{will never} have no chance to collect enough votes. They will get ^{lots of} applause, yes, when they speak to a group of Linzers as young and stupid as boys like yourself, but serious people do not vote with their passions, ^{they vote} but for their interests. For their bank account, not for their heart. Especially the people in Linz, respectable people who

shy away from the vulgarity of extreme change. The Pan-Germans in Linz offer nothing but ridiculous little newspapers that they print and distribute by hand. The fellows who do this job for them are so poor that their noses run in the cold. You, Adolf, are in such a hurry to support them but do you read their ridiculous offerings?

Der Fliegiliner Blatter—what a weekly! Absurd!

Weak! Revolting. I can say ~~even~~ ^{another} worse for the Alte-
Deutsche Blatter—a weak sister, comes out only twice a ~~month~~ ^{all}. There are not interesting political people. This is a cult. Filthy and secret.

ADOLF: You are totally mistaken, Father. I *happen to* know better. In school, my fellow students are devoted to the Alte Deutsche. They love the cornflower, which, as you may even know, is the emblem of the vigorous Schoernerist movement. But perhaps you are ignorant of why students wear the cornflower? It is our way of saying we have German hearts, not Austrian but German, and these hearts dream of a time when we can cross the border back and forth. So, we keep a secret in school. I'll even tell you what it is if you also agree to keep it a secret.

ALOIS: Well, you never offered anything like that before. All right. I must keep it a secret, unpleasant as that is for me.

ADOLF: Well, when they play the Austrian national anthem ^{in school} we do not sing the words we are supposed to sing. We are in tune with the melody, but we sing "Deutschland uber alles." As you know, or maybe as you do not know even with all your bragging about all you know, these two musical anthems ^{happen to have the same notes} are the same. Which we see as a sign that all along, we Austrians have wanted to become Germans. German is the language we wish to speak.

Now, the imaginary conversations had become too bloated. So I brought Adolf back to recognizing that if these conversations had been real, Alois would have taken a club to his head.

Adolf, however, continued to do poorly in school. The report card of his first full year which he handed over to his father in June showed a failure in two courses, Mathematics and Natural History. That meant he would have to repeat this first year of class in the year to come, which also meant that school would take five years, not four. Poor Alois. He could not muster the energy to give Adolf a beating.

That summer, Adolf was equally depressed, but proceeded to tell himself (with my assistance) that the art of learning was something he comprehended far better than any top student. It was only important to

retain the essentials and ignore the non-essentials. Students were too ready to busy themselves with the endless study of details. Just like the teachers. They could only recite categories. They were bores. They spoke like parrots. They smiled as if they were truly intelligent whenever a teacher approved of what they said. These were the ones who pulled down the good marks.

He was considerably above such concerns. So he told himself. He was interested in the hidden core of each situation. That was the valuable knowledge for which to search, the knowledge that could fortify a will of iron. So he would not bend his mind to the methods others used. That could only damage his brain.

It was imperative by now to cheer him up. His best amusement these days had become his power to tease Angela. Physically, he was, at last, her equal in strength. So whenever she criticized him, he called her a "stupid goose." For Angela, that was a dreadful term. She would even run to Klara to complain. She hated geese. She had seen them landing in the town pond, but to her, they were filthy. Angela had watched ^{these} ~~those~~ geese as they crowded along on the banks, leaving their droppings behind them. She was, she told herself, more like a swan.

^{Adolf}
I had to allow ~~him~~ one more imaginary conversation. I encouraged him to imagine himself as a teacher at the Realschule. He dressed in elegant style and was always clear-voiced, incisive, and regarded with admiration for his wit.

ADOLF: Here is the essential, young men. Do not try to remember all the facts of every historical event. That is a discipline many of my colleagues are bound to look to impress upon you. I would say to them as well as to you, "Protect yourself. You are swimming in clouded water." Some of these facts you have memorized are ^{no better} ~~merely~~ ^{than} debris ^{which} ~~to~~ contradict other facts you have memorized. ^{So,} You will be in a state of confusion. I can rescue you from that. The secret is to retain the essentials. That is all. ^{That is exactly it} From there, select those few facts which can clarify the issue. But remember—these facts ^{can only} ~~must~~ be derived from the principles which created them. That is because principles, if wisely chosen, are ^(even at their) immortal, and facts, ~~at best~~ are unreliable. At worst, they are false and treacherous. So it is that facts must never be allowed to dominate your principles.