

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Klaus

o.O., 1944-07-18

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Italy, 18 July, 1944

Dear Max-Pol Fouchet:

I am happy to have your book, and I was greatly touched by the kindness of your dedication: thank you ever so much.

It's a fine book: I like it. How could anyone who loves France -- as I do -- not be sensible to the charm and persuasion of your prose? There is something so unmistakably -- so engagingly and beautifully French about your writing! While reading your texts, I felt almost like transported to Paris! How many aspects of French culture you elucidate -- how many images and moods of French life you evoke, in your casual, nonchalant fashion! At the first look, your book seems just a collection of informal causeries about painting, poetry, and politics. But soon enough the attentive reader comes to realize that ~~Georg Simmel's~~ La France au Coeur is indeed much more than a series of brilliant feuilletons: it is an organic entity, complex and yet congruous, as is the great subject with which it deals -- French culture. What you say about Corot's pleasures, or about that exquisite lunch in Chartres, is as significant and typical -- indeed, as topical and relevant as are your invocations of Cezanne and Péguy, or your essays on French poetry,

or your acute and passionate political commentaries. Your analysis of the Fascist plague -- "Comment le Fascisme vient aux nations" -- is revealingly accurate. And I admire the frankness and fervor of your appeal to the Americans, in "Principes d'une Croisade."

It's a pity that I did not know your book when I wrote my article about "Liberated Literature" in Algiers -- mostly dealing with FONTAINE and L'ARCHE: I had just mailed my paper to the States when I received the copy of La France au Coeur. There is one critical, even rather polemic, passage in my little essay. While sharing with you so many enthusiasms and animosities, I am unable to appreciate one of your penchants -- namely, your penchant for Surrealism. I thought M. Breton's address to the Yale students the weakest and most objectionable piece FONTAINE has ever printed -- and your eulogy of M. Breton's movement the only utterance coming from you that struck me as somehow incomprehensible. Besides you are really mistaken when you think that M. Breton and his clique play an important role in American intellectual life... But that's a rather complicated matter -- one of the many things I hope to discuss with you, in the not too distant future -- maybe in Algiers, or in Paris...

.... This morning, I received a copy of George Weill's Le

Probleme Allemand -- which seems another very interesting publication. I am looking forward to reading it. It's admirable, I think, how active and enterprising "Charlot" is -- in spite of all technical difficulties. Wouldn't the French version of my book on Gide be a possible item for "Charlot's" impressive list? Spanish and Portuguese editions of the book are in preparation, but the French rights are still available -- if I am not mistaken... (They belong to the Creative Age Press, 11 East 44th Street, New York.) I could bring the last chapter up to date. Don't you think there should be some interest for a Gide biography -- in North Africa now, and in France tomorrow?... Well, there is another subject for future conversations, or perhaps for further correspondence.

With best wishes and regards,

Cordially yours,

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