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Mann, Erika

Amsterdam, 1949-07-27

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Erika Mann
Amstelhotel
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July 27th, 1949.

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Mr. Melvin J. Lasky
Inf. Serv. Division
PIB, Omgus
APO 742
Berlin.

Mr. Melvin J. Lasky
Inf. Serv. Division
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APO 742
Berlin

Dear Mr. Lasky.

I am afraid it was about four weeks ago that Golo told me about your interest in DER WENDEPUNKT; and even previously, I had found among Klaus' papers a letter from you indicating that you'd like to obtain a suitable chapter - or fragment of a chapter - for DER MONAT. I re-read the whole book (some 770 pages) in search for the pages most likely to suit your purpose; and when I had found what I consider the best I had no-one to type it for me, and no type-writer to do it myself. After careful consideration, I believe the first chapter, "MYTHEN DER KINDHEIT", to be the only one really to fit. I understood from Golo that you thought the "gay" twenties something to be pondered over, and have consequently investigated the relevant chapters with particular attention. However, while I found much that I should have liked to offer you, too much would have had to be cut or altered. "Myths", on the other hand, may - to my mind - stand exactly as it is - except for its length.

Of the chapter's original 37 pages I have now cut 14 or so, leaving an approximate 23*. I wonder whether that is still too much. I also wonder rather intensely whether it would not be possible to present the whole chapter in two successive issues of DER MONAT. For, although I went to considerable pains to preserve not merely the continuity but also the fullness of it all, there are by necessity important things missing in the proposed version. Such, one whole "milieu" that played rather a decisive role in our early life has had to be omitted: our grand parents' house in Munich, and all the myths connected with it and them. - Even so, I believe the chapter in its present form to be rich enough, if naturally by far not so effective as the unabridged whole.

I need hardly tell you how very glad I should be, if you'd find it possible to accept the whole. Since nothing has appeared in DER MONAT in the nature of a final appraisal, it might perhaps be feasible to grant Klaus those 37 pages which, I suppose, would make up about 30 printed pages, or two contributions of not exorbitant length.

In some - I believe in two - instances, I have added question marks to my cuts. This means that though the paragraphs in question may well be spared as far as the continuity is concerned, I should hate to see them go, - as they are in my humble opinion particularly handsome. This is especially true for pages 18/19.

* rather less, - maybe 22,5!

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I need hardly tell you how very glad I should be if you'd find it possible to accept the whole. Since nothing has appeared in DER MONAT in the nature of a final appraisal, it might perhaps be feasible to grant Klaus those 37 pages which, I suppose, would make up about 300 printed pages, or two contributions of not exorbitant length.

In some - I believe in two - instances, I have added question marks to my cuts. This means that though the paragraph in question may well be spared as far as the continuity is concerned, I should hate to see them go - as they are in my humble opinion particularly handsome. This is especially true for pages 10/11.

* Letter 22.1.51 - 22.1.51

But I mustn't take up any more of your time. Let me, however, take this opportunity to thank you most cordially for your interest in Klaus and for the kindness which you've always shown him, and of ~~the~~ which - as I know very well - he was keenly appreciative.

I so hope that you like the enclosed chapter. Klaus hasn't had too easy a life as a writer. He lived and died in the shadow of his father, and even the obituaries disposed of him as "the son who also wrote". But no obituary, however beautiful, could do more to set things right, than will the publication in a first rate, widely read magazine such as DER MONAT of what I deem one of his most successful efforts. I might add that I discussed the matter with our father and that he, too, would be very glad to see "MYTHS" appear in your revue.

Will you let me hear from you? For the next few weeks I may best be reached c/o Magnus Henning, Haus 63, Ehrwald, Tirol, where I'll be staying until August 11th. From then on until the 18th your news will get me c/o Querido, Publishers, 262 Singel, Amsterdam, and subsequently I'll be home again (1550 San Remo Drive, Pacific Palisades, California.)

Believe me, dear Mr. Lasky,

Yours very sincerely

P.S. You may wonder why I took the trouble of making all those minor cuts in the first part of the chapter, instead of simply having the selection conclude with page 36. However, I felt the very end (the dead baker's apprentice) to be too essential to be eliminated. Hence all those antics which constitute an effort to save him. See?

