

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Erika

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February 4th, 1959

Dear Mr. Chatterji, -

I have to apologize for this late reply to your interesting letter of January 7th. But I have been travelling almost incessantly, and when my mail finally caught up with me, it had accumulated to a degree that made it rather difficult for me to catch up with it.

As for Tagore I am sorry to say that I was too young a child when his shortlived fame spread all over Germany. Actually, I have never read a line of his; for, by the time I was halfway grownup his name had disappeared from our horizon. In addition, my father had not been fond of either the personal impression Tagore made upon him or his work - as far as he knew it. I should think that to Thomas Mann's mind, as to the mind of Bertrand Russell, Tagore would have appeared to be "too mystical" and somehow lacking in meat and backbone. In fact I remember my father having said things to that effect. There are, however, two "anecdotes" connected with Tagore's visit to and public appearance in Munich. Though very few people had read any of his poetry, his name had so swiftly become a household word that the porters at Munich's main railway station used to curse by mumbling "Rabindranath Tagore no amo!", (meaning: "R.T. ~~jolly well~~ ^{and so end}!").

On the other hand, ~~that~~ Munich was aware of the fact that the stilized indian robe Tagore was to wear on the evening of his lecture (or whatever it was) had been made to order by the city's most expensive and exclusive haute couture dressmaker for ladies. Even the very large amount of money the poet and philosopher had paid for the garment kept being its source of laughter in all possible levels.

For the rest I think the German writer, poet and nobel-prizewinner Hermann Hesse would be by far the best for you to approach. Hesse who left Germany in 1914 as a protest to world war number I has been living in Switzerland and in due time became a Swiss citizen. Even so he is to be considered the most representative German writer of his generation, the very generation who lived through the German Tagore "craze". Besides, Hesse has strong Indian leanings and is certain to know Tagore's writings and to be able to give you a helpful reply.

Once again, I regret that I for one have had to disappoint you; however, in naming Hesse I feel confident that I have been as useful as I could. His address is: Dr. Hermann Hesse, Montagnola-Lugano, Ticino, Switzerland. Perhaps you'd care

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51 W Jakob

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H. Hoffmann

to mention my name to him. Somehow I feel that this might help.

With best wishes for your work and kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,



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and that last I remember. and of some of the
other things that have been done to the
other things that have been done to the

N. Chatterji
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