

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Erika

o.O., 1951-04-26

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Erika Mann

April 26, 1951

Mr. M.K. Argus
THE NEW LEADER
7 East 15th Street
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Argus:

Your Guest Column of April 16th
(THE NEW LEADER) is tremendously witty. What could
possibly be funnier or more subtly satirical than that
"Thomas Frau" idea of yours? Priceless, dear, -- and
yet surpassed, rather incredibly, by the perfect union
of ~~the~~ biting esprit and whimsical humor ~~the~~ entire ~~piece~~ piece.

Considering your all but irresistible
charm as a writer, one might, at first glance, incline
to wonder just why you select not to hide your face, as
well as your name. Surely, you know that man is supposed
to possess at least some hint of a chin and that it is
generally considered to be in poor taste for a mouth --
no matter how roll-shaped its blubber-lips -- to blossom
straight out of the neck with no chin to separate the two
and mark the end of the face.

What appears in THE NEW FURHER may be
a very bad photo. Even so, your eyes are unmistakably
swollen and, rightly or wrongly, convey the impression
of making it somewhat difficult for their owner to keep
them open -- what with those thick and sticky lids the
occasional redness of which the picture serves merely to
indicate.

Gratifyingly, there is nothing vague
about the portrayal of your cheeks in the porous vastness
of which your nose threatens to lose itself. What a
pathetically empty threat, though! As if a pear-shaped
monstrosity such as your facial pièce de résistance could
possibly succeed in doing anything of the sort.

As there is no way of telling your brow
from your bald-pate, nothing more need - or could - be
said about your face, and all that remains is the question
of why on God's green earth you won't leave the thing at

home when mingling with people.

Correct me if I'm wrong -- but here is my solution: shocking, though it may be, the exhibition of your features is courageously aimed at enabling your readers more fully to enjoy the feats of your pen. "Authenticity", they tell me, is the number one earmark of true art. And that anyone sporting your face should be urged and compelled -- that he should be forced - to write precisely the way you do is most readily understood. Thus your image served substantially to heighten and deepen the pleasure I derived from your column. Thanks again, dear. And renewed congratulations on what I deem a literary jewel as well as a magnificent manifestation of the smiling humanity that is yours.

Yours very sincerely

Erika Mann

12 P.S. Should -- as I rather suspect -- your name be capable of providing further proof of the authenticity of your art, may I suggest that you swiftly dispose of lil' ole "Argus" and let us have the whole story of how you happened to grow that humorous. "Thomas Frau" -- sweet Jesus, it's killing!

20/10/54
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