

ON THOMAS MANN'S ›HERR UND HUND‹

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Thomas Manns ›Herr und Hund‹ erkundet eine bemerkenswerte Beziehung zwischen Mensch und Tier. Der Autor und Ich-Erzähler verschmelzen in dieser quasi-autobiographischen Novelle, die konsequent jeglichen Bezug auf den Ersten Weltkrieg, aber auch auf Familie ebenso wie auf Freund und Feind ausspart. Hund und Herr bewerkstelligen die narrative Verführung des Lesers allein durch ihre Abenteuer und Lebenseindrücke. Trotz anfänglicher Bedenken kommt der als intellektueller Snob gezeichnete Herr mit der Promenadenmischung schließlich gut zurecht. Die Analyse der Gegensatzpaare: Aristokrat und Gemeiner, Natur und Kultur, bildet den Gegenstand der vorliegenden Studie.

Thomas Mann's narrative ›Herr und Hund‹ explores a remarkable relationship between man and animal. Author and first-person narrator fuse in this unusual piece of autobiographical writing that excludes any references to World War I as well as to family, friend, and foe. The dog and his master stride through the narrative, charming the reader with their adventures and what is their view of the world. Despite initial misgivings, the somewhat snobbish intellectual gets along very well with the mongrel. Together they go for long walks through unbridled nature in the rural surroundings of Munich. The essay focusses on two binary oppositions, of aristocrat and commoner, nature and culture.

No more than Churchill's fame rests on his paintings, or Einstein's on his playing the violin, does Thomas Mann's literary stature rest on this charming canine idyl.¹⁾

This biting remark comes from a critic Frank Braun, referring to Thomas Mann's long narrative ›Herr und Hund‹ (1919) with the subtitle ›Ein Idyll.²⁾ Braun simply dismisses it as “animal literature”³⁾ that can at best be described as “charming”. Similarly Peter Handke, although not a traditional literary critic, remarks in an interview in 1988, in a rather exasperated manner:

Gerade vor ein paar Tagen habe ich wieder *Herr und Hund* von ihm gelesen. Da ist gleich der erste Satz so, daß man spürt, der das schreibt, ist sich dessen gewiß, eine Gemeinde zu haben,

1) FRANK X. BRAUN, Thomas Mann's Canine Idyl, in: Monatshefte 49 (1957), No. 4, pp. 207–211, here: p. 207. (American English in original.)

2) THOMAS MANN, Herr und Hund. Ein Idyll (1919), 3. Aufl., Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 2008 (cited edition).

3) BRAUN, Thomas Mann's Canine Idyl (cit. fn. 1), p. 211.

die auf seinen bestimmten Tonfall hört. Also er fängt nie wirklich an, sondern schreibt in dem Bewußtsein, daß er der Thomas Mann ist. Das ist doch verwerflich. [...] Ein schrecklich schlechter Schriftsteller ist das.⁴⁾

›Herr und Hund‹ has never been taken seriously by literary critics and even by other writers. It is indeed one of the most underrated and least known of Mann's writings. Let us see what it is all about. The prose narrative is accompanied with thirteen beautiful black and white sketches by Georg W. Rössner in the 1925 edition of the book. They are now integral to any new edition. The first person narrator is drawn as the tall and lithe *Herr*. The narrator and the author Thomas Mann become thus one and the same. According to Thomas Mann's Diaries, the dog in the narrative is actually the pet dog of the Mann family in its Munich days. The narrative is without doubt autobiographical, albeit an unusual kind of autobiography where family, friends, foes and the rest of the world are more or less excluded, in an extreme and deliberate manner, at the most hovering at the periphery of an extraordinary relationship between a man and as the saying goes, man's best friend, his dog. Except for a couple of subtle references – it would be nice if Bauschan could hunt a rabbit and contribute to the kitchen in these present modest times (*magere Zeiten*) (94) and (*schmale Zeiten*) (137) –, the First World War and its terrible consequences for Germany are also missing. Historicity is conspicuous by its absence. Only nature, in all its pristine and raw glory in Munich by the river Isar is allowed to participate in this remarkably beautiful relationship. The omission of the inter-human relationships and the worldly affairs is intentional. Only when a being is extremely disillusioned with the world around him, does he attempt to explore other worlds and relations. In this case it is the man-animal-nature idyll, a clear break from the politically charged post-World War I Germany that was bristling with angry accusations and counter-accusations.

Two related dualities of aristocrat and commoner, nature and culture are examined in the following section and the next to illustrate the discourse of this unusual narrative.

Aristocrat and Commoner

The English translation 'A Man and his Dog' does not quite match up to the German original. 'Herr' is not simply any man; rather he is a gentleman, the lord and the master. Herr has many derivatives in German like *Herrscher*-ruler, *herrschen*-to rule. They are the ones who decide the rules of the game. In fact, initially the dog Bauschan feels *herrenlos*-masterless (28), hence his look of misery. Only when he gradually accepts his new *Herr*, and becomes attached to him, does he come alive. The German title itself is in many ways very interesting. Generally two opposing

⁴⁾ ANDRÉ MÜLLER im Gespräch mit Peter Handke, Weitra: Bibliothek der Provinz 1993, pp. 63f.

characters or characteristics are connected with ‘and’ like master and servant, master and apprentice, man and woman, beauty and beast, father and son. Thomas Mann’s title plays with this combination of power relations. Apart from the beauty of alliteration, the title introduces, in the second part of the opposition and relation, an element of surprise, the unexpected: master and dog. In fact, Mann plays with such combinations elsewhere in the book as well: he is sitting between the ‘hen and dog’ (*Hahn und Hund*) in the chapter titled *Revier* and elsewhere the conventional ‘hunter and dog’ is turned upside down to ‘hunter (dog) and master’ (*Jäger und Herr*), an astonishing role reversal. (123)

The discourse oscillates between the Herr’s weakness for pedigree and love for his mongrel German pointer – one of those curious paradoxes of life. Bauschan is often introduced as if he were the protagonist of a play. His entry in the narrative is full of exuberance and vitality. However his initial wretched skeleton state when he was found abandoned – a bundle of bones on four stilts – is compared to the Count of Moor, the central but pathetic character of Schiller’s play ›Die Räuber. When the veterinary doctor diagnoses Bauschan as “a bit nervous and anaemic”, the narrator is pleased for these are supposed to be the attributes of a child with aristocratic background. But otherwise the Herr acknowledges Bauschan as a mixed breed or a commoner unlike his predecessor pure breed Scottish Alsatian Perry. ‘*derb, wie das Volk*’ (rough and tough like the folk) (44) is how Bauschan is described. *Volk* has two meanings in German: It can mean the people or a nation, say the Jewish Volk, the Serbian Volk, the German Volk (*Wir sind das Volk* was the slogan of the demonstrators in East Berlin and Leipzig just before the fall of the wall); or it can refer to a class, i. e. the common people or folks in opposition to the aristocracy. Thomas Mann is implying, of course, the latter. Bauschan is hardy with a strong heart and a strong immune system, one who can even sleep in the open in the coldest of winter nights. The gentle Perry with his silky hair could never have survived such a harsh life. Indeed Bauschan is a “robust” dog who loves to exercise and hunt. His behaviour seems to suggest hunting blood and peasant stock. The narrator jokes light-heartedly that Bauschan is definitely not an “intellectual” or a “professor”.

Kunststücke, zum Beispiel, verlange ich nicht von ihm; es wäre vergebens. Er ist kein Gelehrter, kein Marktwunder, kein pudelnärrischer Aufwärter; er ist ein vitaler Jägerbursch und kein Professor. (46)

Bauschan is tough like the *Volk* and he also whines, like the *Volk*. In contrast, Perry true to his aristocratic nature, showed a steadfast and proud character. In self-discipline Perry was much ahead of Bauschan. If Perry were hurt, he would clench his teeth whereas Bauschan, caught in the same situation, would whine miserably. Interestingly it is exactly this very character of Bauschan, his “naive folksiness”, that disarms his Herr and spreads gaiety and cheerfulness all around.

The dog is the observer. The reader discovers the narrator through the perspective of Bauschan. Here is an example: there are three kinds of people he dislikes: the

policeman, the monk and the chimney cleaner. What connects the three? Probably that they all wear a distinct uniform representing the three pillars of society: the state, the religion and the proletariat. Mann was wary of all three. Bauschan's loud yawn after a rather short walk indicates his dissatisfaction and protest at the brief walk, as if he were saying: "What a fine master I have! How boring can he get!" The narrator's warm intimacy with Bauschan is evident from several instances of astonishment, joy, guilt, embarrassment and even altercations and jealousy.

Bauschan's preference for the narrator, the head of the family vis-à-vis other members of the family, is interpreted by his Herr as a sign of his patriarchal instincts. Hunting or rather attempts at hunting are described in detail in the narrative. Bauschan's enthusiasm and ardour for hunting never wavers although the pursuit of the game seldom culminates in a catch. Apparently what matters to Bauschan is not the booty in the end, but the spirit of the enterprise. "Running and pursuit" become an end in itself: "*Darin besteht der Selbstzweck*". This reminds us of the German saying: *Der Weg ist das Ziel* ("The way itself is the destination", a popular adaptation of a Confucian sentence). It is as if the narrator were learning lessons of life from his dog. The narrator's passive observance of the dog's hunting is sometimes transformed into active participation. His words "We go hunting" could not be clear enough. In one of the hunting scenes Mann remarks sincerely: "Bauschan barks and I silently bark with him" (130). It shows the extent of Mann's involvement. One episode is dedicated to the chasing of the rabbits. Emphasized is the seriousness of Bauschan's chase, although his chances are as good as none. The Herr notices a pattern in the rabbit's escape. It always turns sharply all of a sudden, like a hook, and escapes in the other direction whereas Bauschan, who is often almost at his heels, invariably continues running straight. The rabbit's trick fools him every time. Only many dogs together can hunt a rabbit, concludes the Herr wisely. Sometimes he asks Bauschan ironically "So where is the rabbit, Bauschan?" (120). But the Herr realises deep down his own failure at providing any kind of logistical support and assistance to the success of the enterprise.

Strange and unexpected things sometimes happen during the walks. A rabbit being chased by Bauschan jumps all of a sudden into the Herr's arms seeking refuge, as if he were also his Herr. And the Herr thought he could fool the rabbit by standing still and acting like a tree, helping somehow Bauschan! In this fraction of a second the narrator can feel the soft body and the heartbeat of the trembling rabbit. He sees a close-up of the rabbit, its protruding eyes, spoon-like ears, its lips and nose, before it jumps away on its way to freedom. In another humorous episode, a sheep falls in love with Bauschan and insists on following him, to his extreme embarrassment and discomfort. In this manner every walk turns into an adventure.

A detailed section is devoted to Bauschan's interaction with the water birds on the river. Bauschan is shy of water so he stays at the banks but he likes to make his presence felt by "sending" his bark. The narrator returns to his favourite motif of class differences. Accordingly, the "mild" ducks with their indiscriminate eating habits (eating just about anything available in their range), full tummies and com-

fortable, somewhat satisfied existence could represent the bourgeoisie unlike the wild sea-gulls who look for specific fish in the area of the water-fall. The sea-gulls appear to look somewhat dissatisfied and kind of sad. Bauschan's barking is enough to disturb the "nervous" sea-gulls who fly away. The "shameless" ducks, however, are far from bothered and they remain disrespectful to his barking.

Another episode at the end of the narrative also highlights in a subtle manner, the class structures in the society: those who live by the pen and those who live by means very different from the pen. One day the dog and the Herr are witness to successful hunting by a professional hunter, a specialist. They encounter a gun-wielding hunter who brings down a duck with a single shot. Bauschan is stunned. It was as if he realised, for the first time, the inadequacies of his Herr; this is after all what a "real" Herr is supposed to be like! His yawning on the way back is a clear expression of his low opinion of his Herr, or at least that is what his Herr imagines:

Es war das unverschämte, sperrangelweite, grobe gelangweilte und von einem piepsenden Kehllaut begleitete Gähnen, das deutlich ausdrückte: „Ah-i, ein schöner Herr! Kein rechter Herr! Ein lumpiger Herr!“, und wenn der beleidigende Laut mich niemals unempfindlich läßt, so war er diesmal vermögend, unsre Freundschaft bis in den Grund zu stören. (136)

The Herr, a man of letters, who spends much of his time bent over his study table in his villa, feels terribly hurt and inadequate. He tells Bauschan bitterly that he is welcome to change his master. But this master in hunting boots and leather slacks with rough looks and a gun slung over his shoulders would not caress him tenderly under his chin or patiently take him to a vet when he is bleeding from his mouth! "*Er ist zwar nur ein Mann in Manchester und kein Herr*" (136). He wonders if he even has the license to hunt. And so he goes on with his lamentations and justifications till they reach the house and the Herr slams the gate at Bauschan's face. It takes some time for relations to normalize.

The intellectual snobbery of the Herr often comes in conflict with the common ways of the mongrel, once an abandoned puppy. However the Herr is, more often than not, won over by its naive (folk) character and unbridled zest for life which is infectious and encouraging in difficult times.

Nature and Culture

The binary opposition of nature and culture is omnipresent in the narrative. The title contains in itself the classic opposition of nature (Hund) and culture (Herr). A dog that can dream and laugh is the writer's superimposition of human elements on the dog. The house and the garden represent the culture, the river and the landscape, nature. In the beginning of the narrative, the lively chirping and warble of the singing birds juxtapose with the "boom" of a "stern mechanical bird", the aeroplane. Mostly nature is invariably connected with Bauschan. The Herr always has two possibilities when he leaves his house: a left-turn takes him to 'culture', in the direction of the city with its mundane and cheerless worldly af-

fairs. The city is always invariably ready with its net to trap you and suffocate you with its norms and intrigues. A right-turn takes him, and that suits Bauschan, in the midst of unlimited nature. The attire, the walking stick and all that goes with the “highly bourgeois” process of getting-ready inadvertently betray the intentions of the Herr. The former option always deeply disappoints Bauschan and he prefers to stay behind. The latter, its unfettered freedom with the possibilities of hunting, makes his day.

Sein Leben beginnt, wenn ich ausgehe – und ach, auch dann beginnt es oftmals noch nicht! Denn indem ich das Haus verlasse, fragt es sich, ob ich mich nach rechts wenden werde, die Allee hinunter, dorthin, wo es ins Freie und in die Einsamkeit unserer Jagdgründe geht, oder nach links, gegen die Trambahnstation, um in die Stadt zu fahren – und nur im ersteren Falle hat es für Bauschan einen Sinn, mich zu begleiten. (32)

The Herr suffers pangs of guilt when Bauschan is left behind.

Noch am Ausgange der Allee kann ich ihn sitzen sehen, als kleines, dunkles, ungeschicktes Pünktchen inmitten der Straße, und es gibt mir einen Stich ins Herz, ich besteige den Tram nicht anders als mit Gewissensbissen. (34)

Bauschan is large hearted. He waits for his Herr at the same point where he was left. There is no sign of reproach or sulk. Michael Mann interprets ›Herr und Hund‹ as a political allegory.⁵⁾ Accordingly, the geographical “left” and “right” are understood as ideological orientations. Thomas Mann was – and this is well documented –, uneasy with both the options. This interpretation, however, goes against the very title of the narrative: ›An Idyll‹ and the overall positive ambiance of the narrative. Besides, even if the nature is threatening at times, that is the very reason to treat it with respect. The main thing, is, that “left” and “right” are to be seen from the perspective of the dog and not that of Thomas Mann even if there is a first-person narrator. From Bauschan’s point of view, the “right” is the right choice and that is it.

The Herr is an early riser. In the mornings one feels virtuous and free, forgetting for a while that the world is spreading its net to trap you with its expectations and intrigues. Bauschan runs enthusiastically from his kennel at the back of the house. Together the two of them take their morning walks. The long walks in the Munich province are refreshing and inspiring. The crossing of the river in a boat reminds him nostalgically of the good old days and in a moment of perfect bliss, Mann exclaims: “What more could I want?” (86). But the description of nature is not akin to the 19th century Romantic melancholic yearning for a pure pastoral landscape. Meditation and introspection are also not the author’s aims. The landscape is for Mann not a space for idle contemplation. The description does not even match the landscape paintings perfected by the French Impressionists of the late 19th century.

⁵⁾ MICHAEL MANN, Allegorie und Parodie in Thomas Manns Idyll ›Herr und Hund‹, in: Monatshefte 57 (1965), No. 7, pp. 336–342, here: p. 338. – Michael Mann was the youngest son of Thomas Mann.

Mann takes matter-of-fact walks that offer exercise, relaxation and a botanical scholarly survey of the vegetation in the area. What are the various varieties of trees, what could be their approximate age, what are the foliage and the soil like? It is almost as if an explorer were undertaking a survey, albeit in a poetic fashion. The formidable documentation and keen observation are evident in the details. Elms, beeches, limes and silvery willows dominate some parts of the landscape. The swampy uneven terrain with foul smelling water bodies or lagunae reminds him at times of Venice, later the city of his famous classic ›Death in Venice‹. The primordial terrain makes it necessary for him to wear boots with nails. However nature's mysticism is not completely lost on him. In fact, sometimes it overwhelms him. He struggles to find the right word for this landscape because it is, from his point of view, neither forest nor park. Finally he calls it a magic garden (*der Zaubergarten*) and the healing garden (*der Kurgarten*). The locomotive factory downstream emitting smoke and wailing tones that pierce the air from time to time represents the opposite of all that the nature stands for.

There is also the nature-culture overlapping and even competition for space:

Sie [die Gegend] hat, sage ich, ihre anfängliche Eigenart, auch seit das Grundstücksgeschäft sich ihrer bemächtigt, vollauf bewahrt, und überall, auch außerhalb der Gärten, hält ihre Ur- und Originalvegetation deutlich das Übergewicht gegen die eingeführte und nachgepflanzte. Da kommt wohl in Alleen und öffentlichen Anlagen die Roßkastanie vor, der rasch wachsende Ahorn, selbst Buchen und allerlei Ziergesträuch; doch alles das ist nicht urwüchsig, das ist gesetzt, so gut wie die welsche Pappel, die aufgereiht ragt in ihrer sterilen Männlichkeit. Ich nannte die Esche als autochthonen Baum – sie ist sehr stark verbreitet, man findet sie in allen Lebensaltern, als hundertjährigen Riesen wie auch als weichen Schößling, der massenweise wie Unkraut dem Kies entsproßt; und sie ist es, die zusammen mit der Silber- und Zitterpappel, der Birke, der Weide als Baum und Gebüsch der Landschaft ihr eigentliches Gepräge verleiht. (58f.)

Nature evidently still has an edge over culture in this region. Some streets are almost taken over by vegetation. The signboards of many streets, deserted still, also symbolize the criss-crossing of culture and nature and the struggle for supremacy. Adalbert Stifter Straße, named after the Austrian poet well-known for his rich descriptions of nature, is ironically almost overwhelmed by bushes. Another street signboard is barely legible. Only the S in the beginning and two 'e' at intervals are visible. Mann is eventually able to decipher it as Shakespeare-Straße. Could it mean the waning of Shakespeare's influence on German literature since the epoch of Storm and Stress? In any case unbridled nature mostly proves to be mightier than the signifiers of high culture. Of course, Mann is also at his ironic best here.

Gradually the narrator discovers that nature can also be forbidding, uncanny and at times, dark and scary. Bauschan, overpowered by instincts, once eats a rat that he manages to hunt, right in front of his Herr. The sight of it and the sound of the bones cracking under Bauschan's teeth are hard to bear. This is too much of nature for the polished Herr and he feels disconcerted. However he soon tells himself that this is the natural order of things. His loyalty is undoubtedly with

his dog and so he blames the prey for not being properly guided and trained. The nature's uncanny ways are also highlighted as two dogs confront each other face-to-face. Their distrust of each other is incomprehensible to the narrator.

Ultimately he is grateful to the nature for all the joy that he receives from it:

Ich bin der Landschaft anhänglich und dankbar, darum habe ich sie beschrieben. Sie ist mein Park und meine Einsamkeit; meine Gedanken und Träume sind mit ihren Bildern vermischt und verwachsen, wie das Laub ihrer Schlingpflanzen mit dem ihrer Bäume. (89)

Presentation

Roland Barthes made an important point in his inaugural lecture at Collège de France, most appropriate in the context of Thomas Mann:

Literature accommodates all kind of knowledge. [...] If, by some unimaginable excess of socialism or barbarism, all but one of our disciplines were to be expelled from our educational system, it is the discipline of literature which would have to be saved, for all knowledge, all the sciences are present in the literary monument.⁶⁾

In post-modern studies the same is expressed in technical terms as intertextuality or interdisciplinarity or integrationalism. The narrative abounds with many examples. Mann appears to have done a lot of research on the flora and vegetation of the region, for the book contains extensive information on the various varieties of trees growing in this marshy region like beech, poplar, maple, aspen, chestnut and ash tree. There is the comparison of the picturesque landscape in Munich with the landscapes paintings of the French Baroque painter Claude Lorraine. He also gives umpteen examples from other fine arts. How he compares Bauschan with straw caught in his hair and toes with the poor old Count Moor coming out of the Hunger Tower in Schiller's ›Die Räuber‹! Or how the classical motif of Thorn-Puller is introduced when a thorn pierces one of Bauschan's paws and he cries in pain! The continuity with the classical tradition has always been important for Mann. To cite yet another mythical parallel: Bauschan's pose, sitting erect with his head and chest held high and forelegs close to the body, paws extended in parallel lines, is compared to the majestic sphinx. Of course the metaphors place the dog he loves on a high pedestal. These examples show how Mann draws, with ease, on other texts be it myth, sculpture, painting or literature itself. Mann perfected this technique of interdisciplinarity in ›The Magic Mountain‹ which even contains a chapter with the title 'The Thermometer'. Literature, indeed, stands at the "cross-roads" (à la Barthes) of all other discourses.

The book has all the elements that Mann is famous for: irony and humour. In a radio discussion in 1953 Thomas Mann remarked:

⁶⁾ ROLAND BARTHES, Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France, in: Selected Writings, SUSAN SONTAG (ed.), Oxford: Fontana/University Press 1983, pp. 457–478, here: p. 463.

Irony, it seems to me, is that spirit of art which draws a smile from the reader or listener, an intellectual smile, I might call it; while humor induces the laughter that wells up from the heart. This I personally rate higher as the effect of art and welcome it more happily when it is the effect of my own productions than the Erasmus-like smile which irony evokes. I must say – you know that I have read aloud a great deal in my life, and every time my reading evoked a hearty laugh in the auditorium, I was the most pleased and felt happiest on the platform.⁷⁾

There are ample examples of it in the narrative. The self-irony is evident in the description of the Herr who is holding on to old values and yet cannot help but love his dog whose pedigree is suspect. Thomas Mann is perhaps at his tongue-in-cheek and ironic best when he alludes to Bauschan delicately raising his paw when a thorn pierces it, thereby transferring the motif of the thorn-puller (*Dornauszieher*) with its focus on natural beauty and grace, on to his mongrel dog.⁵⁾ The ironic reference to the German classical epoch slogan of *Edle Einfalt und stille Größe* is clear from the choice of words that describe this scene as *schöne Einfalt*.⁹⁾ The narrator compares his whistle call for Bauschan with the melody of the second movement of Schubert's Eighth Unfinished Symphony. Unusual is, however, the book's occasional sentimental and romantic tone, mostly absent in Mann's other works, expressed through exclamations like: “*Welch ein schönes und gutes Tier ist Bauschan!*” and “*Wie ideal, wie vollkommen!*” This narrative is Thomas Mann's literary mausoleum for his pet dog. Comparisons could be drawn with Eduard Mörike's relationship with his dog Joli. The dog with a French name turns into a poet when Mörike (1804–1874) composes a poem for his sister Clara on her 24th birthday (10. Dec, 1840) with the title ›Joli greets‹ (*Joli gratuliert*).¹⁰⁾ There are ample examples of close human-animal relationship in the cultural history of mankind. It would not be inappropriate to mention in this context the Prussian king Friedrich der Große (1712–1786) who expressed in his testament the wish that he be buried in front of the Sanssouci Palace next to his favourite dogs! However his successor and nephew had no regard for the sentiments of this mighty king and had him buried in a church in Potsdam. Only in 1991 did his family finally fulfil his testament.

Handke's harsh criticism cited in the beginning of this article sounds odd coming from a serious writer like Handke also known for writing on unusual themes

7) THOMAS MANN, Humor und Ironie, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, HANS BÜRGIN, ERNST BÜRGIN, PETER DE MENDELSSOHN [eds.], vol. XI, Reden und Aufsätze 3, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer 1960, pp. 801–805. Trans. HENRY HATFIELD in: THOMAS MANN. A Collection of Critical Essays, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1964, pp. 170–172, here: p. 170f.

8) Refer to Kleist's essay ›Über das Marionettentheater‹ where he gives the example of a young boy pulling out a thorn from the sole of his feet as the epitome of natural beauty, grace and perfection.

9) Refer to JOHANN JOACHIM WINCKELMANN's famous dictum: ‚edle Einfalt und stille Größe‘ (*Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst*, Dresden 1755).

10) WOLFGANG BRAUNGART, Joli gratuliert. Eduard Mörike und sein Hund, in: MARTIN HUBER und GERHARD LAUER (eds.), *Nach der Sozialgeschichte*, Tübingen: Niemeyer 2000, pp. 221–232.

and his art-for-art's-sake approach. In his contemporary writings Handke has discarded the art-for-art's-sake approach and turned into a strong media critic. It needs to be emphasized that art, in this specific context literature, is not a moral or a political category. It is not even a documentary or a report. First and foremost, it is an aesthetic category that seeks no further purpose. At the same time one cannot deny that art can be provocative or, at times, comforting. In this narrative, Mann is, in terms of richness of language, form and unusual content at his realist best. The narrative pulsates with energy and enthusiasm. It is brimming with life. Indeed it shows Mann's versatility as a creative writer that he could write ›Herr und Hund‹ as well as ›Der Zauberberg‹. What matters is not the theme but the treatment of the theme. I would personally rank ›Herr und Hund‹ higher than ›Lotte in Weimar‹.