

# Thomas Mann: Bible, Art and Salvation

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## SUMMARY

Thomas Mann (1875–1955) by the time he came to work on *Joseph and his Brothers* was well-versed in philosophy, ancient mythology, psychology and theology. He was also keen to draw heroic figures against the

background of a world civilisation at war and in chaos. This meant using the stories and themes of Christianity rather than facing the God of which they speak. Against attempts to claim him for Christianity, his diagnosis of the Western soul in its sickness often implied that only in the art of the writer was there a place of cure.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Als Thomas Mann (1875–1955) an *Joseph und seine Brüder* zu arbeiten begann, war er bereits sehr belesen in Philosophie, Psychologie, Theologie und der Mythologie des Altertums. Er war daran interessiert, Heldengestalten vor einem Hintergrund einer Zivilisation im Kriegszustand und im Chaos zu

zeigen. Das bedeutete aber eher eine Verwendung der christlichen Geschichten und Themen als ein Begegnung mit dem Gott von dem sie reden. Im Gegensatz zu Versuchen, Mann als Christen zu vereinnahmen, deutet seine Diagnose der westliche Seele in ihrer Krankheit eher darauf hin, dass Heilung nur in der Kunst des Dichtens gefunden werden kann.

## RÉSUMÉ

Lorsque Thomas Mann (1875–1955) s'est attelé à l'histoire de Joseph et de ses frères, il était versé en philosophie, en mythologie ancienne, en psychologie et en théologie. Il manifesta alors beaucoup d'habileté pour décrire des héros sur la toile de fond d'une

civilisation mondiale en état de guerre et sombrant dans le chaos. Il a utilisé les histoires et les thèmes du christianisme, plutôt que de considérer le Dieu dont elles parlaient. Son diagnostic de la maladie de l'âme occidentale conduisait souvent à la conclusion qu'il n'y a de moyen de la soigner que par l'art de l'écrivain.

## Mann's background

One can trace what has been described as a 'biblical rationality' in the work of Thomas Mann.<sup>1</sup> Any such currents wash together with the philosophy of Schopenhauer and his interpretation of the world as will and imagination.<sup>2</sup> Mann was interested in the outworking of ideas in the life of human characters. He was not fascinated by mind-games, psychology and the inner dialogues in the manner of say, Henry James—it is almost a truism that Mann was not at his strongest when it came to basic characterisation. What matters are the values,

the ideas which drive the action or the plot, to the extent that to draw parallels with Max Weber concerning history as driven by ideologies is quite legitimate.<sup>3</sup> In this Mann was clearly influenced by the work of Theodor Fontane which nourished him in the mid 1890s, and whose influence can be seen at its zenith in the moral irony of *Buddenbrooks*, wherein the *scheinheilig* piety in general and the consul's need to keep up appearances even when bereaved in particular attract caustic ridicule from Mann's pen.

As G. Lukács observed, even the stolid Thomas



Buddenbrook found some consolation in reading Schopenhauer, and Mann seemed then to be indicating that he agreed with such pessimism, that the world itself had to be left to its decay.<sup>4</sup> By the time of *The Magic Mountain* we are presented with the typical extremes of Naptha and Settembrini, even if the latter's 'the world as will' is only slightly preferred to the former's 'the world as representation'. Unlike Goethe Mann had, as if on the other side of Mount Enlightenment (Parnassus), little time for moral utopianism. This can be clearly seen even in the late work *Lotte in Weimar* which works against so much that Goethe would assert. Yet some kind of new optimism in later Mann *did* arise out of this despair during the mid-1920s, as his biographers have noted: it is the engagement that comes from the determination to fight evil where it can be located, and to hope for the purging of some of one's personal demons in the process. According to Hans Küng, the path from *Buddenbrooks* to the later flowering of genius in the Joseph tetralogy was 'vom bürgerlich-Individuellen zum Mythisch-Typischen', in which a spiritual humanism, or at least an all-forgiving humanity gradually takes over.<sup>5</sup>

### The Joseph story re-told

With the huge undertaking of amplifying and re-telling the story of *Joseph and his Brothers*, Mann added to the ancient and honourable tradition of the re-written bible. In *Jubilees* (as in Philo, Ps-Philo and *The Testament of Joseph*) there is a very sanitised version of the Joseph story, told in a matter-of-fact way, with the brothers clearly guilty of unprovoked wickedness.<sup>6</sup> Yet Philo in *De Josepho* attributed the hero's good looks to God's favour, and this may be a way for Philo of indicating his shallowness. In his *De Somnis* Joseph even stands for moral ambiguity, deviousness and vainglory, 'shifting back between true and apparent virtue'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed Joseph, even in the hagiographical *Jubilees* is merely a supporting player to the main figures of Judah and Levi.<sup>8</sup> This may be because Joseph was married to Aseneth, the daughter of the priest of On; in the story she does renounce the false gods and Joseph appears more self-righteous than ever and successful enough to rule over Egypt for 48 years. While in *Jubilees*, it is Jacob's mourning for the 'dead' Joseph on the 10th day of the 7th month that is presented as the reason for the Day of Atonement (*Jub.* 34,15), on the other hand, in *Joseph and Aseneth* the hero is repeatedly described

in the text as 'son of God',<sup>9</sup> and the focus is very much on him. Joseph is a great magician, a 'mighty one of God' with healing as well as divinatory powers (44,8), but also one who keeps out of anything as ordinary as fighting in the ensuing civil war in Egypt. However these were in-house Jewish works, written for Jewish identity, too strictly 'theological', perhaps not even attempting an answer to 'what beliefs and ideas drive humans universally?' It was this quest for the universal that drove Mann to augment his biblical sources not only with Old Testament voices, but with those from the New Testament, but also from Ancient Egyptian and Sumerian mythology.

Hans Küng argues that Mann was ill-advised in his wholesale buying into the Freudian notion of myth, although it is far from likely that Mann believed in the specifically Freudian account of such things. In fact, Mann was naïve or misinformed to believe (as Küng often seems to when he writes of religion as 'Begegnung mit dem Heiligen') that there must be one original *Ur-Geschichte* of all history, according to which all religions go back to common root – usually Egypt. As Manfred Dierks observed, Julius Braun promoted this in his *Naturgeschichte der Sage*, 1864/5, and W. Bachofen also made much of the chthonic mythology of Egypt.<sup>10</sup> However, there is more in the more guarded thesis of A. Jeremias, that there is/was a common middle-eastern mythological world, and the more recent consensus follows this, as indeed did Mann. Distinctiveness arises from what religions *become as they grow alongside one another*, and one might want to reply to Küng, and others troubled by the ghost of 'comparative religion', that if there is to be any inter-religious harmonization and synthesis this will happen only eschatologically: *Endzeit* is not simply *Urzeit*.

Mann did not choose the *Joseph* story simply because it provided its own magical and self-contained world. There is none of the exotic particularity of say, Flaubert's *Salamambo*: indeed, as Mann once wrote, *that* was how *not* to write of the past. Nor, at the other extreme, did he care much for Nietzsche's historicism, but thought that things *could* be learned from the past and its self-representation in its literature.<sup>11</sup> The humorous is all the more possible because these are not historical, time-bound characters. In mythical thinking there is not such a strong notion of the distinct categories of past, present and future, as Cassirer once put it, although Mann was apparently unaware of this work by his fellow exile.<sup>12</sup> Küng provides



the helpful insight that Mann was keen to present Joseph as one who bridged the gap between sacred and secular, thus to suggest that politics was truly religious.<sup>13</sup> In Mann, as in Goethe, the importance of moving from the personal up to the social: out of isolation is expressed.<sup>14</sup> Real change takes place in Joseph only after the second fall of Joseph – in the house of Petepre (Potiphar) – where the belief that his own vision of reality is the real one is forced to surrender to a more psychologically pluralist understanding: put simply, different people see things differently. Indeed, Lukács had asserted that Mann saw the need against so many modern writers, to put subjectivity firmly in its place.

The gradual but increasingly clear transition of Mann's irony and self-irony into the playful is determined by two components. On the one hand, the consciousness of his most important characters recedes ever more distantly from objective reality; on the other, reality asserts its supremacy over all kinds of false consciousness ever more vigorously. For this reason Mann's playfulness never dissolves objective reality, but on the contrary underlines its inevitable and natural triumph. The greater the discrepancy between being and consciousness, the more grotesque and degrading must the defeat of subjectivity be.<sup>15</sup>

There is thus a tragi-comic catastrophe and a 'degradation of the would-be-tragic'. Lukács continues:

Modernism is well-versed in conjuring with extremes, but their trajectory lies between a false consciousness (unrecognised as such) and its special 'reality'; subjectivism then is the ruling principle for both outlook and method. In Thomas Mann, however, the imagined reality oscillates with the real (objective) one and the latter is always victorious.<sup>16</sup>

Lukács thus concludes that Mann is, or has at last become optimistic, perhaps owing to his faith in psychology which affirmed that human beings could leave behind illusion, that history need no longer be destructive. This optimism cannot simply be attributed to the effects of Californian sunshine.

Certainly the whole thrust of the Joseph story is a rejection of lonely individualism and the affirmation of the common human awareness of hope in the future and the power of love.<sup>17</sup> It is clear that *Joseph* is not a mere *Bildungsroman* – it is rather an *Erziehungsroman* which draws the individual out

into society, the realm of the political. Joseph as the artist/dreamer is able to turn his deathly art to serve life. This book was the mature Mann's favourite work, one in which Joseph becomes a bourgeois manager (as provider he is not quite Franklin D. Roosevelt) and evinces practical heroism, with (unconscious) echoes of Dostoevsky's Ivan's axiom: 'Brot kommt zuerst und dann das Hosannah.'<sup>18</sup> The Messiah is not to be expected from the heavens – any such notion is ironically ridiculed in *Joseph* – but is one from amongst us – a Hochstapler, a confidence trickster, a Felix Krull writ large. But is Joseph portrayed as so *ordinary*, so *ungodly*? He may be the anti-Siegfried, but that does not mean he is presented as an anti-hero. Mann's Joseph is hardly Josef K.

Mann therefore does not so much de-mythologise as re-mythologise. Joseph and his brothers and their world stand for things. What is life other than unconscious repetition of primeval models of motives and behaviour? The question: to what extent was Mann interested in the figure of Christ as distinct from Tammuz-Adonai? – is not one Mann would have asked. Typologically there is foreshadowing of Christ in details – with Joseph in the pit: birth, death, hell descent, re-ascent,<sup>19</sup> although Mann seems more comfortable in referring these to 'God to come', rather than the more Christian traditional 'Christ to come'.<sup>20</sup> In any case Joseph spends three days and nights in the well (called 'hell'<sup>21</sup>); the angels watch over the empty well once he has risen from it; he is sold for 20 pieces of silver after Judah kisses him, although it is to Judah that the blessing of Jacob goes. On this last point there is a fine example of Mann's sturdy optimism: human beings are blessed not only through their cursedness but even in their cursing. Joseph's Festessen with the brothers is a kind of *Herrenmahl* that Jacob took beast's blood to be Joseph's (IV 646) made Joseph consider the difference between 'this is my blood' and 'this signifies my blood'. The sin-bearing Joseph becomes founder of a new religion. The words which Joseph uses when revealing himself to his brothers in Egypt are those of Christ to his disciples after the resurrection. In reply to Issachar's doubting Thomas-like query as to his identity, Joseph states: 'Joseph bin ich, überkleidet mit der Herrlichkeit dieser Welt.' Mann's Christ is no superhero nor everyman but the human being who is content with his humanity.<sup>22</sup> Mann is not inventing a mythology, he is re-presenting one.



## The Religious Mann

The watershed in Mann's career around 1924-6 (curiously coincidental with that alleged to be the time of Karl Barth's 'turn') came after completing *The Magic Mountain* and was the sense that literature is more about re-saying reality than finding more of it to talk about. His understanding of *Wiederholung*, of 'myth' as repetition of a primal event, was something far more positive than Nietzsche's 'eternal return' as termless recapitulation or variations on a theme, for it meant a making-available in the present of the best of what went before and would yet come. Such a motif is to be found in *Lotte in Weimar* (from coincidentally on the lips of Adele Schopenhauer) and in *The Holy Sinner (Der Erwählte)*. After all, on receiving the Nobel Prize he was bold enough to say: 'I am no Catholic. I believe in the immediacy of God.'<sup>23</sup> Admittedly, this sounds perilously close to Jung's celebrated 'Gnostic' bon mot: 'I do not believe that God exists. I know', but it is perhaps just an exaggeration of Protestant theology.

Irony as one's meta-principle often means one ends with little of positive substance to affirm. However, by the end of his life Mann became a doubter of doubt, and in that sense could be claimed as religiously 'post-modern'.<sup>24</sup> Yet Mann was too much an optimist in human possibilities to have been able to wear the 'postmodernist' etiquette with conviction. Part of his liking for Freud was his remedy: the Freudian clarification of the unconscious in light of conscious, a kind of secularised 'perspicuity principle'.<sup>25</sup> And yet there would be a shift away from Freud, a sense that human individuals have to go further than Freudian enlightenment of their personal troubles, to move out of themselves altogether to find salvation.<sup>26</sup> We know that in 1936 Mann was involved in organising the celebrations of Freud's 80th birthday when the latter was 'honoured as 'the pathfinder to a humanism of the future'. Through Freud, the human race could hope to find itself standing in 'a bolder, freer, more joyous, artistically more mature relationship to the powers of the underworld, the unconscious, the id, than is granted to today's humanity, as it struggles in neurotic Angst and its accompanying hatred'.<sup>27</sup>

Accordingly, in the one step beyond Freud, a Jungian influence was also mediated to him, principally via Karl Kerenyi, originating in the early 1930s<sup>28</sup> while his acceptance of Freud had become qualified since the 1925-29 period. In the politi-

cal climate of incipient totalitarianism, humanism needed to find a more solid foundation. As with Goethe's Faust who is really a Prospero-figure, Mann's Joseph is one who has belief in the future and its possibilities (*Zukunftsglauben*). Mann himself was the prophet of this Ideal of future self-integration. For Joseph shows a reconciliation of the divided human being, including the chasm between Spirit and Soul/Nature, without losing anything of either by some process of *Aufhebung*.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain* only got to realise the diagnosis, the later creation, Joseph demonstrates the remedy as well. And these remedies are to be found in the ancient traditions of wisdom, with Christianity as a pillar of civilisation. However, as mentioned above, in that Joseph is portrayed exactly as the kind of thing Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor was looking for from a hero, Werner Frizen is not wrong to raise the question of whether Joseph is the 'anti-Christus'.<sup>30</sup>

## Mann and Christ

The Jungian elements can be seen: Joseph-Christ is the *Pantokrator* for the economy of the known world, yet, graciously, he is also Hermes-like and communicates through his art the secrets of the invisible God who is beyond time and space. The Christ-myth thus understood, in which opposites are integrated relates well to Mann's view of sexuality.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the work in its love of description mirroring a love of life, there is the presence of Fontane's 'feines Gefühl', tastefulness, but also of Goethe's ethicized form of Christianity, and it is perhaps not without significance that Mann broke off after the 'Joseph in Egypt' section to write *Lotte in Weimar*.<sup>32</sup>

Werner Frizen has noted the echoes of the Parsifal legend in this first part of *Joseph*, for whom the hermaphrodite nature of the Christ-type was helpful in resolving conflict in a way analogous to that of Adam's androgyny in the kabbalah.<sup>33</sup> In truth, Mann's androgynous Pharaoh seems a bit like a Disney character, a sort of even camper Shere Khan from *The Jungle Book*. Yet the one who has become known through the bible merely as 'Potiphar's wife', is in *Joseph* given a name, nay, two names – Mut and Eni – and in which her torment and courage, worthy of Vergil's Dido, are described and enobled precisely for the strength of her unashamed desire. Mann depicts the woman as hunter, and yet also the universal soul distracted by



a deity (Christ?) who is as desirable as he appears cold towards her. She is one of the finest creations of modern literature, and a brief selection is in order, not simply because Mann identified with her<sup>34</sup> nor just for the sake of literary style, but for the sense of the pathos of a love which lacks the fatherly ordering<sup>35</sup> of the God of Israel.

Ein so große Dame, vornehm, überlegen, hochmütig und weltgewandt, kühl eingeschlossen bisher in das Ichgefühl ihres Gottesdünkels, – und nun auf einmal dem Du verfallen, einem von ihrem Standpunkt gesehen ausgemacht unwürdigen Du, aber ihm verfallen bereits in solcher Schwäche und bis zu solcher Auflösung ihres Herrinentums, daß sie es schon kaum noch zustande brachte, wenigstens die Rolle festzuhalten der Liebesherrin und der herausfordernden Unternehmerin des Gefühls, sondern sich bereits Sklavin wußte des Sklaven-Du, da sie von ihm hinwegfloh mit mürben Knien, blind, bebend, mit flatternden Gedanken, flatternde Worte murmelnd, ohne Bedacht auf die Zofen, die sie doch mit Bedacht und Stolz zum Stelldichein mitgenommen: ‘Verloren, verloren, verraten, verraten. . .’<sup>36</sup>

Friedhelm Marx’s comment, that Mann was not interesting in painting a Christ without contradictions, argued against Küng who thinks Christ was too sober and straightforward to be anything like Joseph, and against Frizen, for whom Joseph is actually the anti-Christ,<sup>37</sup> is well made. There is in *Joseph* a re-interpretation of Christ as one who astonishes and confuses, but finally comes good as the man for everyone.

### Conclusion: Mann at the centre

Where does all this leave Mann theologically, or to be more specific, how did things stand between the ‘later’ Mann and the Judeo-Christian God? For critics of the Hebrew bible such as Abts and Westermann, for whom the Joseph story was about the foundations of the monarchy and hierarchy within Israelite, even Jewish society,<sup>38</sup> Mann’s interpretation (forty-five times as long as the original story in Genesis) was simply fanciful to the extent that he used the story to hang his own ideas on. However the recent popularity of psychological and ‘reader-response’ approaches has meant a cross-over between biblical and literary studies, and a less purist approach to the possibilities of meaning in a biblical text.<sup>39</sup> Mann

would soon re-write the Gregorius-legend in his *Der Erwählte* which is about the implosion of any meaningful view of authority, Catholic or Protestant. Where Helmut Koopmann sees Oedipal themes in these two works by Mann, I prefer to see the issues as theological, to do with relating to ‘authority’ and the heavenly father, no matter how accurate be Koopmann’s speculation about Mann and his earthly parent.<sup>40</sup> The direct truth-sounding voice has been lost and is beyond rediscovery in this confusing but therefore mysterious world.

We cannot conclude without making some reference to the treatise-like novel of *Doktor Faustus*, that work which perhaps showed forth the apocalypse of the German soul, to use the title of Hans Urs von Balthasar’s tour through German literature from 1740-1940 (noticeably quiet on Mann.)<sup>41</sup> Whether the protagonist of the novel is meant to be Nietzsche or Heidegger, there is no doubt of his being gripped by a philosophical passion which is for the infinite. Karl-Josef Kuschel’s view that there is grace in *Doktor Faustus* seems to trade the same old liberal misuse of negative theology: God is where he is not.<sup>42</sup> In fact, in the novel God and the devil have both been secularised to the point that they are identified the one with the other.<sup>43</sup> Goethe’s *Faust*’s heaven and hell no longer exist. Mann’s irony was of course, never merely cynical, but served rather to attack fanaticism in all its forms-materialist, ideological, whatever. In this sense the book is more about German (musical) Romanticism’s *corruption* of Christianity than any direct theological treatise. There was, philosophically speaking, a sort of negative dialectic *avant la lettre*.<sup>44</sup>

The problem is that it did tend to place the wandering artist, himself, Thomas Mann at the centre of the universe—and when that universe is as wide as, well, the Universe, and its good and evil are mixed up together, it is a lonely, confusing, solecistic and self-consciously vacuous place to reside. *Lotte in Weimar* is not only Mann’s concluding interpretation of Goethe,<sup>45</sup> but, in its themes of filial disappointment and tension, of the hollowness of the theme of ‘the great man’, of the illusion of love, the sense of no longer being fashionable, of the desire to mediate the truth giving way to talk of ‘freedom’ – it is autobiographical. Moreover, Mann was himself a Faustian figure, operating between the personalities of *damnatus* and *redemptus*, as played out in *The Holy Sinner*. The prelude to the whole Joseph tetralogy is entitled ‘Descent into Hell’, but, as Mann put it



himself, Germany 'has never descended into hell, and doesn't give a damn for guilt and redemption through grace.'<sup>46</sup> But Mann thought that he had.

## Notes

- 1 F. Golka, 'The Biblical Joseph Story and Thomas Mann's novel' in *The Leopard's Spots* (T&T Clark, 1993), 123-34, 127: 'Where did Mann get this principle of repetition from, if he was not influenced by Noth's tradition-history? According to Manfred Dierks, Thomas Mann's work also narrates the philosophy of Schopenhauer. In this case the Joseph novel deals "with human self-liberation from the confinement to mythological predestination. . ." Mann uses the term "myth" in such a way "that basically all beings in the world are only one". Golka goes on (130) to show how von Rad [in his 'Biblische Josepherzählung und Josephroman' in *Gottes Wirken in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1974), 285-304] challenged Mann's mythological interpretation of a work which was intended to promote secular wisdom and how von Rad's belief that such wisdom is 'open to the future' and linear-historical rather than past-oriented and 'cyclical' is to caricature things with a broad Barthian brush.
- 2 M. Dierks, *Thomas Mann-Studien VII* (Berlin 1987.)
- 3 See H Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: calling and the shaping of the self* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988); *Politics, Death and the Devil: self and power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992.)
- 4 As commented on and affirmed by B. Kristiansen in *Uniform-Form-Überform: Thomas Manns Zaubenberg und Schopenhauers Metaphysik: eine Studie zu den Beziehungen zwischen Thomas Manns Roman Der Zaubenberg und Schopenhauers Metaphysik* (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1978), 248f. He claims that Mann shared the Dionysian view, that only through breaking things up can new forms come into being.: Pepperkorn's story is portrayed as an *imitatio passionis Christi*, not a *Dionysian* ecstasy (282.) Schopenhauer trumps Nietzsche!
- 5 H. Küng: 'die partielle Identität des menschlichen und des göttlichen Geistes zu einer Grundlehren gemacht' (in W. Jens & H Küng, *Anwälte der Humanität: Thomas Mann, Herman Hesse, Heinrich Böll* [München: Piper, 1993], 122.)
- 6 See Erich C. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: the reinvention of Jewish tradition* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: Univ Cal. Press, 1998. Ch.3.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 85; cf. Philo *Migr.* 158-63
- 8 It is significant that Isaac and Rebekah remain alive to give a blessing to Levi and Judah, thus cancelling out any possible invalidity of the blessing inherited from Jacob (see ch. 31)
- 9 'This does not designate a title, nor should it be seen as Christian interpolation. But it lifts Joseph well out of the ordinary and sets him in the glow of the divine' (Gruen, *Heritage*, 98, with reference to *Jos. As.6.3, 6.5, 13.13, 18.11, 21.4, 23.10*)
- 10 Dierks, *Studien*, 246f. Cf. along these lines, Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* - an embarrassment to anthropologists and Freudians alike.
- 11 See Eckhard Heftrich, *Geträumte Taten: über Thomas Mann Bd III* (Frankfurt-a.-M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), 419. Joseph is humanised by a portrait which does not deny his bad temper and his pride.
- 12 K. Hamburger, *Thomas Manns biblische Werk: der Joseph-Roman, die Moses-Erzählung 'Das Gesetz'* (München: Nymphenburger, 1981), 174 with reference to Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen II: das mythische Denken* (Berlin, 1925.)
- 13 *Ibid.*, 108: 'Thomas Mann wollte, dass sein Joseph, mit dem doppelten Segen von oben und von unten, des Geistes und der Natur ausgestattet, die verschwärmt-universale Liebesreligion dieses Pharaos gegen die reaktionäre Tempelpartei in gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit, eine gerechte soziale Ordnung und humane Kultur umsetzen sollte'
- 14 G. Lukács, *Thomas Mann* (5th edn.; Berlin, 1957), 105.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 17 Kenneth Hughes *Mythos und Geschichtsoptimismus in Thomas Manns Joseph-Romanen* (Bern-Frankfurt: Herbert Lang, 1975), 17: 'Der Weg vom Individuum zum Typischen ist als eine Wendung vom "Interessanten" zum Mythischen in F. Schlegels spezifischem Sinn, von Naturalismus zu Symbolismus, Krankheit zu Gesundheit, Romantik zu Klassik verschiedenartig ausgelegt worden'.
- 18 Joseph, V, 1687.
- 19 *Gesammelte Werke* (GW) IX,482:
- 20 'MAKOM he was called, space, because He was the space in which the world existed, but the world was not the place in which he existed . . . But he lay in bonds, and was a God of waiting upon the future . . .' (Joseph, I, 287.)
- 21 Hughes, *Mythos*, 68: 'Mann damit eine Uebergangsfigur von den mythischen zu den historischen Vertretern der Tradition schafen will.'
- 22 Heftrich, *Geträumte Taten*, 419, with reference to Joseph, V, 1686: 'Denn einerseits ist die Sohn- und Bruderschaft mit all dem dazugehörigen Gefühlsaufwand die Voraussetzung für die Glaubwürdigkeit der erzählten Geschichte; andererseits ist die Absonderung zwar die Voraussetzung für die Erhöhung, doch braucht der Auserwählte nicht den Tribut eines Aschenbach oder Leverkühn zu bezahlen. So können die Träume zu Taten des Lebens werden'
- 23 GWXI,409f.



- 24 C.A.M. Noble, *Dichter und Religion: Thomas Mann-Kafka-TS Eliot* (Bern-Frankfurt-N York-Paris: Peter Lang, 1987), 52: 'Was aber als poetisches Spiel erscheinen kann, müsste Thomas Mann in seiner religiösen Spätzeit als Ernst erscheinen, denn er selbst hat behauptet, sein Glaube sei gerade aus seiner ironisch-skeptischen Grundhaltung – aus seinen Werken und den Vorarbeiten zu ihnen-erwachsen. Der Zweifel am Zweifel ist die Religiosität des fast achtzigjährigen Thomas Mann.' Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 54: 'Mann's swerve away from Goethe is the profoundly ironic denial that any swerve is necessary. His misinterpretation of Goethe is to read precisely his own parodistic genius, his own kind of loving irony, into his precursor.'
- 25 Ibid., 36: 'Er findet besonders in C.G. Jungs Schriften die für ihn so fruchtbare psychologische Bestätigung der Selbsterschaffung durch die Seele, der Einheit von Schicksal und Charakter, von Geschehen und Machen, jener Lehre, welche die Psychoanalyse mit der Prädestinationstheorie so unmittelbar und faszinierend in Berührung setzt.'
- 26 Compare GWX 398: 'To be frank: I have not much belief, but also do not believe so much in belief as in the goodness which can exist without belief, and in fact be the product of doubt' (cited in Donald Prater, *Thomas Mann: a life* [OUP 1995, 453.]) Mann followed this by saying, in a letter in response to Ernst Steinbach's article in the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* ('Gottes armer Mensch. Die religiöse Frage im dichterischen Werk von Thomas Mann') that he meant such faith and doubt to be faith and doubt in humanity, although the faith of humanism he felt was a long way down the road to full religious faith. The letter was itself published posthumously in ZThK 54 (1957) 255f.
- 27 Prater, *Thomas Mann*, 251, drawing on Mann's *Tagebuch* for 8 May 1936.
- 28 *The Correspondence of Thomas Mann and Karl Kerényi* (translated A. Gelley; Ithaca-London: Cornell UP, 1975.) See also the comprehensive account by Willy R. Berger, *Die mythologischen Motive in Thomas Manns Roman Joseph und seiner Brüder* (Köln-Wien, 1971.)
- 29 The Apollinischen/Dionysischen or intellect vs. instinct/will contrast as Nietzsche had described the split. See L Klages *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (3rd edn; Munich: J.A. Barth, 1954.)
- 30 'Thomas Mann und das Christentum', in H Koopman (Hg.) *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch* (3. Aufl.; Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 2001), 307-326, 319.
- 31 See C.G. Jung/K. Kerényi *Einführung in das Wesen der Mythologie*, (2nd edn., Zurich, 1951.)
- 32 H. Siefken, *Thomas Mann: Goethe-Ideal der Deutscht: Wiederholte Spiegelungen 1893-1949* (Munich: W. Fink, 1981), 185: Mann's writings and lectures in the late 1930s give an indication that his Faust-work was beginning to come to the surface; nor would he lose the debt to Goethe's moderate stance concerning Christianity as of ethical worth (contrasted with Nietzsche's view.) H. Bloom, *Anxiety*, 54: 'Mann's swerve away from Goethe is the profoundly ironic denial that any swerve is necessary. His misinterpretation of Goethe is to read precisely his own parodistic genius, his own kind of loving irony, into his precursor.'
- 33 W. Frizen, *Zaubertrank der Metaphysik: quellenkritische Überlegungen im Umkreis der Schopenhauer-Rezeption Thomas Manns* (Frankfurt-a.-M.: P.D. Lang, 1980.)
- 34 Hermann Kurzke, *Thomas Mann. Das Leben als Kunstwerk: Eine Biographie* (München: C.H. Beck, 1999), 429.
- 35 A recurrent theme in Kurzke's biography, and one with echoes of Nietzsche's psychopathology.
- 36 Frankfurter Ausgabe *Gesammelte Werke: Joseph und seine Brüder* III (Fischer 1983), 440f.
- 37 Friedhelm Marx, 'Ich aber sage Ihnen': *Christusfigurationen im Werk Thomas Manns*, Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002, 154-155. Cf. 193: 'Josephs Praefiguratio Christibesteht vor allem darin, daß er sein Leben (wie Oscar Wildes Christus) als Kunstwerk begreift.' He is also, argues Marx, one who combines Christ with a Hermes-like character in which secret wisdom is given to Pharaohs with the use of the 'Ich bin' formula and to his brothers with blessing in which the 'messiahship' gets passed on to Judah (194f).
- 38 See Friedemann W. Golka, *The leopard's spots: Biblical and African wisdom in proverbs* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993.) Golka has recently given a paper at the International SBL Conference 2002 in Berlin in which he argued for von Rad as a pioneer of the literary way of reading the Joseph-novella. Cf. n. 1.
- 39 Cf. George Bridges, *Thomas Mann's Joseph und seine Brüder and the Phallic theology of the Old Testament* (Bern: Lang, 1995.)
- 40 H. Koopman, *Thomas Mann: Konstanten seines literarischen Werks* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 54-67; 75-79.
- 41 In his *Apokalypse der Deutschen Seele* (Salzburg-Leipzig: Anton Bustet, 1937.)
- 42 H.-J. Kuschel, *The Poet as Mirror: Human Nature, God and Jesus in Twentieth Century Literature* (London: SCM, 1999) = *Im Spiegel der Dichter: Mensch, Gott und Jesus in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1997.) Also his yet more recent *Jesus Christus im Spiegel der Weltliteratur* (which is kind of a well-annotated reader of literature from the last one hundred years.)
- 43 See Christian Albrecht, 'Protestantismusdeutung und protestantisches Erbe in Thomas Manns Roman "Doktor Faustus"' ZThK 95 (1998): 410-428. He argues that the 'hero' Leverkühn repre-



sents Luther, with Erasmus 'played' by Zeitblom: between them is 'der Aufstand subjektiver Willkür ... gegen objektive Bindung.'

- 44 Of course it is no small irony that Mann has been accused of 'borrowing' ideas from his friend and fellow-exile Theodore Adorno, not least for the writing of Dr. Faustus. See Kurzke, *Thomas Mann*, 504f as well as the recent (2002) edition of the Mann-Adorno correspondence.
- 45 *Lotte in Weimar*, 226: 'What if sweet love itself were put together out of nothing but sheer horrors, and the very purest just a compound of shadiness we

dare not confess to! *Nihil luce obscurius!* Nothing darker than light – was Newton right after all?' and, at 272: 'Religious symbolism is a cultural treasure-house, wherein we have a perfect right to dip when we need use the familiar images to make visible and tangible some general aspect of spirit.' These two statements made by 'Goethe' in the novel perhaps summed up for Mann his own idealist philosophical point of departure.

- 46 In H. Wysling-M.Fischer (Hg.) *Dichter über ihre Dichtungen* (München-Frankfurt a. M., 1981), Bd 14, iii, 248.

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