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Gloria Chasson Erlich  
*Dickinson College*

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## Race and Incest in Mann's "Blood of the Walsungs"

### Abstract

No German or English edition of "The Blood of the Walsungs" concludes with the sentence that Mann wrote for the original version in 1905, a sentence that begins and ends with two Yiddish words that conclusively identify the Aarenhold family as Jewish. The story, suppressed until 1921, draws heavily on the family of his new wife, Katya Pringsheim, a twin of Jewish extraction. Mann juxtaposes the incest of a pair of German-Jewish twins, Siegmund and Sieglinde Aarenhold, with the myth of the Walsungs, subtly manipulating the Wagner libretto to make it express his sense of the condition of the assimilated German Jew. The incest becomes a metaphor for Jewish exclusiveness as well as a type of the great sin which in many of Mann's works is regarded as a prerequisite to creativity. Like the Joseph series, "Blood of the Walsungs" portrays the paradoxical position of the Jew as resident alien.

### Keywords

Thomas Mann, Blood of the Walsungs, incest, Jewish, Jews, Wagner

## RACE AND INCEST IN MANN'S "BLOOD OF THE WALSUNGS"

GLORIA CHASSON ERLICH  
*Dickinson College*

"The Blood of the Walsungs" as it appears in German and English editions is generally regarded as a slight story, condemnatory of the *nouveau riche* and of aestheticism in the extreme form it took around the turn of the century. The brother and sister twins, youngest members of a wealthy mercantile family, are cynically witty, pampered, useless darlings, who love nothing more than themselves as reflected in each other. Named Siegmund and Sieglinde after the Walsung twins of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, they commit incest after watching a performance of this opera shortly before Sieglinde's marriage to a stolid German, von Beckerath. When Sieglinde reflects on how this act will affect her fiancé, the brother tells her, "He ought to be grateful to us. His existence will be less trivial, from now on."<sup>1</sup> This is a mildly thought-provoking conclusion with regard to the fiancé, but he is scarcely our main concern. In fact, this is not the conclusion Mann first intended for the story and it is much less effective than the original.

Many German readers and scholars know, and some American readers may come to suspect, perhaps even to be fairly sure, that the Aarenhold family is of Jewish origin, but lacking the concluding sentence of the original version, they are deprived of certitude as well as climax.<sup>2</sup> This sentence, which appears in a French translation but in no extant German or English version, contains two Yiddish words emphatically placed at the beginning and end: "Beganeft haben wir ihn,—den Goy!" (We've conned him—the Goy!).<sup>3</sup> This conclusion gathers up the scattered allusions to race, blood, dark and troubling origins, and illumines them with a flash of retrospective meaning. We see in this sudden light the special relationship between the myth of the Walsungs and the

troubled psychology of the assimilated German Jew. Traits we had noticed about the Aarenholds — dark curling hair, drooping, hawk-like noses, a nervous need to appear perfect in household arrangements and physical appearance, as well as the children's embarrassment at their mother's guttural speech — suddenly fall into place when, at a moment of extreme emotion, Siegmund lapses into the ancestral dialect. With dazzling appropriateness, this lapse clarifies and completes a pattern of latent atavisms that subtly pervade the story. The savage feeling of this final sentence, rather than the act of incest, is the true climax.

With the certainty of this illumination we realize that the tale is not merely a condemnation of aestheticism or of the vulgarity of the *nouveau riche*.<sup>4</sup> It is rather a very complex vision of the paralyzing tragedy of deracination, a view of the Jewish situation in early twentieth-century Germany as seen by an artist to whom it had a peculiar personal relevance. As we examine the relation of this story to Mann's obsessive sense of divided heritage and to his marriage to a half-Jewish woman, Katja Pringsheim, we shall see also the way in which he manipulated the myth of the Walsungs into an ironic reflection of the Jewish condition.

That the story had peculiar personal relevance beyond that to which we are accustomed in this highly autobiographical writer is evidenced by its depiction of a family with startling similarities to that of his new wife and by his silent withdrawal of the story after it had been set in print and announced for the January 1906 issue of *Die Neue Rundschau*. When the story finally did appear in Germany in 1921, it was in a small, privately printed edition of 530 copies. As Marie Walter informs us in a comprehensive account of the strange publication history of this novella, Mann enjoined booksellers from displaying the small, luxuriously illustrated edition, which was entirely sold out before publication. "Mann further prohibited the appearance of the novella in any other edition (including his collected stories) in Germany. Finally, he expressly forbade the story's appearing in any other form in the German language."<sup>5</sup> Mann never admitted publicly to having revised the final sentence, but in 1931 he did permit the publication of a French translation from the original version (entitled "Sang Reservé"), which concluded with the following translation of the original final sentence: "Eh bien, crois-tu que nous l'avons roulé, le Goy!"

"Wälsungenblut" was in fact omitted from both collected editions of Mann's works. Since 1921 it has been published in German only posthumously (by Fischer Verlag in 1958), and with the revised ending. The story has appeared in many English collections, but always with the altered conclusion. It appears that Mann wanted the story suppressed and consented to publication only because of the prevailing rumor that it had caused a serious rift between him and the Pringsheim family and because copies derived from proof sheets of the cancelled *Neue Rundschau* printing had been circulating surreptitiously in Munich.

The first volume of Peter de Mendelssohn's recent biography of Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberer*,<sup>6</sup> not only gives us more details about the publication history of the novella, but brings together Klaus Pringsheim's recollections of the events as well as references to them from Mann's letters to his brother Heinrich. From the first of these two sources we learn that Mann obtained the Yiddish verb "beganeft" from his Jewish father-in-law, who doubted the propriety of such a word in a German text but was not curious enough to inquire into the context in which it was to be used. Mann had asked him for a Yiddish equivalent of the German verb "betrügen," to deceive or trick, but he wanted a strong word which would express contempt for the person deceived.<sup>7</sup> This the unsuspecting father-in-law supplied.

In December, 1905, Mann discussed in a letter to his brother Heinrich the forthcoming publication of his "Judengeschichte."<sup>8</sup> His editor, Professor Bie, had serious objections to the Yiddishisms in the final sentence, feeling that the average reader would find them crude. Mann expressed agreement with this criticism but was having difficulty revising the final sentence and hoped that Heinrich would be able to supply him with a fitting conclusion, but in haste, because the type was being set.

Apparently Heinrich strongly favored the original ending, finding that it had an "innere Berechtigung," and convinced Mann that it was psychologically right. Mann decided to compromise by altering the final sentence for periodical publication but retaining the original for book publication, an event which did not occur in his lifetime. Torn between psychological rightness and stylistic consistency, he rather shamefacedly confessed to Heinrich that style was probably more important to him.

The parallels that the literary gossips of Munich saw between the Pringsheims and the Aarenholds are expressed by Mann's son, Klaus, in his family history, *The Turning Point*, published in 1942. The temptation to consider the following description of his parents' courtship as an accurate picture of the ambiance of the Pringsheim salon is diminished by our awareness that Klaus tended to experience life through the mythology of his father's fiction:

Both Professor Pringsheim and his wife came from Berlin: he, from a Jewish background without much social distinction but with a great deal of money; she from the intellectual elite but penniless . . . . He collected renaissance tapestry, renaissance pottery, and renaissance silver. His house looked like a palazzo of the sixteenth century. But it was also the first private residence in town that could boast of electric light. He was a professor of mathematics at the University of Munich — an eminent scholar . . . . His fourth passion — besides mathematics, his wife, and Italian antiques — was the music of Richard Wagner . . . . It was in this colorful environment that the young novelist from Lubeck met the dark-eyed girl who so deeply captivated his imagination . . . . He saw and described her as an oriental princess, a perspicacious child, an at once savage and delicate flower. Hand in hand with her twin brother, Klaus, a young musician, she roved through the streets of Munich. Everybody was struck by their peculiar charm and puzzled by their rapid dialogues bristling with secret formulas, tender allusions, enigmatic jokes. From their aimless escapades they returned to the familiar palace, their home. There they hid from the vulgar world protected by their wealth and wit, watched and spoiled by servants and instructors. Two bewitched infants who knew and loved each other exclusively; they quarrelled and giggled together, . . . and the melodies of Rheingold and Parsifal thundered from the big music hall.<sup>9</sup>

In the children of this partly Jewish household, Mann could see a reflection of his own divided heritage another mixture of the native German with "swifter, more perceptive blood," a combination that in his fiction so often produces the artist. Klaus' phrase "oriental princess" points us to the eastern qualities Mann so often attributes to the exotics to whom his fictional surrogates are attracted. The eastern origin of the Aarenholds associates them with the Polish Tadzio, with the Russian Clavdia Chauchat and her prede-

cessor in Hans Castorp's affections, Pribislav Hippe, and most especially with that other deracinated assimilated Jew, the biblical Joseph, who is constantly referred to as "the Asiatic" by his Egyptian hosts. It is interesting in this context that the German text gives only "the East" as the place of Herr Aarenhold's birth ("Herr Aarenhold war im Osten an entlegener Stätte geboren") whereas Lowe-Porter renders this as "born in a remote village in East Prussia."<sup>10</sup> Since the rare hothouse flowers Siegmund and Sieglinde are rendered in terms of their exoticism, Mann's vague and undefined "East" seems more appropriate.

Mann's intimate association with the condition of the assimilated German Jew links this early tale to his later full-scale treatment of the Jew as resident alien, *Joseph and His Brothers* (1933-1943). Parallels, both latent and overt, between the slim early novella and the massive late tetralogy show that symbolic and thematic elements in "Wälsungenblut" were of permanent importance to Mann. Like Herr Aarenhold, Joseph was eminently successful in an alien land, especially in a business way, but it was his very successful adaptation that deprived him of his father Jacob's blessing. Slender but palpable lines connect the following passage describing Joseph's assimilative adaptation to foreign ways combined with a mental detachment, to the unstable poise of the Aarenholds.

Joseph . . . became visibly an Egyptian, in form and manner; quickly, easily, unnoticeably, because he was a child of the world, pliant in body and mind . . . thus the reshaping of his person after the local type happened readily and painlessly, the more that physically he had, from God knows where, something Egyptian about him — the square shoulders, the slender limbs; [Compare the description of the slender Sieglinde: "Her childish shoulders . . . looked like those of an Egyptian statue, a little too high and too square."] and mentally because it lay in his tradition, it was natural to him, to live a stranger among the "children of the land." Even at home he and his, the children of Abram, had always been *gerim* and guests, long settled and well adapted, it is true, but with an inner reserve and looking with detachment upon the easy-going Baal-abominations of the real children of Egypt . . . As a child of the world he found it simple to conform and to practice detachment at one and the same time . . . he might blithely adapt himself to Egypt's children and move among them, consenting to the high culture of the land; yet all the while he

might feel that they were the children of the world at whom he gazed, benevolently but apart, and ever aware of the mocking spirit in his blood at sight of their decorative and detestable folk-customs.<sup>11</sup>

Having a protean personality, Joseph adapts to his Egyptian hosts more easily and naturally than Siegmund Aarenhold does to the German. Siegmund has to fight the “marks of his race” by constant shaving and perfuming, but he shares Joseph’s mocking spirit of detachment toward alien ways. For both, this consciousness divided between assimilation and detachment was to be a barrier to ultimate greatness. The significant difference between them is that Joseph, the pioneer of his family in the land of Egypt, has important work to do and has the satisfaction of success, whereas Siegmund, of the second generation of aliens, has only to enjoy the fruits of his father’s success.

The generation that made good in the alien land can be comfortable in its ironic and detached conformity, proud and like Herr Aarenhold sometimes even embarrassingly boastful about the success it has wrested from “the goyim.” But the children for whom the way has been smoothed may have new and unexpected problems — protected from the struggles of their parents and lacking any genuine work to do, they run the risk of becoming trivial — consumers of wealth and culture instead of producers. Joseph’s two half-Egyptian sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, resemble the Aarenhold twins in their pampered superfluity: “They were exquisites themselves, products of the highest culture, manicured, curled, perfumed, and touched up, with mother-of-pearl toe-nails, corseted waists, and coloured ribbons flowing down their aprons at front, back, and sides. They were not bad, either of them, and their dandyism was a result of the society they lived in . . . .”<sup>12</sup>

Their dandyism is treated lightly, with an extra dash of the witty detachment that flavors the Joseph series. But the impeccable personal perfection of the Aarenhold twins is shown to derive from insecurity, a pathetic need for purification. “The blond-haired citizenry of the land might go about in elastic-sided boots and turnover collars, heedless of the effect. But he — and most explicitly he — must be unassailable and blameless of exterior from head to foot” (p. 303). Siegmund is forever shaving and powdering the cheeks that treacherously persist in sprouting curly black hair. His hands and



wrists are red, not from hard work and certainly not from cheap soap, but from excessive washing. The natural odor of his boyish yet hairy body is concealed by cologne. As he does his careful and lengthy toilette, Siegmund stands in silk underwear and socks on his bearskin rug, complete with claws, in a room that overlooks the Tiergarten, the zoo. There is some atavism that with powder, soap, and perfume he is trying to deny, something native and primitive that survives beneath his polished sophistication. This atavism is present from the very first paragraph of the story, where the servant Wendelin, clad in colorful knee-breeches, pounds a gong to announce luncheon, making a "brazen din, savage and primitive . . . a cannibalistic summons" (p. 292) that reverberates throughout the luxurious rooms. The gong and the bearskin rug, primitive furnishings in a palatial home, serve also to foreshadow the forest setting of *Die Walküre*, bridging the mythic and the contemporary. Siegmund, standing in silk socks on a bearskin rug, does not yet realize the extent of his relationship to the myth for which he is named.

Even those familiar with the original ending and therefore certain of the Jewish origin of the Aarenhold family seem to regard the story as an attack on pretentious aestheticism in general and on Siegmund in particular. His effete diletantism is regarded as merely an ironic contrast to the heroic power and destiny of his mythic counterpart, the Walsung Siegmund.<sup>13</sup> True, there is ironic contrast in this particular example of Mann's fascination with mythic recurrence, but Siegmund, too, is aware of the irony. "He was too shrewd not to know that the conditions of his existence were not the most favorable in the world for the development of a creative gift" (p. 302). His father collects rare books and cultural artifacts; the children keep up with the arts, but always they are consumers of culture, never creators. They cannot even lose themselves in appreciation of the works they read and collect. Siegmund dabbles in painting, reads a great deal, loves music, but always his detachment, intellectual and emotional, stands in the way of passionate commitment. "Siegmund loved to read, he strove after the word and the spirit as after a tool which a profound instinct urged him to grasp. But never had he lost himself in a book as one does when that single work seems the most important in the world . . ." (p. 302).

Painfully aware that "he was no hero, he commanded no giant powers" (p. 303), Siegmund lacks a sense of reality. The twins revel

in “voluptuous abandon” because of inner desperation: “They were like self-centered invalids who absorb themselves in trifles, as narcotics to console them for the loss of hope. With an inward gesture of renunciation they doffed aside the evil smelling world and loved each other alone, for the priceless sake of their own rare uselessness” (p. 304).

Groping toward significance, Siegmund tentatively approaches it in his conning von Beckerath into a goodnatured approval of the twins’ attendance of a performance of *Die Walküre* only a week before the wedding, thus casting the fiancé in the role of the tricked Hunding. Kunz, the super-German complete with duelling scar, drums the Hunding motif on the tablecloth while Siegmund is thus toying with the excluded husband-to-be. Although Siegmund pretends to be begging obsequiously for Beckerath’s permission to take Sieglinde to the opera, he has long before bought his tickets. This playful conning of the bridegroom foreshadows the more serious deception to follow, the act of incest in which von Beckerath’s likeness to Hunding will be completed.

It is the contemplation of his mythic counterpart in the opera that brings Siegmund into awareness of what he needs in order to become creative. He needs, and no reader of *The Holy Sinner* and *Doctor Faustus* ought to be surprised at this, a great sin. A plunge into the deepest reality of his own condition, his narcissism, his Jewishness, his need for primitive vengeance against the German, will carry him over the brink of voluptuousness into passion, the source of the creative. The two words “passion” and “creation” come into meaningful conjunction in his mind during the last act of the opera.

Creation? How did one create? Pain gnawed and burned in Siegmund’s breast, a drawing anguish which was somehow sweet, a yearning — whither, for what? It was all dark, so shamefully unclear! Two thoughts, two words he had: creation, passion. His temples glowed and throbbled, and it came to him as in a yearning vision that creation was born of passion and was reshaped anew as passion . . . He saw his own life, and knew its contradictions, its clear understanding and spoilt voluptuousness, its splendid security and idle spite, its weakness and wittiness, its languid contempt; his life, so full of words, so void of acts, so full of cleverness, so empty of emotion — and he felt again the

burning, the drawing anguish which was so sweet — whither, and to what end? Creation? Experience? Passion? (p. 313)

In examining Mann's recapitulation of *Die Walküre* incorporated into the story, we see that he manipulated this quintessentially Nordic myth to make it convey his sense of the Jewish condition. The Walsung twins are descended from the god Wotan who has bestowed upon them the marks of their high origin, but has, for the time at least, abandoned them, so that they wander the earth hated and persecuted. Sieglinde considered herself "lucky in an honourable marriage which might bury her dark origins in oblivion" (p. 311), but Siegmund had lived a life of alienation from mankind.

He gave a moving account of the hatred and envy which had been the bane of his life . . . and how he had mysteriously lost his father as well . . . . A curse had lain upon him forever, he was marked by the brand of his strange origins. *His speech has not been as others' speech nor theirs his.* What he found good was vexation to them, he was galled by the ancient laws to which they paid honour . . . he had borne the yoke of scorn and hatred and contempt — all because he was strange, of a breed and kind hopelessly different from them. (p. 309; italics added)

A comparison with the libretto shows that although this is a just summary of Siegmund's speech, Mann modified it in significant ways, especially in the matters of ancient laws and alien speech, which are not mentioned by Wagner. The moment of Hunding's recognition of resemblance between the twins is also altered with a modern purpose in mind. Wagner's Hunding says:

He looks like my wife there!  
A glittering snake  
seems to shine in their glances.<sup>14</sup>

Mann renders it this way: "Dull lout though he was, he saw their likeness: the selfsame breed, that odd, untrammelled rebellious stock, which he hated, to which he felt inferior" (p. 309), thus adding words which assimilate the Jews to the Walsungs.

What makes the Jews an untrammelled stock is, according to racial folklore, their inbreeding, a practice that accentuates "racial" characteristics by which they can be recognized. This refusal to

mix with the local stock, either genetically or in customs, had been, so far as it was practiced, occasion for resentment ever since the Diaspora. To Germans, and to many others, this looked like arrogance, contempt for the ways of the lands in which they sojourned. Thus the narcissism implied in the love of twins for each other becomes a metaphor of Jewish exclusiveness, and so, I believe, Mann treats it in "Wälsungenblut." Mann perceives and renders the tragedy of Siegmund's plight, but insofar as he identifies with the ridiculed German, von Beckerath, he expresses at the same time a degree of resentment. The lover of a twin can scarcely hope to attain complete intimacy, at least while the other twin lives. And we remember that the suitor of Katja Pringsheim was somewhat in the position of von Beckerath — to the lively Munich family Mann was a stiff, reserved, North German suitor for the love of Klaus' twin sister. It is reported that Klaus teased Katja about Mann's reserved courtship, "Que veut donc ce goy distingué et muet?"<sup>15</sup>

The complexity of Mann's attitude is revealed in the oxymoronic language he used to refer to the pregnancy of the Walsung Sieglinde: "Sieglinde, in whose womb there grew and waxed the seed of *that hated unprized race, chosen of the gods*, from which the twins had sprung" (p. 314; italics added). But oxymoron does not exhaust the inherent paradoxes of the myth. Using Nordic heroes as archetypes of the German Jews is paradoxical enough. In addition, the sin of incest produces the hero Siegfried, who re-forges his father's sword, gift of Wotan, to recover the ring and thereby redress an ancient wrong.

From sin to greatness — a theme dear to Mann and, as mentioned above, central to the Joseph series, to *Doctor Faustus* (1947), and to *The Holy Sinner* (1951). We recall that Jacob denied the patriarchal blessing to his clever, adaptable, successful son Joseph, who provided for the physical needs of his brethren and who chaste-ly resisted Potiphar's wife, only to bestow it on the sex-tormented Judah. The blessing which identifies the line of transmission of the chosen people was reserved for the "sinner and religious man in one," Judah, who had been deceived into committing incest with his daughter-in-law Tamar, who in turn brought forth from this union — a pair of twins!

In 1951 Mann returned to the incest theme, intensifying it by doubling in *The Holy Sinner*.<sup>16</sup> In this late book incest between

twins is only a preliminary to the primal sin of mother-son incest. Brother-sister incest produced the foundling Gregory, who later unwittingly married his mother and became, after a period of bizarre penance, Pope Gregory the Great. This book was not withdrawn or removed from the Mann canon. Here he felt free to explore without reservation the relation between sin and greatness without shocking either his audience or his in-laws. There are many likenesses between the physical characteristics of the legendary twins of this book and the Aarenholds — in both cases there are marked slenderness, a "foreign" darkness of skin and eyes, and lips that "lie softly together." But in *The Holy Sinner* incest is treated with aesthetic distance. By setting the story back into the legendary past of romance and by telling it through a monastic narrator who constantly reminds us of the story's artifice in commenting on his narrative difficulties and in speaking in a witty, highly artificial language, Mann establishes a distance from the emotionally charged matter of the story. The reader does not experience the events empathically; he contemplates them with aloof amusement and delight. We have a saving tension and contrast between matter and manner that distances the incest without undermining the theme. In both novel and novella the theme is the same — that the chosen of God must experience deep sin before his special work can be done. The German title of *The Holy Sinner* is *Der Erwählte*, The Chosen One.

Siegmund, of that "hated, unprized race, chosen of the gods," shares the status of sexual sinner with Mann's "chosen" — with great men like Pope Gregory and with artists like Adrian Leverkühn. We are not told whether Siegmund is destined for high creativity, for "Wälsungenblut" does not carry him far beyond his transition from languid voluptuousness into passionate experience. Though he may be an artist only *in potentia*, he nevertheless bears within him characteristics of the artist type as Mann depicted it over a long career.

The sexual ambiguity of the slender, effete Siegmund is also characteristic of various Mann artists from Tonio Kröger to Felix Krull, including Gustave von Aschenbach and even Joseph, an artist in his capacity as story-teller. The androgynous Felix Krull is sexually attractive to both men and women, von Aschenbach experienced a heightening of artistic powers through yielding to his

homoerotic feelings for Tadzio, and Tonio Kröger, who absent-mindedly danced the “moulinet des dames,” compared all artists to “those unsexed papal singers.” In a sense, the Aarenhold twins constitute an androgynous entity, so that Siegmund’s desire for his sister is a love for the feminine aspect of his own nature. There is even a hint of homosexuality in his words to Sieglinde, “Everything about you is just like me — and so — what you have — with Beckerath — the experience — is for me too” (p. 318).

Even in his tricking of the bridegroom, Siegmund participates in the roguery that Mann considered intrinsic to the artistic nature. Tonio Kröger was suspected of being a swindler in his native town, and Felix Krull was a confidence man and jailbird whose godfather attributed the artistic gifts of the sculptor Phidias to the fact that he was a thief. Late in his career Mann recognized that he had long been incorporating aspects of the rogue-god Hermes into his artist figures. This protean master of disguise and trickery was also a master of dreams and a kind of spiritual guide.<sup>17</sup> Hermes as thief is an aspect of Hermes as magician.

Mann’s Joseph playfully established his qualification as dream interpreter to Pharaoh by linking himself, through the thefts of his parents, to this rogue-god whom Pharaoh admired. By means of a sly re-casting of the trickiness of Jacob and Rebecca, Joseph showed Pharaoh that Hebrews, too, have an affinity to Hermes, delighting Pharaoh with stories of Jacob’s thefts of Esau’s birthright and Laban’s cattle and Rebecca’s theft of her father’s household gods. Pharaoh relished the ironic fact that Joseph, in playing such roles to gain his confidence, thereby established the best evidence that he *was* a true adept of Hermes, a verbally agile and protean trickster of god-like powers. Interestingly enough, the lyre of Apollo, a symbol of poesy, was said to be the invention of the infant Hermes, who gave it to the sun-god as appeasement for the theft of his cattle. So, too, without precisely knowing it, does Siegmund Aarenhold aspire to godlike artistic powers when he becomes the *ganef* who twice cons the *goy*, von Beckerath.

Siegmund’s linguistic lapse in the original concluding sentence has, as Heinrich Mann put it, an “innere Berechtigung” for a story in which degrees of alienation are symbolized by linguistic differences. Just as the Walsung Siegmund was stigmatized by his strange speech, the Jews were marked by a dialect of their own.

The assimilated Aarenhold children scorn their mother for her guttural accent and their father for his boastful loquacity. They use their "correct" German in such a sophisticated, terse, ruthlessly critical style that they make the native German, von Beckerath, feel painfully excluded. And within the family, the twins enact their special separateness in an arch and artificial private language of their own.

Only after Siegmund rises to a new awareness of the relationship between passion, suffering, and artistic creation by his first total immersion in art (as opposed to aloof critical evaluation of it), does he reject Sieglinde's customary bantering tone: "We must not talk like that — not that way, Sieglinde." Transported by art into passion, Siegmund becomes incoherent, but in this incoherence he is more truthful than in his former speech of "pitiless clarity." Fully in tune with his broken utterance, Sieglinde is carried with him on the bearskin rug into an act of passion that is also an act of revenge.

The substituted ending about rendering von Beckerath less trivial returns Siegmund to the arch, bantering language that he used before, whereas the original conclusion, with its Yiddish words, shows how living out the mythic experience has transformed him. By expressing in his ancestral dialect his contempt for the German *goy* whom he has tricked, Siegmund breaks through his mask of assimilation, assumes his true identity, and in so doing, he, not von Beckerath, becomes less trivial.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "The Blood of the Walsungs" in *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage, 1964), p. 319. Subsequent quotations from this edition will be cited in the text. I would like to thank Professor Richard M. Ludwig of Princeton University for his bibliographic help and for information provided by his exhibit on Thomas Mann in Firestone Library.

<sup>2</sup> Even those European scholars who did not know of the changed ending have long been aware from internal evidence that the Aarenhold family was Jewish. George Fourrier, *Thomas Mann* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956), pp. 132-34, recounts briefly part of the publication history of the story and its biographical parallels. Henry Hatfield (*Thomas Mann* [Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1951], pp. 28-29) refers to the Jewish origins of the family and the withdrawal of the story, but seems to be unaware of the revision of the ending. In "Eine Novelle Thomas Manns und ihre Ge-

schichte," *Welt und Wort* (June, 1950), pp. 234-235, Curt Moreck tells of Mann's efforts to quiet rumors caused by the story. The most complete account in English of all these issues is to be found in Marie Walter, "Concerning the Affair Wälsungenblut," *Book Collector* (Winter, 1964), pp. 462-471.

<sup>3</sup> Walter, "Concerning the Affair Wälsungenblut," p. 468.

<sup>4</sup> Fourrier, *Thomas Mann*, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> Walter, "Concerning the Affair Wälsungenblut," p. 467.

<sup>6</sup> Peter de Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1975), pp. 648-68.

<sup>7</sup> De Mendelssohn, *Der Zauberer*, p. 658.

<sup>8</sup> *Thomas Mann—Heinrich Mann Briefwechsel 1900-1949* (Berlin: Fischer, 1968), p. 42. Discussions of "Wälsungenblut" are to be found on pp. 41-46 and p. 265.

<sup>9</sup> Klaus Mann, *The Turning Point* (New York: Fischer, 1942), pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Mann, *Die Erzählungen* (Stockholm: Fischer, 1966), p. 385 and "The Blood of the Walsungs," p. 296.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1948), pp. 633-639.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, p. 1178.

<sup>13</sup> Fourrier, *Thomas Mann*, pp. 132-34.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Wagner, *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, trans. by Andrew Porter (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), p. 90.

Wie gleicht er dem Weibe!  
Der gleissende Wurm  
glänzt auch ihm aus dem Auge.

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Lobstein, "'Sang Reservé': Histoire d'une Nouvelle," *Nouvelles Littéraires* (Aug. 15, 1931), p. 2. Quoted in Walter, "Concerning the Affair Wälsungenblut," p. 465.

<sup>16</sup> The relationship between "Wälsungenblut" and the twins of *The Holy Sinner* is perceptively discussed in Sigrid Bauschinger, "'Völlig exceptionelle Kinder': Vom Bürgerlich-Individuellen zum Mythisch-Typischen bei Thomas Mann," *Psychologie in der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. by Wolfgang Paulsen (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiehm, 1971), pp. 191-207.

<sup>17</sup> For a fuller discussion of Mann's use of the Hermes figure in his artist characters, see Donald F. Nelson, *Portrait of the Artist as Hermes: A Study of Myth and Psychology in Thomas Mann's "Felix Krull"* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).