

29 January 2019

To whom it may concern,

At the request of Wolf Siegert, I am honored to present a letter of reference in support of his candidacy for the Fellowship at the Thomas Mann House.

As a preamble, I offer the following remarks with the intent of disclosing why I believe Mr. Siegert would make a great Fellow for Thomas Mann House.

Many visitors to America discover, often in hindsight, that their immersion in American culture, enhanced their perspective and understanding of their native country. Upon deeper reflection, this New Perspective exposes the silent, pervasive language of real culture: deep, inflected narratives about what it means to be human living, perhaps even dancing, at the crossroads of history.

While a fish, suddenly finding itself out of water, might sense the phenomenon, *water*, only an enlightened fish would ever feel *wet*.

As one of the world's greater writers, Thomas Mann, not only perceived the cultural waters of America, but pointed at or suggested, without naming it, the *wetness* of culture, both German and American. He transcended time and place, achieving the Universal.

Thomas Mann was an artist who, through the power of his vision and command of language, disclosed new worlds—a New Perspective this now part of the Human Experience.

Like other iconoclasts and artists, he saw what all others did not see and gave voice and pathos to the heretofore unknown and unspoken.

Were he to be alive today, he would, I am sure of it, be tackling the confounding paradoxes of being a "connected" human being, the consequences of acceleration complexity in all aspects of life, the transmediation of human desire in entertainment and marketing, and the denaturing nihilism of technology.

I believe that the principal job of artists is to harmonize conflict and manifold complexity, to bring forth Beauty of an unseen order of our world.

Today that job requires something beyond a classic education and career in Letters. Today's job requires all that plus a mastery in digital technologies, nuanced appreciation of the transmediation of creative intent, sharp commercial instincts of competition and ecosystems, and the interdisciplinary rigor of philosophy, psychology, history, cultural criticism and, dare I say, argumentation or the art of persuasion.

Of the many hundreds of my German, or even European, acquaintances, colleagues and friends, I cannot think of anyone more qualified and prepared to be worthy of a Fellowship at the Thomas Mann House than Wolf Siegert.

Respectfully,



Michael Jay Moon