

# thomas mann a critical study

Thomas Mann: A Critical Study of His Literary Genius

**thomas mann a critical study** reveals the intricate layers and profound themes embedded in the works of one of Germany's most celebrated writers. Thomas Mann's novels and essays not only offer a window into the cultural and political upheavals of early 20th-century Europe but also explore enduring questions about art, morality, and human nature. Engaging with his oeuvre critically allows readers and scholars alike to appreciate the depth of his narrative techniques, philosophical inquiries, and the socio-historical contexts that shaped his writing.

## Understanding Thomas Mann's Literary Landscape

To embark on a comprehensive Thomas Mann critical study, it is essential to grasp the literary environment he inhabited and influenced. Mann's work is deeply rooted in the tradition of German literature, yet it pushes boundaries by incorporating modernist elements and psychoanalytic insights. His narratives often reflect the tensions between bourgeois values and the emerging modern world, making his stories resonate with readers across generations.

## The Historical and Cultural Context

Thomas Mann wrote during a period marked by dramatic political changes—World War I, the Weimar Republic, the rise of Nazism, and World War II. His literature cannot be divorced from these contexts. For instance, Mann's opposition to fascism and his exile from Nazi Germany profoundly influenced his later works and essays. A critical study of his writing, therefore, involves understanding how these historical events shaped his themes and characterizations.

## Major Themes in Mann's Work

Several recurring themes define Thomas Mann's literary output, each worthy of detailed exploration in any critical study:

- **Art and Aesthetics:** Mann often delves into the role of art in society, the artist's responsibility, and the tension between aesthetic beauty and moral issues.
- **Individual vs. Society:** His characters frequently struggle with societal expectations, reflecting

broader conflicts of identity and conformity.

- **Decay and Decline:** Works like *Buddenbrooks* depict the decline of bourgeois families, symbolizing broader cultural and moral decay.
- **Psychoanalysis and Inner Conflict:** Influenced by Freud, Mann explores the subconscious, repression, and dualities within his characters.

Exploring these themes in detail aids in appreciating the complexity and relevance of Mann's narratives.

## Key Works in a Thomas Mann Critical Study

No critical examination of Thomas Mann is complete without a close look at his most influential works. Each novel and novella offers unique insights into his artistic development and ideological concerns.

### Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family

Often regarded as Mann's breakthrough, *Buddenbrooks* (1901) chronicles the gradual decline of a wealthy merchant family over generations. This novel is a rich study in social change and personal tragedy, blending naturalistic detail with symbolic depth. Critics often highlight Mann's keen observation of bourgeois life and his subtle critique of materialism and complacency.

### Death in Venice: The Intersection of Beauty and Obsession

In *Death in Venice* (1912), Mann explores themes of desire, artistic inspiration, and mortality through the story of an aging writer's infatuation with a young boy. The novella's intense psychological focus and symbolic imagery make it a favorite subject for psychoanalytic and aesthetic criticism. This work exemplifies Mann's ability to intertwine personal crisis with larger philosophical questions.

### Doctor Faustus: A Modern Tragedy

*Doctor Faustus* (1947) is often considered Mann's magnum opus, where he reimagines the Faust legend against the backdrop of Nazi Germany. The novel's protagonist, a composer who makes a pact with the devil, symbolizes the moral and cultural decay of Germany during the Third Reich. This work invites extensive critical analysis of its allegorical structure, musical symbolism, and political commentary.

# Critical Approaches to Thomas Mann's Writing

Examining Thomas Mann through various critical lenses enriches our understanding of his literature's multifaceted nature.

## Formalism and Narrative Techniques

Mann's precise, often elaborate prose style and his use of irony and symbolism have attracted formalist critics. His narratives employ a complex interplay of perspectives, metafictional elements, and structural innovations that merit detailed textual analysis. Understanding his narrative techniques helps explain how Mann creates layered meanings and emotional effects.

## Psychoanalytic Criticism

Given Mann's interest in Freud and the unconscious, psychoanalytic approaches are particularly fruitful. Critics analyze his characters' inner conflicts, repressed desires, and symbolic dreams to uncover deeper psychological dimensions. This approach sheds light on the universal human struggles depicted in his works.

## Political and Historical Criticism

Thomas Mann's engagement with the political realities of his time makes historical criticism vital. Scholars investigate how his literature reflects and critiques nationalism, totalitarianism, and exile. This perspective highlights Mann's role as both an artist and a public intellectual committed to humanistic values.

## Why Thomas Mann Remains Relevant Today

A Thomas Mann critical study is not just an academic exercise; it reveals why his work continues to captivate contemporary readers. His exploration of ethical dilemmas, the role of the artist in society, and the complexities of identity resonates in today's globalized and often turbulent world.

Moreover, Mann's nuanced portrayal of cultural decline and regeneration offers insights into the cyclical nature of history. His ability to blend personal, social, and philosophical themes encourages readers to reflect on their own times and values.

# Tips for Reading Thomas Mann Critically

Engaging deeply with Mann's writing can be challenging but rewarding. Here are some tips for readers approaching his work:

1. **Contextualize Historically:** Familiarize yourself with the political and cultural events of Mann's era to fully appreciate his references and critiques.
2. **Analyze Characters Psychologically:** Consider the psychological motivations and conflicts that drive his characters, using insights from psychoanalytic criticism.
3. **Pay Attention to Symbolism:** Look for recurring motifs and symbols that enrich the narrative's meaning beyond the surface story.
4. **Explore Secondary Literature:** Reading critical essays and interpretations can open new perspectives and deepen your understanding.

By applying these strategies, readers can uncover the richness and complexity that make Thomas Mann's literature enduringly significant.

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Thomas Mann's legacy as a literary giant is secured not only by the brilliance of his storytelling but also by the profound questions his work poses. A critical study of his writings reveals a writer deeply engaged with the moral, cultural, and philosophical currents of his time—many of which remain strikingly relevant today. Through exploring his masterful narratives and the critical conversations they inspire, readers gain invaluable insights into the human condition and the transformative power of literature.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the primary focus of 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study'?

'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' primarily focuses on analyzing the literary works, themes, and stylistic techniques of Thomas Mann, exploring his influence on modern literature.

### Who is the author of 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study'?

The author of 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' varies depending on the edition, but notable scholars such as

Ralph Freedman and Harry T. Moore have written critical studies on Thomas Mann.

## **What are the major themes discussed in 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study'?**

Major themes discussed include the conflict between art and life, the role of the artist in society, German identity, and the exploration of psychology and philosophy in Mann's works.

## **How does 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' interpret Mann's novel 'The Magic Mountain'?**

The study interprets 'The Magic Mountain' as a symbolic exploration of European intellectual and cultural tensions before World War I, emphasizing its philosophical depth and narrative complexity.

## **What literary techniques of Thomas Mann are highlighted in 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study'?**

The study highlights Mann's use of irony, symbolism, detailed character development, and the blending of myth with contemporary issues as key literary techniques.

## **Does 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' address Mann's political views?**

Yes, the study examines Mann's evolving political views, especially his opposition to Nazism and his reflections on exile and German nationalism.

## **How is the influence of Thomas Mann on contemporary literature evaluated in the study?**

The critical study evaluates Mann's influence as profound, noting how his narrative style and thematic concerns have shaped modernist and postmodernist literature.

## **Are there any critiques of Thomas Mann's work presented in 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study'?**

Yes, the study offers critiques regarding Mann's sometimes dense prose, his elitist perspectives, and the complexity that can alienate some readers.

## **What role does 'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' play in academic**

settings?

'Thomas Mann: A Critical Study' is widely used in academic settings to provide students and scholars with a comprehensive understanding of Mann's literary contributions and historical context.

## Additional Resources

Thomas Mann: A Critical Study of His Literary Genius and Cultural Impact

**thomas mann a critical study** presents an intricate exploration of one of the 20th century's most profound literary figures. Renowned for his deeply philosophical novels and novella, Mann's body of work offers a rich tapestry of narrative complexity, cultural critique, and psychological insight. This article endeavors to analyze Thomas Mann's literary contributions through a critical lens, tracing the thematic and stylistic elements that have cemented his legacy within modern literature.

## Contextualizing Thomas Mann's Literary Significance

To understand Thomas Mann's oeuvre, it is essential to situate him within the broader historical and cultural milieu of his time. Born in 1875 in Lübeck, Germany, Mann's career spans the transformations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the tumult of World War I, the Weimar Republic, and the rise of fascism. His works reflect not only personal introspection but also a profound engagement with the ideological and aesthetic currents shaping Europe.

Thomas Mann's narrative style is marked by a synthesis of realism and symbolism, blending detailed psychological portraits with allegorical depth. His critical study reveals how Mann navigates complex themes such as the artist's role in society, the conflict between reason and passion, and the decay of bourgeois values. This duality makes his novels fertile ground for interdisciplinary critical approaches, encompassing literary theory, philosophy, and cultural studies.

## Major Works and Their Thematic Resonance

### "Buddenbrooks": The Collapse of a Bourgeois Dynasty

One of Mann's earliest and most celebrated novels, "Buddenbrooks" (1901), chronicles the decline of a wealthy merchant family over several generations. This work is often regarded as a sociological critique of the German bourgeoisie, highlighting themes of social decay, familial obligation, and the inexorable passage of time.

In a critical study of Thomas Mann, "Buddenbrooks" serves as a foundational text that exemplifies his narrative precision and thematic ambition. The novel's detailed portrayal of characters' internal struggles against external societal pressures underscores Mann's preoccupation with the tension between individual desires and collective expectations.

## **"The Magic Mountain": Time, Illness, and Ideological Conflict**

Perhaps Mann's most philosophically dense novel, "The Magic Mountain" (1924), is set in a Swiss sanatorium and explores themes of temporality, illness, and ideological discourse. Its narrative structure defies conventional linearity, immersing readers in a liminal space where time is both suspended and interrogated.

From a critical perspective, "The Magic Mountain" can be seen as an allegory for the intellectual and political ferment of pre-World War I Europe. Mann's use of the sanatorium as a microcosm enables a nuanced examination of contrasting worldviews, such as humanism versus nihilism, and rationalism versus mysticism.

## **"Death in Venice": The Tragic Artist and the Aesthetics of Desire**

In the novella "Death in Venice" (1912), Mann delves into the psyche of an aging writer who becomes obsessed with youthful beauty, leading to his eventual demise. This narrative probes the intersection between artistic creation and destructive desire, encapsulating Mann's fascination with the dualities of life.

A critical study of Thomas Mann's shorter works reveals how "Death in Venice" distills many of the themes present in his larger novels into a concentrated and poignant form. The novella's stylistic elegance and symbolic richness have made it a focal point for psychoanalytic and queer theoretical interpretations.

## **Stylistic Innovations and Narrative Techniques**

Thomas Mann's literary craftsmanship is characterized by a meticulous attention to language and structure. His prose often combines intricate sentences with a formal tone, reflecting his classical education and affinity for German Romanticism. This stylistic choice enhances the thematic gravitas of his works but can also pose challenges for contemporary readers.

Moreover, Mann frequently employs irony and ambiguity, inviting multiple interpretations and resisting simplistic readings. His use of unreliable narrators and layered narrative perspectives deepens the psychological complexity of his characters, making his novels fertile ground for literary criticism.

## **Philosophical Underpinnings and Intellectual Influences**

Mann's writings are imbued with philosophical reflections drawn from figures such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Goethe. His engagement with German Idealism and Romanticism informs his exploration of art, morality, and the nature of existence.

A critical study of Thomas Mann must address his ambivalent relationship with modernity. While he critiques the materialism and spiritual emptiness of bourgeois society, he also expresses skepticism toward radical political ideologies. This nuanced stance positions Mann as both a conservative and a modernist thinker, complicating efforts to categorize his work within straightforward ideological frameworks.

## **The Cultural and Political Dimensions of Mann's Work**

Beyond his literary achievements, Thomas Mann's role as a public intellectual significantly shapes his legacy. During the rise of National Socialism, Mann vocally opposed fascism and eventually went into exile. His essays and speeches from this period demonstrate a commitment to democratic values and humanistic ideals.

This intersection of literature and politics enriches any critical study of Thomas Mann. His novels do not merely depict individual tragedies but also engage with the broader crises of European civilization. Mann's works serve as a testament to the power of literature to reflect and influence cultural consciousness.

## **The Reception and Criticism of Mann's Work**

Critics have long debated the accessibility and relevance of Mann's writings. Some argue that his dense prose and intellectualism render his novels elitist, while others praise his depth and moral seriousness. The Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to Mann in 1929 underscored his global recognition, but critical opinions remain diverse.

Contemporary scholarship often focuses on reevaluating Mann's themes in light of modern concerns, such as identity, sexuality, and postcolonialism. This ongoing dialogue attests to the enduring vitality of his literary corpus.

## **Key Takeaways from a Critical Study of Thomas Mann**

- Thomas Mann's work is characterized by a fusion of psychological depth and cultural critique.

- His novels often explore the tension between individual desires and societal norms.
- Mann's narrative techniques include irony, ambiguity, and complex characterizations.
- Philosophical influences shape his thematic concerns with art, morality, and modernity.
- His political engagement during the 20th century highlights the interplay between literature and ideology.
- The reception of his work remains varied, reflecting its complexity and richness.

Thomas Mann's literary legacy continues to provoke critical inquiry and inspire readers worldwide. The multifaceted nature of his work ensures that each reading can uncover new layers of meaning, making any critical study of Thomas Mann a rewarding endeavor for scholars and enthusiasts alike.

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**thomas mann a critical study: Thomas Mann: a Critical Study** R. J. Hollingdale,

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**thomas mann a critical study: Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche** Caroline Joan (Kay) S. Picart, 2022-07-11 Traditional interpretations of Thomas Mann's relation to Nietzsche's writings plot out a simple relation of earlier adulation and later rejection. The book argues that Mann's disavowal of Nietzsche's influence was, in the words of T.J. Reed, a necessary political act when the repudiation of Nietzsche's more hysterical doctrines required such a response. Using a genealogical method, the book traces how Mann labors ambivalently under the shadow of Nietzsche's writings on his own political artistry through a detailed analysis of Mann's *Death in Venice*, *Dr. Faustus*, the *Joseph tetralogy*, and *Confessions of Felix Krull*, *Confidence Man*. Using the recurring Nietzschean themes of eroticism, death, music, and laughter as a guide, it arrives at a rough picture of how Mann both takes up and discontinues Nietzsche's poetic heritage. The book derives the vision of the

interrelationships binding these four leitmotiv elements from Dürer's magic square as depicted in *Melancholia I*. The link with Dürer is far from arbitrary because Mann directly aligned Nietzschean insight with Dürer's world of passion, sympathy with suffering, the macabre stench of rotting flesh, and Faustian melancholy.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *The Modern Revival of Gnosticism and Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus* Kirsten J. Grimstad, 2002 This study explores the reappearance of Gnostic themes across the landscape of European literature and thought and in major works by Thomas Mann

**thomas mann a critical study: A Study Guide for Thomas Mann's "Disorder and Early Sorrow"** Gale, Cengage Learning, 2016-07-14 A Study Guide for Thomas Mann's *Disorder and Early Sorrow*, excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Short Stories for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Short Stories for Students* for all of your research needs.

**thomas mann a critical study: A Companion to the Works of Thomas Mann** Herbert Lehnert, Eva Wessell, 2004 Thomas Mann is among the greatest of German prose writers, and was the first German novelist to reach a wide English-speaking readership since Goethe. Novels such as *Buddenbrooks*, *The Magic Mountain*, and *Doktor Faustus* attest to his mastery of subtle, distanced irony, while novellas such as *Death in Venice* reveal him at the height of his mastery of language. In addition to fresh insights about these best-known works of Mann, this volume treats less-often-discussed works such as *Joseph and His Brothers*, *Lotte in Weimar*, and *Felix Krull*, as well as his political writings and essays. Mann himself was a paradox: his role as family-father was both refuge and façade; his love of Germany was matched by his contempt for its having embraced Hitler. While in exile during the Nazi period, he functioned as the prime representative of the good Germany in the fight against fascism, and he has often been remembered this way in English-speaking lands. But a new view of Mann is emerging half a century after his death: a view of him as one of the great writers of a modernity understood as extending into our 21st century. This volume provides sixteen essays by American and European specialists. They demonstrate the relevance of his writings for our time, making particular use of the biographical material that is now available. Contributors: Ehrhard Bahr, Manfred Dierks, Werner Frizen, Clayton Koelb, Helmut Koopmann, Wolfgang Lederer, Hannelore Mundt, Peter Pütz, Jens Rieckmann, Hans Joachim Sandberg, Egon Schwarz, and Hans Vaget. Herbert Lehnert is Research Professor, and Eva Wessell is lecturer in Humanities, both at the University of California, Irvine.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Thomas Mann's Death in Venice* Ellis Shookman, 2003 Study of the critical reception of one of the most famous and widely read works of modern literature. Thomas Mann's 1912 novella *Death in Venice* is one of the most famous and widely read texts in all of modern literature, raising such issues as beauty and decadence, eros and irony, and aesthetics and morality. The amount and variety of criticism on the work is enormous, and ranges from psychoanalytic criticism and readings inspired by Mann's own homosexuality to inquiries into the place of the novella in Mann's oeuvre, its structure and style, and its symbolism and politics. Critics have also drawn connections between the novella and works of Plato, Euripides, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Platen, Wagner, Nietzsche, Gide, and Conrad. Ellis Shookman surveys the reception of *Death in Venice*, analyzing several hundred books, articles, and other reactions to the novella, proceeding in a chronological manner that allows a historical perspective. Critics cited include Heinrich Mann, Hermann Broch, D. H. Lawrence, Karl Kraus, Kenneth Burke, Georg Lukács, Wolfgang Koeppen, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Thomas Mann himself. Particular attention is paid to Luchino Visconti's film, Benjamin Britten's opera, and to other more recent creative adaptations, both in Germany and throughout the world. Ellis Shookman is associate professor of German at Dartmouth College.

**thomas mann a critical study: Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain** Rodney Symington, 2011-09-22 Thomas Mann's novel *The Magic Mountain* presents a panorama of European society in the first two decades of the 20th century and depicts the philosophical and metaphysical dilemmas

facing people in the modern age. In the years leading up to the First World War, the fundamental elements of human nature were thrown into sharp relief by the political tensions that resulted in the ultimate metaphor for the innate destructiveness of humankind: the War itself. If such a war is the true expression of human tendencies, what hope is there for the future? Through the figure of the main character of the novel, Thomas Mann explores the alternative philosophies of life available to human beings in the modern age, and invites the reader to undertake a personal odyssey of discovery, with a view to adopting a positive approach in an era that seems to offer no clear-cut answers. This book is a comprehensive commentary on Thomas Mann's seminal novel, one of the key literary artefacts of the 20th century. The author has taken upon himself the task of explaining all the references and allusions contained in the novel, and of providing readers who know little or no German with enough explanatory comment to enable them to understand the novel and extract the maximum reading pleasure from it.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Thomas Mann's Artist-Heroes* Jeffrey Meyers, 2014-02-28 Jeffrey Meyers has written acclaimed biographies of many of the most influential authors of the twentieth century, but none has affected him as deeply as Thomas Mann. From his first youthful encounter with *Death in Venice*, Meyers has cultivated a lifetime obsession with Mann's elegant style, penetrating irony, and insight into the life of the artist. Admirers of Thomas Mann and of Jeffrey Meyers's biographies will find in this remarkable book the best introduction to one of the greatest writers of the modern age.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Mann: Doctor Faustus* Michael Beddow, 1994-09-29 In *Doctor Faustus*, his last major novel, Thomas Mann attempted to interpret and judge Germany's role in European culture and history since the Reformation. Through the figures of the solitary avant-garde composer, Adrian Leverkühn, and his often bemused biographer Serenus Zeitblom, Mann explores Germany's self-understanding and self-assertion. The novel intermingles fiction and history in a narrative that combines complex psychological analysis, virtuoso stylistic parody and vivid evocation of atmosphere and milieu. Michael Beddow analyses the structure of the plot and explores the significance of its chief historical, theological, psychological and musical themes. He considers Mann's understanding and modification of the Faust tradition, his thematic and formal indebtedness to Nietzsche and his interest in Adorno's neo-Marxism. The study concludes with an account of the work's generally hostile reception in defeated Germany.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Nietzsche in the Early Work of Thomas Mann* ,

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Thomas Mann Studies, Volume 2* Klaus W. Jonas, Ilse B. Jonas, 2016-11-11 Seldom, if ever, has there lived in the United States a foreign-born writer who has won such universal acclaim and made such an impact on the American literary scene as Thomas Mann. Not only have Mann's works, with very few exceptions, been translated but he is also one of the most eagerly collected of all modern authors. This volume will serve any student of literature, or collector, who is anxious to locate materials on Thomas Mann. *Thomas Mann Studies, Volume II*, is intended first of all as the bibliographical record for the period from 1954 to 1965. Since the death of Mann in 1955, a vast amount of material has been published about the man and his work. This extraordinary book lists almost four thousand items of criticism about the novelist which are not to be found in any previous bibliography. By far the majority of the items are in German, followed by a large number in English, French, Italian, and Swedish. Other languages represented include Japanese, Dutch, Spanish, Romanian, Danish, Polish, and Russian. Achieving its primary purpose of facilitating research in the rapidly growing area of Thomas Mann studies throughout the world, this book forms the complete record of critical, secondary literature about Mann, published as well as unpublished, through 1965. It also contains a comprehensive chapter on Mann's manuscripts, describing the public and private collections in which his papers are now preserved.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *Thomas Mann's Joseph and His Brothers* William E. McDonald, 1999 Second, the scores of essays and lectures that Mann composed during the Joseph years (1926-1943) interweave with the mammoth tetralogy in complex ways.

**thomas mann a critical study:** *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann* Ritchie

Robertson, 2002 Specially-commissioned essays explore key dimensions of Thomas Mann's writing and life.

**thomas mann a critical study: Changing Perceptions of Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus**

John F. Fetzer, 1996 Ever since its appearance in 1947, Thomas Mann's novel Doctor Faustus has generated heated reactions among critics. Whereas initial ideological differences stemming from the Cold War and the division of Germany have abated following the reunification of 1990, diverse opinions and controversies persist about Mann's daring treatment of the Faust theme. These include such topics as the political stance of the author and the historical dimensions of the novel; the biographical and autobiographical and backgrounds of the work especially in light of the subsequent publication of Mann's diaries and private notebooks; the writer's sexual and psychological proclivities; the thorny issues of montage, collage, and intertextuality; musical concerns such as the extent to which the novel's protagonist appropriates as his own Arnold Schonberg's twelve-tone system of composition or the role of Mann's fellow exile and mentor, Theodor W. Adorno, in indoctrinating his pupil into avant-garde musical techniques; the degree to which the novel exhibits structural features of the music on which the narrative focuses; and the function of certain mythic prototypes for this modern parody in fashioning the fortunes and fate of Adrian Leverkühn. A provocative and still unresolved question centers on the precise role played by Goethe's Faust in the conception and execution of Doctor Faustus, in spite of Mann's assertion that his version of the legend had nothing in common with the work of his famous predecessor. Finally, the presence of strong visual elements in the novel leads to an assessment of the critical reception accorded Franz Seitz's film adaptation of Doctor Faustus (1982), a dicey subject in Mann circles, since few filmed versions of his novellas or novels have enjoyed an unsullied reputation.

**thomas mann a critical study: Doctor Faustus** Thomas Mann, 2025-09-12 'Why must I feel that almost all--no, all--of the devices and conventions used by art are today only fit for parody?' Adrian Leverkühn is a composer who, at terrible personal cost, makes the breakthrough from traditional art to extreme modernism and success. Creative and brilliant, he will stop at nothing to achieve greatness. Thomas Mann wrote Doctor Faustus (1947) in American exile during and just after the Second World War. A prominent and long-standing defender of democracy, he sought to understand, in cultural and intellectual terms, how Germany had succumbed to Nazism. Mann structures his story through references to the German legend of Faust and his pact with the Devil. The life of the solitary composer, an ultimately tragic figure, is recounted by his friend and biographer, who represents a sadly ineffectual humanism, and whose social activities provide a panorama of middle-class German society in the early twentieth century. Ritchie Robertson's new English translation is accompanied by detailed annotations and an introduction illuminating the themes of the novel. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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