



# Thomas Manns the Magic Mountain: A Readers Guide

*Rodney Symington*

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## **Thomas Manns the Magic Mountain: A Readers Guide** Rodney Symington

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 comments to enable them to understand the novel and extract the maximum reading pleasure from it.

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