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The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann

Key dimensions of Thomas Mann's writing and life are explored in this collection of specially commissioned essays. In addition to introductory chapters on all the main works of fiction, the essays and diaries, there are four chapters examining Mann's oeuvre in relation to major themes. These thematic explorations include his position as a realistic writer concerned with the history of his own times and as a commentator on German and American politics; his controversial reputation as an intellectual novelist; the literary techniques that enabled his challenging fictions to appeal to a wide audience; and the homosexual subtext running through his fiction and diaries. A final chapter looks at the pitfalls of translating Mann into English. The essays are well supported by supplementary material including a chronology of the period and detailed guides to further reading. Altogether the volume provides an invaluable resource for scholars and students.

RITCHIE ROBERTSON is Professor of German at Oxford University and Fellow and Tutor of St John's College, Oxford. He is the author of *Kafka: Judaism, Politics, and Literature* (1985) and *Heine* (1988), which have also been published in German translation, and *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature, 1749–1939* (1999). He has also published numerous translations from German, including works by Heine and Hoffmann. He is an editor of *The Modern Language Review*.

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P R E F A C E

Thomas Mann continues to have the widest appeal of all German novelists. Although he identified profoundly with various conceptions of Germany and Germanness, he sought during most of his literary career to build bridges between German culture and a succession of wider worlds. His first masterpiece, *Buddenbrooks*, the unrivalled bestseller in twentieth-century German fiction, adopts techniques from French, Russian, and Scandinavian realism to chronicle the lives of a family in a North German backwater. *The Magic Mountain*, though set in the confines of a Swiss sanatorium, takes its setting as a stage where debates about the shape of European culture can be dramatised. The huge tetralogy *Joseph and his Brothers* explores the cultures of the ancient Near East, the origins of religion and culture, and the foundations of a Judaeo-Christian humanism that, as Mann wrote, was under threat from Hitler's Third Reich. And in *Doctor Faustus* Mann revived a German myth, with its theological underpinnings, to present the fictional biography of a quintessential German artist whose tragedy lay not least in cutting himself off from European culture.

Mann's mission to explain Germany to the wider world was made more urgent by his own exile from Germany. Having been an outspoken opponent of the reactionary Right and of the National Socialists from 1922 onwards, he moved, after Hitler's accession to power, to France, Switzerland, and eventually the United States. Deprived of his German citizenship, he became a citizen first of Czechoslovakia and later of the United States. In America, where the translations of his fiction already had a large readership, he enjoyed more prominence than almost any other émigré, and used it to become a spokesman for humanism and a cultural mediator.

During Mann's lifetime, his public persona inevitably coloured the reception of his novels. They were often understood with dutiful awe as intellectual fiction of a high order, top-heavy with German philosophy and history. Over-attention to this aspect of Mann's fiction often distracted readers, especially those reliant on imperfect translations, from the light and polished irony,

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PREFACE

apparent even in the short stories with which Mann entered the literary scene in the 1890s, and from the practically Dickensian humour governing the characterisation in the major novels. In the 1970s scholars drew attention to Mann's career as a politically engaged intellectual and to the close links between his political stances and his writing, especially *The Magic Mountain*, the short fiction of the 1920s, and the large body of reflective and thought-provoking essays that Mann produced for many public occasions. It was also in the 1970s that Mann's surviving diaries began to be published, not only proving an invaluable biographical source and a major addition to the canon of literary journals, but also disclosing much about his lifelong homosexuality. Although *Death in Venice* and some published correspondence were frank enough, the insights provided by the diaries coincided with the new perspectives of gender-oriented criticism to open up additional layers of meaning in large areas of Mann's fiction.

Like any classic, therefore, Mann has continued to be reread in new ways, and part of the purpose of this collection of introductory essays is to offer a variety of approaches to his work. The first four contributions are thematic. They consider Mann in the light of his engagement with German history; as an intellectual novelist; as a supremely skilful practitioner of the novel, both heightening his readers' moral awareness and providing them with gratification; and using these techniques to explore forms and categories of masculinity. There follow three essays on the shorter fiction, six on the major novels (other fictional works, including *Royal Highness*, are dealt with in passing), and appreciations of Mann the essayist and the diarist. Finally, there is a critical examination of the translations of Mann currently available in English, reminding us that despite his popularity in the English-speaking world, part of his claim to fame lies in his uniquely skilful and untranslatable use of the German language. The essays are intended to be useful both to readers who have access to the original, and readers who know Mann in English translation. Each chapter concludes with a list of further reading relevant to the subject of the chapter; the selected bibliography at the end of the book gives information about German and English editions of Mann's works and includes a wide selection of criticism written in both languages.

I should like to thank all the contributors to this book for their enthusiastic and good-natured co-operation; the four anonymous readers enlisted by Cambridge University Press for their detailed, supportive and constructive comments; and Linda Bree for her invariable helpfulness and patience as editor.

Ritchie Robertson

CHRONOLOGY

- 1875 6 June: birth of Paul Thomas Mann to Julia (née da Silva Bruhns, born 1851) and Thomas Johann Heinrich Mann (1840), the second of five children. Paul Thomas's siblings are Luiz Heinrich (born 1871), Julia (1877), Carla (1881) and Viktor (1890).
- 1877 Mann's father is elected to the Lübeck senate.
- 1891 Mann's father dies on 13 October; the family firm (Johann Siegmund Mann Corn Merchants, Commission and Transport Agents) is liquidated and the family house sold, leaving Heinrich and Thomas with independent means sufficient to establish themselves as writers.
- 1893 Frau Mann moves to Munich with the three younger children (Julia, Carla, and Viktor); Thomas stays at school in Lübeck.
- 1894 Thomas leaves school and joins his mother in Munich, where he starts working for an insurance company, but leaves it after four months in the hope of a career as a journalist. His first story, 'Gefallen' [Fallen], is published in the Naturalist journal *Die Gesellschaft* [Society]. In the next few years he gradually publishes short stories in the periodical edited by his brother Heinrich, *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* [The Twentieth Century]. The two brothers also work and travel together.
- 1898 *Der kleine Herr Friedemann* [*Little Herr Friedemann*], a collection of short stories, Mann's first book, is published.
- 1899 beginning of friendship with Paul Ehrenberg
- 1900 Mann completes the novel *Buddenbrooks* in May. Called up for military service, beginning on 1 October, but thanks to an inflamed tendon in his right foot he is confined to bed and given leave in December.
- 1901 *Buddenbrooks* published in two volumes. This novel was the foundation for Mann's reputation and success: it sold a million copies in just over a year, and continued to have a steady sale.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1903 Another collection of short stories, *Tristan*, appears (including 'Tonio Kröger').
- 1905 11 February: Mann marries Katia Pringsheim (born 1883), daughter of a wealthy Munich mathematics professor of Jewish descent.
 9 November: birth of their first child, Erika Mann
- 1906 18 November: birth of Klaus Mann
- 1909 27 March: birth of Gottfried ('Golo') Mann. Mann publishes the novel *Königliche Hoheit* [*Royal Highness*], which is judged lightweight by comparison with *Buddenbrooks*.
- 1910 Mann begins work on *Felix Krull*, only to abandon it in 1911.
 7 June: birth of Monika Mann
 30 July: suicide of Mann's sister Carla
- 1911 May: feeling ill and depressed, Mann visits the Adriatic island of Brioni and Venice with his wife; they stay (26 May to 2 June) in the Hôtel des Bains on the Lido at Venice.
- 1912 *Death in Venice* completed in June, published in a journal in October and November. 15 May to 12 June: Mann visits Katia, who is staying in a sanatorium in Davos in Switzerland.
- 1913 Mann begins work on *The Magic Mountain*, planning it as a novella similar in length to *Death in Venice*.
- 1914 August: outbreak of war. Mann shares the widespread patriotic euphoria.
- 1915 November: Heinrich Mann's essay on Zola is published, with a hostile reference to Thomas Mann, who is inspired to start work on the *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*.
- 1918 24 April: birth of Elisabeth Mann
 9 November: proclamation of a German Republic
 Just before the war ends, Mann publishes *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*.
- 1919 7 April: a Soviet Republic is declared in Munich; it is overthrown by government and paramilitary troops on 1–3 May.
 21 April: birth of Michael Mann
 Mann resumes work on *The Magic Mountain*.
- 1922 24 June: assassination of the Foreign Minister, Walther Rathenau
 15 October: Mann delivers his address 'Von deutscher Republik' ('On the German Republic') in the Beethovensaal in Berlin; ostensibly a celebration of the dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann's sixtieth birthday, it is recognised as Mann's public avowal of support for the Weimar Republic.
- 1926 31 August to 13 September: the Manns take a holiday at Forte di

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- Marmi in Italy, where the events inspire *Mario and the Magician* (published 1930).
- 1927 10 May: suicide of Mann's sister Julia
- 1929 Mann is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, explicitly for *Buddenbrooks*.
 His speech on Lessing, at the bicentenary of the latter's birth, marks an important attempt to reconcile myth with reason in the struggle against fascism.
- 1930 February to April: travels in Egypt and Palestine
- 1932 The centenary of Goethe's death brings forth important lectures and essays.
- 1933 30 January: Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
 10 February: Mann delivers lecture on Wagner at Munich University.
 11 February: Mann leaves Germany with his wife, initially to lecture in Holland and Belgium, then to visit Switzerland; while there, his children Klaus and Erika warn him not to return. After spending the summer on the French Riviera, the Manns settle at Küsnacht outside Zürich in Switzerland.
 October: publication of *The Tales of Jacob* (first volume of *Joseph and his Brothers*)
- 1934 April: publication of *The Young Joseph*
 May–June: Mann pays his first visit to the United States; lectures on Goethe at Yale University.
- 1935 June–July: Mann revisits the United States and receives an honorary doctorate from Harvard.
- 1936 Mann is deprived of German citizenship; becomes a Czech citizen. Also deprived of his honorary doctorate from Bonn University.
Joseph in Egypt is published in Vienna by Bermann-Fischer, Mann's publisher, now also in exile.
 8 May: lecture on 'Freud and the Future' delivered in Vienna to celebrate Freud's eightieth birthday.
- 1937 April: Mann revisits US at invitation of the New School for Social Research in New York.
- 1938 February: returns to US for long visit; news of Hitler's annexation of Austria encourages Mann to settle in US; accepts a chair at Princeton University.
 1 October: German invasion of Czechoslovakia
 9 November: 'Kristallnacht': attacks on Jewish homes and synagogues throughout Germany

CHRONOLOGY

- 1939 3 September: Britain and France declare war on Germany after Germany invades Poland.
- 1941 April: the Manns move to Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles.
 December: US declares war on Japan after its attack on Pearl Harbor; Germany and Italy declare war on the US.
- 1943 *Joseph the Provider* published by Bermann-Fischer, now in Stockholm.
 23 May: Mann begins work on *Doctor Faustus*.
 ‘The Tables of the Law’, Mann’s story about Moses, is published in a book entitled *The Ten Commandments: Ten Short Novels of Hitler’s War against the Moral Code*.
- 1944 Thomas and Katia Mann become American citizens.
- 1945 12 April: death of Roosevelt
 7 May: Germany’s unconditional surrender
 29 May: lecture, ‘Germany and the Germans’, delivered at Library of Congress: it is Mann’s major statement on the German catastrophe, closely linked to *Doctor Faustus*.
- 1947 May to August: Thomas and Katia visit Europe, including Britain, Switzerland, Italy and Holland, but not Germany.
- 1949 21 May: suicide of Klaus Mann
 Mann revisits Germany (Frankfurt, Munich, Weimar) in connection with celebrations of Goethe bicentenary.
 12 October: founding of German Democratic Republic in Soviet zone of occupation
 Beginning of anti-Communist hysteria in US, stirred up by Senator Joseph McCarthy
- 1950 2 March: death of Heinrich Mann
- 1951 Mann resumes work on *Felix Krull*.
- 1952 Alarmed by McCarthyism, Mann moves to Switzerland; he and Katia rent house at Erlenbach near Zürich.
- 1954 The Manns buy a house at Kilchberg on Lake Zürich.
- 1955 12 August: Thomas Mann dies in Zürich of arteriosclerosis.

LIST OF THOMAS MANN'S WORKS

English titles given here in square brackets are not published titles.

1894	'Gefallen'	'Fallen'
1896	'Enttäuschung'	'Disillusionment'
1897	'Der kleine Herr Friedemann'	'Little Herr Friedemann'
	'Der Bajazzo'	'The Joker'
1898	<i>Der kleine Herr Friedemann</i>	
1901	<i>Buddenbrooks</i>	<i>Buddenbrooks</i>
1902	'Gladius Dei'	'Gladius Dei'
1903	<i>Tonio Kröger</i>	<i>Tonio Kröger</i>
	'Tristan'	'Tristan'
1905	'Schwere Stunde'	'A Weary Hour'
	<i>Fiorenza</i>	<i>Fiorenza</i>
1909	<i>Königliche Hoheit</i>	<i>Royal Highness</i>
	'Süßer Schlaf'	'Sweet Sleep'
1910	'Der alte Fontane'	'The Old Fontane'
1911	'Über die Kunst Richard Wagners'	[On the Art of Richard Wagner]
1912	<i>Der Tod in Venedig</i>	<i>Death in Venice</i>
1914	'Gedanken im Krieg'	[Thoughts in War]
1915	<i>Friedrich und die große Koalition</i>	[Frederick and the Grand Coalition]
1918	<i>Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen</i>	[Reflections of an Unpolitical Man]
1919	<i>Herr und Hund</i>	<i>Master and Dog</i>
	<i>Gesang vom Kindchen</i>	<i>A Birth and a Christening</i> (literally, 'Song of the Baby')
1921	'Goethe und Tolstoi'	[Goethe and Tolstoy]
1922	<i>Rede und Antwort</i>	[Address and Reply] (a collection of essays)

LIST OF THOMAS MANN'S WORKS

1924	<i>Der Zauberberg</i> 'Vorspruch zu einer musikalischen Nietzsche-Feier'	<i>The Magic Mountain</i> [Opening Words to a Musical Celebration of Nietzsche]
1925	<i>Unordnung und frühes Leid</i> <i>Bemühungen</i> 'Deutschland und die Demokratie'	<i>Disorder and Early Sorrow</i> [Endeavours] (a collection of essays) [Germany and Democracy]
1928	'Kultur und Sozialismus' 'Dürer'	[Culture and Socialism] 'Dürer'
1929	'Die Stellung Freuds in der modernen Geistesgeschichte'	'Freud's Position in the History of Modern Thought'
1930	'Rede über Lessing' <i>Mario und der Zauberer</i> <i>Die Forderung des Tages</i>	[Speech on Lessing] <i>Mario and the Magician</i> [The Day's Demand] (a collection of essays)
	'Deutsche Ansprache. Ein Appell an die Vernunft' 'Lebensabriss'	[German Address: An Appeal to Reason] [A Sketch of my Life]
1931	'Die Wiedergeburt der Anständigkeit'	[The Rebirth of Decency]
1932	'Goethe als Repräsentant des bürgerlichen Zeitalters' 'Goethes Laufbahn als Schriftsteller' 'Die Bäume im Garten. Rede für Pan-Europa'	'Goethe as Representative of the Bourgeois Age' [Goethe's Career as a Writer] [The Trees in the Garden. A Speech for Pan-Europe]
1933	<i>Die Geschichten Jaakobs</i>	<i>The Tales of Jacob</i>
1934	<i>Der junge Joseph</i>	<i>The Young Joseph</i>
1936	<i>Joseph in Ägypten</i> 'Freud und die Zukunft'	<i>Joseph in Egypt</i> 'Freud and the Future'
1938	'Schopenhauer'	
1939	<i>Lotte in Weimar</i> 'Bruder Hitler'	<i>The Beloved Returns/Lotte in Weimar</i> [Brother Hitler]
1940	<i>Die vertauschten Köpfe</i> 'On Myself'	<i>The Transposed Heads</i>
1941	'Goethe's "Werther"'	

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LIST OF THOMAS MANN'S WORKS

1943	<i>Joseph der Ernährer</i> 'Das Gesetz'	<i>Joseph the Provider</i> 'The Tables of the Law'
1945	<i>Adel des Geistes</i> 'Deutschland und die Deutschen'	<i>Nobility of the Spirit</i> [Germany and the Germans]
1947	<i>Doktor Faustus</i> 'Nietzsches Philosophie im Licht unserer Erfahrung' 'Die Aufgabe des Schriftstellers'	<i>Doctor Faustus</i> 'Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of our Experience' [The Task of the Writer]
1948	'Phantasie über Goethe'	[Goethe: An Imaginative Portrait]
1949	'Goethe und die Demokratie'	[Goethe and Democracy]
1951	<i>Der Erwählte</i>	<i>The Holy Sinner</i>
1953	<i>Die Betrogene</i>	<i>The Black Swan</i> (literally, 'The Deceived Woman')
1954	<i>Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull</i>	<i>Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man</i>
1955	'Schiller'	

A NOTE ON REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise stated, translations of German works are the chapter author's own.

References to Thomas Mann's essays and literary works are to *Gesammelte Werke*, 13 vols. (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1974), cited by volume and page number.

This edition is supplemented where necessary by Thomas Mann, *Essays*, ed. Hermann Kurzke and S. Stachorski, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993–1997), referred to as *Essays*.

Diary entries are cited by date from *Tagebücher*, 10 vols., ed. Peter de Mendelssohn (vols. I–V) and Inge Jens (vols. VI–X) (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1979–95)

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Freud is quoted from *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), abbreviated as SE.

Nietzsche is quoted from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 8 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1972–), abbreviated as *Werke*. References to Nietzsche's works are by abbreviated title, with roman numerals for 'book' and arabic for 'section': e.g. GM III, §13. Abbreviations used are:

- GM *The Genealogy of Morals*
 A *The Antichrist*
 BT *The Birth of Tragedy*
 CW *The Case of Wagner*
 D *Daybreak*
 EH *Ecce Homo*
 GS *The Gay Science* (also known as *The Joyful Wisdom*)
 TI *The Twilight of the Idols*
 WP *The Will to Power*