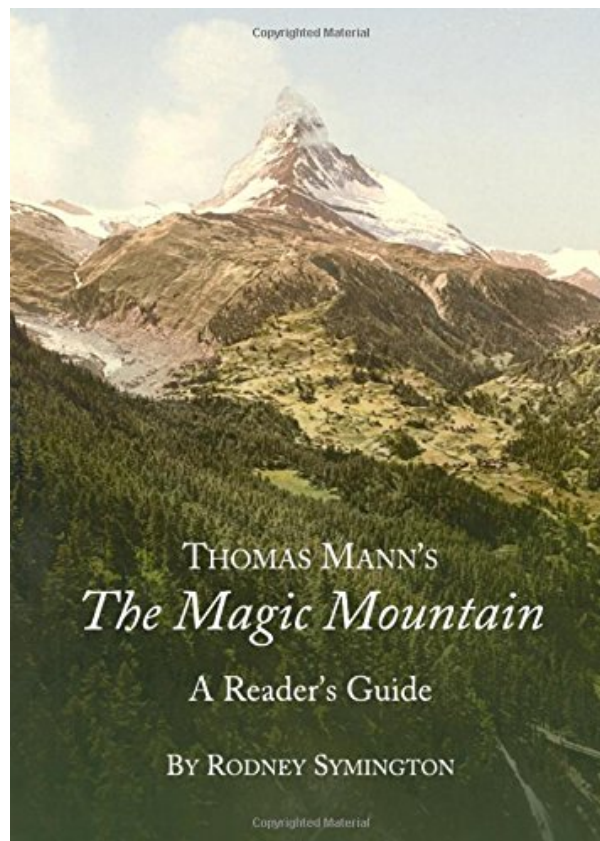
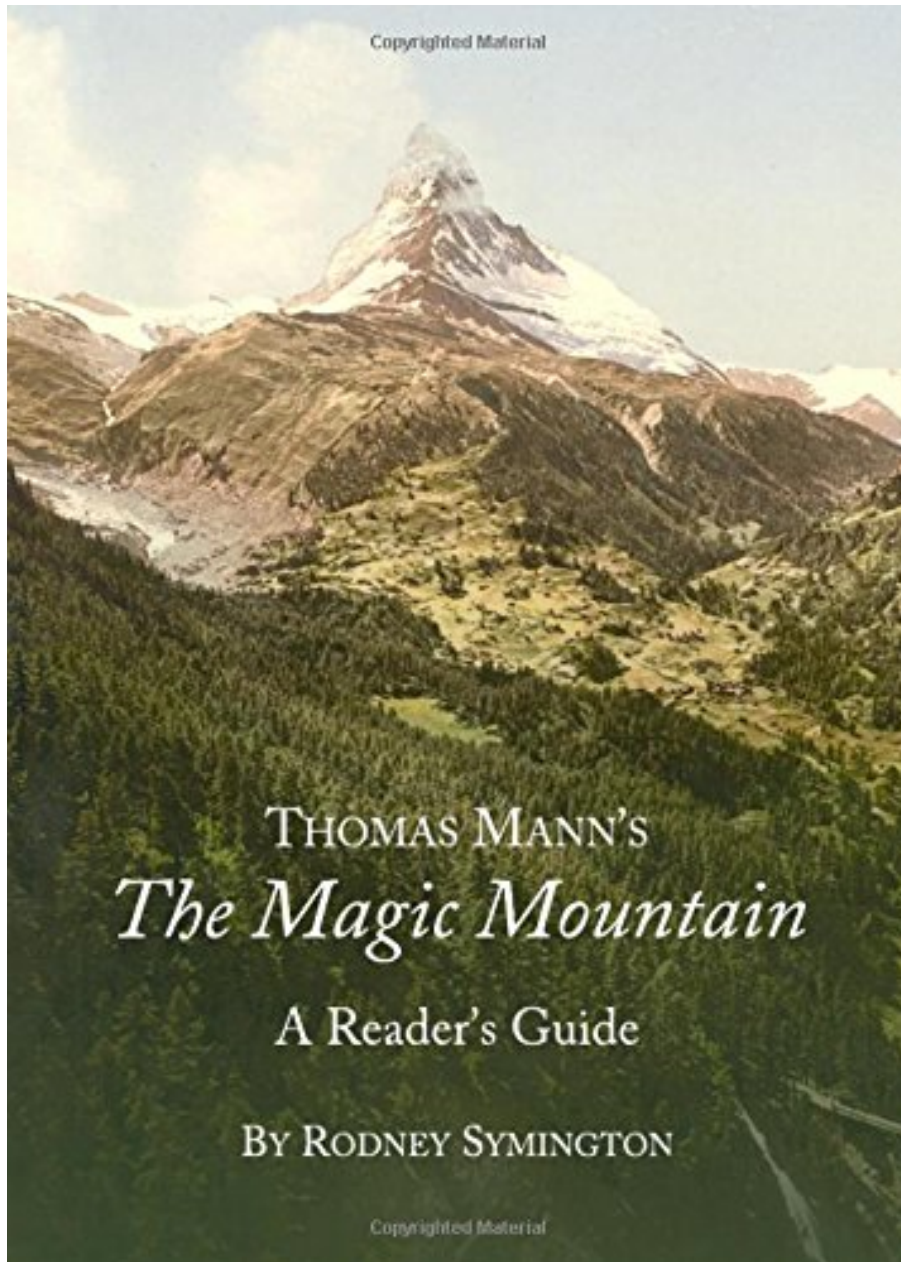


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About the Author

. Rodney Symington is Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. His publications include the book-length studies Brecht und Shakespeare and The Nazi Appropriation of Shakespeare, plus many edited volumes of essays, and numerous articles on Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and Heimito von Doderer. For 12 years he was Editor of Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies.

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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.

- Sales Rank: #3186177 in Books
- Published on: 2011-11-01
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.20" h x 1.20" w x 6.00" l, 1.27 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 370 pages

About the Author

Rodney Symington is Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. His publications include the book-length studies *Brecht und Shakespeare* and *The Nazi Appropriation of Shakespeare*, plus many edited volumes of essays, and numerous articles on Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and Heimito von Doderer. For 12 years he was Editor of *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*.

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sometimes they explain puns or classical allusions that would not be familiar to those not familiar with German history and literature in German (like the English speaking readers of this book!). The book is simply superb and greatly enhanced my understanding of this difficult book. I prefer not to read essays because they tend to tell me what the book means and I cannot get those thoughts out of my head while I read; I prefer to read a book without those prejudices though, truth be told, there are some interpretations floating about in the notes presented. I cannot recommend this book highly enough for those looking for this kind of reference. The book is new (published 2011), hardcover only, and expensive. I balked at buying it but figured I'd try it since I could return it if it didn't meet my needs. I am SO glad I took that step. I cannot say if the book will be printed in cheaper paperback form. But if reading and understanding *The Magic Mountain* is important to you I highly recommend this Readers' Guide. Have fun.

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