



Changing Perceptions of Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus: Criticism 1947-1992 (Literary Criticism in Perspective)

John F. Fetzer

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Since its publication in 1947, Thomas Mann's daring treatment of the Faust theme has generated diverse reactions from the critics, and continues to provoke controversies. This volume traces the history of its critical reception. Topics considered include the political stance of the author and the historical dimensions of the novel; the autobiographical background of the novel - especially in the light of the subsequent publication of Mann's diaries and private notebooks; the issue of intertextuality; the way in which the novel exhibits structural features of the music on which the narrative focuses; and the function of mythic prototypes. Of particular importance is the question of the precise role played by Goethe's Faust in the conception and execution of Doctor Faustus, in spite of Mann's assertion that the works had 'nothing in common'. Finally, the presence of strong visual elements in the novel leads to an assessment of the critical reception accorded to Franz Seitz's film adaptation of Doctor Faustus (1982). JOHN F. FETZER is Professor of German Emeritus at the University of California, Davis.

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