

Reading Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* with Anne Hall

Description

The background of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* is the rise of Nazism in Germany. Its wider theme is modern culture, which might best be characterized, in Mann's words, as "culture without the cult," that is, culture without a connection to a transcendent world. For Mann, modern culture, seeking intensity of feeling, takes as its hero Nietzsche, who thought creative energy, not a quest for the truth, is the best ground for a renewal of culture. Such a path would allow artists to explore human experience more fully. In Mann's view, however, modern art has set artists on a ceaseless quest for novelty and difficulty for their own sake. In so doing, they have cut themselves off from what Mann calls "the bovine warmth" of art, a language that can speak to the general reader and to the soul of a nation. Mann's hero makes a "Faustian bargain" with the devil, selling his soul in exchange for ever renewed creative invention. In case you are a lover of classical music, *Doktor Faustus* makes frequent reference to famous musical works. Probably as a ploy for notoriety, Schoenberg brought suit against Mann for attributing 12-tone music to the hero of his tale.

Required Text

Please be sure to get the translation by John E. Woods, *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn As Told by a Friend*, published by Vintage ISBN 375701168

Reading Schedule

Sep 15: pp. 5 - 107

Oct 6: 108 - 225

Nov 10: 226 - 340

Dec 8: 341 - 462

Jan 12: 463 - 535

About the Instructor

Anne Hall taught for 25 years in the English department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, another 18 years in the English department at the University of Pennsylvania, and for The Rosenbach, has led courses on Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady* and James' *The Ambassadors*.