Chapter 2

The Magic Mountain (1924) Thomas Mann

The myth is the foundation of life; it is the timeless schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious. Certainly when a writer has acquired the habit of regarding life as mythical and typical there comes a curious heightening of his artistic temper, a new refreshment to his perceiving and shaping powers, which otherwise occurs much later in life; for while in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one.
-THOMAS MANN, Freud and the Future

Paul Thomas Mann was born in Lubeck, Germany, (6 June 1875 – 12 August 1995). He was the second son of Thomas Johann Heinrich Mann, a senator and a grain merchant Julia da Silva Bruhns, a Brazilian having partial German ancestry. His mother was a Roman Catholic but Mann was baptized into his father’s Lutheran faith. After his father’s death in 1891, his business was liquidated and the family moved to Munich, where he lived till 1933. In 1905, he married Katia Pringsheim, daughter of a wealthy, secular Jewish industrialist family. After marriage she changed to Lutheran faith. She gave birth to six children.

Thomas Mann attended the science division of a Lubeck Gymnasium School; he then went to the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich and Technical University of Munich to pursue a career in journalism. Along with this he also studied economics, art, history and literature. He worked with the South German Fire Insurance Company for a year (1894 – 95). His career as a writer began when he wrote for Simplicissimus. His first short story “Little Mr Friedemann” was published in 1898.
‘Writing well was almost the same as thinking well, and thinking well was the next thing to acting well. All moral discipline, all moral perfection derived from the soul of literature, from the soul of human dignity, which was the moving spirit of both humanity and politics. Yes they were all one, one and the same force, one and the same idea, and all of them could be comprehended in one single word… The word was civilization!’ – Chapter 4.

Mann a German, novelist, short story writer, social critic, philanthropist, essayist and a Noble Prize Laureate in 1929 is known for his series of highly symbolic and ironic epic novels and novellas. His novels are noted for their insight into the psychology of the artist and the intellectual. His analysis and critique of the European and German soul used modernized German and Biblical stories, as well as the ideas of Goethe, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Mann fled to Switzerland. When World War II broke out in 1939, he immigrated to the United States and returned to Switzerland in 1952. He never returned to Germany though he regularly traveled there. He is one of the best-known exponents of the so-called Exilliteratur. His brother Heinrich Mann and three of his children, Erika Mann, Klaus Mann and Golo Mann also became important German writers. In 1955, he died of atherosclerosis in a hospital in Zurich and was buried in Kilchberg.

During World War I Mann supported conservatism and attacked liberalism. But in the course of time it shifted to liberal and democratic principles. He denounced Nazism and encouraged resistance by the working class. He attacked the Nazis by writing numerous essays and lectures. At the same time, he expressed increasing sympathy for socialist ideas. His denunciation of Nazi policies was the reason he never returned to Germany from his vacation to Switzerland.
The works of Thomas Mann were first translated into English in the year 1924 by H. T. Lowe-Porter. His Noble Prize in Literature was principally in recognition for his epic Buddenbrookes (1901), The Magic Mountain (1924) and his numerous short stories. The other novels are Lotte in Weimar (1939), Doktor Faustus (1974), Confessions of Felix Krull, which was unfinished at his death. Mann’s diaries were unsealed in 1975, which tells of his struggles with his homosexuality. The reflection of this can be found in his works.

Mann was highly influenced by Goethe, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer. Nietzsche’s views on decay and the proposed fundamental connection between sickness and creativity run deep in Mann’s work. Mann held that disease is not to be regarded as wholly negative. In his essay on Dostoyevsky we find: “but after all and above all it depends on who is diseased, who mad, who epileptic or paralytic: an average dull-witted man, in whose illness any intellectual or cultural aspect is non-existent; or a Nietzsche or Dostoyevsky. In their case something comes out in illness that is more important and conducive to life and growth than any medical guaranteed health or sanity… in other words: certain conquests made by the soul and the mind are impossible without disease, madness, crime of the spirit.

When Thomas Mann speaks of the “heightening” in his introduction to The Magic Mountain and the opening of new spiritual possibilities that Hans Castorp experiences in the midst of his sickness, it portrays his strong belief in the power of sickness and decay to destroy the overflowing effects of tradition and civilization by balancing his humanism and appreciation of western culture. And his own summation on receiving the noble prize he mentioned,

The value and significance of my work for posterity may safely be left to the future; for me they are nothing but the personal traces of a life led consciously, that is, conscientiously. (The Noble Prize speech. 1929)
Hence the work of Mann *The Magic Mountain* has been picked for this study as the ideal subject matter worth introspecting with respect to the characteristics of the Novel of Ideas.

A 3-week stay in a Davos sanatorium during the summer of 1912 when he was visiting his sick wife undergoing treatment there, gave Mann the impetus for his next book, *Der Zauberberg (1924; The Magic Mountain)*

The Magic Mountain (*Der Zauberberg, 1924*) is about an engineering student Hans Castorp who, plans to visit his tubercular cousin at a Swiss sanatorium for only three weeks but finds his departure from the sanatorium delayed. During that time, he confronts medicine and the way it looks at the body and encounters a variety of characters who, play out ideological conflicts and discontents of contemporary European civilization.

The narrative opens in the decade before World War 1. The central protagonist Hans Castorp, the only child of a Hamburg merchant family is introduced. Following the early death of his parents, is brought up by his grandfather and subsequently by an Uncle James Tienappel. Hans is twenty years old and is about to take up a shipbuilding career in Hamburg, his home town. Before beginning this professional career he undertakes a journey to visit his tubercular cousin, Joachim Ziemssen, who is undergoing a cure in a sanatorium in Davos, high up in the Swiss Alps. In the beginning itself Hans is symbolically transported away from the familiar life and mundane obligations he has known, in what he later calls “the flatlands”, to the rarefied mountain air and the introspective little world of the sanatorium.

Castorp’s departure from the sanatorium is repeatedly delayed by his failing health. At first it appears to be a minor bronchial infection with slight fever and later is diagnosed by the sanatorium’s chief doctor and director, Hofrat
Behrens, as symptoms of tuberculosis. Hans is persuaded by Behrens to stay until his health improves.

During his extended stay, Castorp meets and learns from a variety of characters, who together represent a microcosm of pre-war Europe. These include the secular humanist and encyclopedist Lodovico Settembrini (a student of Giosue Carducci), the totalitarian Jew turned Jesuit Leo Naphta, the Dionysian Dutch Mynheer Peeperkorn, and his romantic interest the Russian Madame Clavdia Chauchat. Castorp remains in the morbid atmosphere of the sanatorium for seven years. At the conclusion of the novel the World War I breaks out, Castorp volunteers for the military and his possible or probable demise upon the battlefield is portended.

The Magic Mountain defies all the elements of the conventional novel. The most troubling aspect about this book is about coherence. The incoherence can be attributed to the length of the novel. Certain portions of the novel have to be read and reread again and again to keep the story rolling. Mann had an inclination for history and more so The Magic Mountain can be considered an artifact of that particular duration in history. It does not provide a mirror for the modern mentality, except to say that in its broad scope and unerring rigor we see the degraded state of our own ideological interactions. This novel functions as a vehicle for Mann to illustrate the various philosophies that were prevalent, and the political developments during his days. The plot does not move in the conventional and reportorial sense because it is the correlative, not of the hero’s story, but of his experience. Sections have been inserted to unravel the past and tie it up to the future. A few incidents discussed at length about Han’s childhood are the christening basin, his life at Tienappels, about Hippe, and his dreams. If seen in detail the christening basin links the Castorps family from generation to generation. The basin has been inscribed by generations of his ancestors from whom the basin was
passed down and was regarded as a symbol of honour, tradition and strong Christian beliefs, as narrated by his grandfather. The specific mentioning of Castorp’s feelings about the prefix ‘great’ being repeated verbally by his grandfather again and again illustrates the importance that Mann as a student of history was well aware of as the prevailing culture of the Prominent families of Europe. He thought it was of less significance and sounded hollow. Hans’s curiosity about the basin can be seen from his repeated pleas to see the basin time and again, to fulfill his craving for the kind of aristocratic life as described and seen from his grandfather’s way of life. Much similar is the experience of Han’s life after the death of his grandfather, when he is adopted by deceased mother’s uncle Consul Tienappel who lived the life of a through English gentleman with specific preference in style, quality and grandeur. Hans aspired to live such a life. Hans cannot be considered as below average or a genius, but a firm believer in the go-easy way of life, which did not demand much painful ways to acquire.

Pribislav Hippe’s portrayal is a strong example, of how Mann connects the past with the present. Mann uses specific references of characters and incidents in the past of Hans Castorp as a means to provide an understanding of his character by side stepping the conventional style of portraying a character. This technique of leaving it up to the reader to build the bridge between the past and the present leaves the door open for the readers to come to various interpretations to Castorp’s personality and hence giving the plot an unwritten volume. A seemingly irrelevant reference of borrowing the pencil from his schoolmate Pribislav Hippe and the elaborate description of Hippe and his ways of life momentarily takes the reader to question Castorp’s inhibitions, inclinations, and intentions. Hans dream points into the future by means of an image of the past. In one of the dreams Hans sees himself on a lake in his native Germany, crossing over in a boat: the pale moon rising in
the east and the glowing sun setting in the west leave him in a strange mood of twilight. The colorful and confusing twilight stands for the impending political holocaust threatening Germany. It can also be interpreted as (Mann always wanted it to be) Germany as a saving mediating force between east and west. The plot thus shuttles the readers mind back and forward from what Castorp aspired to be and what he intends now. The dilemma is passed on from the author to the reader.

Mann has employed a very unusual technique of running the plot in various subjective scenarios in an all most synchronized manner with absolutely no connection at all, but it is left to the reader to link up as one may wish to connect either politically, critically, historically and similar manners of interpretations. To achieve this Mann has developed relationships and counter relationships amongst his characters which though seem to be agreeing to each other’s conversation but remain in a state of confrontation in the mind. That is why characters do not so much live by themselves but are linked like Hans Castorp and Joachim Ziemssen, Castorp and Settembrini, Settembrini and Naphta, Hofrat Behrens and Dr. Krokowski. These characters are Mann’s combinations to put forward the concept of confrontation.

The Magic Mountain lays bare the complex web of philosophical, political and metaphysical contradictions and conflicts which eventually fueled the defining wars of the 20th century. The novel ends, as it must, with the onset of war, the proverbial thunderbolt that symbolizes the end of the past and the beginning of modernity and a new order.

The plot is played out in a manner that everybody claims to represent the whole truth and nothing but the truth. To demonstrate the futility and irrationality of holding such biased views Mann employs irony. The greatest bit of irony in the novel is Mann’s characterization of Castorp as “simple-minded” (the first two sentences of the novels foreword). All the characters
around Castorp are “simpler” in the sense that they are wholly committed to some cause or idea without experiencing the complexities of reality. As the story progresses, it becomes increasingly obvious that Castorp is by no means a “simple-minded” young man in the derogatory sense of the term.

The characters of The Magic Mountain lead life hermetically sealed off from the outside as a result they barely age, have no real goals and are rarely exposed to change of any kind. They are reduced to mannerisms, appearances, actions, or mere figures of speech, forcing a reader to remain within a time slot and contemplate upon the interaction and behavior of characters, their motives and opinions, which eventually does not seem to have any relevance or connection to the overall theme of the novel. E.g. Settembrini’s moustache, Clavdia’s Asiatic features, the borrowed pencil - twice from Hippe and Clavdia.

The length of the novel is also a tool employed by Mann to force upon the reader to travel back and forth again and again to derive a logical conclusion, which is almost not possible to reach at for every understanding raise a counter argument which is inconclusive. Castorp’s surging and receding consciousness is the perfect example of the dilemma which is passed on to the reader.

Throughout the plot Mann employs the technique of the leitmotif (a short musical phrase representing and recurring with a given character, situation, or emotion). He uses it to point similarities and changes in the conduct of the characters or to tie together elements of dreams and visions with others experienced in real life Joachim, for instance, keeps shrugging his shoulders in a manner he never used to in the ‘world below’, and Castorp unpacks the same brand of cigars that he used to enjoy at his great uncles. The face cream Hans applies on his sun burned cheeks reappears in his first dream at the Berghof. The image of Joachim also appears in Hans dream; Joachim’s face
is as translucently pale as that of Dr. Krokowski. In Hans’ dream, Joachim and the Austrian aristocrat Settembrini ride down the mountain side together in bobsleds, the manner in which sanatorium carries it’s dead down the mountain. Thus by means of the leitmotif, we get a fore warning of Joachim’s death in the future. The emergence of Clavdia Chauchat in the school court is the most thoroughly developed leitmotif in the novel, pulling together episodes both real and imagined over long spans of time. The Walpurgis Night elevates the novel’s main leitmotif of the borrowed pencil from the world of vague reminiscences into that of the very real party game conducted by Behrens for his guests. Castorp experiences the entire evening “like a dream”, but he wants to participate in the pig-drawing contest, so he approaches Clavdia for a pencil. Confronted with her, he turns pale, realizing the parallel between this situation and the others he has lived through his dream. Clavdia lends him the pencil, using the very words Pribislav Hippe once used when he lent Castorp a pencil for a drawing lesson at school. In no other leitmotif does the inseparability of man’s conscious and unconscious levels of experience appear so strikingly. Mann employs the leitmotif to enhance the vividness of his characterizations and also to emphasize the similarities of recurring situations like Hans slight trembling of his head at the very sight of Madame Chauchat. It is also an outward sign of his violent emotional involvement.

Mann employs a technique where it becomes necessary for a reader to reread the work to experience the multiple layers of interpretation incorporated to associate with contemporary themes, some of which were controversial or politically unsafe to talk about in those times.

The Magic Mountain is long, complex, and full of seemingly endless flights of fancy. This is why its chapters are not tightly knit, but flow and ebb and overflow with little apparent logical consistency. The construction of these
chapters is perfectly attuned to Castorp’s surging and receding consciousness. The climax of the plot is when Castorp’s sensuality reaches a point where it turns into self-debasement. Castorp’s fever curve has steadily gone up and his condition has gone worse ever since he has met Clavdia or dreamt about her. Castorp’s course of life merges with that of Madame Chauchat at this juncture of the plot, after which they move apart again: Castorp moves towards new intellectual and moral insights and Madame Chauchat to another sensual adventure. The Walpurgis Night is central as it contains the climax of Castorp’s irrationality.

The song the hero sings on the battlefield is the reiteration of an experience which he had when the same song came over the record player at the Berghof. What these examples have in common is the repetition of the same motif for the sake of linking the past with the future and vice versa. They serve to weave the many-faceted novel into an organic whole by pointing to the fundamental presentness of time in the world of the sanatorium. Mann referred to himself as a "musician among writers." There is no better proof of the affinity he felt with music than his use of the leitmotif technique.

Mann has created relatively lifeless, almost stylized characters, and this objection has its point. With the exception of Castorp, the seeker of his identity and ideal, most central figures tend to reiterate certain ready-made ideas on how to master life. There is no character development or change in outlook in any of them. This inert quality at times is boring for the reader particularly when they dominate a scene. The major dialogues between Settembrini and Naphta, written using the dialectic technique and its contents looks as if copied from an encyclopedia. It can also be concluded that this quality emphasizes the aspect of time which Castorp keeps calling the “dimensionless present”. Besides, carriers of fixed ideas the characters facilitate the success of their respective educational function. Mann uses the
novel’s main characters to introduce Castorp to the ideas and ideologies of his time. Mann observed that the characters are all “exponents, representatives, and messengers of intellectual districts, principles and worlds,” and not mere wandering allegories.

Mann creates his protagonist's name intentionally, *Hans* is a generic German first name, almost anonymous, but also refers to the fairy tale figure of *Hans im Glück* and the apostle St. John (*Johannes* in German), the favorite disciple of Jesus, who beholds the Revelation (*Offenbarung des Johannes* in German). Castorp is the name of a prominent historic figure, Hinrich Castorp of Mann's hometown, Lübeck. The "trop" is Danish, not unexpected on the German north coast.

In a way, Hans Castorp can be seen as the incorporation of the young Weimar Republic; both humanism and radicalism, represented by Settembrini and Naphta, try to win his favor, but Castorp is unable to decide. His body temperature is a subtle metaphor for his lack of clarity: Following Schiller’s theory of fever, Castorp’s temperature is always 37.6°C, which is neither healthy nor ill, but an interstage. Furthermore the outside temperature in Castorp's residence is out of balance: it is either too warm or too cold and tends to extremes (e.g. snow in August), but never normal.

Mann portrays Hans Castorp, the protagonist as a questing knight, who remains pale and mediocre, representing a German bourgeois who is torn between conflicting influences; capable of the highest humanistic ideals, yet prone to both stubborn philistinism (in the field of philosophy and aesthetics, the term describes the social attitude of anti intellectualism that undervalues and despises art, beauty) and radical ideologies. It can be derived from the novel that Mann had to portray Castorp as an individual, who did not have any specific sense of ideology and direction. In doing so Mann could, throughout the novel, throw ideas and philosophies from different corners and
characters at him and still prevent him to be influenced and becoming indecisive. By this the reader’s curiosity is retained throughout the novel for the eventual culmination of the conclusion and the outcome of Castorp’s character.

Castorp has great difficulty in making decisions and taking clear stance because he was on the battle field between the ‘normal world’ with its conventional standards and the ‘world above’. Whoever gets caught in this dilemma was in trouble this is what happens to Castorp.

But Castorp is not only “life’s delicate child” he is also the embodiment of civilization’s precarious situation before World War 1 He has lost the goal and is caught in destructive indifference towards, if not sympathy, with disaster. The outward symptom of this situation is his disease. At the same time the development of Castorp’s disease is the prerequisite for his growing self awareness and also to remove the biased feeling of not being a patient of the sanatorium. Only above average people like him can derive a more spiritualized experience from their disease. For it brings out latent superior quality. Clavdia is ill but in her case the disease merely enhances her purely physical traits.

Above all these aspects we are reminded that Thomas Mann is the master of irony. Irony permits him to bridge the gaps between the vantage points by professing doubt from all sides. He admonishes us to keep a skeptical distance towards the absolute.

Joachim Ziemssen, Hans Castorp’s cousin is described as a young person representing the ideals of loyalty and faithfulness as an army officer. Mann somewhat drifting from the genre of ideas introduces Joachim as a conventional character, to provide the basic reason for Castorp’s presence and interaction with other characters at the sanatorium. To ensure that the reader
does not interpret in detail, Joachim is portrayed as that of the “world below”. His uncompromising views and disciplined way of life earn him the ridicule of Clavdia; unto a lesser extend also that of his own cousin. To Clavdia Joachim represents the incarnation of the German Military mind, eager to place order over liberty and anxious to live and die for a cause. Hans refers to him as “not exposed to intellectual dangers” but not without envying him for his uncomplicated nature. Joachim’s death after he returns from his call of duty and his commitment towards himself and his death, which he dies willingly and contentedly questions Mann’s intention of keeping his character at a “safe distance” and “continued self education” as a conventional character in a novel expecting reader interpretations and conclusions.

Discrepancies’ between Joachim’s goals and his fate is the object of Mann’s irony. He, who has known always what he wants, cannot even join the maneuvers. On the other hand his cousin Hans, who has spent his life in the service of avoidance of friction and the compromise of opposites, is plunged into war. Mann does not condemn Joachim for his views and actions, though he would have condemned Hans if he behaved similarly.

Whatever Joachim may be, he is mature enough to decide for himself and stand by it, by not letting his integrity challenged by other views nor the decadence of the Berghof reality. Maybe his ultimate message goes beyond demand and concedes that his life long search for the last answers and the most objective position (as Castorp practices it) should be restricted to the very strong. It is safer and is indeed necessary for Joachim (representing the vast majority of the people) to commit himself to a cause. To firmly believe in it, even at the risk of being bourgeois. Dr. Behrens alludes to the pair as “Castor (P) and Pollux” the twin brothers of Greek mythology. And in fact, there is some affinity between the two cousins, both in their love to Russian women (Clavdia Chauchat in the case of Hans Castorp, and the female co-
patient "Marusja" in the case of Joachim Ziemssen), and also in their ideals. But, in contrast to Hans Castorp, who is an assertive person on the Berghof scene, Joachim Ziemssen is rather shy, known to stand somehow outside of the community. He tries to escape from what he, unspokenly, feels to be a morbid atmosphere. After long discussions with his cousin, and in spite of being warned by Dr. Behrens, he returns to the "flatlands", where he fulfills his military duties for some time. But after a while, forced by deterioration of his lungs, he returns to the Berghof. It is, however, too late for a successful treatment of his illness, and he dies in the sanitarium. His death is described in a moving chapter of the novel, with the title "As a soldier, and a good one" ["(Ich sterbe) als Soldat und brav"], again a well-known citation from Goethe's Faust.

Settembrini is Mann’s portrayal of humanism, reasoning, and progress with a very strong influence of knowledge. The Italian is a man of letters. He goes about reciting Italian poetry and mentioning to the cousins about his translation of liberal thinkers. One of these men he had translated had composed a hymn to Satan himself, Satan in the form of unbridled revolution. The Italian baffles Castorp. He compares his visit to the Berghof with Odysseus venture to the realm of shadows. Settembrini’s admiration for renaissance poetry and figures of Greek mythology show how much he lives in the Greco-roman tradition.

It also reflects Mann’s sympathy with his views, which is considered the most powerful reservoir of democratic thought. Initially Mann was a strong believer in conservatism but work on this novel was interrupted by the World War 1, after the war and being witness to its cause and consequence subsequently he appreciated democracy and human rights, this led him to rewrite some of the first part of ‘The Magic Mountain.’
Settembrini represents the active and positive ideals of enlightenment, humanism, democracy, tolerance and human rights. He often finds Castorp literally in the dark and switches on the light before their conversations. He compares himself to Prometheus of Greek mythology, who brought fire and enlightenment to man. Mann’s own mentor Giosuè Carducci has even written a hymn to another light bringer: to Lucifer, demonstrating the negativity of the influence of Christian faith and its shortcomings. His ethics are those of bourgeois values and labour. He tries to counter Castorp's morbid fascination with death and disease, warns him against the ill Madame Chauchat (as a symbol of temptation and distraction), and tries to demonstrate a positive outlook on life.

His antagonist Naphta describes him as "Zivilisationsliterat". Mann originally constructed Settembrini as a caricature of the liberal-democratic novelist, represented for example by his own brother Heinrich Mann. However, while the novel was written, Mann himself became an outspoken supporter of the Weimar Republic, which may explain why Settembrini, especially in the later chapters, becomes the authorial voice.

Mann used the character of Settembrini to represent the multiple aspects of political systems to the reader in the backdrop of the prevailing scenario leading up to the world war and weighing each with a provocative thought, which he wanted to lead up to a peaceful co-existence among the various nations, cultures and people, a optimistic humanist perspective.

Naphta, Settembrini's antagonist represents the forces of decay, collectivism, radicalism and extremism. His perspective combines several heterogeneous radical aspects that include fascism, anarchism, and communism. With brilliant intelligence he aims to unmask Settembrini's values and ethics and
leads them *ad absurdum*, "as if to prove that the Sun revolves around Earth."

In Mann's original draft, Naphta was not planned but was added later, while the Weimar Republic was threatened by collectivistic radical ideologies from all sides, eventually leading to its failure. Hans Castorp famously tries to classify Naphta politically and comes to the conclusion that he was just as revolutionary as Settembrini – not in liberal, but in a conservative way. So he decides that Naphta was a Revolutionär der Erhaltung (revolutionist of conservation). This apparent oxymoron alludes to a heterogeneous movement of right wing intellectuals called the Conservative Revolution. The term, probably first adopted by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, was repeatedly used by Mann and is meant to be revolutionary in a reactionary sense: The movement was highly nationalistic and not only fought against the ideals of left-wing socialism, liberalism and enlightenment, but it also detested the lost Empire’s dull conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. The movement was somewhat elusive, flirting with every radicalism against established views. Thus, Naphta himself is conceived as a living contradiction in terms: An ex-Jewish Jesuit, anti-capitalist, hostile to modernity, freedom, individuality and progress, anarchic and theocratic. Naphta may have been modeled on George Lukács, the Hungarian Communist philosopher.

Clawdia Chauchat represents erotic temptation, lust, and love, all in a degenerate, morbid, "Asiatic-flabby" form. She is one of the major reasons for Castorp's extended stay on the magic mountain. The female promise of sensual pleasure as hindrance to male zest for action imitates the themes from the Circe mythos and in the nymphs in Wagner's Venus Mountain. Chauchat's feline characteristics are noted often, her last name is derived from the French chaud chat (Eng., hot cat), and her first name includes the
English claw. (Her name may also be a reference to the ‘Chauchat’ machine gun, a French weapon that saw significant use by the French and American forces during World War I.)

Clawdia Chauchat leaves the Berghof for some time, but she returns with an impressive companion, Mynheer Peeperkorn, who suffers from a tropical disease. Mann uses her to question the purpose of love, lust and its ultimate outcome in terms of stability, reliability and the wastage of time when it comes to Hans Castrop, a character representing nothing more than the physical pleasure, of acquaintance with the female gender. Mann intends to point out the rift that is affecting the mindset of Castrop with her presence, absence and return with Pepperkorn. It is also to be noted that Mann does not mention any reference to her husband visiting her, but she travelling to meet him, though she was the one who was ill, this also questions her loyalty. Mann’s wife was ill and treated for months in a Devos facility and he himself paid her a visit for three weeks, the experience of which was influential as ‘The Magic Mountain.’ Mynheer Peeperkorn, Clawdia Chauchat's new lover, enters the Berghof scenery rather late; but he is certainly one of the most-dominating persons of the novel. The Dutchman's traits fit Mann's concept of the "Eastern" man. He is a non-intellectual, mysterious, sensual, incoherent, and tyrannical. His forceful personality succeeds in regrouping the patients at the Berghof into those who are aware of the spell he casts on them and try to resist and those who surrender to him. By his mere presence, he dwarfs both Settembrini and Naphta.

His behavior and personality, with its flavor of importance, combined with obvious awkwardness and the strange ability never to complete a statement, is reminiscent of certain figures in the former novellas of the author (e.g., Herr Klöterjahnin Tristan) – figures, which are, on the one hand, admired because
of their vital energy, and, on the other hand, condemned because of their naïveté. In total, this person represents the grotesqueness of a Dionysian character. The Greek god Dionysus is also important in Nietzschean philosophy, whose *The Birth of Tragedy* is the source of the title *The Magic Mountain*.

We discern that mere intellectual argument is futile when we see Peeperkorn together with Settembrini and Naphta. But the vaunted superiority of feeling over reason comes to naught through Mynheer's suicide. What does Mann mean? Perhaps he simply wants to demonstrate that Mynheer Peeperkorn, too, commits a fatal error: He falters because of his total commitment to emotion, for, as he admits himself, he cannot bear sacrificing intensity of emotion to the demands of everyday life. By Mynheer Peeperkorn the author of the novel simultaneously personalizes his rival, the influential German poet Gerhart Hauptmann, and even certain properties of Goethe (with whom Hauptmann often was compared).

Hofrat Behrens the key to an understanding of the head doctor is the name Rhadamanthus, which is the ‘clear sighted’ Settembrini's term for him. Rhadamanthus and Minos (Dr. Krokowski is called Minos), in Greek mythology, are the two sons of Zeus and Europa who preside over the realm of the dead.

Behrens presides over the sanatorium, a world from which there is no escape. The little tours the patients go on lead back to the Berghof as surely as the last tour they travel leads to the cemetery. Like his patients, Behrens is but a representative. He has no power over the fate of his patients. All that he can do is determine the length of their respite from death. His jovial approach is deceptive. It merely serves to give his patients the impression as though he were really interested in their recovery. But he is not. He reduces the
difference between life and death to a chemical term, pursues his profession for sensual and financial reasons. Appropriately, Behrens' office radiates the sinister atmosphere of a grave; it is located in the basement and is described as a labyrinth. Mann presents him as indulged in the process of making wealth out of the promised cure, for an illness that did not have a genuine cure to offer, most of his patients were from wealthy families or backgrounds who could afford the long and luxurious treatments.

Dr. Krokowski is Behrens' assistant. Whereas Behrens views disease as something organic, Krokowski regards it as something inorganic. This causes him to be obsessed with the idea that all disease is the result of repressed love. He is incapable of thinking about love in any other way than as in his lecture series, which goes on throughout the entire length of Castorp's stay and deteriorates into occultism. He defines the sanatorium as Venusberg (‘Mountain of Venus’ in German, taken from Wagner's opera Tannhäuser, where it is the sinful world of physical love).

Called Minos, he is not interested in the cure of his patients. Preoccupied with the analysis of their souls, his lectures, besides satisfying his sensual interests, have the function of killing time in the boredom of the Berghof. Appropriately clad in black and residing in semi-darkness, he represents the deliberate distortion of psychoanalysis in the interest of perversion and death.

When Mann visited his wife Kaia at the Davos sanatorium in May and June of 1912, he made plans for The Magic Mountain, set into a luxury setting, exploring an existentially threatening situation subsequent to falling in love, the atmosphere was to be that strange mixture of death and lightheadedness found in Devos. There was to be a simple minded hero, in conflict between bourgeois decorum and macabre adventure. The First World War incalculably enriched the content of this novel.
Mann initially saw the war as a chance for his Fatherland (Germany) to demonstrate its spiritual superiority to the crassly materialistic culture of France and Britain. In 1918, he had published Reflections of a Non-political Man, a passionate and patriotic defense of Germany’s participation in the war. As an arch-nationalist, he had argued against the liberal position of his own brother Heinrich, a committed Francophile. By 1922, in a speech on the “German Republic” two years before The Magic Mountain appeared, Mann had completely changed his position. He was now a supporter of democratic republicanism. Mann’s task, since he identified much with his native country, was how to represent these new values to the many readers who, like him, still believed in the “suffering and greatness” of a bygone era.

In Clavdia’s absence, Hans takes up the part of the Medieval Everyman in a mortality play, with Settembrini and his new foil, Leo Naptha, a Polish Jew converted to Catholicism, as God and the Devil fighting it out for the young man’s soul. Many of their arguments do indeed offer “the great disputation on sickness and health” that Mann hoped for his novel. For Settembrini, the purpose of modern medicine is, through hygiene and social reform, to allow reason and enlightenment to triumph over disease. This fight against the sufferings of the flesh is a moral one, since health is identified with virtue. For Naphta, nothing can be more detestable than this ethics of normal living. True spirituality and freedom are not bound to an anodyne veneration of the healthy body but to a stoic acceptance of bodily infirmity and suffering. To be human is to be ill.

Man was essentially ailing; his state of unhealthiness was what made him man. There were those who wanted to make him ‘healthy,’ to make him ‘go back to nature,’ when, the truth was, he never had been ‘natural’.

The arguments run on and on for a hundred pages or so before Clavdia returns in the company of her lover, Mynheer Peeperkorn, who tells Castrop
that his duty is to act on his thoughts and not merely discuss – with Settembrini and Naphta as alibis. On *The Magic Mountain* time seems to pass in a cyclic rather than a linear way due to the consecutive references to the similarities in the references.

Mann has ensured that each character depicted within, has a distinct attitude, intelligence, philosophy and understanding of the human social existence. Hans Castorp who does not have a specific point to represent is in the process of acquiring one (educating himself). The human life is most valued only by those effected otherwise it is considered irrelevant, this is an essential humanist problem: how to care about man when it is too easy to make him into an idea instead of a being, and even more difficult to care about death when individual identity is not relevant. The Sanatorium at Devos is depicted as the stage where the high drama of issues related to prewar Europe is enacted. The characters indulge to challenge various levels of intellectual interpretations of established theories, understandings and the contemporary environment. Care is also taken to contain the thought process by shifting priorities, and by changing the intensity of the condition of patients, the rise and fall in the temperature of Hans Castrop and the various daily routine of the sanatorium, and the occasional outings and visits to and by the patients.

*The Magic Mountain* is Mann’s churning of the various philosophical and political perspectives during the prewar period of World War 1, it is also a fact that the novel was interrupted during the war and Mann made some major changes to it when he completed the novel after the war, this led to his change in perspective in the first and second half of the novel, and adding characters depicting radicalism, which was a war observation.

*The Magic Mountain* is the perfect example of human sceptics. Since Mann’s basic concern was of the European society as morally decadent, he used the Berghof as the ideal location to bring together characters from various
backgrounds to represent specific attitudes, understandings; the observations of Mann’s mentors, their work also find references in the characters he has portrayed. Since the novel ends at a time where the outcome of the new political order post the World War 1 was uncertain, Mann also left the outcome of the education of Hans Castorp in uncertainty; it is presumed that Hans died in the war.

Mann being an optimist and a student of history, did not believe in radicalism or decisions taken in haste to bear good fruits, to make his point he led the radical characters to death, he also believed that only discussing on issues sitting Up-there and not doing anything about it is also equally disastrous. The direct reference to man being sick is a direct representation to the prewar decaying human attitude of coexistence in Europe, political upheaval, power struggle, conspiracy, and other vices that led to the war was something Mann wished would not happen, but it was important that for a new world order the evils had to die. As Hans was a healthy visitor from down below, he had to acquire an illness that had to have a prolonged cure to be able to witness the hermetic life the people up there lived, in ignorance of the reality of death, which were hushed up incidents. Mann also saw the radicals as the main reason for the failure of the Wilmar Republic which he became a strong follower of.

The characters not changing their stance is the authors technique to contain the overall length of the novel but not compromising on the controversies and contradictions built both within the novel and outside in the readers mind.

Mann contains the flow of thought by using references from other forms of expression; the titular reference to mountain reappears in many layers. The Berghof sanatorium lies on a mountain not only geographically, but also figuratively, a reclusive, separate world. The mountain also represents the
opposite of Castrop’s home, the sober, business-like and (for Joachim Zimzen) mortal “flatland”.

In general, the inhabitants of the Berghof spend their days in a mythical, resistant atmosphere, full of references to fairy tales and sagas. The x-ray laboratory in the cellar represents the Hades of Greek mythology, where Medical Director Behrens acts as the judge and punisher Rhadamanthys, and where Castrop is but a fleeting visitor, like Odysseus. Behrens compares the cousins to Castor and Pollux, Settembrini compares himself to Prometheus. Frau Stöhr mentions Sisyphus and Tantalus, albeit confusedly. These extensive references to the Greek mythological characters shows how Mann used these readymade characterizations to frame his characters in The Magic Mountain, a short cut technique he employed being in Europe where it is assumed that the readers are aware of the original mythological portrayal of these characters and their relevance.

The repetition of the number seven, why Mann should incorporate such a numerology concept is a mystery. Castrop spends seven years at the Berghof, the central Walpurgis Night scene happens after seven months, both cousins have seven letters in their last name, the dining hall has seven tables, the digits of Castrop’s room number (thirty four) add up to seven, Settembrini’s name includes seven in Italian, Joachim keeps a thermometer in his mouth for seven minutes, and Mynheer Peeperkorn announces his suicide in a group of seven. Joachim dies at seven o’clock. Even Castrop’s parents die when he is seven. Mann was also aware of the multiple references to the number seven in the Bible the most important of which was the seven days of a week when God himself rested.

‘Hans Castorp loved music from his heart; it worked upon him much the same way as did his breakfast porter, with deeply soothing, narcotic effect, tempting him to doze.
There is something suspicious about music, gentlemen. I insist that she is, by her nature, equivocal. I shall not be going too far in saying at once that she is politically suspect. – Herr Settembrini,’ (ch.4)

Music plays a major role throughout Thomas Mann’s work, in The Magic Mountain, the recently invented Edison gramophone allows the Berghof people to listen to, e.g., Aida’s final duet with Radames from Verdi’s opera, and to Schuber’s multi-valent song ‘Der Lindenbaum’ from the Winterreise, both full of mourning feelings in the view of death. Hans Castorp engages himself very much in such presentations. With the last-mentioned song of Franz Schubert on his lips, our protagonist is told to vanish on the battlefields of World War 1. (This end of the novel is at the same time of parodist character, concerning the romantic love for “death”, e.g. Richard Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde. It may also contain some amount of self-irony, since the song is sometimes considered as typical for prewar Germany, whereas the novel was published during the Weimar republic, which was now strongly defended by Thomas Mann.) In any case one can speak of Thomas Mann’s novel as “music by words”.

The publication of The Magic Mountain caused something of a stir, not only among writers, but also among medical doctors. Many of them took the novel to be an attack on medical conditions at Davos or at sanatoriums in general. Some went so far as to set up lists of the novel's key figures and match them with their alleged counterparts in real life. There were even people who threatened Mann with lawsuits and others who could not understand why the director of the sanatorium at Davos did not quit his position in disgust.

Yet there were also countless favourable comments from medical circles. One well-known physician thanked Mann for directing the attention of professional people to the extreme psychological pressures to which patients
are exposed as a result of their time consuming rest cures and the whole mode of life these involve. Another renowned doctor was so impressed by the author's firm grasp of the medical techniques and terminology relating to the treatment of tuberculosis that he devoted a lecture to the medical aspects of *The Magic Mountain*.

Whatever their view, the majority of doctors commenting on the book failed to see that it was *not* about the problems of medicine, let alone but about the people engaged in it. This was also a reason why Mann wrote such a novel, his choice of setting in a sanatorium for the high-altitude treatment of tuberculosis as well as his detailed description of life there had led many to believe just that. The truth is that the author needed the sanatorium atmosphere as an appropriate framework within which to develop his diagnosis of European society as morally decadent. Davos is a symbol enabling Mann to present his case in the tangible terms of concentrated, physical decay.

The fact that tuberculosis was rampant during the first quarter of the twentieth century is another reason for the author's choice of this disease, and also the nature of prolonged treatment available at that time. Above all, however, there is a personal motivation: his wife's illness, her prolonged stay at Davos, and his visit there. At Davos, Mann actually met most of the people whom he - under different names, of course - recast in the roles of his Magic Mountain characters later on. The novel's excursions into the realm of parapsychology, very much in vogue in Munich after World War I, are also the result of Mann's own experience. Mann's reaction to the comments on his alleged assaults on the medical profession was primarily one of dismay at the gigantic misunderstanding.
The Magic Mountain is a novel about the ideal of self-education in which Castorp represents the age-old resistance of youth to the attempts of adults to teach and guide. It is also a novel full of metaphysical ambitions in which a young man, through the experiences of death and disease, gradually gropes his way toward a humanistic ideal. It is, furthermore, a novel about growing political awareness without ever prescribing a fixed political view beyond that of the broad principles of democracy. Essentially, however, *The Magic Mountain* stands as its author's diagnosis of a decadent society caught in nationalistic selfishness. Whatever else the novel may be, its medical aspects remain secondary. They are a means, not an end. As Mann once worded it, "Medicine and music are the two neighbouring spheres of my art."

When Mann penned this novel, tuberculosis was at a significant juncture in its history. The discovery of the X-ray in 1895 had suddenly made it possible to detect early, active pulmonary forms of the disease. Medicine’s diagnostic capability was, however, decades ahead of its therapeutic capacity, and effective antibacterial treatments for TB did not emerge until after the World War II. (Even today, despite the drugs available to treat it, TB remains a major public health problem in many developing countries.) Mann sets *The Magic Mountain* in 1907 at one of the only therapeutic options available, *The Sanatorium*. It was an option open only to better-heeled European patients. An Alpine regime of rest and rich food was thought to provide the best chance for recovery from TB, and for the body to reveal its healing wisdom. It certainly isolated patients with active disease (and who were spreading the infection through coughing or sneezing) and created local environments that must have had high circulating levels of airborne bacilli.

Just like cinema X-ray provides new possibilities of ‘seeing’ the world. During a visit at the cinema Hans is very fascinated by these
phantoms, whose deeds had been reduced to a million photographs brought into focus for the briefest of moments so that, as often as one liked, they could then be given back to the element of time as a series of blinking flashes (pg.311).

With the aid of modern technology it suddenly becomes possible to fragment actions into their elements (cinema), or to penetrate matter in order to make something visible that could not be seen before (X-ray). This is also described in the chapter

“My God, I See It!” It seems noteworthy that the description of this procedure at the same time implicates a certain “whiff of spookiness” (pg.216);

Hans cannot tell if he was in a photographer’s studio, an inventor’s workshop, or a sorcerer’s laboratory (pg.211).

The “exorcism” begins with angry humming, a vibrating floor and a little red light staring at them, “silent and threatening,” while

before it sat Director Behrens astride his footstool -thighs spread wide, fists propped against them, snub nose close to the screen that gave him a view into the organic interior of another human being. (pg.214)

Thus, the technological triumph of modern times appears to the dialectically interwoven with its own opposite: an almost medieval superstition and a sensation of piety cross Hans’ mind as he sees his own skeleton – in other words: “his own grave” (pg.215)

Hans Castorp represents the last descendant of an ‘endangered’ bourgeoisie family; he too is disposed to sickness, dislikes work shows a ‘slight’ tendency to escape from the productive working life. Instead of retreating into the aesthetic sphere of art, Hans Castorp prefers the hermetic sphere of the Berghof residence.
The ‘institution’ Berghof shapes the lives of its patients in a very rigorous way with its strict schedule of daily and weekly events, such as rest cures, temperature measuring, and lectures. In its additional organization of rooms, such as the seating arrangement in the dining hall, it structures life both in a temporal and local sense. Inside this hermetic and (towards the rest of the world) sharply delimited structure, however, converse tendencies take place. It is the destruction of social borders that occurs during the climax of Dionysian trends, namely the bacchanalian carousal with Mynheer Peeperkorn. The institution – understood as order and organization, therefore apparently creates its own antithesis, or, shapes the lives of its inhabitants precisely in these two senses: On the one hand it forces its rules and its order of time schedule on the patients; on the other hand it seduces them to abandon rules of the ‘Flatland-society’ (not wearing hats, slamming doors, amorous adventures).

The visit of James Tienappel, Hans Castrop’s uncle shows this two-sided and most ambivalent power of the Berghof. In order to convince Hans to return to the Flatlands, he visits the sanatorium, and thereby, somehow goes astray himself. More precisely, the unique spirit of the place seduces him not only to relinquish his original intention, but to adapt positively to its way of life. It is as though certain external actions like the meal ceremonies or the unfamiliar lounging in the comfortable chair arms would almost automatically trigger corresponding internal movements, such as foolishly falling in love or the involuntarily oblivion of one’s initial purposes.

The gunshot on the mountain signals the one soon heard more than four hundred miles away in the flatlands: the Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s assassination prevents Hans from eking out his life indefinitely at the sanatorium. The first rumblings of the World War 1 finally enter the novel, like chairs being toppled in a drawing room. In the final, film like epilogue to
the novel, we see Hans advancing over the mists of a battlefield; bayonet in his hand, humming to himself the Schubert song ‘The Linden-tree’ that once besotted him in the Berghof.

Mann’s conclusion is one of most unsettling aspect of the novel, and not just because it falls in the shadow of the mountain of text that precedes it. As the first soldiers to go over the top in 1914 soon realized, they were poor, deluded heralds to the first technological war, one to be run under the guidance of the coolly functional engineer types Hans is supposed to be.

In his English comments for the American edition of The Magic Mountain, Mann wrote, “Such institutions as the Berghof were a typical prewar phenomenon. They were only possible in a capitalistic economy that was still functioning well and normally. Only under such a system was it possible for patients to remain there year after year at their family’s expense.

**Conclusion**

‘Writing well was almost the same as thinking well, and thinking well was the next thing to acting well. All moral discipline, all moral perfection derived from the soul of literature, from the soul of human dignity, which was the moving spirit of both humanity and politics. Yes they were all one, one and the same idea, and all of them could be comprehended in one single word… The word was civilization!’ – Chapter 4.

The Magic Mountain can be seen as the author’s struggle to bring about change and peaceful coexistence by social awareness and humanistic mindset. Mann had delivered lectures in this direction and was a critic of the Nazi movement. His attempt to prevent his fatherland from plunging into war is noteworthy.

By referring to the people ‘down there’ he represented his concern for all those who died or were affected due to the war and were not in a position to do much about it, in contradiction to the privileged ‘up there’ indifferent to
the developments around them. Hans Castorp’s outcome from the journey through the novel is also inconclusive; the reader is left to wonder if the education was to what purpose, the debate is left open-ended. There is no specific purpose for the Magic Mountain, but the absence of this work would have surely left a gap on the exact conditions that effected Europe just before the war, and how people had taken to it. Underlining the fact that it is foolish to be ignorant and move on with the clout that things will not become worse (consequence of living in sickness with the ignorance of death) as all sickness will always lead to decay and eventually death, just by knowing that the sickness exists is not enough (like the x-rays the inmates carried with them), but to stand together as one in civilization for coexistence.

If neither time nor space remain as absolute dimensions (Albert Einstein), if the subject is at the mercy of his or her own abysmal unconsciousness (Sigmund Freud) and if techniques of industrial modernization such as gradual acceleration and dissection control the daily life, then art becomes a battlefield where this very ‘metaphysical homelessness’ (Georg Lukács formulates it in his *Theory of the Novel*, published in 1916) and the foundations of modern subjectivity can be now reflected and transcended.

One of the last glimpses the reader catches of Hans shows him

“[…] stepping on the hand of a fallen comrade – stepping on it with his hobnailed boots, pressing it deep into the soggy, branch-strewn earth” (pg.705).

Just as the positions of the two antagonists gradually become more ambiguous, the position of the narrator does, too.

There are many possible understandings of The Magic Mountain, each one as valid as the next one. The problem is that Thomas Mann himself, in front of his Princeton audience, explained his book as a “*Bildungs roman*”, a coming
of age novel. This remark, ironically meant or not, has confused both critics and readers alike and turned the interpretation, the understanding of The Magic Mountain, into a guessing game about “what Hans has learned” during his seven year stay on the Mountain. Instead of clarifying things, it has been the reason of more misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Indeed, the milieu of The Magic Mountain could not be more precisely literal and exact in its level of immersive description and attention to realistic minutia. Castorp is the conscientious and methodical student, well aware of his own ignorance and unwilling to be considered callow, an empty vessel as yet unfilled.

The next novel to be analyzed for this study is The Counterfeiters by Andre Gide. In 1947, he received the Nobel Prize in Literature and an honorary doctorate from the Oxford University. Gide in The Counterfeiters rings a warning bell for the society as a whole and the youth in particular, for in them he saw the pure future of the civilization. The portrayal of ideas by his characters clearly put forward his perception about society and the intended message is conveyed quite unambiguously.