



# Temptations of Faust: The Logic of Fascism and Postmodern Archaeologies of Modernity

By Evelyn Cobley

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*Temptations of Faust* is a theoretical analysis of the conceptual paradigms that allowed German fascism to emerge in a highly civilized nation. Analyzing these paradigms through the dual lens of Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*, his self-confessed parable of fascism about the avant-garde composer Adrian Leverknhn, and Theodor W. Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music*, this cultural study draws on aesthetic, sociohistorical, political, and philosophical discourses to conclude that German fascism is at once continuous and discontinuous with the emancipatory ambitions of modernity. Drawing on Adorno's sociohistorical critique of avant-garde music, Cobley connects Leverknhn's radical aesthetic innovation with Hitler's radical reconfiguration of Germany's administrative apparatus and discovers that postmodern processes of fragmentation may well remain complicit with the totalizing tendencies they seek to disrupt. This lucid and sophisticated book demonstrates that *Doctor Faustus* provides a more astute understanding of German fascism than Mann is usually given credit for.

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### **Editorial Review**

Review

'A remarkable amalgam of detailed reading, sound historical scholarship, and theoretical sophistication...What Professor Cobley has done is to read Mann's Doctor Faustus as a master-text in which can be deciphered a virtual cultural, political, and ideological history of Germany and beyond. Her historico-conceptual reach extends from Beethoven to postmodernism, even as her constant focus is a single book considered as a parable of fascism.'

(Geoffrey Harpham, Department of English, Tulane University)

About the Author

**Evelyn Cobley** is a professor in the Department of English at the University of Victoria.

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