

"BOTH MANN AND HESSE WERE CHARGED WITH...ENERGY. Mann, the resident of cities (particularly his beloved Munich) poured his uncertainty and his corrosive insights into his great first novel, *Buddenbrooks*, which was published in 1901 and sold an astonishing one million copies. The bourgeois writer had exposed most of the fault lines in bourgeois society, not only in Germany, but in most of Europe. At twenty-six, he was famous, proclaimed by many as a coming master of the literary twentieth century.

"...As a writer, Hesse flourished. Within a few years, he had published two more novels, a book of poetry, and two collections of short stories, while reviewing books for various publication in Switzerland and Germany.... Hesse had solidified his literary reputation with *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf*. One of their most attentive readers was Thomas Mann.

"...the best of the letters present us with two fundamentally decent, sophisticated men grieving for the ruined world. In the 1930s and 1940s, they rail against the stupidity of war and the cowardice of diplomats, against the social savagery of the Nazis, against the blind forces of abstraction and nationalism. They brood about the fate of Germany and of Europe after the last shots have been fired. They have lived through a time of extraordinary horror and yet they have not surrendered to despair or nihilism. *Reading the letters, I feel like some privileged guest in a special room, sitting off to the side somewhere, listening while these men talk.* A fire burns in a fireplace. Through the windows I can see snow falling against a dark sky. We are in the country of exile. Neither man has given up hope. Art will prevail, they insist. Civilization will prevail. Music will drive off the explosive rumble of artillery. Life will defeat death. *Listen to them: they are speaking truth. Nothing else matters.*"

From the Introduction by Pete Hamill

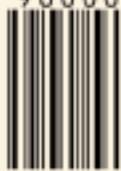
"FOR ALL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, BETWEEN epic narrator and lyric confessor, between sophisticated cosmopolite and briskly recluse, Hesse and Mann shared a common experience that provided the basis for their eventual feeling of collegueship. Reduced to its simplest terms, this experience was based on the insight that their common bourgeois heritage... was exhausted.... According to their diagnosis, it was an unthinking alliance to outmoded and sterile bourgeois ideals that enable the 'law and order' mentality of the fascist so easily to take over in Europe. In opposition to that mentality... Hesse and Mann proclaimed their faith in a humanism predicated upon belief in the integrity of the individual."

From the Foreword by Theodore Ziolkowski

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THE HESSE/MANN LETTERS



THE

HESSE/MANN

LETTERS

Edited by Anni Carlsson and Volker Michels

Introduction by Pete Hamill

Foreword by Theodore Ziolkowski