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Key dimensions of Thomas Mann's writing and life are explored in this collection of specially commissioned essays. In addition to introductory chapters on all the main works of fiction, the essays and diaries, there are four chapters examining Mann's oeuvre in relation to major themes. These thematic explorations include his position as a realistic writer concerned with the history of his own times and as a commentator on German and American politics; his controversial reputation as an intellectual novelist; the literary techniques that enabled his challenging fictions to appeal to a wide audience; and the homosexual subtext running through his fiction and diaries. A final chapter looks at the pitfalls of translating Mann into English. The essays are well supported by supplementary material including a chronology of the period and detailed guides to further reading. Altogether the volume provides an invaluable resource for scholars and students.