



by **Massimo Bonifazio**



Luca Crescenzi's essay *Melancolia occidentale* (Western Melancholy) provides a new interpretation of Thomas Mann's novel *Der Zauberberg* (The Magic Mountain). In 2010 Crescenzi edited a new Italian version of the novel, translated by Renata Colorni with a new title, *La montagna magica* (The Magic Mountain). Crescenzi's essay considers Mann's novel in the light of the ancient tradition of melancholy (an impulse towards death pervading the whole of western culture), whose hypostasis is found in WWI. The entire novel is thus interpreted as the dream of a German soldier during a battle. Crescenzi also identifies several recurring elements in *The Magic Mountain* which he believes Mann adopted from Albrecht Dürer's famous engraving *Melencolia I*.

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