



# Europa

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At the midpoint of his life, Jerry Marlow finds himself on a bus from Milan to Strasbourg, taking stock of the wreckage strewn behind him -- a failed marriage, a daughter going astray, and an affair that has left him both numb and licking every wound, self-inflicted or otherwise. Even his teaching job is in peril. And what lies around the next bend? There are times when the most appalling premonitions seem all too plausible, yet the pull of hope cannot be resisted. Fueled by Marlow's scalpel-sharp commentary, Europa bristles with ferocious wordplay and a vision of the sexes as honest as it is incorrect.

## Europa Details

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Author : Tim Parks

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## Yücel Batu says

T?pk? Kader'de oldu?u gibi Europa'da da anlat?c?n?n derin, ac?mas?z hatta son derece y?k?c? iç hesapla?mas? üzerinden olaylar?n geçmi?ini ö?renirken, olaylar?n bugününü anlamlandırmaya çalış?yoruz. Bahsetti?imiz “iç hesapla?man?n” biraz alt?n? çizmekte fayda var çünkü iç hesapla?madan ziyade bana adeta gayet y?k?c? bir psikoterapi seansı gibi geliyor Tim Parks'?n anlat?m?. Bu hesapla?may? da aç?k aç?k ifade ediyor esas?nda, sayfa 87'de “Her ?ey geçmi?te kald?, diyorum kendi kendime, ama tam da bu yüzden, her zamankinden daha fazla ?imdide yer al?yor”.

Bu arada bu iç hesapla?malar? psikoterapiye ba?lamam?n bir di?er nedeni de; anlat?c?n?n 45 ya??nda olmas?, olaylar?n 4. ay?n 5'inde geçmesi, bakt??? birçok yerde 45 rakam?yla kar??la?mas? vb. gibi kitapta ara ara bu inanca gönderme yapmas?. Psikoterapinin babası Freud'un da buna çok benzer bir durum ya?ad??? bilinir. Hayat?n?n birçok döneminde 62 rakam?yla sürekli kar??la?mas?, 62 ya??nda ölece?ine inanmas? ve bunu saplant? haline getirmesi (yan?lm?yorsam seksenli ya?lar?nda ölüyordu). Sat?r aralar?ndaki bu detaylar okuma zevkini ciddi olarak arttı?yor.

Kitapta ba?ka birçok al?nt?lama bulmak da mümkün, özellikle antik yunan ve fransa'dan. Mesela kitab?n bir yerinde “Gerçekler yoktur, sadece yorumlar vardır” cümlesi geçiyor, Nietzsche'ye de bir gönderme olarak.

Özetle felsefe ve psikoloji kitab?n geneline yay?lm?? durumda ve gayet de ba?ar?lı olarak kullan?ld?klar?n? dü?ünüyorum.

Son olarak, karakterin durumunu biraz daha iyi özetleyebilmek aç?s?ndan 2. bölümün ba??nda Cioran'dan yap?lm?? bir al?nt?y? da yazmak istiyorum. “Hayat?n içinde yer alan her ?ey, hem gerçek anlamda hem mecazi anlamda, dengesizdir” (Zamana Dü?ü?).

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## Anton Segers says

'Europa' is niets dan 250 pagina's gepieker: de eindeloze 'stream of consciousness', de associatieve flow van bedenkingen, observaties, twijfels, verlangens en herinneringen die obsessieel door je hoofd over elkaar heen blijven tuimelen in tijden van frustraties over werk en liefdesleven. Het klinkt saai, maar het is zo herkenbaar beschreven dat ik van zin 1 af gefascineerd volgde.

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## Simon says

Assuming that you're not put off by the prose style which uses long, rambling, clause-cluttered Proustian sentences, or by the fact that the narrator isn't a particularly likeable fellow, there's an awful lot to enjoy here. As Marlowe picks over the scabs of his failed relationship with a fellow language teacher, we are treated to a

series of perceptive and witty remarks on everything from sex to philosophy to nationality to architecture to language. Wait, I'm making it sound awfully dry and pompous, aren't I? In fact the emotional charge is the book's main strength; the overwhelming sensations of regret and frustration with oneself and the way one behaves in relationships, the way we deceive ourselves about what we see in our partners.

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## Serbay GÜL says

4,5/ 4 ( Ke?ke buçuklar olsa)

Bir otobüs dolusu üniversite ö?rencisi ve e?itim görevlisinin Strasbourg'a seyahatlerini konu almaktadır kitap. Muhtemelen kitab? çok sevmi? olmam?n nedenlerinden biri de Ölü Ozanlar Derne?i'nin yolculuk esnas?nda izlenecek film olarak seçilmi? olmas?dır. Sonras?nda görece?iz ki bu seçim öylesine bir seçim de?il. Bu yüzden bu kitaba ba?lamadan önce Ölü Ozanlar Derne?i mutlaka izlenmi? ya da okunmu? olmal? diye dü?ünüyorum.

Europa , muhte?em analizlerin yan? s?ra, sürükleyici bir kurguya da sahiptir. Yolculuk esnas?nda izledikleri filmin ana temas? Carpe Diem (an? ya?a) olmas?na ra?men bir türlü an?n tad?n? ç?karamayan Jerry'nin gözünden tan?k oluyoruz olanlara. Yol boyunca geçmi?e geri dönü?leri ve belki de hala orada ya??yor olu?unu , gereksiz pi?manl?klar?n? ve memnuniyetsizli?i , sürekli ?üpheci yakla??mlar?n? dinlemekteyiz. Yolculuk boyunca yolculu?a kat?lm?? olman?n pi?manl??n? bizlere s?k s?k hat?rlatmaktadır. Tam bir carpe diem dü?man?dır Jerry.

Tek bir ki?i üzerinden dünyanın sorunlar?n? ba?ar?lı? bir ?ekilde anlatm?? Tim Parks. Karakterlerin ki?ilikleri üzerinden Avrupa ülkelerinin de genel politik duru?lar? hakk?nda göndermeler de mevcut kitapta.

Burnunun dibinde çocuklar?n öldürüldü?ü bir sava? (Bosna Sava??) varken , mesle?inden olma korkusuyla ya?amak ne kadar ahlaki ? Ya da u?runa e?ini ve çocu?unun terk etti?in kad?n?n ?uanda yan odada yak?n arkadaşlar?ndan biriyle birlikte oluyor olma ihtimali ne kadar rahats?z edici olmal?dır ? Erkeklerin cidden tek muhabbet konusu cinsellik midir ? Ac?lar?n, s?k?nt?lar?n büyüklükleri k?yaslanabilir mi ?

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## Marc says

I can understand that not everyone can appreciate this book, because this is a particularly intense, feverish work: all the time we are enclosed in the head of the 45-year-old Jerry Marlowe, a man with a lot of issues and 1 life consuming obsession: his one time, French mistress. Both of them are lecturers at the University of Verona, Italy; and in this book they are - together with colleagues and students – in a bus on their way to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, to protest against a discriminatory measure of the Italian Government. Throughout the book we get a constant flow of thoughts and observations by Jerry, about all kinds of themes. It is a misanthropic jeremiad (Jerry!) full of self-pity, self-doubt and self-deception, in which Jerry constantly jumps between time and place: from his failed marriage and the now 18-year-old daughter that he has ended up with, to the passionate affair that he had with his French colleague and that was “the highlight of his life”, until she unexpectedly took another lover; from the many one night stands he had with female students since then, to his job at the university that actually doesn't interest him anymore, from the petition that they are going to do in Strasbourg and which he sees as futile, to the colorful bunch of colleagues and students who are on the bus, and finally to the awkward institution (the European Parliament in Strasbourg) they are on

their way to now.

Europe in this book applies to all kinds of social constructions that are part of a man's life: a family/marriage, a profession, a company or institution, a country and/or a minority group, and so on. Men (or women) derive their identity from these constructions, and crystallized in 1 person these form quite a complex whole, with its own myths, outward appearances and self-deception. And amidst this complex whole, - that is constantly on the move and changing – a person needs to define him/herself again and again, and see that he can continue to stand upright.

Parks develops this theme in a masterful way, all through the eyes of Marlowe who is increasingly sinking deeper into a quagmire of despair, but in his outward actions tries to cling to social conventions and group compulsion (his flat macho behavior with his English colleague Collins for example). But, in the end, under the influence of some dramatic events he comes to a catharsis and puts himself back on the map of life.

The style in which this book is written is quite demanding for a reader: the stream of consciousness permanently swirls through the different layers; sometimes no less than 5 different time layers are concentrated in 1 long sentence. That's heavy, but it works, and it gives a really sublime effect. Proust, Joyce, Svevo, Faulkner, Bellow and apparently also Thomas Bernhard are obvious influences. But for me Jerry Marlowe is a worthy, end-twentieth century successor of "the man from the underground" by Dostoevsky, still the key work to understand the desperation of modern man. I'm looking forward to reading more by Parks!

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### •Karen• says

A jeremiad is a literary lament, a plaintive, pessimistic harangue on the state of the world. Appropriate, therefore, that the narrator of this book should be called Jeremiah, as he spends fruitless days on a trip bound for disaster scrutinising his life, and disliking intensely what it amounts to so far. He sways between reason and paranoia, between self loathing and self-righteousness, between recognition and obfuscation of his motives and desires. I liked the voice, the long, winding sentences, the tone and the wry, dry insight that eventually comes through. Man suffers, but comes out the other side of that suffering wiser and perhaps even better too.

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### Ovidiu Oprea says

One of the few books that made me experience reading as an addiction. Once I start reading, I am simply sucked in, I cannot let go. The average sentence is half a page long but the style is perfect for the story: a character, also the narrator, who cannot get over his former mistress and keeps churning the details of their relationship in his head even a year or so after their breakup. I found it surprising that all those clauses and digressions did not make me lose track of the main line of thought. So that despite the pages looking so intimidating, it did not feel like I had to make an effort. Quite the contrary, I started enjoying it. Probably because you have no other choice but to get into the character's skin. And sometimes it is so nice to be someone else for a change.

I will just add that it was my favourite book as a literature undergraduate. I remember having it on our reading list for the course on postmodernism, of which I was a big fan back then. I did not expect that more than ten years later and after my tastes having undergone so many radical changes, it would still be my favourite book, the one I most enjoyed reading.

Oh, and the ending is absolutely beautiful. And I do not use that qualifier lightly. True, the last part did have a bit of a Hollywood feel, but it worked well overall. What I liked most were the very last two sentences. I thought they were so masterfully chosen. And unrepresentatively short.

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## **Lorenzo Berardi says**

There was a till receipt left as a bookmark between page 86 and 87 of my second hand copy of this novel. I cannot help but assuming that page 87 is as far as the former owner of Europa managed to get. And, if so, I don't blame him or her.

Actually I would prefer reviewing the till receipt than this book, at least for a moment. For, believe it or not, the till receipt can tell us something important about this novel.

First of all, it's a French till receipt implying that the former owner of my copy of Europa was either a Frenchman or someone who spent some time in France. I would pick the French nationality of the owner, though, as the grocery he/she made is a big one and includes a list of items I have never heard about, something that only an authentic Frenchman or Frenchwoman might be familiar with, such as:

- Cidoupeche 2L
- VDP rouge
- Thon Miette X2
- Mir Poudre Coul
- St Hubert

(By the way, any idea on what they could be?)

Not to mention some classic gourmet products like:

- Pate brisee
- Creme fraiche
- Baguette 250g

Secondly, it has to be said that the prices reported in the till receipt are still in French Francs meaning that this huge grocery for a total amount of 671.00 FRF was done before the Euro coming on 1st January 2002. Unfortunately, no date is provided either at the bottom or at the top of the receipt. But this hardly matters.

My deduction is that this 1998 Vintage edition of Tim Parks book was purchased at some point in the three years after its publication, read (or half-read) and then left untouched on a shelf for the following 10 years before its former owner (now relocated in the UK) gave it to the Helen & Douglas charity shop where I bought it on 14th January 2012.

This assumption of mine is based on the fact that the ink on the receipt is still very easy to be read at least 11 years after having been printed. By coincidence I saved some receipts of the little groceries I made in Berlin on 2002 and Oslo on 2005 and in both cases, the ink on the paper has almost faded away because it was sometimes exposed to light and air and breath and the skin of my fingers.

This leads me to think that this French receipt was kept inbetween page 86 and 87 of Europa for no less than 9-10 years without being exposed in the meantime.

Now, let's come back to the book.

Does the fact that the former owner of Europa

- a) Left a bookmark at approximately one third of the book;
  - b) Never re-opened the book at that page;
  - c) Gave the book to a charity shop in the UK.
- suggest you anything?

True, the book could have been brought from UK to France and then again to the UK, or perhaps never left the British isles welcoming a French receipt till as a bookmark between 2000 and 2001 (most likely).

But the very fact that the former owner of this novel decided to get rid of it without even giving it a second chance ten years after being done with it, casts a shadow on the quality of the book itself. Which, I must admit, looked poor to me.

Tim Parks wrote a very disturbing novel about a coach trip from Milan to Strasbourg in the mid 1990s putting himself in the shoes of a British university lecturer in Italy (which is pretty much what Mr Parks did during his long Italian life).

Whereas a few characters are interesting and the exhausting monologue of the protagonist has his pros and cons, where Europa utterly fails is in delivering a convincing plot and a realistic portrait of a bunch of Italian girls in their 20s traveling with their professors to the European Parliament.

There is this awful, awful scene with the girls dancing in their coats in the square below Strasbourg impressive cathedral by night and singing aloud "Sei un mito" by 883 a horrible Italian pop song of the 1990s, which I found deeply embarrassing.

Let's face it. I was 12 years old when that song came out and had it as the soundtrack of many a school trip by coach, but nobody ever sung the song aloud. And we were kids.

I think that Tim Parks failed here. I'm not saying that a bunch of 20 something Italian girls in the mid 1990s attending university was living in an ivory tower, but please Tim don't make them look like half-wit morons in order to remark the intellectual superiority of your alter-ego justifying his soft spot for naughty sex.

I am sorry to say that, but Europa was a very disappointing reading.

Just let me find another till receipt and I will bring the book back to the charity shop where I bought it. I hope someone will enjoy a bit of archaeology as a well-welcomed distraction before reaching page 86.

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## **Banushka says**

4 ve 5 y?ld?z aras?nda karars?z kald?m, 4,5 olsayd? onu verirdim.

avrupa, avrupa'n?n ne anlam ifade etti?i, demokrasi ve çokkültürlülükten ikiyüzlülü?e giden yol...

küçük hesaplar, bencillik, abart?lan cinsellik ve tüm bunlar?n aras?nda unutulamayan bir a?k hikâyesi...

hem kendiyile hem avrupa'yla hesapla?an jerry'le beraber trajik sona do?ru ad?m ad?m ilerletiyor bizi tim parks.

denemeleri, romanlar?, çevirileriyle okunmas? gereken bir yazar parks.

ve roza hakmen bazen 1,5 sayfa sürebilen cümleleri müthi? bir ustal?kla çevirmi?.

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## Annette Morris says

A stream of misogynist consciousness in which the 45 yr old male narrator spends 48 hours with a coach load of female students fantasising about all kinds of inappropriate stuff. The tragic story revealed in the last chapter could have been better told without without all the preceeding sexism.

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## Kadircan says

Kitap, Milano Üniversitesi'nde okutmanlık görevini yürütmekte olan bir grup yabancı akademisyenin mesleki sıkıntılarına çözüm bulabilmek amacıyla Avrupa Parlamentosu'na yönelttikleri başvuru ve şikayetlerini dile getirebilmek amacıyla parlamentonun bulunduğu Strazburg kentine yaptıkları yolculuğu ana eksenine oturtuyor. Yazar, Avrupa Birliği, göçmenlik, milliyetçilik, din gibi konulardaki fikirlerini aktarmak için bu yolculuktan ve bu uluslararası topluluktan yararlanıyor. Kitabın bu bölümleri sayesinde Avrupa Birliği'ne yönelik merakımın arttığını söyleyebilirim.

Kitabın benim daha çok ilgimi çeken kısmı ise, topluluğun İngiliz üyesi Jerry ile adının öykünün sonunda dahi öğrenemediğimiz Fransız üyesinin yolculuktan bir sene kadar önce ayrıldığı noktalanmış hayli tutkulu ve gelgitli duygusal ilişkilerinin anlatıldığı bölümler oldu. Anların, onların yaarken farkına varamadığımız birçok başka olayın da etkisiyle birlikte gelecekte yeniden kekillenebileceğini, zamanın aslında geriye doğru biçimlenen bir süreç olduğunu söyleyen Carpe Diem tadındaki kısımlar, bu duygusal ilişki çerçevesinde, aforizmalardan ve başka eserlerden yapılan alıntılardan da yararlanılarak etkileyici bir biçimde işlenmişti.

Öykünün anlatıcısı Jerry, içe dönük karakter özellikleriyle öne çıkan biri. Jerry'nin yer yer obsesyona varabilen iç konuları ve gerek kendisine gerekse çevresine yönelik psikolojik tahlilleri, kitabın okunması emek isteyen bölümlerini oluşturuyor. Yeri gelmişken belirtmekte fayda var, kitapta yapılan psikolojik incelemeler beni pek tatmin etmedi. Psikolojiye giriş tonunda geçen bu kısımlar, konuyla daha önceden ilgilenmemi kiiler için faydalı olabilecek bir boyuta sahip belki ama psikoloji üzerine birkaç kitap karıştırmı ya da psikoterapi sürecine kıyısından köşesinden bulaşmış kiiler için zaten bilinen şeylerin sıkıcı bir tekrar olmaktan öteye geçemiyor ne yazık ki.

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## Jo says

Couldn't finish it, finished half of it. Long sentences make it very difficult .

A brilliantly comic, dark and dyspeptic novel about an obsessive love gone sour. Jealousy and revenge, passion and dread intertwine in one man's soul as he's trapped in the awful claustrophobia of a three-day coach journey across Europe with a group of people he loathes - and the woman who broke his heart.

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## Philippe says

Tim Parks' Europa is not an easy book. Stylistically and psychologically it makes considerable demands on the reader. The whole narrative is captured as an obsessive, splintered internal monologue. Despite being on a journey from one European city to another, there is an overwhelming impression of stasis as we are pinned



down to listen to a voice that is relentlessly drawing itself further in an abyss of self-doubt and reprove. Jerry Marlowe, the protagonist, is an archetypal one-dimensional man. He doesn't believe, doesn't want to believe in anything. His intellectual achievements, job, marriage and relationships are cause for ceaseless, sardonic appraisal. Least of all he believes in a Europe that has turned into a figment of our tired, postmodern imagination. It's a world where words have lost their meaning, dwellings have turned into floodlit non-places, and people have delegated their civil rights to faceless technocrats. Marlowe's erotically charged affair with a sophisticated French colleague is a divisive beacon in this process of psychological dissolution. It represents both the apex of his life and the inevitable expulsion from paradise.

As the journey progresses, Marlowe's distress and disorientation deepens. Parks masterfully juxtaposes this emotional maelstrom with a strand of black comedy. Marlowe's co-travelers (including a mongrel dog named after medieval Welsh poet Dafydd ap Gwilym) form a microcosm in which quite a few of the lowly human impulses - ego-centrism, greed, prejudice, debauchery, vanity, stupidity - are showcased in what at times approaches pure slapstick. Ultimately this slightly vulgar insouciance - and the tragic outcomes that seem to be associated with it - only reinforces the mood of despair that pervades this Swiftian novel.

Tim Parks seems to be an enormously versatile writer. This is the third novel from his hand that I have read (in addition to *Dreams of Rivers and Seas*, *Teach Us to Sit Still*) and they all provided a different reading experience. But without exception these are brilliantly written, intellectually satisfying and emotionally rewarding books.

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### **Maggie Roessler says**

No we can't all just love and accept one another - neither nationally nor personally. I am a sucker for Tim Parks' brand of cynicism, especially in relation to traveling and multiculturalism. Only after acknowledging the boundaries of our upbringing and our guilty boorish pride, can we honestly relate to something or someone foreign.

Brilliant exposition, picking up clues regarding this guy's situation from his stream of consciousness was a thrill. Once I had all the information, it did get a bit repetitive, but by that point I was so drawn into his obsession, it only seemed appropriate.

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### **Alan says**

a fun read (later, found this in my 2003 notebook: cynical, Eurosceptic, well read ranting, sharp, superior, sexist middle aged teacher from Milan on a coach trip across Europe for a cause he doesn't believe in. A good strong voice).

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