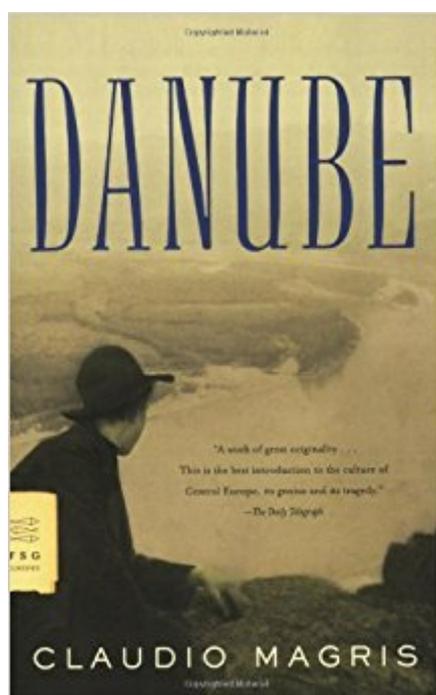


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Danube: A Sentimental Journey From The Source To The Black Sea (FSG Classics)



Synopsis

In this acclaimed international bestseller, Claudio Magris tracks the Danube River, setting his finger on the pulse of Central Europe, the crucible of a culture that draws on influences of East and West, Christianity and Islam. In each town he raises the ghosts that inhabit the houses and monuments, from Ovid and Marcus Aurelius to Kafka and Canetti, in "a fascinating blend of anecdote and history" (San Francisco Examiner).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

More than a thoroughfare linking Europe and Asia, the Danube, for Magris, is symbol and nourisher of a hinterland, a Germanic/Magyar/Slavic/Jewish/Central European culture counterposed to northern and western Europe. As he follows the river from the Bavarian hills to the Black Sea, lingering at villages, castles, Viennese cafes, ancient ruins and cemeteries, the author, a professor of German literature at the University of Trieste, offers a sustained, rich, often profound meditation on diverse themes: the tension between Greco-Roman and Teutonic civilization, the roots of fascism, Napoleon as a personification of modern, clashing nationalisms, etc. We read of Hapsburg splendor and decline, Nazi evil, Slavic soul-searching, Rumania as melting-pot of races and cultures. This sequence of stately tableaux is steeped in cultural and historical references to the likes of Kafka and Kepler, Haydn, Heidegger, Elias Canetti, George Konrad, Vasko Popa. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Danube river runs from central to southeast Europe, and Danube is a stream of consciousness flowing down the history of the great basin. The intrepid Italian traveler and cultural and literary historian, Claudio Magris, has taken the occasion of his river-length journey to make forays into the legends and lore, history and geography, politics and literature of the peoples and places along the Danube's winding path. The result is a rambling amalgam rich in nuances and allusions, some of which may be lost on those unversed in Central European culture. This is a stimulating tour which will challenge and reward the attentive and courageous intellectual traveler. It is recommended for academic and public libraries.- James B. Street, Santa Cruz P.L., Cal. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a delightfully translated, rich and ornate, not so much travelogue as intellectual and literary history, of what Magris is pleased to term Mitteleuropa. Indeed, the reader looking for actual descriptions of the Danube will find them few and far between, whereas the intellectual - capital I - reader will find a smörgåsbord of poets and writers of all sorts who have dwelt along the banks of the Danube for centuries. Magris, though his prose may come across as dense at times, is actually a bon-vivant with a rather breezy, hedonistic take on life. This is fortunate, for it serves to leaven the sometimes ponderous meditations the reader comes across. This duality of text and attitude is nicely encapsulated in the first two paragraphs of the chapter entitled "Believing In Ulm". On the one hand, in the first paragraph: "But all that is real is being erased each instant, even if luckily not always in the bloodstained theatre of phosphorous bombs. Little by little, however, things are imperceptibly erased, and one cannot do otherwise than believe that they nonetheless exist." On the other hand, in the second: "We are happy in the company of people who make us feel the unquestionable presence of the world, just as the body of the beloved gives us the certainty of those shoulders, that bosom, that curve of the hips, the surge of those as incontestable as the sea." In general, there is a tendency to delve to a greater or lesser extent into the life and works of a writer or thinker, whetting the reader's appetite, and then, quite often, drolly cock a snook at said individual before moving on to a writer who dwelt further down the Danube. This is nowhere more evident than in his treatment of the Hungarian writer Georg Lukács, on whom Magris dwells for some time before jauntily quipping in the penultimate paragraph that: "From his window he could see the great Danube, but he probably had little appreciation of it, insensitive as he was to nature, which in his eyes was blemished by not having read Kant or Hegel." The result of all this? A bit of a mixed bag, I should say. As Magris says of another writer, "The result is that he says too little and too much at

the same time." Be this as it may, the author is widely read and the book is quite fun to read for the intellectual traveller who doesn't mind being taken down a Danube of history and ideas, if not the actual river.

It was beautifully written, informative, and thought provoking; it was an humanities class of central Europe between pages. In addition, it provided insight into the mental gymnastics a Marxist intellectual had to put himself to be able to justify to himself European Communism.

Excellent. Arrived quickly

- you'll know more than you can possibly imagine about places you're maybe only lucky enough to have heard about, let alone visited. it's a zig-zag wander through history and geography.

Arrived promptly and exactly as advertised.

The book is a dense collection of thoughts, experiences, reflections and recollections, which begin at the source of the Danube and end at the terminus with the Black Sea. I picked up this book for a trip in the eastern European region, with many stops along the Danube. While the book is packed with a wide array of historical, literary and artistic references, I found the exposure to new ideas refreshing, even if they disrupt the flow of the book at times. The translation from the artistic Italian prose to English seems to create unnecessarily dense wording at times, but the comprehensive collage of imagery made the book worthwhile in the end. To me, I found the style of writing like the flow of the massive Danube: sometimes it slowly swirls reflectively, but it constantly moves onwards...

Book in good condition. Extremely small print (my mistake, should've expected it - paperbacks are often like that). Fast shipping.

One of the most extraordinary, fascinating books I've ever read. Cultural history of the legendary river and its people like no other.

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