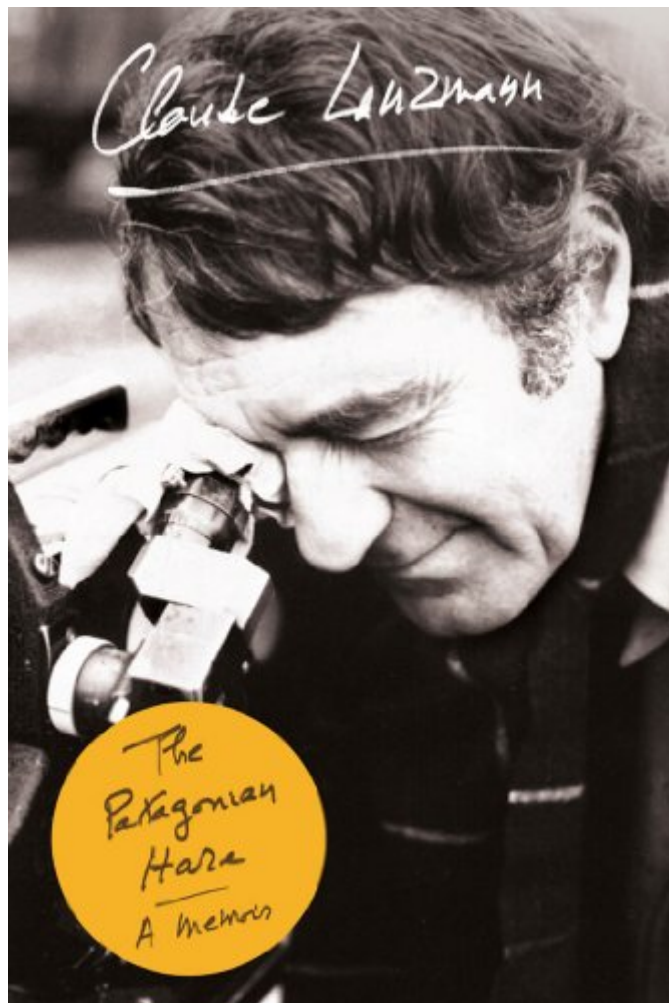


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The Patagonian Hare: A Memoir



Synopsis

"Even if I lived a hundred lives, I still wouldn't be exhausted." These words capture the intensity of the experiences of Claude Lanzmann, a man whose acts have always been a negation of resignation: a member of the Resistance at sixteen, a friend to Jean-Paul Sartre and a lover to Simone de Beauvoir, and the director of one of the most important films in the history of cinema, Shoah. In these pages, Lanzmann composes a hymn to life that flows from memory yet has the rhythm of a novel, as tumultuous as it is energetic. The Patagonian Hare is the story of a man who has searched at every moment for existential adventure, who has committed himself deeply to what he believes in, and who has made his life a battle. The Patagonian Hare, a number-one bestseller in France, has been translated into Spanish, German, Italian, Hebrew, Polish, Dutch, and Portuguese. Claude Lanzmann's brilliant memoir has been widely acclaimed as a masterpiece, was hailed as "a true literary and historic event" in the pages of Le Monde, and was awarded the prestigious Welt-Literaturpreis in Germany.

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Customer Reviews

This is an incredible tale told by a complex but not altogether laudable man who nevertheless is one

of the major figures of post-war France's incredibly influential intellectual life. For admirer's of his epic work Shoah, the behind the scenes look at the making of the film are extraordinary. Lanzmann will not be remembered in the same light as Sartre, Camus and de beauvoir but he was on the front-lines (and in bed!) with them every step of the way until he set off on his own with outstanding results. This is a must read for any students of film making, intellectual history or just those interested in how some people cope with extraordinary challenges.

As an admirer of Claude Lanzmann's films, I was looking forward to reading his memoir. In particular his vision in constructing "Shoah". I was interested to read the memoir was a product of dictation as it read like a conversation. A conversation at times rewarding, generally engaging but strangled with episodes of arrogance and self promotion. On reflection a man in his eighties who has lived the life Mr Lanzmann has lived may have grounds for arrogance. But some of it fell into the "so what?" category. Reading an interview with him in an English newspaper, it is apparent he is not full of himself. Sadly episodes in his telling of his story in his memoir smacks of score settling and statements to underline his importance. Unnecessary, because at heart this is a remarkable man's life and he has lived his time fully and in Mr Lanzmann has contributed a unique, honest and searching body of work. "Shoah" was a moral compass. I gained insight from his memoir as to why he chose to portray the Holocaust in the manner he did. "Shoah" was a nine hour smoking gun that forensically tore the scabs of a deep and bitter wound that still resonate today. Mr Lanzmann's experiences in Poland have a similar theme in Fiona McGregor's superb book "Strange Museums-A Journey Through Poland". Mr Lanzmann has come closer to showing the face of evil and even "good" people's refusal to look on it and learn that it is amongst us. As social history, it is a slice of life that is rich with people and events. The pre Second World War years, his schooling, his parents, the resistant. The post war years and his relationship with Israel. The descriptions of Simone de Beauvoir, John Paul Satre and Franz Fanon. So I thank Mr Lanzmann for his window into his life.

Seriously, it's hard to believe all these things happened to one guy! He has done so much in his life that severing an artery while walking through a plate glass door and requiring 40 days in the hospital only earns about three paragraphs of detail! The best parts of the book deal with his youth under Nazi Occupation, as well as all the work and thinking that went into the construct of Shoah. In a world where everyone seems to have an urge to write a memoir, Lanzmann is the rare author who takes the form far beyond what seems capable. A tremendous book.

This account is a story of a most accomplished life by a very gifted artist -- a graceful autobiography that encompasses a youth fighting the Nazi occupation of France plus a journalistic career as a confidant of Jean Paul Sartre and a lover of Simone de Beauvoir. If one has seen his film, Shoah, reading this tome about how this unique and powerful film was made is compelling. If one hasn't seen Shoah, one should do so after which reading this book would be a compulsion.

A compelling reconstruction of the intellectual development of the producer/director of Shoah. Especially strong in recounting his relationship to Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre. Reads like a personal adventure story in places.. In other places he comes off as egotistical, but he has earned his pleasure in himself.

Excellent introspective memoir

This is one of the best books I read this year. Lantzmann was in several crossroads of the 20th century, from war to philosophy, from hell to love and he describes them all with vigor and humor. Highly recommended

An exceptional book written by an exceptional man who had intimate relationships with some of the most famous French writers of his time, and who was responsible for the finest documented oral history (Shoah) of the Holocaust. Well written and very engaging.

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