



The Trolley

Claude Simon, Richard Howard (Translator)

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Claude Simon, a Nobel Prize-winning author and cultural icon in France, has written a Proustian novel, intermingling the memories of youth and old age. His madeleine is the trolley of the book's title, the transport that took him to and from school every morning of his childhood. Passing back and forth between vine-covered hills, the trolley punctuates the trivial or cruel events of many lives, while action unfolds at the shore, in the gradually modernizing town, on a tennis court, and in a country villa. Elsewhere, life in all its fragility persists in the pavilions and labyrinthine corridors of a hospital, where our narrator now travels on a wheeled hospital bed, set to begin a new voyage into old age. When coincidences unite the two trajectories, the story becomes a fugue of memory that has delighted critics and made the book an immediate bestseller in France.

The Trolley Details

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From Reader Review The Trolley for online ebook

Ahmet Toköz says

Zaman, tuhaf bir dalgalanma sadece. Zaman?n bir yerinde tramvaya yeti?mek için hepimiz ko?mu?uzdur....

Shehroze Ameen says

Its not a good read. It is honestly not a good read in any way and in any form.

Its the hardest book you can find in a bookstore. Although the whole concept of this book's plot is very straightforward - you're the protagonist going in a trolley watching his hometown change before his eyes and pondering about what has changed in it, with an end all message about society and morality - it is handled with no care whatsoever.

Even though Claude Simon is a Nobel Laureate in Literature, this work did not appeal to me in the slightest. The vocabulary is arcane for casual readers, it requires a *lot* of backtracking, and the end message not only feels hollow - it dies because it flows over the casual reader's head. I quite frankly was disappointed with it.

Take this portion from the book, for instance:

As for that much-despised "Society Beach" and its humble attempts of the dance-hall music wafting from it to contend with the sound of the waves which immediately smothered it, I was to recall them many years later, on the very eve of the war, lying on the deck of one of those huge boats (not the ones that in my childhood were used for "trolling" - a kind of fishing so unlikely to be profitable that I think it has long since been abandoned - but equipped for sardine fishing and working out for some port on the rocky coast) anchored offshore for the night, when a strong land breeze came up, overcoming the sea wind which had blown all day, beginning by covering the sea's surface with a reticulation of tiny wavelets running in the opposite direction from the long swell which was very slow to settle - and the silence and only the occasional rustle, here or there, of one of those wavelets, its crest breaking so that the setting sun cast bronze patches on the no longer blue but bottle-green water darkening now, finally black in the black silence so that I could no longer make out the deck except by the faint reddish glow of a alntern, the boat pitching gently at anchor, the black thrust of the mast pointing up into the sky...

And that is one portion, mind you. the whole of this sentence starts from the start of page 46, and ends with six lines remaining in page 47. Its pretentious in my opinion and downright idiotic of the author in my honest opinion.

If egotistical narcissists are your thing, then go ahead and read Claude Simon. You won't be disappointed.

Intery says

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Andrew says

All of Claude Simon's chickens, it seems, have come home to Proust.

Sorry, I couldn't resist.

The Trolley is a lush, poetic sort of novel, just as much impressionist as it is nouveau-roman in its approach. Short and compact, it oscillates deftly between past and present in a way that French authors seem to be almost uniquely capable of. I was delighted, but given the long, flowing sentences, I'm confident that to truly appreciate it, I'm going to need to track down a copy in the original.

Bob Lopez says

Eh, couldn't really get into it; thankfully, it's short enough that a brief, concentrated read was all I needed. I liked the device, almost stream-of-consciousness narration for the memory parts. And really, I found the hospital scenes the most interesting. I liked the interplay between both narratives...but otherwise, blah.

Brandon Douglas says

At the surface, this novel seems like a boring, plotless story, but once you dive deeper, you discover that it is a delicate look at life, death and the aging process. I don't think I would read it again, but it was certainly an interesting literary experience.

Mikael Kuoppala says

I have to admit that I really don't see the greatness of Claude Simon's last novel. His unending sentences lose me, even though they do contain a certain mysterious beauty. And as the storytelling is so very stream-of-consciousness I feel that the core of what is being said is lost somewhere. There are certain individual moments of insight, but I really appreciate clarity in prose, and there isn't a lot of that here.

I wonder though how much of Simon's possible magic is simply lost in translation as the language is so unusual with the impossible Proustian sentence structure.

aykut says

Yorum yapamayacak kadar dolu kafam.. Durum öyküleri k?sa film gibidir genelde. Durum romanlar? da frans?z filminden farks?z olur. Bu roman (öyle mi?) nefes almaya izin vermeyen bir sanat filmi. Ba?ka bir ?ey söylemeye gerek yok..

Melissa says

This is my first work by Claude Simon, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in the year of my birth 1985. I have read that this book is Proustian, but having never read any Marcel Proust I can't rightly evaluate that concept. I appreciated this work as a treatise on memories and how they come upon the sick and dying. Simon seems to be saying that our memories can protect us if we just remember it all correctly. The trolley of the main title is almost another character and it seems to represent the unchanging portion of a nearly concrete and palpable memory. The trolley is always there throughout all the things that happen in the main character's life be it good or bad. There was an undercurrent as well of the significance of having a sick parent as the protagonist often recalls the memories of his mother's decline during his own decline.

Riikka says

I'm glad this book was short because it was quite hard to read. The sentences run on and on for pages with so much information I don't have any tangible memories of what I just read.

The atmosphere of the writing is nice, but because it's not all linear, it gets difficult to follow the story - the long sentences add to this. Maybe there really isn't much of a story at all, it's more memories of things that were and are, and I can appreciate that, and I guess the style works for that purpose. Still, not the best read.

Henna Parkas says

Tunnelmapala, josta en vain saanut otetta (tai joka ei saanut otetta minusta). Joko kirjan maalailemat muistokuvat eivät vedonneet minuun tai sitten hetki tämän teoksen lukemiselle oli väärä. Huomasin ajatuksen karkailevan jatkuvasti muualle. Parhaimmillaan kuitenkin ihastuttavaa henkilö- ja miljöökuvausta, tunnelmaltaan miellyttävän seesteinen.

Felice Picano says

Claude Simon received the Nobel Prize in Literature and this book is one reason why. In a gorgeous translation by American poet Richard Howard, we are immediately thrown into the author's small, yet

enormously opening out world, that then closes up again by the end: sort of like a flower. The book is said to be "a novel." Is it? I don't know. Maybe in the Proustian sense. Proust is definitely a model. But so is Beckett in his fictions. Yet it is unique. There is no plot to follow. No character is dealt with at length or depth besides the narrator, who may or may not change from time to time. And this might as easily be a memoir. Once I got past the opening pages set actually on a trolley going from some Midi town to the beach, I read a few pages every night before bed and I recommend that as a way to enjoy the book

Fabian says

So now I am officially tired of smaller tales. After "The Trolley," a Proustian novel that's vivid, digestible, o so French, both tender & brutal and sometimes run-on and modern like that, about childhood (I read it on the way to San Antonio in a room with my family, so I guess vaguely relatable, and fittingly, on a car, which like the trolley in its time was, is, an acceptable form of transportation) & about memory. Loooong sentences create that popular effect of giving movement to moments that contain no discernible plot.

Jdu FFH says

Een heerlijk boek voor op een druilerige herfstmiddag. Associatieve herinneringen aan zonovergoten zomers in Perpignan, door een hoofdpersoon die inmiddels met onduidelijke klachten in het ziekenhuis ligt. Scherpe observaties van de rangen en standen in een provinciestad; van de 'meid' die niet alleen het eten kookt maar ook de zieke moeder verzorgt, tot de 'salons' waar het heel nauw komt wie er wel en niet wordt uitgenodigd. Al op de flap wordt de vergelijking met Proust gemaakt, en Proust komt zelf als personage heel kort in het boek voor, dus Simon wist ook wel waar hij de mosterd haalde. Simon doet minder aan zelfbeklag en houdt het kort en luchting, best een aanrader dus.

Nicolas says

Voilà le livre le plus pénible que j'aie lu depuis longtemps. Le manque de ponctuation, des phrases faisant parfois plus d'une page rendent la lecture de cet ouvrage particulièrement contraignant et fait rapidement perdre le fil de l'histoire (pour autant qu'il y en ait une)
