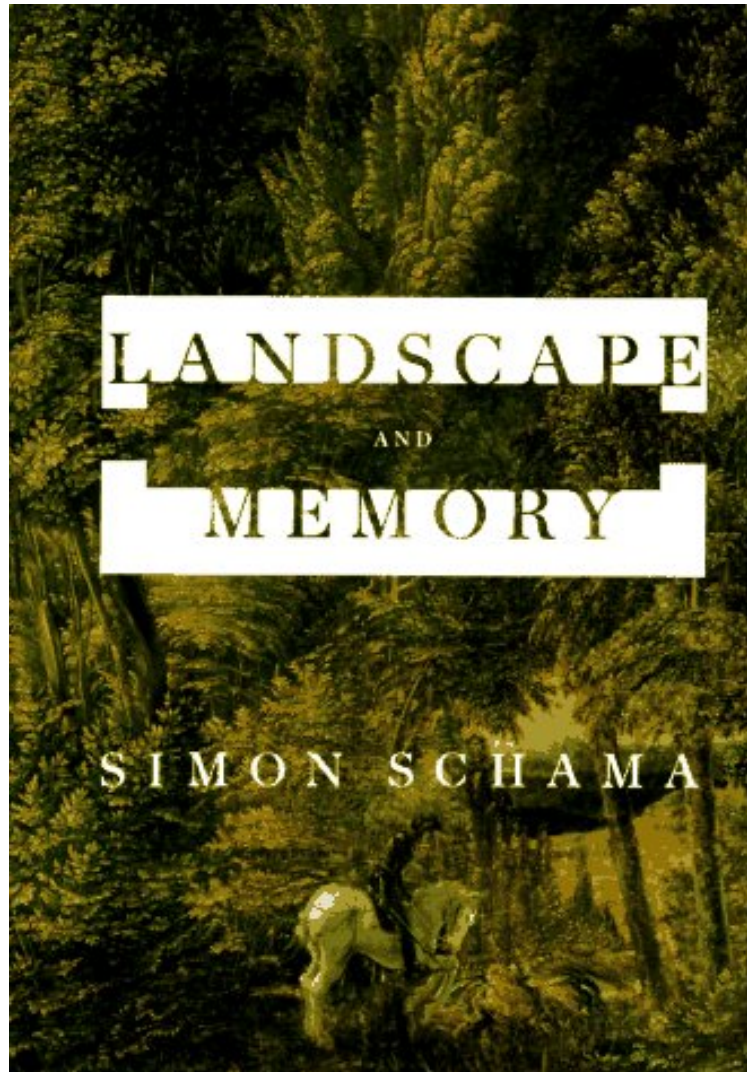


[FREE] Landscape And Memory

Landscape And Memory

Simon Schama

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A TRUE THRILLING SHAMA BOOKBy Miriam MilmanAs usually, Schama proves to be a great thinker and a great writer. Knowing that he also teaches Art History, I expected this book of his to contain his thoughts about painted landscapes.... I had to realise it is FAR from it. All about his ancestors life in the wild, rather frightening dark woods of the baltic countries. And it manages to be thrilling, so knowledgeable, and witty.!!!Shama proves again to be a great writerand a thrilling personality one would like to

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An extraordinary book that explores how the earth itself has shaped the Western imagination and how, as a result, our interaction with the environment is far richer and more complex than today's doomsayers would have us believe.

From Publishers WeeklyIn an enormously rich, labyrinthine survey, Columbia University humanities professor Schama, author of prize-winning books on the French Revolution (*Citizens*) and Dutch culture (*The Embarrassment of Riches*), explores the role of landscape in myth, art and culture. Full of wondrous and forgotten lore, his mind-expanding study links the Egyptian myth of Osiris, sacrificed king-god of the Nile, to pagan traditions of the sacred stream, Christian baptism and modern images of the fertile, fatal river. He follows woodlands-based myths of utopian primitivism from Tacitus through German Romanticism, the work of contemporary painter Anselm Kiefer and the militant nationalism that culminated in Hitler. Ranging freely over Western literature, history, art and mythology, Schama examines Mount Rushmore as an icon of democracy, unfenced suburban lawns as symbols of social solidarity, Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers in Rome, Sir Walter Raleigh's journey to Guiana, Thoreau's meditations at Walden Pond, Swiss climber Horace Benedict de Saussure's ascent of Mount Blanc in 1787. Arguing that the boundaries between the wild and the cultivated are more flexible than is commonly assumed, this rewarding synthesis maps an uncharted geography of the imagination. Illustrations. 40,000 first printing. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library JournalSchama presents a wide-ranging meditation on the role of nature in Western civilization from ancient times to the present. The previous books by Schama (humanities, Columbia Univ.) include *The Embarrassment of Riches* (LJ 5/15/87) and *Citizens* (LJ 4/1/89). In the present work, he argues persuasively that Europeans and Americans have been shaped by nature as much as they themselves have shaped nature. Schama discusses the impact of sacred or mysterious rivers, forests, and mountains in forging the Western imagination. Individuals discussed include the expected (e.g., Henry David Thoreau) as well as some surprises (e.g., Louis XIV and Hitler). The fact that nature has had a huge impact on Western history is not a startling new revelation, but Schama is a marvelous writer and an impressive scholar. He brings together familiar and not-so-familiar stories to create a fresh reappraisal of more than 2000 years of history. Highly recommended.?T.J. Schaeper, St. Bonaventure Univ., N.Y. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From BooklistCultures are shaped by place. Forests inspire tree worship; rivers are gods. These cultural constructs are the source of "landscapes," the transformation of earth into metaphor. Schama, a fluidly creative scholar and adept author with far-ranging interests, has conducted what he describes as an "excavation" of Western culture's profound landscape tradition. What he reveals in this intricately structured, finely detailed, and wonderfully engaging analysis is the endurance of our veneration for nature, a perspective we still hold dear in spite of our environmental difficulties. Schama believes that a deeper understanding of our "core myths" may help us see our way through the present crisis. Schama focuses on three types of landscapes: forests, rivers, and mountains. As he describes each setting--from the tragedy-filled forests of Poland to California's astounding redwoods, to the heavily navigated Thames and Mississippi, the otherworldly Swiss Alps and even crass Mount Rushmore--Schama interprets the myths, literature, art, and polemics that have infused each place with metaphorical, spiritual, or political significance. This beautifully illustrated volume is an awesome achievement, a masterful, multifaceted survey of the many stories and images Western culture has evolved to express our complex relationship with place and the rest of life. Donna Seaman