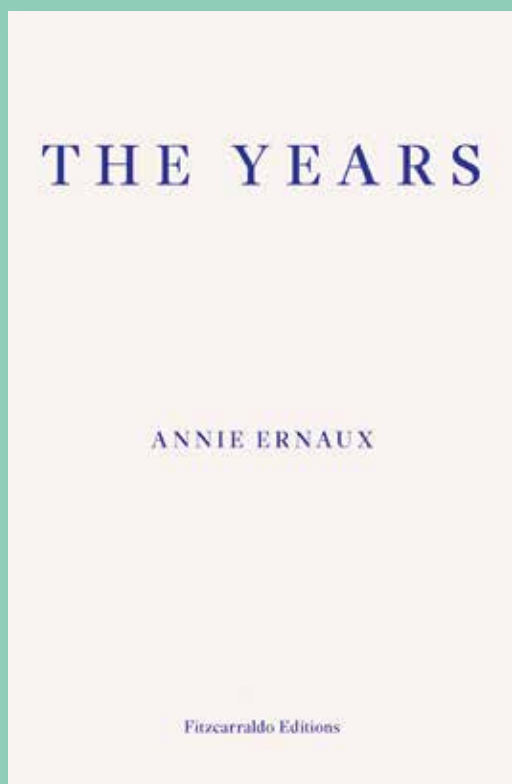




Reader's Guide



Other books by Annie Ernaux

A Man's Place (1992)

A Frozen Woman (1995)

Cleaned Out (1996)

Exteriors (1996)

Shame (1998)

I Remain in Darkness (1999)

Happening (2001)

A Woman's Story (2003)

Simple Passion (2003)

The Possession (2008)

Things Seen (2010)

The Years Annie Ernaux

Translated by Alison L. Strayer

Fitzcarraldo Editions

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About the author	Annie Ernaux was born in Seine-Maritime, France, in September 1940. She grew up in Normandy, studied at Rouen University, and later taught in secondary schools. From 1977 to 2000, she was a professor at the Centre National d'Enseignement par Correspondance. Her books, in particular <i>A Man's Place</i> and <i>A Woman's Story</i> , have become contemporary classics in France. <i>The Years</i> won the Prix Renaudot in France in 2008 and the Premio Strega in Italy in 2016. In 2017, Annie Ernaux was awarded the Marguerite Yourcenar Prize for her life's work. She lives in Paris, France.
About the translator	Alison Strayer was born in Saskatchewan, Canada, in July 1958. A writer and translator, her work has been shortlisted twice for the Governor General's Award for Literature and for Translation. She has also been shortlisted for the Grand Prix du Livre de Montréal and the Prix Littéraire France-Québec, and longlisted for the Albertine Prize. Her translation of <i>The Years</i> was awarded the 2018 French-American Translation Prize in the non-fiction category. She lives in Paris, France.
About the book	<i>The Years</i> is a narrative of the period 1941 to 2006 told through the lens of memory, impressions past and present, photos, books, songs, radio, television, advertising, and news headlines. Local dialect, words of the times, slogans, brands and names for ever-proliferating objects are given voice. The author's voice continually dissolves and re-emerges as Ernaux makes the passage of time palpable. Time itself, inexorable, narrates its own course, consigning all other narrators to anonymity. A new kind of autobiography emerges, at once subjective and impersonal, private and collective.
What the judges thought	'An elegant portrait of an age; a much needed riposte to the ever-narrowing trajectory of autofiction.'
Discussion points	<p>How would you describe the genre of this book? Memoir, journalism, autofiction, or something else? Does it need to be defined?</p> <p>Ernaux examines her life from the point of view of a third person – what does this distancing do to the narrative?</p> <p>The book covers the years from 1941 to 2006 – what are the key changes in French society during that time?</p> <p>Ernaux explores very personal experiences of her family and herself – how did this affect you as a reader?</p> <p>French popular culture references have footnotes added by translator Alison Stryer – did you find these to be useful?</p>
Themed reading	<p><i>The Paris Journal</i> by Janet Flanner Flanner was an American writer and journalist, who was the Paris correspondent of <i>The New Yorker</i> from 1925 to 1975. Writing under the pen name Genêt, this is a collection of her letters that talk about the arts, the politics and the economy of post-war Paris.</p> <p><i>The Tender Hour of Twilight</i> by Richard Seaver Seaver came to Paris in 1950, when the city was still traumatised by war, and the Parisian women were still charmed by American men. He noticed great writers like Beckett and Ionesco were struggling to have their voices heard, so he found a way to bring them into the light.</p> <p><i>An Attempt At Exhausting A Place in Paris</i> by Georges Perec Perec spent three days recording the everyday events he witnessed through different café windows in Paris in 1974. The result is a melancholic, slightly eerie, and oddly touching read in which the ordinary becomes somewhat surreal and the viewing of strangers becomes unexpectedly intimate.</p> <p><i>The Folded Clock</i> by Heidi Julavits In <i>The Folded Clock</i>, Julavits chronicles her daily life as a fortysomething woman, wife, mother and writer. The result is a meditation on time and self, youth and aging, betrayal and loyalty, friendship and romance, faith and fate, marriage and family, desire and death, gossip and secrets, art and ambition.</p> <p><i>Bonjour Tritesse</i> by Françoise Sagan This is the story of Cécile, who leads a carefree life with her widowed father and his young mistresses until, one hot summer on the Riviera, he decides to remarry – with devastating consequences. A stylish, shimmering and amoral tale of adolescence and betrayal, which was censored when first published in English.</p>
Useful links	<p>The Intimate Portrait of a Generation: Annie Ernaux's <i>The Years</i> in <i>LARB</i></p> <p>Bad Genre: Annie Ernaux, Autofiction, and Finding a Voice in <i>The Paris Review</i></p> <p><i>The Years</i> by Annie Ernaux review – a masterpiece memoir of French life in <i>The Guardian</i></p> <p>Annie Ernaux's <i>The Years</i> is a striking piece of communal memoir in <i>The New Statesman</i></p>