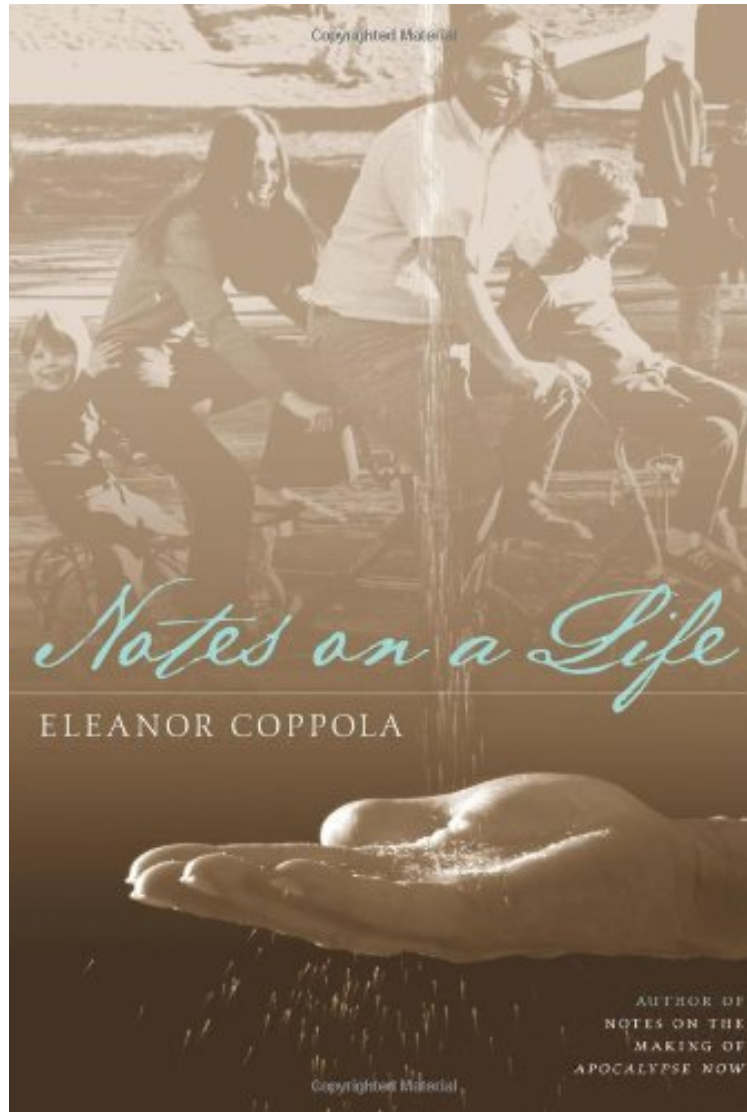


(Pdf free) Notes on a Life

## Notes on a Life

*Eleanor Coppola*

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**Eleanor Coppola : Notes on a Life** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Notes on a Life:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It was a great escape into another life where people exhausted themselves making ...By Carol WeissI found this book to be so comforting besides the fact that the author's life is so interesting. This was my bedtime reading after exhausting days taking care of my mom who had a massive stroke. It was a great escape into another life where people exhausted themselves making movies. Eleanor Coppola sounds so down to earth, the kind of person you'd love to have as a friend.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The

Trials of a Hollywood Wife By Rob Hardy Consider the problem of the wife who has a successful husband and has for decades put him and their family first, and her own aspirations second. It's not a novel problem, but is instead too common to be of much interest: let's just count on the woman to take care of herself and her family and her career as best she can. The situation might, however, be particularly interesting if the family moves in the highest of Hollywood circles, with many family members involved in moviemaking, and with the wife herself a successful filmmaker, artist, and memoirist. In the beginning of *Notes on a Life* (Nan A. Talese), Eleanor Coppola says, "I am an observer at heart," and this is manifestly true, but she is also a reporter, whether in her movie *Hearts of Darkness* which is a documentary about the making of *Apocalypse Now* by her husband Francis Ford Coppola, or in her previous book which was a memoir of the making of that film, or in her other films about her children's films. As fits a memoir from a devoted and dutiful wife and mother, this is a book mostly about her family and about how she has cared for them. It may have all happened in extraordinary circles, but it is delightful to read this candid memoir and realize that for all the working trips to exotic locales, and the house in Napa Valley, and hobnobbing with George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, Eleanor Coppola's marriage and family are a lot like anyone else's. They come with problems, and she works on them, and gets things done, and she quite clearly loves what she and they have managed to accomplish. An idea follows her all through the decades covered in the diary entries here: "I have an ongoing internal war, a conflict between wanting to be a good wife and mother and also to draw, paint, design, write and shoot videos. I focus on the family and imagine there will be time for my interests, but there rarely is." She does manage to make time for herself, but it isn't easy, and there were times she was deeply depressed. Her book often reflects on how she managed to solve the problem in her own ways, knowing that the problem was never completely solved any more than her children's (or husband's) problems were completely out of her thoughts. She has had to be an itinerant mom at Easter times: "I hid eggs in the hotel room in Trieste during *Godfather II*, in the tropical foliage at our house in Manila during *Apocalypse Now*, in the city park in Tulsa during *The Outsiders*, and in the apartment in NYC during *Cotton Club*." As she looks for her place in all this, it might be that she could come off as a whining overprivileged yuppie, but she maintains an amused tone and is constantly self deprecating. She is happiest when her family is all around her, and Frances seems to be the same way. She always has doubts about how well she is taking care of all of them, but she does love the job. When her daughter Sofia was working on Sofia's movie *Lost in Translation*, Eleanor went to see her in Japan: "As we hugged I could feel her thin arms and shoulders. I was glad I'd brought her a Tupperware container of chocolate chip cookies." There are paths not taken, and she is imaginative enough to wonder about them, but has little reason to regret where her eventual path has taken her. *Notes* is indeed excerpts from Coppola's notebook, arranged by general themes, with flashbacks through the decades to an old entry as a memory is triggered. Much of it is sweet, and some is deeply sad. A lot is funny; for a scene in *Dracula*, we are introduced to an unusual assistant on the film who is helping in a scene with Tom Waits: "The bug wrangler was standing nearby. He had several additional tins of maggots and beetles. He occasionally prodded the contents of Tom's plate to make sure they were all moving." There are lots of stars wandering through her life, of course. Note, for instance, Brando, whom she met on the set of *The Godfather*: "It was the first time I really understood what charisma was ... I felt as if I were standing in a special beam of light and he found me utterly fascinating." Through all the book, though, are notes of a creative woman taking (usually) the conventional marital role: "Over the years I stopped whatever it was I was doing to go on location with Francis and the children. I sincerely tried to be a good wife and mother to my family. For a variety of reasons, I haven't created a body of notable work in my life when many around me have, and I haven't yet made peace with that truth." I'd venture to guess that even if she had more exhibits, more documentaries, and more books to her name, she'd still have the artist's hunger to do more. There is also the mom's worry that she wasn't doing more for her children, a worry she is letting go of now that they are not children. Worries aside, "long consistent body of work" aside, *Notes* is a beautifully written record of a life lived well, with the right priorities of convention assumed and convention shunned.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An impressionist painting with words By Rich Martini I really loved this book. The pain of losing her son, the behind the scenes look at what glitz and glamour is really like, her observations of nature and life around her. At times I felt like I was watching a scene from one of her daughter's films - the way things are observed on a table, or the unusual slices of life - and by allowing her mind to wander in the structure, it became clearer that it was like a Chuck Close portrait - where when you stand close to it the face disappears, but far away, comes into excruciating focus. Or to gaze upon Seurat's "La Grande Jette," an experience she recounts of "nearly fainting" from the intensity of the experiences. It's an apt metaphor for her writing where one can feel the words as brushstrokes, the points of light as various experiences in her unusual journey. At times reading passages of behind the scenes descriptions of the shoot of *Godfather III*, or *Dracula*, or even attending the Oscar ceremony, I felt the same way I do when standing in a room full of Monet paintings, a sense of melancholy, of loss, and when I stand close to the canvas, I can feel the emotion of each brush stroke, but when I stand back across the room, I'm overwhelmed by the structure and clever connections that she's taken the reader through. If someone plans to live a life in the glare of the limelight, this is required reading. If someone wants to know what its like to live a life in the limelight, it's also required reading. The fact that she and her husband have stayed together and laughed and lived such an extraordinary life is worth examining. The incredibly pain and sense of loss of their son permeates

the book, but also underlines and expands and reflects the light coming from both of them as they've somehow been able to survive this incredible journey together. And there's fun here as well, sensuality, I can almost taste her description of various meals, a memorably one with Alice Waters, inside Eleanor's Napa valley kitchen as she stirs an espresso or the smell of chicken in the oven. And not to gild the lily, but the paintings of Edward Hopper come to mind - a sense of isolation betwixt the wonderment of the glare of light surrounding the author. Can't recommend it any higher.

(Applause Books). Eleanor Coppola's first book, *Notes on the Making of Apocalypse Now*, was hailed as "one of the most revealing of all firsthand looks at the movies" ( Los Angeles Herald Examiner ). Now the author brings the same honesty, insight, and wit to this absorbing account of the next chapters in her life. In this new work we travel back and forth with her from the swirling center of the film world to the intimate heart of her family. She offers a fascinating look at the vision that drives her husband, Francis Ford Coppola, and describes her daughter Sofia's rise to fame with the film *Lost in Translation* . Even as she visits faraway movie sets and attends parties, she is pulled back to pursue her own art but is always focused on keeping her family safe. The death of their son Gio in a boating accident in 1986 and her struggle to cope with her grief and anger lead to a moving exploration of her deepest feelings as a woman and as a mother. Written with a quiet strength, Eleanor Coppola's powerful portrait of the conflicting demands of family, love, and art is at once very personal and universally resonant.

From Publishers WeeklyCoppola (*Notes on the Making of Apocalypse Now*) has gathered together excerpts from 20 years of her personal journals and in the process she captures the experiences of being a wife, mother and artist trying to find her own self-expression in the midst of a talented family. While there's an emotional price to pay in supporting her family's careers, Coppola has expressed herself in painting, conceptual art pieces and her documentary, *Hearts of Darkness*, which chronicled the creation of *Apocalypse Now*. As the author confesses: I'm an observer at heart. As befits its source material, this book has a fragmented style; Coppola uses objects to spark memory, such as a pair of patent leather shoes found in 2002, which prompts her to recall a 1998 brunch when her husband advised their daughter about filmmaking. Some of the entries seem aimless and the jumps in time are occasionally forced, but Coppola's most touching memories, following the sudden death of her son Gio, are expressed with honesty and dignity. While this is certainly not a book for film buffs, it does supply an intriguing view of one of the central figures in the Coppola filmmaking dynasty. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistAcclaimed documentary filmmaker, artist, and authorCoppolaapplies herpowers of reflectionto the life shes led as wife of a cinematic giant andmother of a brilliant young director:Francis Ford Coppola and Sofia CoppolaWritten in diary form, her intimate observations of her familys peripatetic and tumultuous existence spans decades and crosses continents, revealing moments of abject tragedy as well as those of sheer joy. A disarming honesty informs every episode Coppola shares, yet what infuses it all is her keen sensitivity to the world around her, as she lyrically describes events as mundane as a walk in the woods or as monumental as a stroll down the red carpet at the Academy Awards. By any accounts a rich, full, and charmed life, Coppolas is, nonetheless, still filled with the same doubts, misgivings, and regrets that any woman from any walk of life will recognize; as if to say: forget the name, see me for who I really am. --Carol Haggas Eleanor Coppola is a multitalented artist who reveals in this riveting book how she has managed to help and reinforce her famous filmmaker husband and to produce talented, original, and loyal children, while still holding on to her own innate creativity. In this deeply poetic and tantalizing book, replete with accounts of the Coppola appetite for visual beauty and good food, she honestly and generously shares her discoveries, while battling tragedy and disappointment, of her own magic formulas for finding joy and serenity in life. --Lillian RossWinning and quietly provocative. New York Times Book Notes on the Making of *Apocalypse Now*, Eleanor Coppola's 1979 production diary of husband Francis' audacious, flawed film released that year, remains one of the best accounts ever written of the insane difficulties involved in shooting a big-budget movie on location. Nearly 30 years later, she brings the same scrupulous honesty and lucid, thoughtful prose to her memoir *Notes on a Life*.Ranging episodically over several decades, Coppola offers a poignant self-portrait of middle age.... The author could have come off as an overprivileged whiner as she describes jaunts to Brazil, Thailand and Bali, a cruise of the Caribbean in George Lucas' chartered yacht, the Coppolas' apartment at the Sherry-Netherland in New York and their mansion in the Napa Valley. But her detailed evocations of such lavish scenes are coupled with an awareness of how rarefied they are.... Like many women of her generation, she pushed aside many of her aspirations when she married and had children. The difference is that she didn't marry a guy with an ordinary job, she married a man who turned out to be one of America's greatest film directors. Francis Ford Coppola is, not surprisingly, the elephant in the room in his wife's memoir, which is a three-dimensional portrait of a marriage unlike any other, and yet not so very different after all....The fact that she generally was an onlooker rather than a participant in this world was her choice, Coppola acknowledges in this nuanced assessment of her life. Her mature understanding illuminates this engaging memoir, which chronicles with equal acuity regrets over the paths not taken and pleasure in the ones that were. Los Angeles Times [An] affecting memoir.... Eleanor is the glue that holds her family together, yet the tone of this memoir is

always self-effacing, reticent, reserved.... Eleanor quietly stands at the ready, watching for opportunities both to help and to make art, giving an entirely different meaning to that old poetic line: They also serve who only stand and wait. Carolyn See, *The Washington Post* [An] emotionally naked [book that is] compulsively readable. *Houston Chronicle* Eleanor's life, the constant push-pull between her desire for her own emotional primacy and her need to be a helpmate to her husband and mother to her children, is most reminiscent of another distinguished diarist: Anne Morrow Lindbergh....although [Eleanor] is far more emotionally naked than Lindbergh. *Palm Beach Post* Notes on a Life details the price often paid to attain artistic greatness, and the toll that quest can have on the lives of everyone involved in it.... *Coppola* takes you deeply inside the daily routines, trials, failures and triumphs of an extraordinary family, one that ultimately isn't really all that different from anybody else, regardless of their celebrity status and awards. *Nashville City Paper* Coppola's most touching memories...are expressed with honesty and dignity.... An intriguing view of one of the central figures in the Coppola filmmaking dynasty. *Publishers Weekly* Coppola has an artist's eye for the world around her.... What emerges from these notes is a portrait of an extraordinary woman who, while traveling the world, renovating huge estates, making award-winning films, and rubbing elbows with celebrities, is also just a woman like any other, struggling to balance work and family, dealing with unexpected grief, and trying to achieve spiritual and creative fulfillment. It is Coppola's words alone, however, that make these reflections on life so thoughtful, imaginative, and completely absorbing --Various reviewers