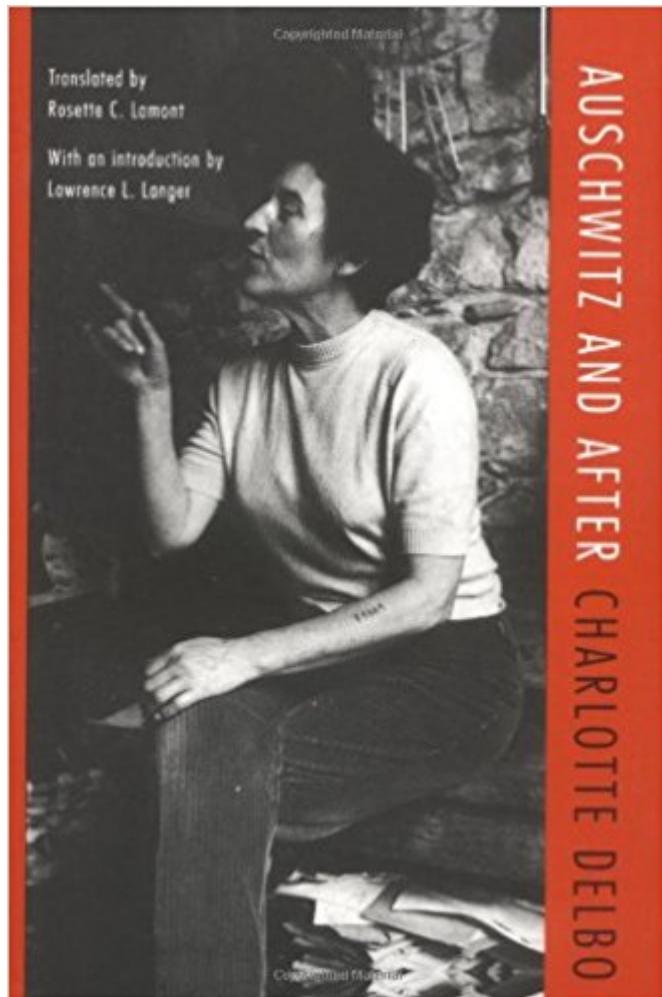


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Auschwitz And After



Synopsis

In March 1942, French police arrested Charlotte Delbo and her husband, the resistance leader Georges Dudach, as they were preparing to distribute anti-German leaflets in Paris. The French turned them over to the Gestapo, who imprisoned them. Dudach was executed by firing squad in May; Delbo remained in prison until January 1943, when she was deported to Auschwitz and then to Ravensbruck, where she remained until the end of the war. This book - Delbo's vignettes, poems and prose poems of life in the concentration camp and afterwards - is a literary memoir. It is a document by a female resistance leader, a non-Jew and a writer who transforms the experience of the Holocaust into prose. "Auschwitz and After" speaks of the moments of horror and of heroism Delbo never left behind, of the everyday deprivation and abuse experienced by all the people in the camps. Delbo describes the suffering of the doomed children. She also recounts the collections of survivors of her own work unit and their difficulties in returning to normal life after Auschwitz. The book conveys how a survivor must "carry the world" and continue to live after surviving the greatest tragedy of the 20th century. Translated from French and now available in English in its entirety, "Auschwitz and After" began as three separate books published in France by Editions de Minuit: "None of Us Will Return", "Useless Knowledge" and "The Measure of Days".

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One of the most moving books on the Holocaust ever written, and I've read my fair share. Between her stories, diary-like recounts, and poems, it's no wonder Saul Bellow said, "We have seen so many Holocaust documents that we cannot be blamed for saying, 'Oh, God! Not another!' This one,

however, I could not resist." Her varying style and attention to details skimmed over in other documents, this book is perfect for those who can't get any more depressed already, and wish to know more about the non-Jewish side of the Holocaust.

Horror in a literary masterwork!

The other two reviews are so insightful and accurate, in my opinion, I should have little to add. Yet, after reading "Auschwitz and After", I felt I had to express something of how the book made me understand and grow. As a convert to Judaism (born in 1951, I was on the pathway my whole life, I realize now), I have read many, many books/memoirs/histories on the Holocaust. Many of them have been very moving, indeed, beginning with Anne Frank's Diary, on through to "Maus". Though I acknowledge that these words have been said before, I still believe that Charlotte Delbo's words put me into that Hell more than any other survivor's testimony to date. Delbo's words do more than say "this happened and that happened". They are poetry...yet how can poetry apply to any experience in a death camp? Surprisingly, scarily, the poetry transports the reader there more truly than any film, any historical analysis, even better than any well-written survivor account. At first I thought I would not like it; my sensibilities were offended that someone would write in poetic format about an experience at a death camp ("Maus" was different; it was a cartoon, yes, but drawn by the son of a survivor, not a survivor). After finishing Delbo's trilogy, I feel that her words (not all in poetic form) made me understand as much as anyone who did not experience a death camp, how it felt, how one survived, what one endured when one "came back" to the "real world". Due to the passage of time, we are losing the remaining Holocaust survivors. Hence, Spielberg's and others' efforts to record the testimony before it is too late. There has been more attention lately paid to the children of the survivors' and how their parents' experiences affected their lives. Delbo's words transcend the words of one survivor - she really makes the reader understand what happened to those who "came back", how little they had to give, in some cases, to their spouses, to their children. American culture puts a lot of emphasis on "getting over, moving on". To some extent, I believe this is usually a healthy thing to try to do; but some experiences fall outside the realm of being able to "get over it". I would suggest that some experiences are so traumatic that one cannot "process" them and get over them. How is forgiveness possible when the entire world is affected as a result? Some experiences mark a person and maybe a culture permanently, and to deny or to try to repress this is unhealthy. At the end of their lives now, most published Holocaust testimonies report that the death camp experience "never leaves you" - something "survivors" probably didn't believe when they were first

liberated. The fact that the Holocaust survivors are becoming fewer and fewer makes Delbo's book all the more important because it conveys the true horror, the true evil of human degradation and genocide - and explains why the Holocaust, as well as other genocides have and will reverberate from generation to generation. Her book made me realize that understanding and vigilance, not "processing" and forgiveness is the answer.

I had to read this book for a class I had in college, and I absolutely loved it. Delbo really has a wonderful and unique way of depicting the horrors of the Holocaust. I HIGHLY recommend this book to anyone interested in the Holocaust, especially since she lived through the horrors of it all.

This is the single most impactful traumatic memoir I have read. Delbo is honest with her memory and with her reader.

This is a must read by a non-jewish French survivor of Auschwitz.

Awesome

An amazingly written poetic book about such a depressing subject. Well worth reading if this is an area of history you are interested in.

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