



Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive

By Giorgio Agamben

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In this book the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben looks closely at the literature of the survivors of Auschwitz, probing the philosophical and ethical questions raised by their testimony. "In its form, this book is a kind of perpetual commentary on testimony. It did not seem possible to proceed otherwise. At a certain point, it became clear that testimony contained at its core an essential lacuna; in other words, the survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to. As a consequence, commenting on survivors' testimony necessarily meant interrogating this lacuna or, more precisely, attempting to listen to it. Listening to something absent did not prove fruitless work for this author. Above all, it made it necessary to clear away almost all the doctrines that, since Auschwitz, have been advanced in the name of ethics."--Giorgio Agamben

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Editorial Review

Review

"Agamben's moving text on the Nazi death camps asks what happens to speech when the deracinated subject speaks. Although some say that Auschwitz makes witnessing impossible, Agamben shows how the one who speaks bears this impossibility within his own speech, bordering the human and the inhuman. Agamben probes for us the condition of speech at the limit of the human, evoking the horror and the near unspeakability of the inhuman as it witnesses in language its own undoing." Judith Butler, Maxine Elliot Professor of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature, University of California, Berkeley

About the Author

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner practices architecture in Houston.

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