

The Writing of the Disaster

By Maurice Blanchot

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The Writing of the Disaster By Maurice Blanchot

Modern history is haunted by the disasters of the century—world wars, concentration camps, Hiroshima, and the Holocaust—grief, anger, terror, and loss beyond words, but still close, still impending. How can we write or think about disaster when by its very nature it defies speech and compels silence, burns books and shatters meaning?

The Writing of the Disaster reflects upon efforts to abide in disaster's infinite threat. First published in French in 1980, it takes up the most serious tasks of writing: to describe, explain, and redeem when possible, and to admit what is not possible. Neither offers consolation.

Maurice Blanchot has been praised on both sides of the Atlantic for his fiction and criticism. The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas once remarked that Blanchot's writing is a "language of pure transcendence, without correlative." Literary theorist and critic Geoffrey Hartman remarked that Blanchot's influence on contemporary writers "cannot be overestimated."

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Ann Smock is a professor of French at the University of California at Berkeley. She has translated Blanchot's *The Space of Literature*, also available as a Bison Book. Jeffrey Mehlman, a professor of French at Boston University, is the author of many books and articles on twentieth-century France and French literature.

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