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## The Human Race

*Robert Antelme*

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#414419 in Books Robert Antelme 1998-12-09Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.20 x 6.00l, .97  
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**Robert Antelme : The Human Race** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Human Race:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Humanity is not enoughBy Buenoslibros.es"Weg! -get the hell out of the way! -he said to me in a rasping voice. I shrugged it off ... but I still existed, and I shrugged it off ... the insults of these people are no more able to reach us than they are able to get their hands on the nightmare we have become in their brains: for all their denying of us we are still there." (p. 51)These victimizers could live next to you, could walk

by you any given day on the streets, they are not German, they are human of any nationality, in this case Spanish: "Sometimes the SS man laughs and jokes with the doctor. And yet, before he was given the job, the SS used to beat him. But now he wears a white coat; he sleeps in a small heated room; he doesn't have to go to roll call; and he eats, and he's pink ... the Spanish doctor rapidly turned into a particularly good example of the kommando's aristocracy." It makes one ashamed to be Spanish, human. And there's no such thing as sin, they say. It's a hard read because of its sadness, hellish misery, absence of what well-intentioned people call humanity but is nothing but sin and evil. The author cries his soul out, pours his deepest self in words of sorrow, in pages that seek comprehension, but from whom? The author does not say. If it's from his readers no help can be given him now. This is the best account of the experiences of a man in a Nazi prison camp during the European Holocaust. Much better than the popular Primo Levi book. This is a deep, slow-paced, intellectual, thinking-man's guide to survival in Holocaust Europe. There are detailed descriptions of ways of feeling, of sentiments and relationships that are tacit, hard to describe, but which the author in his characteristic French style achieves perfectly. I strongly recommend to read this book, with a little patience. It takes its time to get into it fully, to grasp the implications and all the meaning of what's going on physically -but specially-psychologically. The book is not spiritual, because there's no spiritual faith. But if humanity is not enough to account for the gravity of the things told here, then who or what to appeal to? If we trust in man alone, and man does these things, then who are we to appeal to? It would be an useless exercise of intellect. 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Human Race By Deano This is a very interesting story about men in a German Concentration Camp, during WWII. The story in a large part describes what the prisoners thought about, as well as how they were treated. It allows the reader to get into the mind of a captive of Germany, and relive his experiences as he sees them. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A heavy but uplifting read By Leland Spencer I am very interested in this period of history, and this book adds to my knowledge. I am not an intellectual, and the author tends to spend a lot of time on the psychology of why all this is happening to him, and in my opinion over-analyzes it. Still a very uplifting story from a person who seems to show no bitterness. Leland Spencer

Arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Dachau, Robert Antelme recovered his freedom a year later when Francois Mitterrand, visiting the camp in an official capacity, recognized the dying Antelme and had him spirited to Paris. Antelme's story of his experiences in Germany--his only book--indelibly marked an entire generation, "a work written without hatred, a work of boundless compassion such as that is to be found only in the great Russians."

From Publishers Weekly A member of a French Resistance group headed by Francois Mitterrand, Robert Antelme was arrested by the Gestapo in June 1944, sent to Buchenwald, then to a work camp in Germany. First published in 1947 and now in its first English-language translation, this moving memoir is a testament to Holocaust survivors' furious desire to remain human, even as the Germans, through forced starvation, reduced them to near-skeletons, "nothing but plumbing for soup." Writing with lucidity, detachment and meticulous observation, Antelme (who died in 1990) describes the camp hierarchy whereby kapos, German common criminals serving on the lowest rung of the SS administrative ladder, tried to set political prisoners, convicts and conscientious objectors against one another. His transfer to Dachau and its liberation by the Allies brings to a close a harrowing journey through the human depths. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Published in France in 1947, here translated for the first time, Antelme's memoir of his year (1944-45) in a German labor camp was written to assuage his guilt at surviving and to deal with his depression. Stylistically, and in its attempt to turn the prison into a microcosm, it resembles e.e. cummings's *The Enormous Room*, the fictional representation of cummings's experience in a French prison camp. An anthropologist by training, Antelme (husband of Marguerite Duras) was arrested for participation in the Resistance and was sent first to Buchenwald, then to Gandersheim, where, among an international collection of political prisoners, he worked in a factory and slept on the straw-covered floor of a church. Condemned to death by work rather than in the crematoriums, the prisoners suffered a range of indignities, discomforts, and deprivations; beyond food, warmth, sleep, they lost human contact, such rituals as funerals and holidays, and even simple greetings that acknowledged their humanity. The camp functioned on a system of parasitism: like the ubiquitous lice tormenting the unwashed prisoners, the criminals in charge of the prisoners depended on their underlings' labor, and these overseers, in turn, answered to the SS. With little to affirm his humanity (looking in a mirror, a gift of bread), Antelme feared becoming "nothing but plumbing for soup, something that they fill with water and that pisses a lot." And much of the book involves just that: getting food, picking nits, and, his only freedom, disposing of bodily waste. An intense, unsparing, and brutal homage without anodyne, philosophical comfort, or affirmation. Antelme's homecoming, recounted by Duras in *The War*, provides a positive closure to the experience. -- Copyright 1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "[Antelme's] grave and moving plea, not for retribution but for understanding, is reinforced by his endurance . . . human dignity in a nutshell." --New York Times Book