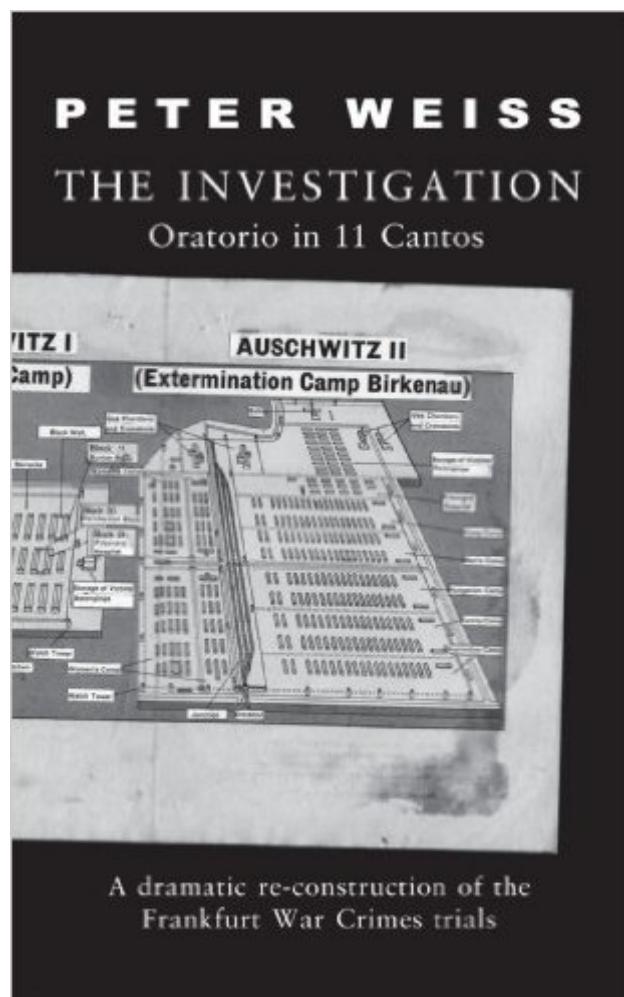


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# The Investigation



## Synopsis

The Investigation is a dramatic reconstruction of the Frankfurt War Crimes trials, based on the actual evidence given. This testimony, concerning Auschwitz and the atrocities which were enacted there, has been edited and extracted by Peter Weiss into a dramatic document that relies solely and completely on the facts for its effectiveness. There is no artistic license, no manipulation of facts and figures, no rearrangement of events for theatrical effect. Nameless witnesses stand and recall their appalling memories of Auschwitz, allowing us to bear witness to their painful and painstaking search for truth and, ultimately, justice. What emerges is a chastening and purging documentary of deeply moving power. Peter Weiss was born in 1916 and settled in Sweden before the outbreak of World War II. Apart from his writing, he was also well known as a painter, theatrical and operatic director, and a film maker. His magnificent play *Marat/Sade*, which is also available from Marion Boyars Publishers, established his reputation among English-speaking audiences as a revolutionary dramatist, and has continued to be a bestselling classic. He died in 1982.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd; First Printing, Underlining edition (July 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0714503010

ISBN-13: 978-0714503011

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.5 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #468,691 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European > German #334 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > German #4211 inÂ  Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays

## Customer Reviews

I've wanted to direct Peter Weiss's *The Investigation* since I first read it in translation in the mid-sixties. Weiss is better known for his brilliant *Marat/Sade*, a reinterpretation of the assassination of Jean-Paul Marat by Charlotte Corday as staged by the marquis de Sade with the inmates of the mental asylum at Charenton. It's an awesome play. But *The Investigation* in its own way is as revolutionary as *Marat/Sade*. More germane to my concerns, it's fairly easily adaptable to Readers'

Theater. The play is presented as a series of eleven "Songs." (They aren't sung songs, but rather prose -talked--songs. It's Brecht-Talk to call them "Songs".) Each song/scene details some aspect of the atrocities committed upon the prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. Most, perhaps all, of the text of the play is taken verbatim from the transcripts of the Nuremberg Trials (November 20, 1945, to October 1, 1946), which tried German war criminals. If the parts in the play were not double-cast, it would require twenty-eight actors (two of them women). The play is also too long: it would have to be shortened. The dialogue is chilling, made even the more so by being presented in so low a key. There's almost no action: witnesses ascend and leave the witness stand, the prosecuting attorney and the defense counsel wrangle before the judge. Some functionaries who collaborated in maintaining the camp system are called as witnesses. All of them deny knowledge of what took place, even of what they could read in account books or see from the windows of their workrooms. The accused are monsters, whether on the stand testifying or simply acting the boor in their seats.

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