

Letters to Olga: June 1979-September 1982

By Vaclav Havel, Paul Wilson



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Czech absurdist playwright Havel defines God as a horizon that gives everything meaning, the possible perimeter of his life. He holds that death permeates our consciousness as destiny. These daring observations were penned during the three years he spent in a Czech prison, from 1979 to 1982, for dissident activity. Allowed to write one letter per week to his wife, Havel eluded the prison censor by resorting to circumlocutions and revealing little about the harsh treatment he endured. Most of his correspondence is tedious reading. Yet, embedded in the muddled philosophizing are eloquent, startling comments about the individual as an anonymous molecule in society, the dynamics of fanaticism, faith, freedom, the chessboard of power politics, the social nature of theater. Havel's unbroken spirit resonates throughout this smoothly translated journey into hell.

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From Library Journal

During his three-year imprisonment for human rights activities, Czech dissident and leading playwright Havel was allowed to write nothing but one letter a week to his wife. In these 144 letters that made it through the prison censor, Havel meditates on theatre, religion, and philosophy; his personal world-view; the meaning of his actions; and the issues of human identity and personal responsibility in modern society. The letters, excellently translated, are a unique and moving document of the struggle by a man of formidable moral strength to preserve his dignity and identity in the most difficult conditions. Highly recommended for academic and larger public libraries. Marie Bednar, Pennsylvania State Univ. Libs., University Park Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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Ingrid Baumbach:

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Karen Lambert:

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