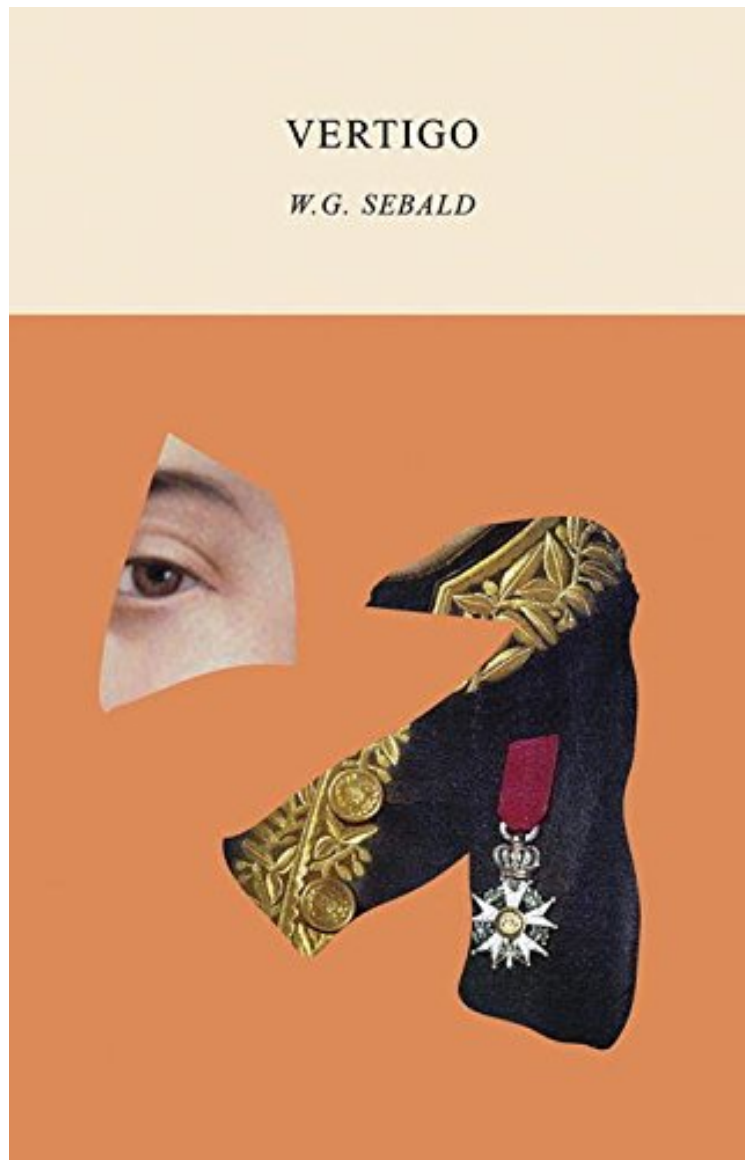


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Vertigo

W. G. Sebald

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#303237 in Books W G Sebald 2016-11-08 2016-11-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.40l, .0 #File Name: 0811226166272 pagesVertigo | File size: 43.Mb

W. G. Sebald : Vertigo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vertigo:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. odd but intriguingBy K.N.R.A very odd little book that winds around the theme of memory and vertiginous feelings. The main character is un-named and tells the story of various persons and two sections are about the narrator's journeys through Italy and Germany. I think the idea of it is to

describe the unreliability of memory and the similarities of time. The book was not difficult to read, yet it remained a bit vague as to actual meaning or plot. Although the ending section is rather enjoyable, full of interesting details about his old hometown, the rest of the book is rather distant but equally intriguing. If you are in a mood to read, apparently, the next two books, then I would certainly peruse this one.² of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Meandering, strange, and disassociative. Vertigo is a ...By Micah Martin
Meandering, strange, and disassociative. Vertigo is a book about travel, the impossibility of travel, the meaning and meaningless of Place and Time, and the memorial mechanics of living in physical places. Prose carries it.³ of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Existential Masterpiece
By Eebers
The review by Gary Jakaitis captures well the structure and method of Sebald's first masterpiece. As for Sebald's intention, as conveyed to this reader, it is to observe -in great detail, real or imagined - how we mortals function in the face of the eternal. In this landscape, our fears are but fragments of a shattered glass, surrounding and reminding us of the inevitable. How does one fight such an overwhelming foe? Sebald finds that he can suspend time, and thus help it endure, by recording in memory and by creating in imagination a deep intuition of being, one in which fact, fantasy, and dreams deserve equal respect, indeed where they need not be differentiated. The resulting narrative celebrates with wonder that people do anything at all, that we are not immobilized by a vertigo resulting from our ever-present knowledge of what awaits. In this theatre, Sebald provides us a brief respite, one in which he grants us the "touching, in a moment of distraction, the knee of the man who was to have been our salvation".

A masterwork of W. G. Sebald, now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund
Perfectly titled, Vertigo W.G. Sebald's marvelous first novel is a work that teeters on the edge: compelling, puzzling, and deeply unsettling. An unnamed narrator, beset by nervous ailments, journeys across Europe to Vienna, Venice, Verona, Riva, and finally to his childhood home in a small Bavarian village. He is also journeying into the past. Traveling in the footsteps of Stendhal, Casanova, and Kafka, the narrator draws the reader, line by line, into a dizzying web of history, biography, legends, literature, and most perilously memories.

.com It is not often that books receive the universal critical acclaim with which W.G. Sebald's work in English translation has been met. Both *The Emigrants* and *The Rings of Saturn* won the sort of plaudits that would enable most writers to die happy. Sebald first employed his limpid, literally entrancing style in *Vertigo*, which appeared in German in 1990 and then waited a decade for its English-language debut. Like *The Emigrants*, this earlier novel interweaves four different narratives, which cumulatively sound a single, transcendent note--in this case, that of memory. Sebald begins with Marie Henri Beyle (better known as Stendhal), cruising through the French author's painful and unreliable recollections of his military career. Then he splices in his own voyage through Italy, allowing these historical and personal perspectives to intersect when we least expect them to. As the book develops, it returns to the same locations: Milan, Verona, Venice, and the Alps. And in the course of this fractured meandering, the reader cohabits with a haunted Franz Kafka, admires the serene beauty of the stars above Lake Garda, and ultimately returns to Sebald's home in Bavaria, where the author confronts his childhood memories. For Sebald, a straight line is never the shortest distance between two points: he more often travels in concentric circles, or cuts wild capers from past to present. Yet the stumbling journey in *Vertigo* seeks to replicate the distorted and unfathomable workings of memory itself. And it succeeds to an astonishing extent, so that the acts of traveling, recalling, and writing are impossible to tell apart: On this occasion in the midst of the holiday season, the night train from Vienna to Venice, on which in the late October of 1980 I had seen nobody except a pale-faced schoolmistress from New Zealand, was so overcrowded that I had to stand in the corridor all the way or crouch uncomfortably among suitcases and rucksacks, so that instead of drifting into sleep I slid into my memories. Or rather, the memories (at least so it seemed to me) rose higher and higher in some space outside of myself, until, having reached a certain level, they overflowed from that space into me, like water over the top of a weir. Thus is the writer inundated. And so, happily, are his readers--those lucky enough to take the plunge. --Toby Green
From Publishers Weekly
Sebald's third novel to be translated into English is in fact the German author's first novel, written before the acclaimed travel meditation, *The Rings of Saturn*, and *The Emigrants*. This exquisitely composed work also undertakes a disorienting, if less somber, journey through historical and personal memory. The first-person narrator travels through Europe during the 1980s, spurred on by history's ghosts and his own melancholic yearning for adventure. Having left his base in England to explore Vienna, Venice and Verona, he concludes with a bittersweet pilgrimage to his hometown in southwestern Germany. In four nonlinear chapters, the narrator sustains himself along his journey by establishing parallels with places and personages throughout history--e.g., the romantic novelist Stendhal, who led a peripatetic life as a Napoleonic soldier ("Beyle, or Love Is a Madness Most Discreet"), and the ailing and sexually repressed Franz Kafka, who made mournful trips to Italy ("Dr. K Takes the Waters at Riva"). Black-and-white illustrations (a detail from a Pisanello fresco, a postcard of the smoking peak of Vesuvius) provide the ironic relief. "What relation was there," the narrator asks himself in a typical moment of self-befuddlement, "between the so-called monuments of the past" and our own "vague longing" to try to connect to the future? Sebald writes elliptically, refusing to explain the intersection of seemingly irrelevant events: the narrator is fond of combing old newspapers for bits "that might well be worth retelling some time," but he is unable to resolve the

purpose of his aimless quest, and allows his serenely seductive prose to lead where it will. In the last chapter, "Il ritorno in patria" (readers had better know some Italian and German, because phrases are not translated), Sebald attains a particularly fluid synthesis of intellect and sensation as the writer revisits the stunning scenery and complicated memories of his youth. In the Alpine village of W., where he has not returned for three decades, he realizes that places "which had meant so much to me in my memory... meant nothing to me now." Back in London, he has a vision of the "vertiginous depths" of the past, and hears "an echo that had almost faded away." Again translator Hulse successfully conveys Sebald's shimmering prose. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Few writers have traveled as quickly from obscurity to the sort of renown that yields an adjective as quickly as German writer W. G. Sebald (1944 - 2001), and now Sebaldian is as evocative as Kafkaesque. Sebald is that rare being: an inimitable stylist who creates extraordinary sentences that, like crystals, simultaneously refract and magnify meaning. - Booklist In Sebald's writing, everything is connected, everything webbed together by the unseen threads of history, or chance, or fate, or death... beautiful and unsettling, elevated into an art of the uncanny - an art that was, in the end, Sebald's strange and inscrutable gift. - Slate One emerges from it shaken, seduced, and deeply impressed. - Anita Brookner, Spectator Tragic, stunningly beautiful, strange and haunting. The secret of Sebald's appeal is that he saw himself in what now seems almost an old-fashioned way as a voice of conscience, someone who remembers injustice, who speaks for those who can no longer speak. - The New York Times Few writers make one more aware of the seductive powers of language. - Tim Parks, The New York Times Think of W.G. Sebald as memory's Einstein. - Richard Eder, The New York Times Sebald stands with Primo Levi as the prime speaker of the Holocaust and, with him, the prime contradiction of Adorno's dictum that after it, there can be no art. - Richard Eder, The New York Times Book Sebald has done what every writer dreams of doing. - Roberta Silman, The New York Times Book Sebald is a thrilling, original writer. He makes narration a state of investigative bliss. His narrative doesn't just tell stories; it offers itself as a model of consciousness, demonstrating that to be fully aware of oneself in time is to suffer incurable vertigo. In his droll way, Sebald possesses the world-covering ambition of a magus: he wants a book to be like his old childhood atlas, made to hold... all conceivable mysteries. - W. S. Di Piero, The New York Times Book The books are fascinating for the way they inhabit their own self-determined genre, but that's not ultimately why they are essential reading. There is a moral magnitude and a weary, melancholy wisdom in Sebald's writing that transcends the literary and attains something like an oracular register. Reading him feels like being spoken to in a dream. He does away with the normal proceedings of narrative fiction - plot, characterization, events leading to other events - so that what we get is the unmediated expression of a pure and seemingly disembodied voice. That voice is an extraordinary presence in contemporary literature, and it may be another decade before the magnitude - and the precise nature - of utterances are fully realized. - The New Yorker Is literary greatness still possible? What would a noble literary enterprise look like now? One of the few answers available to English-language readers is the work of W.G. Sebald. - Susan Sontag, The Times Literary Supplement For all its dark contents and burden of undeclared grief, Vertigo is dizzily light and transparent. - Benjamin Kunkel, The Village Voice A haunting masterpiece from W.G. Sebald. - The Washington Post An intensely personal work, showing us Sebald's genesis as a writer, and it is constantly stimulating. - Sebastian Shakespeare, TLS One of contemporary literature's most transformative figures: utterly unique. - New Yorker