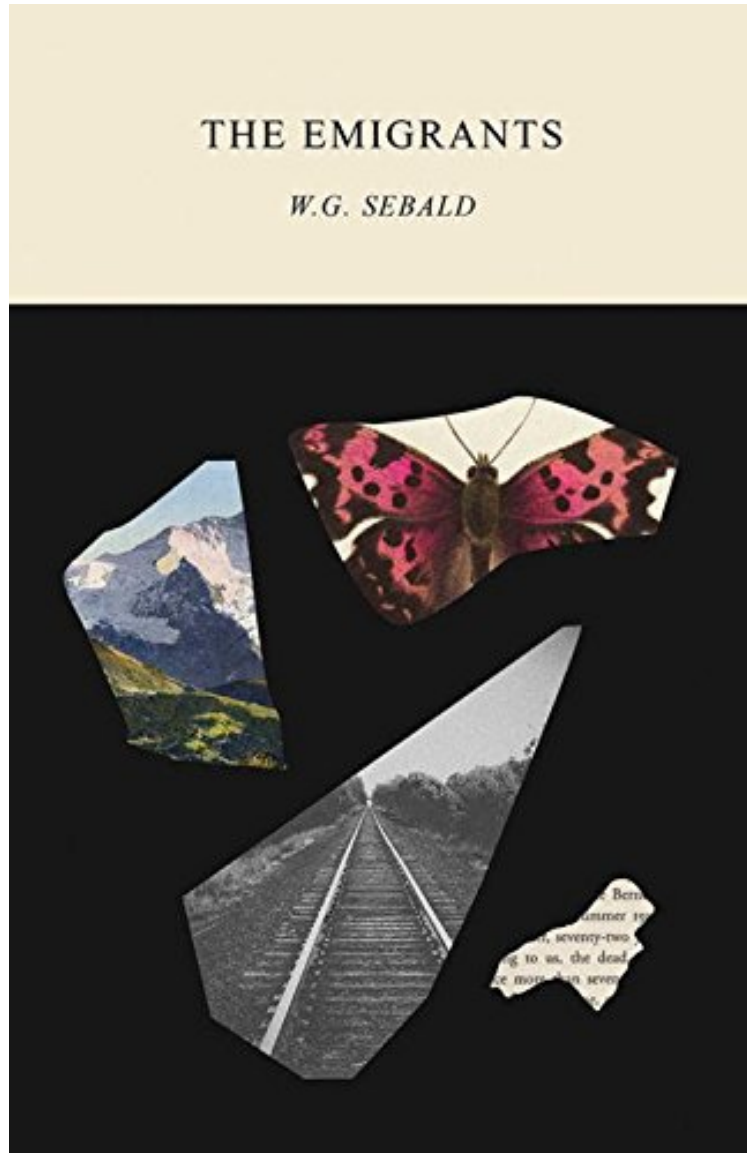


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## The Emigrants (New Directions Paperbook)

*W. G. Sebald*

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#99036 in Books Sebald W G 2016-11-08 2016-11-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.40l, .0 #File Name: 081122614X240 pagesThe Emigrants | File size: 68.Mb

**W. G. Sebald : The Emigrants (New Directions Paperbook)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Emigrants (New Directions Paperbook):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Quiet MasterpieceBy Anne MillsFirst off, I strongly recommend you read Douglas Harper's review of this book -- it conveys the sense and spirit of Sebald work far better than I could do. Second, when you do read Sebald, prepare to journey through layer after layer of memory, history, identity, and to end with nothing concrete, but something profoundly evocative. Sebald recounts the stories of four men, all of whom

emigrated from Germany at different points in the twentieth century, and all of whom had a marginal connection with the unnamed narrator who frames the stories. Each is at least partly Jewish, and each has been profoundly affected by the Holocaust. Still, the great catastrophe is never front and center, it is always alluded to in passing, and in terms very specific to each of Sebald's protagonists -- how a life was changed, a past destroyed. This book at first seems an easier read than "Austerlitz", but Sebald's focus of piling memory on memory creates at least as strong an effect as in that book. In "The Emigrant", one person's story opens out into another's, until all the complexity of a past descends. It is not a cheerful book -- the protagonists die, either by their own hands or in distressing circumstances -- but it is a very beautiful and powerful one. The description of Manchester, for example, vividly recalled to me the experience of being a foreigner in 1960's Britain, and the section on Istanbul is perhaps the loveliest evocation of that city that I have ever read. "The Emigrants" is about identity, and memory, and about the great mystery of the 20th century -- how could so many people have gone mad enough to allow the Holocaust? Sebald does not arrive at an answer, but he tells us a great deal about the question.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Entrophy, Love and Loss  
By JAMES A. WEST  
This is the second Sebald work I have read. So I obviously find the author's themes and style interesting. We Americans are for the most part immigrants. We descend from emigrants who left their homelands. The work is suffused with the story of a few emigrants and their history in the context of the larger history around them. It is a page turner and I read the book in two sittings. Sebald weaves history, places, people, problems in an inimitable style that is both sad, thought provoking and rich in imagery and allusion. Highly recommended if you are not into thrillers or romance.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unusually beautiful writing  
By Maggie  
I don't have the right words to describe the book. I enjoyed it from end to end. You can read better reviews at , and the NY Times review is on target. W. G. Sebald's use of language is something special. He writes with long sentences and wonderful prose. To me, it was a pleasure just reading the words formed into descriptions, ideas, and dialog. Most interesting to me was the lack of quotation marks when someone was speaking, but it was completely clear who was speaking. He never had to say in words that he was telling the reader about Jews in exile; he did it in ways that you just knew. I loved the book! I love reading historical novels especially relating to WWII, but this wasn't so much of the physical destruction of war but of the psychological implications and how it uprooted people in body and soul.

A masterwork of W. G. Sebald, now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund The four long narratives in *The Emigrants* appear at first to be the straightforward biographies of four Germans in exile. Sebald reconstructs the lives of a painter, a doctor, an elementary-school teacher, and Great Uncle Ambrose. Following (literally) in their footsteps, the narrator retraces routes of exile which lead from Lithuania to London, from Munich to Manchester, from the South German provinces to Switzerland, France, New York, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Along with memories, documents, and diaries of the Holocaust, he collects photographs the enigmatic snapshots which stud *The Emigrants* and bring to mind family photo albums. Sebald combines precise documentary with fictional motifs, and as he puts the question to realism, the four stories merge into one unfathomable requiem.

.com A meditation on memory and loss. Sebald re-creates the lives of four exiles--five if you include his oblique self-portrait--through their own accounts, others' recollections, and pictures and found objects. But he brings these men before our eyes only to make them fade away, "longing for extinction." Two were eventual suicides, another died in an asylum, the fourth still lived under a "poisonous canopy" more than 40 years after his parents' death in Nazi Germany. Sebald's own longing is for communion. En route to Ithaca (the real upstate New York location but also the symbolic one), he comes to feel "like a travelling companion of my neighbor in the next lane." After the car speeds away--"the children pulling clownish faces out of the rear window--I felt deserted and desolate for a time." Sebald's narrative is purposely moth-holed (butterfly-ridden, actually--there's a recurring Nabokov-with-a-net type), an escape from the prison-house of realism. According to the author, his Uncle Ambros's increasingly improbable tales were the result of "an illness which causes lost memories to be replaced by fantastic inventions." Luckily for us, Sebald seems to have inherited the same syndrome. --Kerry Fried  
From Publishers Weekly  
Composed of four compelling portraits of Jewish emigres whose lives have been scarred by exile, dislocation and persecution, this unusual work of fiction is pervaded by a sensibility and a degree of circumstantial detail so authentic that it could pass for historical documentation. That Sebald has invested his fictional creations with both dignity and pathos is a mark of his achievement here. A narrator provides perspective on the lives he relates. Retired surgeon Henry Selwyn was born Hersch Seweryn and changed his name after arrival in England; his disclosure of his true origins to his Swiss wife causes an irreparable rift in their marriage and an essential loss of identity in the now aimless man. Paul Bereyter, fired from his post as schoolteacher in Germany because he is one-quarter Jewish, serves six years in the Germany army and is haunted by the bestial violence he witnesses. Ambros Adelwarth escapes Germany, finally settling in the U.S. Concealing his traumas from family members, he commits himself to a sanitarium at age 67 and undergoes electroshock therapy, longing for extinction. German-born artist Max Ferber, a recluse in Manchester, England, suffers claustrophobia stemming from the deportation and murder of his parents by Nazis. Though none of the protagonists is thrown into a concentration camp, they are all haunted by the effects of the Holocaust. Two of them eventually commit suicide, all suffer shame

and guilt, claustrophobia and depression. Photographs interwoven with the restrained text add to the cumulative effect, which is that of an eerie memento. Long after the Nazis have fallen, these exiled individuals endure existential agony and emotional breakdowns. German novelist and literary scholar Sebald, who has lived in England since 1970, won the Berlin Literature Prize for this remarkable work. Copyright 1996 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

The Emigrants is that terrifyingly rare and wonderful thing: a unique masterpiece... - Thomas McGonigle, Chicago Tribune

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

Sublime. - Cynthia Ozick, The New Republic

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

Most writers, even good ones, write of what can be written. The very greatest write of what cannot be written. I think of Akhmatova and Primo Levi, for example, and of W.G. Sebald. - The New York Times

A masterpiece. - Richard Eder, The New York Times

A writer of almost unclassifiable originality, but whose voice we recognize as indispensable and central to our time. - The New York Times

Book A writer whose work belongs on the high shelf alongside that of Kafka, Borges, and Proust. - The New York Times

Book 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 is a rare and elusive species, but still, he is an easy read, just as Kafka is. He is an addiction, and once buttonholed by his books, you have neither the wish nor the will to tear yourself away. - Anthony Lane, The New Yorker

W. G. Sebald's [early death is] much lamented by admirers of his too few books, chiefly The Emigrants, The Rings of Saturn, Vertigo, and Austerlitz. Readers of these four essay-fictions know that Sebald exemplified the best kind of cosmopolitan literary intelligence - humane, digressive, deeply erudite, unassuming and tinged with melancholy. The last quality is particularly important, for if one had to characterize Sebald's ethos - the mood he generates on the page, the themes that haunt him - one could hardly do better than borrow the title of the famous essay by Freud: 'Mourning and Melancholy.' - The Washington Post

If you are completely new to Sebald, you should probably start with his early masterpiece, The Emigrants. - Michael Dirda, The Washington Post

The first thing to be said about W. G. Sebald's books is that they always had a posthumous quality to them. He wrote - as was often remarked - like a ghost. He was one of the most innovative writers of the late twentieth century, and yet part of this originality derived from the way his prose felt exhumed from the nineteenth. - Geoff Dyer

One of the most mysteriously sublime of contemporary writers. - James Wood

An astonishing masterpiece perfect while being unlike any book one has ever read. - Susan Sontag

W.G. Sebald has written an astonishing masterpiece: it seems perfect while being unlike any book one has ever read. Bewitching in its subtlety, sublime in its directness and in the grandeur of its subject. The Emigrants is an irresistible book. - Susan Sontag

Sebald is a rare and elusive species... But still he is an easy read, just as Kafka is... He is an addiction, and, once button-holed by his books, you have neither the wish nor the will to tear yourself away. - Anthony Lane, New Yorker