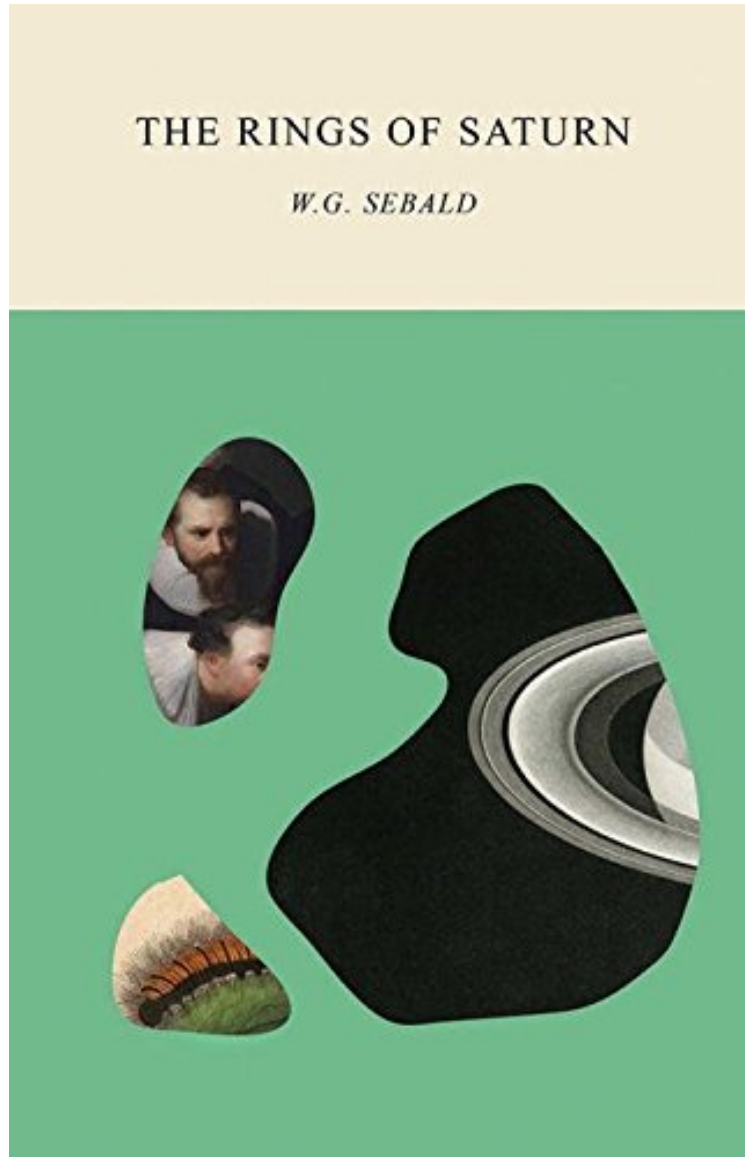


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## The Rings of Saturn

*W. G. Sebald*

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#26654 in Books W G Sebald 2016-11-08 2016-11-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .90 x 5.40l, .0 #File Name: 0811226158304 pagesThe Rings of Saturn | File size: 56.Mb

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

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very movingBy R. WHITBYVery moving.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beyond others' words to describe!By Lloyd KlinedinstBeyond others' words to describe! Read it yourself to see why!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Quirky and compellingBy JKJI love Sebald's books, and and "Austerlitz" are my favorites of favorites. His work is, to say the least, quirky, with blurry

photos, mournful moodiness, and sometimes an odd juxtaposition of fact with fiction. But for some reason, which I've never tried to put into work, and probably will never try to, they are compellingly readable. If only he had lived to write 10 or 20 more . . . . He was an original. My only regret is that I can't read them in the original German.

"The book is like a dream you want to last forever" (Roberta Silman, *The New York Times Book Review*), now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund  
A masterwork of W. G. Sebald, now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund  
*The Rings of Saturn* with its curious archive of photographs records a walking tour of the eastern coast of England. A few of the things which cross the path and mind of its narrator (who both is and is not Sebald) are lonely eccentrics, Sir Thomas Browne's skull, a matchstick model of the Temple of Jerusalem, recession-hit seaside towns, wooded hills, Joseph Conrad, Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson," the natural history of the herring, the massive bombings of WWII, the dowager Empress Tzu Hsi, and the silk industry in Norwich. W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* (New Directions, 1996) was hailed by Susan Sontag as an "astonishing masterpiece perfect while being unlike any book one has ever read." It was "one of the great books of the last few years," noted Michael Ondaatje, who now acclaims *The Rings of Saturn* "an even more inventive work than its predecessor, *The Emigrants*."

.com In August 1992, W.G. Sebald set off on a walking tour of Suffolk, one of England's least populated and most striking counties. A long project--presumably *The Emigrants*, his great anatomy of exile, loss, and identity--had left him spent. Initially his tour was a carefree one. Soon, however, Sebald was to happen upon "traces of destruction, reaching far back into the past," in a series of encounters so intense that a year later he found himself in a state of collapse in a Norwich hospital. *The Rings of Saturn* is his record of these travels, a phantasmagoria of fragments and memories, fraught with dizzying knowledge and desperation and shadowed by mortality. As in *The Emigrants*, past and present intermingle: the living come to seem like supernatural apparitions while the dead are vividly present. Exemplary sufferers such as Joseph Conrad and Roger Casement people the author's solitude along with various eccentrics and even an occasional friend. Indeed, one of the most moving chapters concerns his fellow German exile--the writer Michael Hamburger. "How is it that one perceives oneself in another human being, or, if not oneself, then one's own precursor?" Sebald asks. "The fact that I first passed through British customs thirty-three years after Michael, that I am now thinking of giving up teaching as he did, that I am bent over my writing in Norfolk and he in Suffolk, that we both are distrustful of our work and both suffer from an allergy to alcohol--none of these things are particularly strange. But why it was that on my first visit to Michael's house I instantly felt as if I lived or had once lived there, in every respect precisely as he does, I cannot explain. All I know is that I stood spellbound in his high-ceilinged studio room with its north-facing windows in front of the heavy mahogany bureau at which Michael said he no longer worked because the room was so cold, even in midsummer..." Sebald seems most struck by those who lived or live quietly in adversity, "the shadow of annihilation" always hanging over them. The appropriately surnamed George Wyndham Le Strange, for example, remained on his vast property in increasing isolation, his life turning into a series of colorful anecdotes. He was "reputed to have been surrounded, in later years, by all manner of feathered creatures: by guinea fowl, pheasants, pigeons and quail, and various kinds of garden and song birds, strutting about him on the floor or flying around in the air. Some said that one summer Le Strange dug a cave in his garden and sat in it day and night like St. Jerome in the desert." In Sebald's eyes, even the everyday comes to seem extraterrestrial--a vision intensified in Michael Hulse's beautiful rendition. His complex, allusive sentences are encased in several-pages-long paragraphs--style and subject making for painful, exquisite reading. Though most often hypersensitive to human (and animal) suffering and making few concessions to obligatory cheeriness, Sebald is not without humor. At one point, paralyzed by the presence of the past, he admits: "I bought a carton of chips at McDonald's, where I felt like a criminal wanted worldwide as I stood at the brightly lit counter, and ate them as I walked back to my hotel." *The Rings of Saturn* is a challenging nocturne, and the second of Sebald's four books to appear in English. The excellent news is that his novel *Vertigo* is already slated for translation. --Kerry Fried  
From Publishers Weekly  
As he did so brilliantly in *The Emigrants*, German author Sebald once again blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction in this meditative work. Sebald's unnamed, traveling narrator is making his way through the county of Suffolk, England, and from there back in time. We learn that he has recently been hospitalized, an event that "marked the beginning of a fissure that has since riven my life." Sunk in his own thoughts, he becomes obsessed with the ubiquitous evidence of disintegration he views in the landscape and history of the small coastal towns, from the moribund herring industry to the lost art of silk production. He spirals deeper into his own considerably learned historical memory to explore, for example, slavery, the Chinese opium wars, Joseph Conrad's life on the high seas and Chateaubriand's memories of estranged love. It comes as no surprise that the "parlous loftiness" of the 17th-century metaphysician Thomas Browne holds particular fascination for our narrator who, like Browne, writes "out of the fullness of his erudition," pursuing his train of thought in sentences "that resemble processions or a funeral cortege in their sheer ceremonial lavishness." Numerous photographs that illustrate the people, places and objects discussed in the text add to the curious beauty of this brooding, elegiac novel. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Kirkus s  
Like his much praised novel

The Emigrants (1996), this new work by Sebald is steeped in melancholy. Its also highly idiosyncratic, beginning as the record of a fictional walking tour along the coast of Suffolk in southeast England before turning into a broad, rich meditation on Britains past and the power of history. Observations en route link with psychological and historical elements to form a kind of dreamscape, the boundaries of which become increasingly hard to define, though the 17th-century naturalist and physician Thomas Browne acts as fixed point of reference. The walk starts at the remains of the fairy-tale palace known as Somerleyton Hall, once a Victorian railway king's monument to extravagance. On the nearby coastline are other ruins, from the recently foundered town of Lowestoft (where Joseph Conrad first made landfall in England), a wreck after the Thatcherite bubble burst, to the more spectacular ghost of the once-mighty port of Dunwich, which over several centuries toppled inexorably into the North Sea. Each of the sites prompts stories of Britains past. A railway bridge, for instance, leads to the story of the odd train that once ran over it and of the trains unlikely connection with the Emperor of China and the silk trade. Turning inland, the trail leads to writer Michael Hamburger (a number of writers, most long dead, figure in the journey), whose story of flight from the Nazis in 1933 resonates with the narrator's own more recent history, and on to a disorienting sandstorm among the remains of a forest uprooted by the freak hurricane of 1987 before turning back to the history of Britains colonial involvement in the silk trade, which binds many threads of this trek together. Erudition of this sort is too rare in American fiction, but the hypnotic appeal here has as much to do with Sebalds deft portrait of the subtle, complex relations between individual experience and the rich human firmament that gives it meaning as it does with his remarkable mastery of history. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.