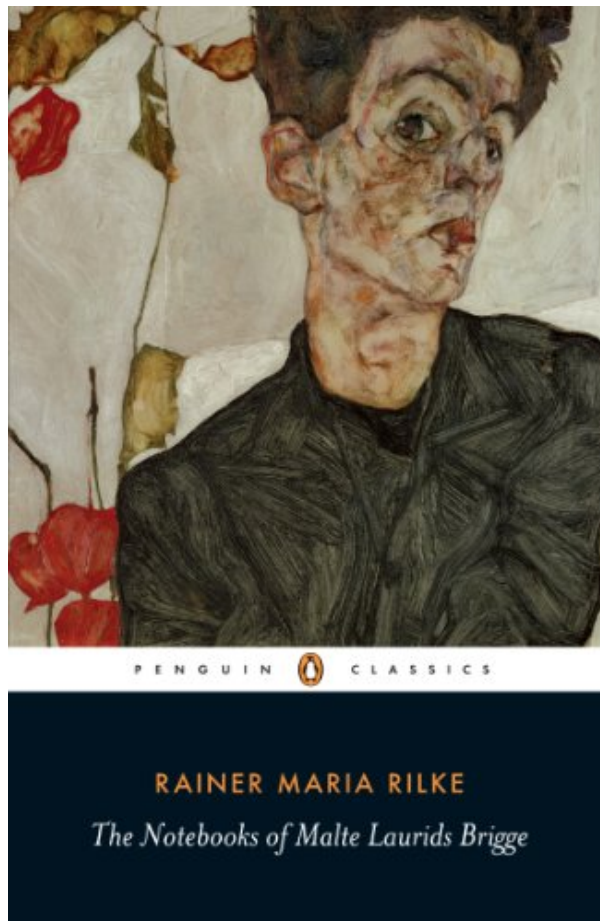


**THE NOTEBOOKS OF MALTE LAURIDS
BRIGGE (PENGUIN CLASSICS) BY RAINER
MARIA RILKE**



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The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge

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Review

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Language Notes

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From the Inside Flap

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THE NOTEBOOKS OF MALTE LAURIDS BRIGGE (PENGUIN CLASSICS) BY RAINER MARIA RILKE PDF

A masterly new translation of one of the first great modernist novels

In the only novel by one of the German language's greatest poets, a young man named Malte Laurids Brigge lives in a cheap room in Paris while his belongings rot in storage. Every person he sees seems to carry their death with them, and with little but a library card to distinguish him from the city's untouchables, he thinks of the deaths, and ghosts, of his aristocratic family, of which he is the sole living descendant. Suffused with passages of lyrical brilliance, Rilke's semi-autobiographical novel is a moving and powerful coming-of-age story.

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- Brand: Rilke, Rainer Maria/ Hulse, Michael (TRN)
- Published on: 2009-08-25
- Released on: 2009-08-25
- Original language: German
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.76" h x .48" w x 5.02" l, .31 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 208 pages

Review

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An intellectual goldmine...

By Zachary Hale

This proto-existentialist novel features a main character (Malte) that is frightened by the possibility of facelessness; that is, he is terrified by the collapse of a coherent subject/identity in modernity. This work is highly critical of the traditional narrative where everything occurs in a logical and temporal order that is coherent and teleological. Through the character of Malte, Rilke illustrates the decay of such an understanding of one's self and the chaos that results.

Rilke read a lot of Nietzsche prior to writing this book, and many of the same themes Nietzsche contemplated in *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* are reworked by Rilke in this novel. It is my interpretation that Rilke was trying to work out a theory of modern, fragmented, existential subjectivity and then offer some way to make such a life livable. Rilke explores such themes as memory's transience, unpredictability, and instability, the role of a God in a world after the "death of God", and a dissolving of the conceptual categories between the self and the other, or the inside and the outside, all play into this fascinating book.

The book is written in notebook form, which plays into the notion of fragmentary identity and problematic narrative. Entries jump from the past to the present to imagined futures in an often random and chaotic order. There is no "plot" to speak of, although there are bits and pieces of narratives, but nothing sufficient enough to create a comprehensible 'Malte'. All the while, you are in the mind of a character that is trying and failing to make sense of it all (to 'impose' a narrative).

The later Martin Heidegger always lauded Rilke (despite Rilke's being too metaphysical) for being able to express ways of interacting with the world that were non-humanist. He was especially interested, and wrote significantly about, a passage (p. 46 in the Vintage paperback edition) where Malte imagines a house and its inhabitants from a single mutilated wall that is left remaining. I'm not too sure what his relation to the text as a whole was, so I'll leave it at that.

This book is an intellectual paradise and is rich in treasures as long as you are willing to look for them.

37 of 38 people found the following review helpful.

The Failing Light of Inspiration

By Doug Anderson

If you read this at the right time of life no other book will ever be more important to you. I read it when I was 19 and for me that was the right age. Rilke's *Notebooks* contain what amounts to the crisis of modern existence. For Rilke the solution was writing some of the best poetry ever written. If you want proof read it. For Malte it was not so clear yet and his struggles will be very familiar to any student of the arts. As a time

piece this also has much value. It records the change over from the old Europe to the new. For Malte, as it was for many of Mann's, Musil's, Broch's... characters, this proves devastating. Identity threatening. The second half of this book is not as good as the first half but I'll take that first half and disregard the rest. Read this while reading Rilke's greatest contribution to our world, his poetry.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Rilke was just like me.

By Lambert's dentist

Classic fiction from a poet that lived the life.

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