



Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day: A Reader's Guide (Continuum Contemporaries)

By Adam Parkes

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Continuum Contemporaries will be a wonderful source of ideas and inspiration for members of book clubs and readings groups, as well as for literature students. The aim of the series is to give readers accessible and informative introductions to 30 of the most popular, most acclaimed, and most influential novels of recent years. A team of contemporary fiction scholars from both sides of the Atlantic has been assembled to provide a thorough and readable analysis of each of the novels in question. The books in the series will all follow the same structure: a biography of the novelist, including other works, influences, and, in some cases, an interview; a full-length study of the novel, drawing out the most important themes and ideas; a summary of how the novel was received upon publication; a summary of how the novel has performed since publication, including film or TV adaptations, literary prizes, etc.; a wide range of suggestions for further reading, including websites and discussion forums; and a list of questions for reading groups to discuss.

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Editorial Review

Review

The following notice appeared in Time Out (London) on January 30, 2001:

Study Aids Get Chic

Concerned about keeping up at the book club? Stuck for something to say when dinner party talk turns to Zadie Smith? Or no time to read Captain Corelli's Mandolin before the movie comes out? Never fear, cool new study aids are here in the form of Continuum Contemporaries – The Novel Approach, a series of handy readers' guides to contemporary fiction. Launching in September, with further waves in January and May 2002, they're much slicker than the frumpy cheat-aids of yore, including everything from website links to review buzz, and deliberately featuring new novels such as Bridget Jones's Diary, The Shipping News, Trainspotting, and even the Harry Potter books.

"A brilliant idea—short, perceptive books which tell you what you need to know about some of the most vibrant and challenging writing around today—a bit like having a reading group in your pocket."—Ian Rankin

"The series comes as near to squaring various circles - popular / academic, 'good read' / 'classic Lit', novel / film of the book as any I know. And at best it goes a fair way towards reshuffling those categories and redrawing the boundaries. With the first volume, I was relieved. After two or three, I was hooked.

The books are invaluable for gathering out-of-the-way or ephemeral comment from TV and radio interviews and the web as well as from literary reviews.

Refreshingly upfront and up-to-date...

Given the space, there are remarkably balanced film/novel comparisons of the most well-known examples...

An important feature is the fully referenced bibliographies, including reviews and copious website addresses - the latter ranging from fanzines and authors' and publishers' own sites to academic discussion lists and online journals.

In method as in subject matter, these guides move freely on the interface between print culture and multimedia. Highly finished and pleasantly handleable as books in their own right, they gesture accommodatingly to both words and worlds beyond.

Taking the series as a whole, it also confirms two things: that narrative nowadays is generically highly hybrid and increasingly cross-media; and that an understanding of the processes of writing and reading 'contemporary classic' (or at least 'currently famous') fiction cannot be separated - yet must be distinguished - from the processes of making and marketing books and films."

— The Times Higher Education Supplement, May 31, 2002

"An impressive entry into the field of Reader's Guides, (The Continuum Contemporaries), are valuable on

two levels: for the individual reader who wants to enhance his understanding, and for the book discussion group leader it's like stumbling on a gold mine of useful information.

In the hundreds of books we've discussed, this series stands alone as the most in-depth, challenging, and comprehensive Reader's Guides offered. They leave no stone unturned and turn up some you'd never have imagined.

These slim volumes begin with a study of the author, moves to an analysis of the book itself, the issues and sub themes, comparative literature, the reception of the novel, some questions, a bibliography and recommended reading, and more.

I would buy anything in this series again: it's that good."

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"...a brilliant and succinct analysis of this many-faceted book....an ideal tool for those teaching modern literature...will send the reader back to the novel with his understanding and enjoyment enhanced."

—K Beresford, Amazon.com, 11/4/01

"...for the individual reader...it's like taking a Master Class; and for the book discussion group leader it's like stumbling on a gold mine of useful information....the most in-depth, challenging, and comprehensive Reader's Guide offered."

—Ginny Anders

From the Publisher

This is an excellent guide to Kazuo Ishiguro's novel of 1989. It features a biography of the author, a full-length analysis of the novel, and a great deal more. If you're studying this novel, reading it for your book club, or if you simply want to know more about it, you'll find this guide informative and helpful.

About the Author

Adam Parkes (Univ of Georgia, US)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frank Johnson:

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Alice Ybarra:

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Gina Dana:

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