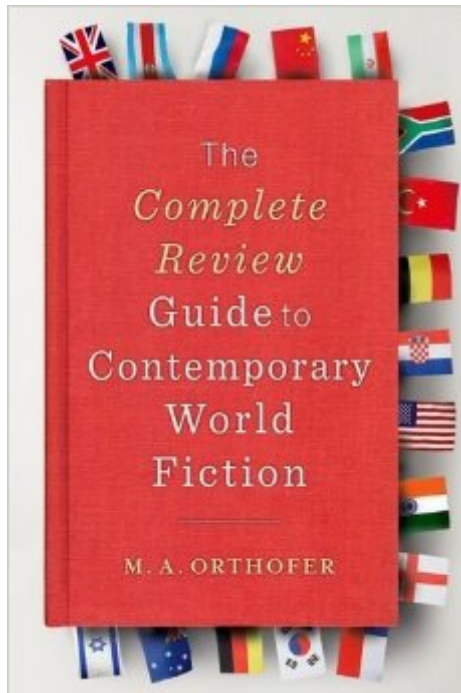


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The Complete Review Guide To Contemporary World Fiction



Synopsis

This user-friendly resource is the perfect reference for English-language readers who are eager to explore fiction from around the world. Profiling hundreds of titles and authors from 1945 to today, with an emphasis on fiction published in the past two decades, this guide introduces the styles, trends, and genres of the world's literatures, from Scandinavian crime thrillers and cutting-edge Chinese works to Latin American narco-fiction and award-winning French novels. The book's critical selection of titles defines the arc of a country's literary development. Entries illuminate the fiction of individual nations, cultures, and peoples, while concise biographies sketch the careers of noteworthy authors. Compiled by M. A. Orthofer, an avid book reviewer and the founder of the literary review site the Complete Review, this reference is perfect for readers who wish to expand their reading choices and knowledge of contemporary world fiction.

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Customer Reviews

For those of us attempting to cast a wider net in contemporary world fiction, The Complete Review Guide to Contemporary World Fiction is no less than a godsend. I could not imagine designing a more useful reference tool for readers, bloggers, and reviewers wishing to discover authors of distinction from around the world. This book grew out of the Complete Review website, founded by M. A. Orthofer in 1999 to provide timely information on book reviews of international fiction, along with publishing and translation information for readers. This website is phenomenal, but I am delighted to have a guide in book form that digs deep into the literary scene for nearly all the

countries of the world and offers a rich treasure trove of contemporary fiction to consider. What is considered "contemporary"? The Guide focuses on fiction after 1945, but rest assured, earlier fiction is discussed to provide context for the relevant country or national literature. A fascinating Introduction describes the selection process and some of the issues involved in classifying the works. The author has done internet detective work ever since founding the Complete Review website, trawling newspapers worldwide, online reviews and forums, and a host of professional websites, including publishers' foreign rights pages, international literary agencies, and national organizations that promote the exchange of book information and news about contemporary fiction. An extensive appendix of Supplemental Resources shares many of the available sources with the reader. The very scope of information available online, as the author notes, creates the need for an overview, country by country, as a helpful "entry point" for readers seeking to delve into a nation's literature.

As the title plainly states, this a guide to contemporary world fiction. It surveys the world by region and by country, and notes for each country much of the fiction that is now available in English. Take, more or less at random, Austria as an example. First there is this introductory paragraph for literature from that country: "Germans may generally be considered to be more severe, but the works of the best-known Austrian authors available in English make the Austrians seem even less jolly. Thomas Bernhard (1931-1989) at least does display a wicked sense of humor in much of his fiction, but he, Peter Handke (b. 1942), and Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek (b. 1946) show a lot of angry intensity, tempered only by some melancholy, especially in Handke's later works." There then follows a couple paragraphs on each of those authors and some of their books. There also is a "Keep in Mind" sidebar that names, albeit with very little discussion, other Austrian authors and their works. That format is employed throughout the book. With some countries, the presentation is subdivided. For instance, the section on fiction from India includes these categories: "The Forerunners", "The First Wave of Women Writers", "'Midnight's Children' and Beyond", "Other Indians Abroad", "Popular Fiction", and "Indian-Language Literature". The Guide focuses on fiction written after 1945, but for many countries, there also is a brief discussion of earlier, major twentieth-century writers -- for example, Ireland and James Joyce. The Guide is surprisingly comprehensive. But for me it is rather superficial.

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