



History and Fiction: Writers, their Research, Worlds and Stories

By Gillian Polack

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Fiction plays a vital role in describing history and transmitting culture. How writers understand and use history can play an equally important role in how they navigate a novel. This book explores the nature of the author's relationship with history and fiction – often using writers' own words – as well as the role history plays in fiction.

Focusing on genre fiction, this study considers key issues in the relationship between history and fiction, such as how writers contextualise the history they use in their fiction and how they incorporate historical research. The book also addresses the related topic of world building using history, discussing the connections between the science fiction writers' notion of world building and the scholarly understanding of story space and explaining the mechanics of constructing the world of the novel. This book places the writing of fiction into a wider framework of history and writing and encourages dialogue between writers and historians.

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Editorial Review

Review

«This study will be an essential read for genre scholars, but the accessible writing style extends its appeal beyond academic circles. Historical novelists can consult it for deeper insight into their own writing and research choices, while anyone curious about how authors bring the past to life through fiction will come away with considerable knowledge of what goes into the crafting of the novels they enjoy»

(Sarah Johnson, Historical Novels Review November 2016)

About the Author

Gillian Polack is a writer, editor, historian and critic based at the Australian National University. Her main research interests are cultural development and transmission in both the Middle Ages and the contemporary period. She has published several novels and seventeen short stories and has edited two anthologies. One of her stories won a Victorian Ministry of the Arts award and three more have been listed as recommended reading in the international lists of world's best fantasy and science fiction short stories. Her non-fiction includes work on historiography, the Middle Ages, Arthurian studies and literature.

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