

Librería  
*Bonilla y Asociados*  
desde 1950



**Título:** Historical Novel, The

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**Precio:** \$319.00

**Editorial:**

**Año:** 2009

**Tema:**

**Edición:** 1ª

**Sinopsis**

**ISBN:** 9780415426626

The historical novel is an enduringly popular genre that raises crucial questions about key literary concepts, fact and fiction, identity, history, reading, and writing. In this comprehensive, focused guide, Jerome de Groot offers an accessible introduction to the genre and critical debates the surround it, including:

the development of the historical novel from early eighteenth-century works through to postmodern and contemporary historical fiction

different genres, such as sensational or 'low' fiction, crime novels, literary works, counterfactual writing and related issues of audience, value, and authenticity

the many functions of historical fiction, particularly the challenges it poses to accepted histories and postmodern questioning of 'grand narratives'

the relationship of the historical novel to the wider cultural sphere with reference to historical theory, the internet, television, and film

key theoretical concepts such as the authentic fallacy, postcolonialism, Marxism, queer and feminist reading.