



Historical Dictionary of French Literature (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

John Flower

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Almost all of us know French literature, even if we don't know French, because it is probably the second largest and certainly the most translated into English. And, even if we don't read, we would have seen film and television versions (think Count of Monte-Cristo) and even a musical rendition (Les Mis). So this is a particularly interesting volume in the literature series, since it covers French literature from the earliest times to the present. It is also a particularly rich literature, espousing ever genre from poetry, to novel, to biography, to drama, and adopting every style, including realism and surrealism, and expressing the views of all classes and political stands, with recently strong feminist and gay strains.

Obviously, the core dictionary section includes among its panoply of often substantial and detailed entries, hundreds of authors, dozens of significant works, the various styles mentioned above and many others, events that have impacted literature such as the Dreyfus Affair and the Algerian War, and literary prizes. The chronology manages to cover about 1,200 years of literary output. And the introduction sets it all out neatly from one historical and literary period to the next. The bibliography, broken down by period and author, directs us to further reading in both French and English.



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