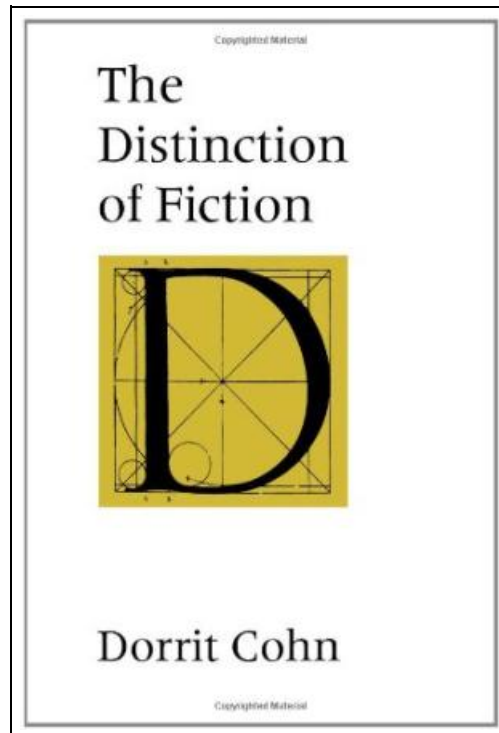


## The Distinction of Fiction



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## THE DISTINCTION OF FICTION



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JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 2000. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 226 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*.Winner of the Modern Language Association's Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for Comparative Literary Studies The border between fact and fiction has been trespassed so often it seems to be a highway. Works of history that include fictional techniques are usually held in contempt, but works of fiction that include history are among the greatest of classics. Fiction claims to be able to convey its own unique kinds of truth. But unless a reader knows in advance whether a narrative is fictional or not, judgment can be frustrated and confused. In *The Distinction of Fiction*, Dorrit Cohn argues that fiction does present specific clues to its fictionality, and its own justifications. Indeed, except in cases of deliberate deception, fiction achieves its purposes best by exercising generic conventions that inform the reader that it is fiction. Cohn tests her conclusions against major narrative works, including Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, Mann's *Death in Venice*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and Freud's case studies. She contests widespread poststructuralist views that all narratives are fictional. On the contrary, she separates fiction and nonfiction as necessarily distinct, even when bound together. An expansion of Cohn's Christian Gauss lectures at Princeton and the product of many years of labor and thought, *The Distinction of Fiction* builds on narratological and phenomenological theories to show that boundaries between fiction and history can be firmly and systematically explored.

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