

# The Novel After Theory - Judith Ryan

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Starting in the late twentieth century, novels began to incorporate literary theory in unexpected ways. Through allusion, parody, or implicit critique, theory formed an additional strand in narratives, raising questions about the nature of authorship and the practice of writing fiction. Overlooked by many scholars, this phenomenon casts new light on both the recent development of the novel and the persistence of modern theory beyond the period of its greatest success. In this book, Judith Ryan opens these questions to a variety of audiences, enabling them to participate in the debates over fiction today. Ryan seeks to understand what prompted fiction writers to begin incorporating theory nearly thirty years ago and what its role may have been. Designed for readers unfamiliar with theory's complex formulations, her book introduces the major trends and controversies in the discipline and notes the salient features of each approach. Ryan follows novelists' adaptation to and engagement with arguments relating to the significance of symbol, language, interpretation, and craft. At the core of her research is a fascinating microstudy of French poststructuralism and its dialogue with narrative fiction. Investigating theories of textuality, psychology, and society in the work of Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, J. M. Coetzee, Margaret Atwood, W. G. Sebald, and Umberto Eco, as well as Monika Maron, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Marguerite Duras, Marilynne Robinson, David Foster Wallace, and Christa Wolf, Ryan notes subtle negotiations between author and theory and the richness this debate adds to the text. Her book is an innovative reading of current literary theory and its shaping of a distinct fictional genre. Author: Ryan, Judith  
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