



# Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

*Jonathan Culler*

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What is literary theory? Is there a relationship between literature and culture? In fact, what is literature, and does it matter?

These are some of questions addressed by Jonathan Culler in this Very Short Introduction to literary theory. Often a controversial subject, said to have transformed the study of culture and society in the past two decades, literary theory is accused of undermining respect for tradition and truth and encouraging suspicion about the political and psychological implications of cultural projects rather than admiration for great literature.

Here, Jonathan Culler explains 'theory', not by describing warring 'schools' but by sketching key 'moves' theory has encouraged, and speaking directly about the implications of theory for thinking about literature, human identity, and the power of language. In this new edition Culler takes a look at new material, including the 'death of theory', the links between the theory of narrative and cognitive science, trauma theory, ecocriticism, and includes a new chapter on 'Ethics and aesthetics'.

This lucid introduction is useful for anyone who has wondered what all the fuss is about or who wants to think about literature today.

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