



The Deaths of the Author: Reading and Writing in Time

Jane Gallop

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For thirty years the "death of the author" has been a familiar poststructuralist slogan in literary theory, widely understood and much debated as a dismissal of the author, a declaration of the writer's irrelevance to the reader's experience. In this concise book, Jane Gallop revitalizes this hackneyed concept by considering not only the abstract theoretical death of the author but also the writer's literal death, as well as other authorial "deaths," such as obsolescence. Through bravura close readings of the influential literary theorists Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, she shows that the death of the author is best understood as a relation to temporality, not only for the reader but especially for the writer. Gallop does not just approach the death of the author from the reader's perspective; she also reflects at length on how impending death haunts the writer. By connecting an author's theoretical, literal, and metaphoric deaths, she enables us to take a fuller measure of the moving and unsettling effects of the deaths of the author on readers and writers, and on reading and writing.

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