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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- In Place of Beginning ... -- 1. A Compass in a Moving World -- 2. Many Lines of Descent -- 3. Theoria as Practical Philosophy -- 4. The Sage Is Wise Only in Theory -- 5. Variations and Discontinuities: Aesthetic -- 6. How Art Found Theory -- 7. Philosophy before the Arts -- 8. The Rarity of Theory -- 9. On the History of Film Theory -- 10. Genres of Theory -- 11. Excursus: Ricciotto Canudo and the Aesthetic Discourse -- 12. On the Way to Language -- 13. The Travels of Formalism -- 14. An Uncertain and Irrational Art -- 15. A Small History of Structuralism -- 16. After the Long Eclipse -- 17. An Object, a Method, a Domain -- 18. A Care for the Claims of Theory -- 19. The Sense of an Ending -- 20. "Suddenly, an Age of Theory" -- 21. The Fifth Element -- 22. "A Struggle without End, Exterior and Interior" -- 23. Becoming a Subject in Theory -- Acknowledgments -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Rhetorically charged debates over theory have divided scholars of the humanities for decades. In <i>Elegy for Theory</i> , D. N. Rodowick steps back from well-rehearsed arguments pro and con to assess why theory has become such a deeply contested concept. Far from lobbying for a return to the "high theory" of the 1970's and 1980's, he calls for a vigorous dialogue on what should constitute a new, ethically inflected

philosophy of the humanities. Rodowick develops an ambitiously cross-disciplinary critique of theory as an academic discourse, tracing its historical displacements from ancient concepts of *theoria* through late modern concepts of the aesthetic and into the twentieth century. The genealogy of theory, he argues, is constituted by two main lines of descent--one that goes back to philosophy and the other rooted instead in the history of positivism and the rise of the empirical sciences. Giving literature, philosophy, and aesthetics their due, Rodowick asserts that the mid-twentieth-century rise of theory within the academy cannot be understood apart from the emergence of cinema and visual studies. To ask the question, "What is cinema?" is to also open up in new ways the broader question of what is art.

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