

Chapter 1 : Paul de Man: "The Resistance to Theory" | Emily Fitzgerald's Blog

"The Resistance to Theory" is an essay by Paul de Man (), a renowned literary critic and theorist belonging to the Yale School of Deconstruction, which appeared in Yale French Studies 63 () and was widely anthologized.

Sree Kumar Paul de Man December 6, 1912 – December 21, 1982, was one of the most prominent literary critics in the United States who succeeded in bringing German and French philosophical approaches into Anglo-American literary studies and critical theory. This approach aroused considerable opposition, which de Man attributed to "resistance" inherent in the difficult enterprise of literary interpretation itself. Derrida was a frequent visitor to the University at that time and together they piloted the destiny of what is today known as the Yale School of Deconstruction. At the time of his death from cancer, de Man was Sterling Professor of the Humanities and chairman of the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale. Thus they exemplify the break between a sign and its meaning: He said that the study of literature had become the art of applying psychology, politics, history, philology or other disciplines to the literary text, in an effort to make the text "mean" something. In his argument, formalist and New Critical emphasis on the "organic" nature of poetry is ultimately self-defeating because the notion of the verbal icon is undermined by the irony and ambiguity inherent within it. Form ultimately acts as "both a creator and destroyer of organic totalities," and "the final insight These oppositions are central to Western discourse. The double bind [see notes 1] which is considered as a license by other deconstructionists to pursue meaning as far as their hermeneutic ingenuity [see notes 2] can carry them is accepted by de Man in a spirit of stoical irony [see notes 3]. De Man views language as unreliable. Language is unreliable because of the rhetorical and figural component in it. Rhetoric continuously undermines the abstract systems of grammar and logic. Literature frankly admits the rhetoricity in it. Thus it avoids the bad faith of other discourses – "history and Sciences" – that try to repress or deny it. The discourse of traditional literary criticism and literary history also try to repress or deny rhetoricity in language. Hence traditional scholars resist literary theory. Their resistance is also because of their anxiety as they consider literature as a representation of reality. He says that resistance to theory is a displacement of a much deeper resistance, or contradiction in theory itself. In short, the resistance to theory is in-built in the theoretical discourse itself. The essay later became part of the book by the same name. It is a key statement in poststructuralist approaches to literary studies. The essay argues that "the main theoretical interest of literary theory consists in the impossibility of its definition. The introduction of linguistic and semiotic terminology into literary studies gives the language, "considerable freedom from referential restraint". De Man means that literary study, as a branch of knowledge, is undependable. Literary language is predominantly rhetorical and figurative. Crisis in Literary Studies Literary language is unreliable. This gives rise to a crisis in literary studies because "literariness" is no longer an aesthetic quality or a mimetic mode. The signified is only a concept or many concepts. The actual remains only a concept]. But in actuality language is a material and conventional medium. Mimesis, like aesthetic quality, is also an effect of the rhetorical and figurative aspects of language. Language is not a transparent and intuitive guide from the textual material to the historical situation. Therefore if we assume that ideological and historical contexts exist as backgrounds for literary texts [as New Historicism claims] our assumption will become problematic. They are the polemical opponents of theory. It is unreliable like literary language. De Man states that the resistance to theory may be "a built-in constituent of its discourse. But in the 70s and 80s the interest in theory is receding. The reason for this may be satiation or disappointment after the initial enthusiasm. The ebb and flow of interest and aversion is natural but it makes the depth of resistance to literary theory clear. However, the predominant trend in North American literary criticism before the nineteen sixties was not against literary theory. The interest in theory was asserted publicly and practised. Their work did not provoke as strong reactions as that of later theoreticians. Their critical approaches experienced no difficulty fitting into the academic establishments. Many of them pursued successful parallel careers as poets or novelists next to their academic functions. Eliot, a combination of original talent, traditional learning, verbal wit and moral earnestness Their main concern was cultural and ideological rather than theoretical. Culture allows cosmopolitanism and it was the spirit of the

American Academy of the fifties. It had no difficulty appreciating and assimilating outstanding products of a kindred spirit that originated in Europe—Curtius, Auerbach, Croce, Spitzer, Alonso, Valery etc. Literary theory originates when the approach to literary texts is not based on non-linguistic factors like historical or aesthetic considerations. In other words the consideration should not be on meaning or value but on modalities of production and reception of meaning. The question of the relationship between aesthetics and meaning is more problematic because aesthetics is connected to the effect of meaning rather than with the content as such. Aesthetics is part of a universal system of philosophy. It cannot be termed a theory. De Man says that it is difficult to see the modern developments in literary theory as a product of philosophical speculations. He believes that contemporary literary theory is autonomous. It came from outside philosophy and this adds a subversive element of unpredictability to literary theory.

Background of theory The advent of theory which made it different from literary history and literary criticism occurred with the introduction of linguistic terminology in the metalanguage about literature. The link between structural linguistics and literary texts was not obvious in the beginning. Peirce, Saussure, Sapir and Bloomfield were not concerned with literature at all but with the scientific foundations of linguistics. But philologists like Roman Jakobson and literary critics like Roland Barthes took interest in semiology. This highlighted the natural attraction of literature to a theory of linguistic signs. When language was considered as a system of signs and signification, the traditional barrier between literary and non-literary uses of language disappeared. The meeting of literature with semiology was more intense than the meetings of literature with philology, psychology or epistemology. The meeting of literature and semiology could only be described in terms of their own, specifically linguistic terms only, whereas the meetings of literature with other disciplines could be paraphrased or translated in terms of common knowledge. The linguistics of semiology and literature has something in common that is related only to them. This something is often referred to as literariness and it has become the object of literary theory.

Literariness Literariness is often misunderstood for aesthetic response. The use of such terms as style and stylistics which carry aesthetic connotations along with literariness adds to the confusion. Again the search for example, by Roland Barthes for coincidence between the phonic properties of a word and its signifying function helps to foster the confusion. But one may ask whether it is not more or less consciously present in all writing and whether it is possible to be a writer without some sort of belief in the natural relationship between names and essences. This can be considered a mere effect which language can perfectly well achieve. But it has no substantial relationship to anything beyond that effect. De Man says that this effect is rhetorical rather than aesthetic. The relationship between word and thing is not phenomenal but conventional. When this autonomous potential of language is revealed, we deal with literariness. This literariness makes us aware of the unreliability of linguistic utterance. The foregrounding of materials and the phenomenal aspects of language create a strong illusion of aesthetic seduction. De Man suggests a potentially revolutionary idea when he states: Did de Man seriously think that such a thing is possible? Literariness is also not a mimetic quality. Literariness is also not a mimetic quality. Mimesis is another trope among many others. Literariness is misrepresented as pure verbalism and this is also one of the main objections against literary theory. In genuine semiology, the referential function of language is not denied. Far from it, what is questioned is the authority of language as a model for natural cognition understanding. Thus it is NOT certain that literature is a reliable source of information about anything but its own language. It is unfortunate to confuse the materiality of the signifier with the materiality of what it signifies. This is clear in the case of light and sound. But it is not so with regard to the phenomenality of space, time and self. Ideology is precisely the confusion of linguistics with natural reality. Thus the linguistics of literariness is a powerful and indispensable tool in the unmasking of ideological aberrations. There are people who discredit literary theory by stating that it is oblivious of social and historical reality. These people are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit. Why does literary theory provoke strong resistance and attacks? But these are not satisfying answers. Resistance may be a built-in constituent of its discourse, in a manner that would be inconceivable in the natural sciences and unmentionable in the social sciences. But this is not an excuse for rejecting literary theory. Instead of asking why literary theory is threatening, we should ask why literary theory has such difficulty doing its business and why very often it lapses into the language of

self-justification and self-defence. De Man adds that such difficulties, as mentioned above, always existed for literary theory.

Chapter 2 : The Resistance to Theory - Wikipedia

The Resistance to Theory. This essay was not originally intended to address the question of teaching directly. f. although it was supposed to have a didactic and an educational function - which.

In effect "magistrate" here may stand for head of state , but the modern concept of state grew up alongside the early modern resistance theories, rather than preceding them. Reference was made, for example by Althusius to classical history: Lutheran resistance theory[edit] It is argued that the beginnings of Protestant resistance theory lay in the legal positions worked out after the Diet of Augsburg , by jurists working for the Electorate of Saxony and the Landgraviate of Hesse. Monarchomachs The mainstream ideas from the Magdeburg Confession recur in Calvinist writings, from onwards. Theodore Beza produced the work Right of Magistrates ; it was followed by the anonymous Vindiciae contra tyrannos Resistance theory also became important for the justification of the Dutch Revolt. In the Politica of Johannes Althusius , one of the occasions justifying resistance to a supreme magistrate by inferior magistrates roughly, members of the "ruling class" , in the case of tyranny, is for a prince or group of rulers of provinces, extended to the provincial "authorities", this matching the situation of the Revolt. Althusius was closer to Zwingli than Calvin in his approach, in fact, and clarified his views on church and state in successive editions. In De jure belli ac pacis he argued against the distinction from the right of self-defence and accountable government. But he also modified the question, influentially, to include the removal of private warfare from political society an issue of pacification. This situation came about because the opposite "cismontane" tendency, Gallicanism , came to be allied with the politiques , and the royalist view tending to divine right. The position after the Council of Trent left the Jesuits opposed to the "liberties" claimed by the Gallican Church, and defenders of ultramontanism. Reformed theology was accepted on a piecemeal basis. It was reprinted in , at the outbreak of the First English Civil War. Besides theoretical reasons for denying what Buchanan had written in De juri regni apud Scotos , and dedicated to James, he felt that Buchanan had used Scottish history to support his claims only by misprision; and those views led to disorder. These opinions he did not vary on becoming king in England five years later; as for religious strife he was a conciliarist of an older tradition, in harmony with the views of Richard Hooker. Arminianism in the Church of England had become a source of great tension. But in theological terms Arminianism was compatible with divine right , as it was with resistance theory. The argument on resistance was going on elsewhere. Algernon Sidney like Locke replied to the Patriarcha of Robert Filmer , and provided a thorough animadversion. These developments broke apart any semblance of unity in Anglican resistance theory.

Chapter 3 : Change is not the problem - resistance to change is the problem

The title essay in this book does not engage in a debate with the polemical opponents of literary theory; to Paul de Man, the resistance to theory is inherent in the theoretical enterprise itself, and the real debate is with its own methodological assumptions and possibilities. The core of his.

Europe, to The development of the theory of resistance in the early modern period was complex and was based in large part on the political, philosophical, and legal arguments of French authors during the religious wars in the sixteenth century. Their arguments in turn were a development of three earlier theories based on Roman, canon church, and medieval law: Laws and statutes permitted violent defense against aggression because it was generally believed that both natural law *ius naturale* and human law *ius gentium* granted the individual a right to defense. Roman and medieval law limited this violence by requiring that the defense was immediate and the force used was moderate. The sixteenth-century coronation ceremonies in many countries supported this interpretation because they contained a consensus *populi* consent of the people clause that suggested election. This was applied by proponents of the resistance theory. Others saw the question not as one of elective elements in the coronation oath, but of contractual ones. The feudal contract, like any contract, carried rights and duties for all parties. As a contract between a king and his people, the coronation oath bound both parties. The king had to observe the oath unless the people released him from it. In this feudal view of kingship, royalty was not absolute and the king was only the administrator, not the owner, of the kingdom. In his coronation oath the king swore to obey the law, defend the faith, and protect his subjects and their property. The inclusion of his duty to defend the faith obligated him to fight heresy, which could also mean to maintain order, since heresy was seen as a threat to the peace of the kingdom. In addition, since the king was supposed to protect the faith, any challenge to that faith became a kind of treason. Numerous canon law precedents also justified the use of force against heretics and the confiscation of their property. Augustine and St. In this theory there were three conditions necessary for a war to be a just war: The latter stipulated that the people would obey the king if he were a proper ruler. The sixteenth-century activists recognized the necessity of remaining within the prescribed limits of the law when advocating or using violence. The ethical and practical issues they faced paralleled those Roman law writers had raised concerning self-defense and canonists and theologians had raised while developing the arguments for just war. They claimed to be doing this in defense of themselves, their property, their king, and their religion. They appealed to the king based on his legal duties and obligations under the coronation oath: A breach of those promises could, according to some theorists, justify correction of a ruler by the lesser magistrates civil officials, including members of the city governments and officials of the central government with the power to administer the law. The personal responsibility of the magistrates for their own actions as well as for those of the king seems to have been widely accepted during the sixteenth century, although earlier medieval theorists such as Marsilius of Padua [c. The massacre of Huguenots on St. They continued to use the constitutional and historical arguments and the legal precedents, but now they used the new arguments to reason that true sovereignty belonged to the community and enabled its representatives to discipline, depose, or even assassinate the ruler. This feudal basis for forfeiture of the kingdom was repeated in Judgment against Tyrants and tied to the covenant made at the coronation ceremony. These ideas were not unanimously accepted. Extreme cruelty or injustice could justify resistance by individuals or groups, but a primary consideration for him was whether that resistance itself would be more destructive or harmful to the state than the original injustice. John Locke, on the other hand, argued in his Second Treatise of Civil Government that although the contract made between the sovereign and the people is binding, a ruler who misused the authority or broke the contract could be resisted, even to the point of removing that ruler and restoring the governing power to the people. A ruler who acted arbitrarily was not fulfilling his duty, and the people could assume governing power in order to restore their rights. The theory of resistance has continued to develop. It remains an important part of modern popular revolutions and arguments for just war. Translated and edited by Julian H. New York, English translations of key excerpts from their major works on resistance, with an introduction. Latin text by Ralph E. Secondary

Sources Gelderen, Martin van. The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt. Hotman, Beza, and Mornay. Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts, " From Defense to Resistance: Justification of Violence during the French Wars of Religion. Parrow Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography. Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World. Retrieved November 11, from Encyclopedia. Then, copy and paste the text into your bibliography or works cited list. Because each style has its own formatting nuances that evolve over time and not all information is available for every reference entry or article, Encyclopedia.

Chapter 4 : "The resistance to theory" | Vandorpr's Blog

In a brilliant collection of essays, de Man explores his views, that, the resistance to theory is inherent in the theoretical enterprise itself, and the real debate is with its own methodological assumptions and possibilities.

The Problem of Defining Deconstruction. His writings are characteristically postmodern in the sense they seek to go beyond modernity. Derrida has written prolifically on various themes like translation, ethics, aesthetics, responsibility, death and mourning, politics of friendship, cosmopolitanism, Marxism, globalization, technology and terrorism. His dense and complex writings have had an enormous influence in psychology, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, feminism, sociology and anthropology. Though the term has become very popular in literary criticism and theory, its precise meaning is extremely problematic. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air. Can it thus be allowed to be reappropriated and domesticated by academic institutions? Background to Deconstruction Derrida and Heidegger: Heidegger demands the destruction Destruktion of the Western philosophical tradition, which is not its destruction but total transformation. It also implies that the signifier does not naturally lead to the entities in the world beyond the linguistic system but stays within it by pointing to other signifier. However, Derrida points out that these oppositions are not equal but hierarchic where the second term is considered either derivative or inferior to the first, the privileged one. Derrida combines two characteristics of the language mentioned above: The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which is free from free play and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms free play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism. Though Derrida wrote occasionally on literature, his primary focus was on the classical texts of Western philosophical tradition starting from Plato onwards. Most of his important statements on literature are collected in the book Acts of Literature. Literary language being predominantly rhetorical and figurative, to take for granted that literature is a reliable source of information about anything but itself would be a great mistake. This gives rise to a particular crisis in literary studies because "literariness" is no longer seen as an aesthetic quality nor is it seen as a mimetic mode. As we consider language as an intuitive and transparent medium, as opposed to the material and conventional medium that it is, aesthetic effect, according to de Man, takes place because we tend to mistake the materiality of the signifier with the materiality of the signified. Mimesis, like aesthetic quality, is also an effect of the rhetorical and figurative aspects of language. The assumption of ideological and historical contexts or backgrounds to literary texts becomes problematic if language is no longer seen as a transparent and intuitive guide from the textual material to the historical situation. Consequently, the theorists who uphold an aesthetic approach to literary studies and those who uphold an historical approach both find deconstructive approach inconvenient and challenging. In Blindness and Insight, de Man sought to deconstruct the privileging of symbol over allegory and metaphor over metonymy in Romantic thought. In Romantic philosophy, metaphor implied self-identity and wholeness, decomposition of self-identity implied inability of overcoming the dualism between subject and object, which Romantic metaphor sought to transcend. To compensate for this inability, de Man argued that the Romanticism constantly relies on allegory to attain the wholeness established by the totality of the symbol. Thus, deconstruction remains one of the most influential theories in literary studies till today. An Attempt to Summarize: It has had an enormous influence in psychology, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, feminism, sociology and anthropology. It has influenced a wide range of theoretical approaches to literary studies like feminism and gender studies, cultural materialism, new historicism, postcolonial studies, Marxism, psychoanalysis and so on. It involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. Though it is often misunderstood as negative activity of destruction, it is in many ways continuation of Heideggerian project of dismantling and transforming the entire tradition and architecture of western thought by building upon the insights from contemporary linguistics regarding the mechanism of language and meaning production.

Chapter 5 : for Literary Criticism and Theory: English at Chapman University, Alfred J. Drake, Ph.D.

In his essay, "The Resistance to Theory," Paul de Man analyzes traditional literary theories and theorists as well as the history of the resistance to literary theory in an attempt to explain the relationship between literary theory and resistance.

Bruce Kestelman, March 17, Well Done! Especially like the connection with resistance and the organizational culture. The embedded PPT provides helpful reminders about what to avoid. Stefan Norrvall, March 22, There are also some strong arguments against this view of planning for resistance to change. Firstly, the use of change resistance model that is based on how individuals cope with bereavement and that has not been tested for use in organisational change. Furthermore, it is a model of personal emotions and does not take into account managing large-scale change with groups of people. It also projects a sense of victimisation of staff that have change done to them and there is nothing they can do about it. Organisational change and the loss of a loved one are not the same. Secondly, by assuming resistance to change in advance there is also the issue of creating the situation it predicts which further reinforces the need to address resistance to change. The issue is the confusion of cause and effect "resistance is not the cause of failure, it is the outcome of failure. Having worked in countless organisations I have not yet come across one where change was not desired. In some they spoke about change fatigue and what a hard job it would be to get them to change. It turned out to be the complete opposite "they were tired of all the initiatives that did not change anything. Milad Avaz, March 22, Great article Torben, However I fear that it is trending to consider resistance as a unilateral holistic thing when it is actually comprised of resistance to smaller things that the general change might be representing. Change Management theories are more and more trying to emulate science when the truth is that it is not. Thanks for a great blog! In that context this and other such publications provide useful learning and start points to our planning of change. In my experience this is rarely the case. Change will frequently impact on the personal aspirations of people with power and influence at some level. Only a part of this will be visible at the outset and the change leader must be vigilant to detect the direct and indirect signs as the change project proceeds. This does not necessarily mean they will resist change. Stefan Brian Chajewski, March 26, I enjoyed the article and the conversation that it has started. I agree that change needs to have a clearly communicated value statement and the endurance to see the training through. I have experienced massive organizational changes that were communicated well, money was spent to provide good training up front, and the employees felt like there was money being spent to train them. Then after the roll out, there was continual support and if need be, a person that has mastered the new process was flown to the site struggling for a week long of side-by-side mentoring. I have also experienced the massive change that has a lot of fan fare. A lot of up front training. Then the new system was unreliable and employees had to do a hybrid of old system and new system just to get through, which is not as efficient as doing either one. Also, the system was designed to identify if a service failure had occurred, but the procedures were never rewritten to account for this new data. This leaves the employees disillusioned about the information that can be provided by the change in systems. When an employee can adapt to the change in systems and see the information of how it is not a service failure, but still has to act like it is a service failure, it is very frustrating and leaves them asking what is the point of the change if the company will not let them use the information. Merkenhof, March 29, The subject is indeed key to successful change in any organization. People are not against change but against being changed. Force it upon them, and they all will find reasons not to collaborate. Change requires people to step out of their comfort zone; This induces fear. Discomfort and even more so, fear for the outcome, is the utmost important reason for resistance to change. It is about people and not machines. People think, feel and have emotions. The objective of all change: The last one will certainly increase internal competition, immediately jeopardizing personal safety. These and other personal interests and internal networks need to be understood, made visible and consequences in actions from the management need to be clear, integer and decisive. The inevitable questions need to be defined and answered upfront. Only then you can take the right decisions and implement the correct measures to reduce R2C. People need to feel comfortable, every step of the change and you must obtain their buy-in check, check and check again. Trustworthiness only comes with clearness about the objectives and

integer and consistent leadership. It will reduce the depth and length of the unavoidable depression in the resistance curve. Which is a symptom of our western culture. What I see is that we resist changing because we perceive stability as a security.

Chapter 6 : Resistance theory in the Early Modern period - Wikipedia

Hence the resistance to theory is theory itself. The latter suggests that it is merely a starting point using concepts, methods, and terminology gained from sources outside itself, which also unsurprisingly lead one to conclude that the resistance to theory never ends since such resistance must come from the eternal squabble between theorizing.

Chapter 7 : "Resistance to Theory" by Paul de Man by Luna Raven on Prezi

Freud's theory replaced the idea of coherent and autonomous human self (which is a humanist idea) with the idea of human ego existing on the fringe of the all powerful Unconscious- the huge area of human self existing outside of human awareness.

Chapter 8 : The Resistance to Theory " University of Minnesota Press

The title essay in this book does not engage in a debate with the polemical opponents of literary theory; to Paul de Man, the resistance to theory is inherent in the theoretical enterprise itself, and the real debate is with its own methodological assumptions and possibilities.

Chapter 9 : The Resistance to Theory - Paul De Man - Google Books

The Resistance to Theory's wiki: "The Resistance to Theory" is an essay by Paul de Man (), a renowned literary critic and theorist belonging to the Yale School of Deconstruction, which appeared in Yale French Studies 63 () and was widely anthologized.