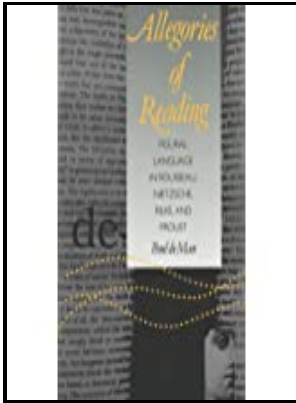


Blindness and insight - essays in the rhetoric of contemporary criticism.

- - Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism
(9780816611355): Paul De Man



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Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism by Paul De Man

I have made no attempt to bring the terminology of the 1 Vll viii FOREWORD earlier essays up to date and, except for minor changes, have left them as they were originally written. They each orient the reader towards the relation between reader and text, especially towards the abstractions or assumptions or jumps that each interpreter tends to make. Uniform series Notes Includes bibliographical references and index.

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They do not occur with the same clarity to a spontaneous, non-critical reader who is bound to forget the mediations separating the text from the particular meaning that now captivates his attention. Rhetoric is that material element of language consisting of tropes that makes attempts to abstract an interpretation of a text from the language of the text impossible or always already a failure. .

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Their findings about the structure of texts contradict the general conception that they use as their model. Because critics deal more or less openly with the problem of reading, it is a little easier to read a critical text as text-i. My tentative generalizations are not aimed toward a theory of criticism but toward Ji! It is concerned with a different problem.

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Not only do they remain unaware of this discrepancy, but they seem to thrive on it and owe their best insights to the assumptions these insights disprove. In all of them a paradoxical discrepancy appears between the general statements they make about the nature of literature statements on which they base their critical methods and the actual results of their interpretations. They were written for specific occasions-conferences, lectures, homages-and reflect interests that are bound to occur to someone whose teaching has been more or less evenly divided between the United States

and Europe.

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