



Philosopher's theories and Nazi background contrasted in new book

By Lisa Donovan
Senior Reporter

A second book about Nazi collaborator and Yale University professor Paul de Man will be published as early as this spring by University of Nebraska Press.

The 1987 discovery of de Man's articles written for the Belgian Nazi-controlled newspaper *Le Soir* spurred the University Press's November publication of "War Time Journalism: 1939-1943" and the upcoming "Responses."

"War Time Journalism: 1939-1942" is a compilation of some of the articles de Man wrote for the paper.

According to Dr. William Regear, editor in chief of University Press, the controversy over de Man centers on his anti-Semitic articles.

"It came as a shock to many of his admirers that he worked with the Nazis," he said.

De Man, who lived from 1919-1983, came to the United States in 1947. After he taught and worked on his deconstruction theories, de Man spent the final 13 years of his life as a professor of humanities at Yale University.

Students and Colleagues alike touted de Man, founder of the modern school of philosophical criticism called deconstruction, as one of America's premier literary critics.

According to Regear, a major international storm has developed among literary critics about whether it was right for de Man to suppress his past.

Some critics question de Man's honesty, while others claim he was trying to rebuild his life and that his past shouldn't be linked to his theories.

The whole debate, Regear said, is covered in "Responses."
"Responses" is a compilation of

theories about de Man's deconstruction theory and how it relates to his activities as a Nazi collaborator.

"The essence of the arguments (in "Responses") is what constitutes ethics in literary criticism," Regear said. "Should a book be judged by the likes of its author?"

"Deconstruction is linguistic analysis which pays attention to the suppression of categories," he said.

When one talks about people, for example, they primarily refer to "he" and suppress the "she," Regear said. This is what the deconstructionists studied, he said.

Bruce Erlich, associate professor of English and Modern Languages, expanded the definition.

Deconstruction is a theory in the analysis of language and literature, Erlich said.

Its basic argument, he said, is that all language is inherently indeterminate.

"Language has no assignable fixed meanings," Erlich said in reference to the deconstruction theory.

According to Erlich, this is true. A dog, for example, is called a dog in the English language, but it could be called something else and still be the same object, he said.

Deconstructionist theory says that language can't refer to objects at all, Erlich said.

"The second claim by the deconstructionists," Erlich said, "... is that the only way we can know life is in terms of experience -- that our mental processes are entirely dependent on language."

Erlich said if all thinking depends on language, then there really isn't a world of experience for the deconstructionists, only a world of language. This world of language is called textuality.

See DeMAN on 12

Pleasant, poetic 'Cousins' excites and delights reviewers

The New Shut Up and Watch the Movie is written by William Rudolph, a sophomore English major and Lisa Donovan, a junior news-editorial major.

William Rudolph: It's going to hurt me to admit it, but I loved "Cousins." Yes, I planned on hating it, but something just happened.

movie REVIEW

Lisa Donovan: At first, I was gnashing my teeth and hem-hawing, but this romantic work of art would warm the coldest heart. Ted Danson and Isabella Rossellini were completely, utterly charming.

WR: You know I hate Danson, Lisa. I've told you that many times. But in this movie, he redeemed himself. I actually wanted him to win Rossellini, instead of winning something else, like a trip to hell in a garbage disposal without a continental breakfast.

LD: Redeemed himself? William, this may change his entire career -- he may be a respectable actor after all. In fact, the whole movie was simply poetic. From the candid lighting to the beautiful innocence of the children. Every essence of the beauty of life -- birth, childhood, marriage and death -- was captured in this flick.

WR: You really can't use any other word than "beautiful" for

"Cousins," although "warm, wonderful, tender, funny, magical, special, etc., etc., etc." all come to mind. At the risk of sounding extremely pompous, I'd have to say that "Cousins" is a lot like life; it's funny, it's sad, it's romantic and glad. Oh, I rhymed, how poetic. Don't we sound like idiots, Lisa?

LD: Yeah, right, William -- let's just get to it. Remember the first wedding? It was just like watching a home movie. It had all the regulars -- a drunk relative, the embarrassing relatives, the arguing relatives, the crotchety grandparents, and all the wonderful characters that make up the family unit. It was a great way to start a movie that just sort of flowed.

WR: How do you explain the story behind "Cousins?" Well, it's like this: A man and a woman (Danson and Rossellini) who are loosely related by marriage have an affair. But it gets more complicated. It's also about this man and woman's spouses who are sleeping together. And their families, who are getting increasingly more connected by a string of marriages. And Danson's multi-media artist, teen-age son, who's kind of bizarre. And his father (Lloyd Bridges), who's wild and funnier than heck. And so on. And so on. Take it away, Lisa, before I lose control.

LD: I need to talk a little more about Danson and Rossellini's relationship. It was so neat. It was so natural and unpretentious -- every-

thing someone wants in a relationship, physical or not. The way their relationship evolves is so beautiful -- it brings back the importance of human interaction that the media has stripped away from many movies.

WR: The technical crafting is flawless. The scenes are beautiful, from the sets to the settings. The music swells at the right moment, accentuating the scene but never directing it. The lighting is very rich and romantic. But the movie wouldn't succeed if the cast wasn't fantastic.

LD: It was very European, from the "dry" humor to the costuming. It was probably hard to stray from the original French film "Cousin, Cousine." But hey, why

mess with greatness?

WR: "Cousins" was very European, as far as the technique and the storytelling. But it did have its American touches, like Rossellini's BMW salesman husband and Sean Young as the Cosmopolitan Girl of the '80s gone wild.

LD: Young has got to go... apparently she's related to someone in Hollywood, but her character, although fairly humorous, is, well -- repulsive. She's a... well, I don't want to be judgmental, so let's just say she really enjoys sex.

WR: I really enjoyed the movie, Lisa, and I don't think you need to knock her, just because she was very thin and very irritating and very chic, in a Joan Collins sort of way. Rossellini, on the other hand,

was flawless. If anybody has any doubts that she's anything besides Ingrid Bergman's daughter, "Cousins" shows that she's an actress in her own right. And OK, I'll admit it; Danson is more than just a "Cheers" alumnus.

LD: No doubts about this movie at all -- it's a winner all the way.

WR: Don't worry about trying to make sense out of our confusion. Just go to "Cousins." Go now. Don't think about it. Just do it.

LD: We never thought before we did it and now look what happened -- we actually liked it, the movie, that is.

WR: You are so romantic. I could cry in the face of such feeling. I hope you've got insurance.

