

In Defence of Poststructuralism

French theory has regularly been declared dead ever since the 1970s, when it first began to exercise an influence outside France. Poststructuralism itself would read these repeated announcements as wishes rather than truths: the new theories challenged existing paradigms and called on scholars to rethink their positions. The appeal of poststructuralism has therefore been mainly to successive generations of the young, who have no entrenched positions to defend. In my view, poststructuralism continues to offer valuable ways of respecting the textuality of texts. Far from exhausted, it has only begun to influence the ways we might read more attentively. In this talk I shall exemplify some of the possibilities with reference to *Romeo and Juliet*.

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Preliminary reading

My book, *A Future for Criticism* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) is short and readable. It gives a more expansive picture than I can promise in a lecture. [Now available at Studia University Bookstore, shelf for Literary Studies/Comparative Literature (cost NOK 239,-).]