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Title

Rita Felski. The Limits of Critique . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 232 pp.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87x1442d>

Journal

Critical Inquiry, 42(4)

ISSN

0093-1896

Author

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Publication Date

2016-06-01

DOI

10.1086/686957

Peer reviewed

is no passive construct here, though readers may wish Bear's version were more convincingly anchored in individual accounts rather than asserted in sweeping generalizations. Ultimately, however, *Disillusioned's* greatest services may be historiographic. Bear successfully dislodges the truism that photography was immediately accepted as a new ideal of objectivity and restores to view the capacity of its earliest viewers to analyze photographic images as constructions. The stage is set for future studies that might locate in such activity the more unruly imaginative freedoms Bear considers elusive. In equally convincing terms, his conclusion dislodges the modernist history of photography that valorized objectivity as its patrimony and reinserts Rejlander and Robinson as the precursors of postmodernism, when photography's referentiality was challenged and subverted again.

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Rita Felski. *The Limits of Critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 232 pp.

DAVIDE PANAGIA

The Pleasures of Criticism could have been the alternate title to Rita Felski's provocative *The Limits of Critique*. In this book Felski traces the *cynegetic* tendencies (my term, not hers, for the cynical or disillusioning mode) of postwar literary criticism in the West to survey, hunt, and capture meaning in literary works. Those hunting practices are named the hermeneutics of suspicion and much of Felski's analysis is devoted to unpacking the diagnostic parameters of suspicious reading, its moods and attitudes, and its effects.

Felski's is the kind of psychology of epistemes that wants to remind readers why they might want to pick up literary works in the first place: that is, for the sheer pleasure of wanting to play with worlds and their varieties. Like Amanda Anderson's characterological study of theoretical argument (that Felski cites), the ambition is not only to diagnose the limiting effects of suspicious hermeneutics but also to remind readers that interpretive detection is not the sole response that works invite or, indeed, deserve. For Felski, suspicious reading is *cynegetic*; it is a mode of tracking meaning as if one were hunting prey. By the end of the nineteenth century, *cynegetic* practices were adapted by police powers for the detection and pursuit of criminals. Police *cynegetics* concerned itself with "bodies in movement, bodies that escape and that it must catch, bodies that pass by and that it must intercept."¹ Hence the efficacy of Felski's adjoining suspicious reading to detective novels throughout, but especially in chapter three. To argue that critique is committed to suspicious reading in the manner in which Felski does means that critique is governed by the impulse to police something like the kernel of a literary unconscious in constant flight. This, in sum, is her story of twentieth-century literary criticism.

But Felski wants to offer us a reprieve from the hunt as if to say, "stop chasing and start reading." Her Latour-inspired reasoning claims an aesthetic work as a nonhuman actant, populated by a diversity of other nonhuman agents that complicate critical suspicion's reduction of aesthetic pleasure to the pleasure of the hunt for meaning. The issue with Felski's critique of "Crrritique" regards the professional transformation of

1. Grégoire Chamayou, *Manhunts: A Philosophical History*, (Princeton, N.J., 2012), p. 90.

aesthetic objects into purposive things and, *ceteris paribus*, the diminution of criticism to an investigative logic of predation. And her task, enabled by an alliance with actor-network-theory, is to make the claim for the lure of aesthetic objects on their own terms and to accept their lure as a spur to criticism (in whatever form), rather than seeing that lure as merely a testament to an object's nefarious mesmeric effects.

The book's implication is that aesthetic value is not reducible to a psychology of the commodity form, and here I am in sympathy with Felski's defense of aesthetic experience for its own sake. And I am spurred to want to extend her provocations. For instance, I understand why she names her agent of critique the hermeneutics of suspicion, but I also think it is worth expanding to say that the spatial metaphors of deep reading that accompany such an hermeneutic model are not elements of Karl Marx's or Friedrich Nietzsche's influence (*pace* Felski via Paul Ricoeur). They are Sigmund Freud's. Marx and Nietzsche remained surface critics; Marx was worried about surface relations of exchange, and Nietzsche extolled the Greek virtue of being superficial out of profundity. But Freud, and the Freudo-Marxism of György Lukács and the Frankfurt school, gave us the depth hermeneutics of "critique."

No doubt this is too quick an intervention to make here, but it is a point worth raising for future elaboration: If critique remains "a fundamentally interpretive task" (p. 83), this is because the aesthetic object is imagined as having an invisible power that functions like Victor Tausk's influence machine, an imaginary machine conjured by schizophrenic patients that "serves to persecute the patient and is operated by enemies. . . . The manipulation of the apparatus is likewise obscure, the patient rarely having a clear idea of its operation."² I sense that Felski wants us to dispense with the mood of mysterious purposiveness that has overtaken literary works and with the influence machine apparatus and its moral psychology. Therein lies the book's greatest and most ambitious provocation: its claim that aesthetic works have nothing to hide and that there is no ghost in the machine. By admitting this fact we may reacquire the pleasures of criticism.

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Louis-Auguste Blanqui. *Eternity by the Stars: An Astronomical Hypothesis.* Trans. Frank Chouraqui. New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2013. 202 pp.

ANDREW PENDAKIS

For Louis-Auguste Blanqui, prison was seasonal. When he was not in jail he was at the barricades. The intensity of his life, his gift of extreme focus, has often obscured our capacity to think Blanqui apart from his actions. Conflated with the gesture of "conspiracy," his life comes to be seen as a series of fantastically miscalculated *deeds* or *feats*; he ceases to exist as the name for a legitimate period logic—an actual way of *thinking* politics—and instead vanishes behind the tired caricature of the revolutionary brute, a figure governed by rectilinear instincts (for destruction, power, or death) but never science or logic. Though this image of Blanqui the beast is belied by even a perfunctory reading of his speeches—his 1832 defense is a caustically brilliant critique of nineteenth-century French liberalism—our understanding of Blanqui stands to be

2. Victor Tausk, "On the Origin of the 'Influence Machine' in Schizophrenia," *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research* 1, no. 2 (1992): 185–206