



# Literature after Feminism

By Rita Felski

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Recent commentators have portrayed feminist critics as grim-faced ideologues who are destroying the study of literature. Feminists, they claim, reduce art to politics and are hostile to any form of aesthetic pleasure. *Literature after Feminism* is the first work to comprehensively rebut such caricatures, while also offering a clear-eyed assessment of the relative merits of various feminist approaches to literature.

Spelling out her main arguments clearly and succinctly, Rita Felski explains how feminism has changed the ways people read and think about literature. She organizes her book around four key questions: Do women and men read differently? How have feminist critics imagined the female author? What does plot have to do with gender? And what do feminists have to say about the relationship between literary and political value? Interweaving incisive commentary with literary examples, Felski advocates a double critical vision that can do justice to the social and political meanings of literature without dismissing or scanting the aesthetic.

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## Literature after Feminism By Rita Felski Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #492039 in Books
- Published on: 2003-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .70" w x 5.50" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 192 pages

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"This lively and highly readable account of the encounter with feminism will interest both students and critics alike. . . . For feminist readers of whatever nationality, this will provide a timely reminder of the ways in which 'rather than destroying the field of literary study, feminism has reinvigorated it.'"

(*Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*)

"Aiming at readers whose knowledge of feminist literary criticism has come largely from popular media, the author gives a concise account of a range of feminist critical approaches to literature and convincingly demonstrates the usefulness and variety of these approaches. . . . Felski supports her arguments with a wide variety of examples, and her writing is enjoyable to read."--Choice

(*Choice*)

"For the beginning student of feminist studies, this is a good survey. . . . For the advanced student, it is a helpful review. Most feminist students of literature will find the bibliography an invaluable tool. . . . A learned critique and eloquent defense of feminists' contributions to the field of literary studies."

(Meg Gardiner *IRIS*)

"Felski . . . here offers an eloquent apologetic for feminist literary criticism, revealing its diversity, celebrating its great influence on the teaching of literature, and showing its development far beyond the stereotypes imposed by its critics. In the process, she provides a penetrating analysis of fiction and the ways in which feminist criticism has changed its authors, plots, and values and the perceptions of the general public."

(*Library Journal*)

"An informative and thorough introduction for beginners in feminist studies as well as a valuable reference book on recent feminist debates in the United States for an advanced academic audience."

(Klaudia Papp *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*)

### From the Inside Flap

Recent commentators have portrayed feminist critics as grim-faced ideologues who are destroying the study of literature. Feminists, they claim, reduce art to politics and are hostile to any form of aesthetic pleasure.

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### About the Author

**Rita Felski** is a professor of English at the University of Virginia. She is the author of *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, *The Gender of Modernity*, and *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*.

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#### **Stephen Ross:**

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#### **Carlos Moses:**

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#### **Joseph Whitely:**

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