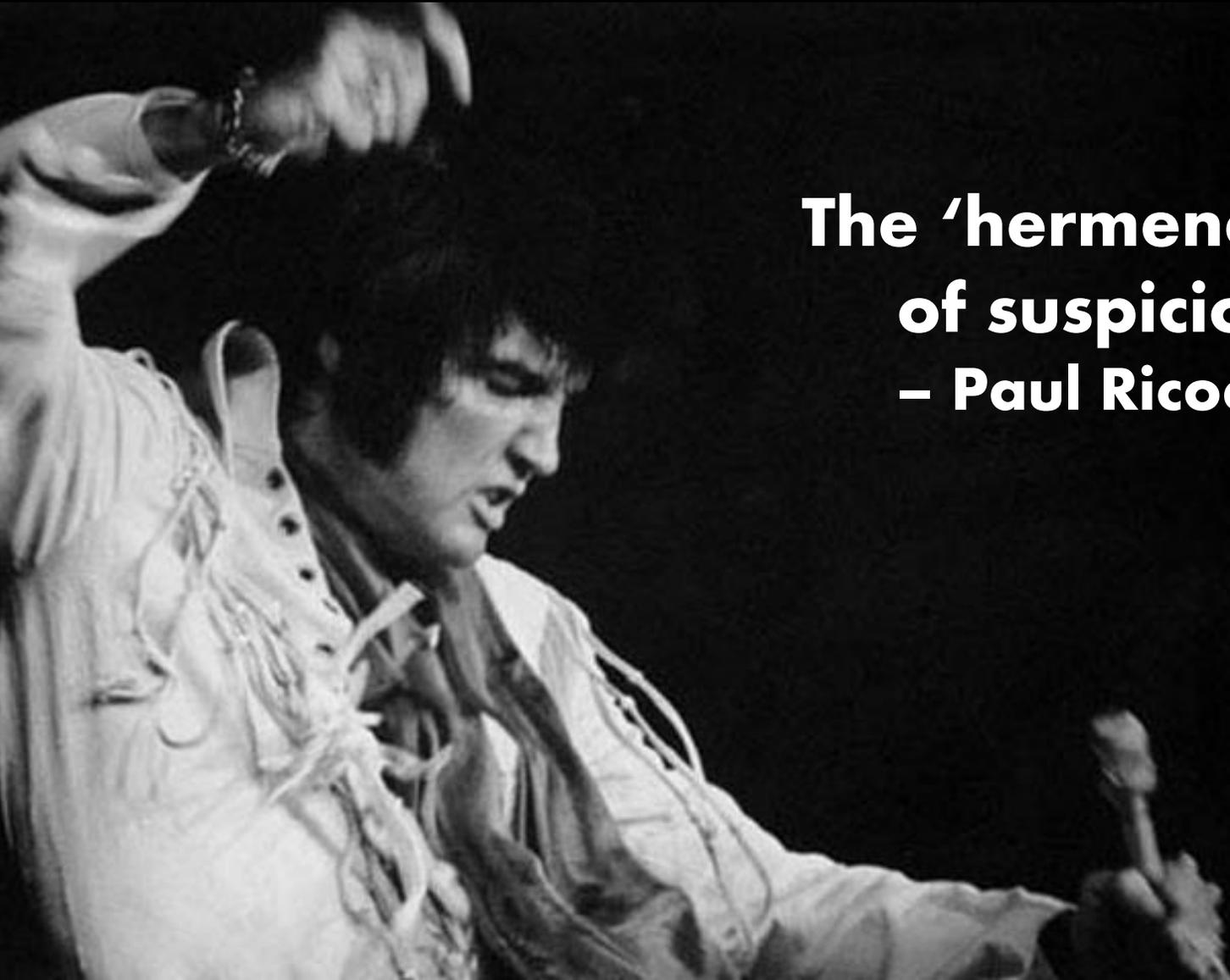


**With Suspicious
Intent:
Teaching the Pleasures
of Short Fiction**

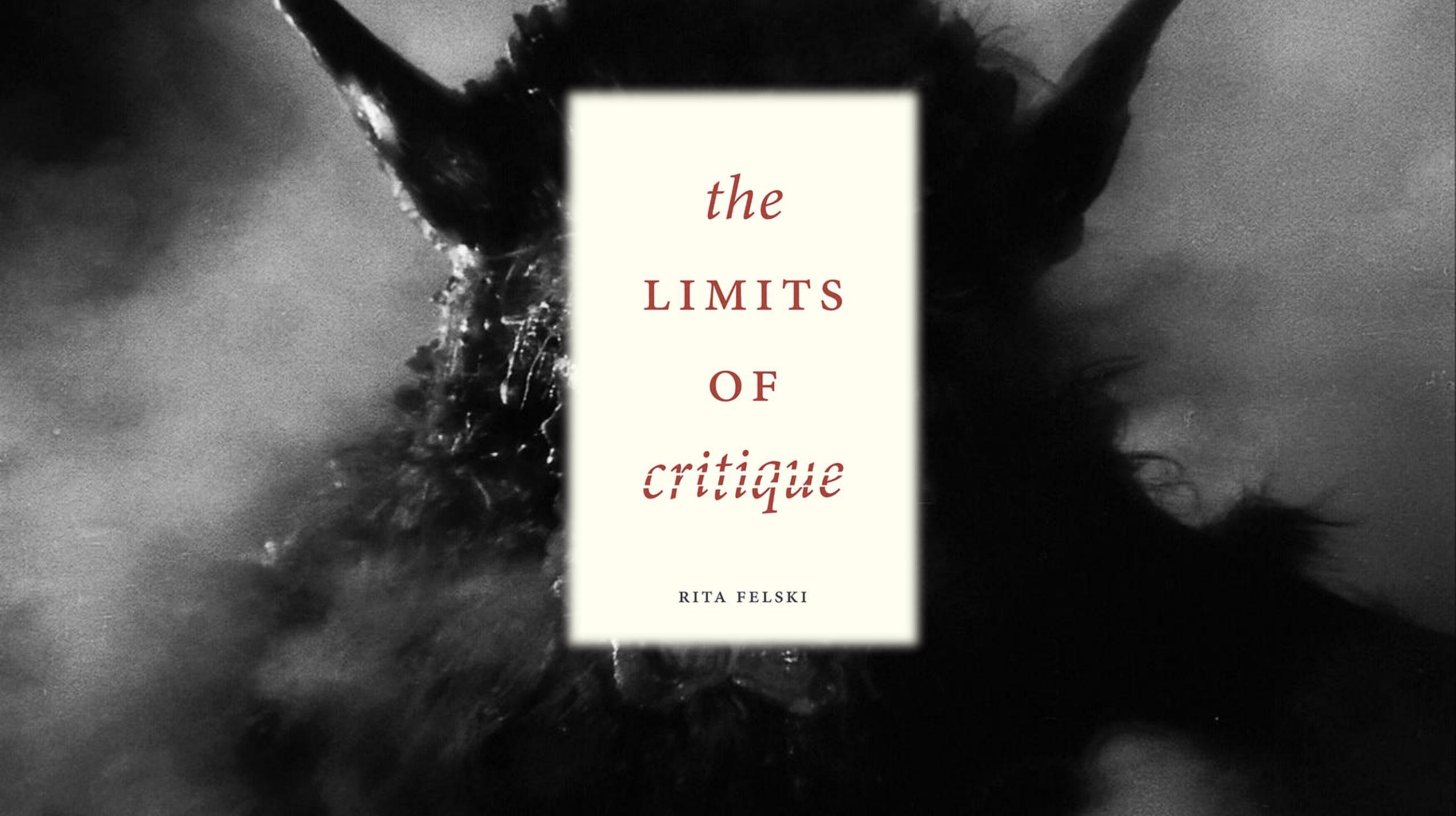
Kerry Myler, Newman University

Suspicious minds...



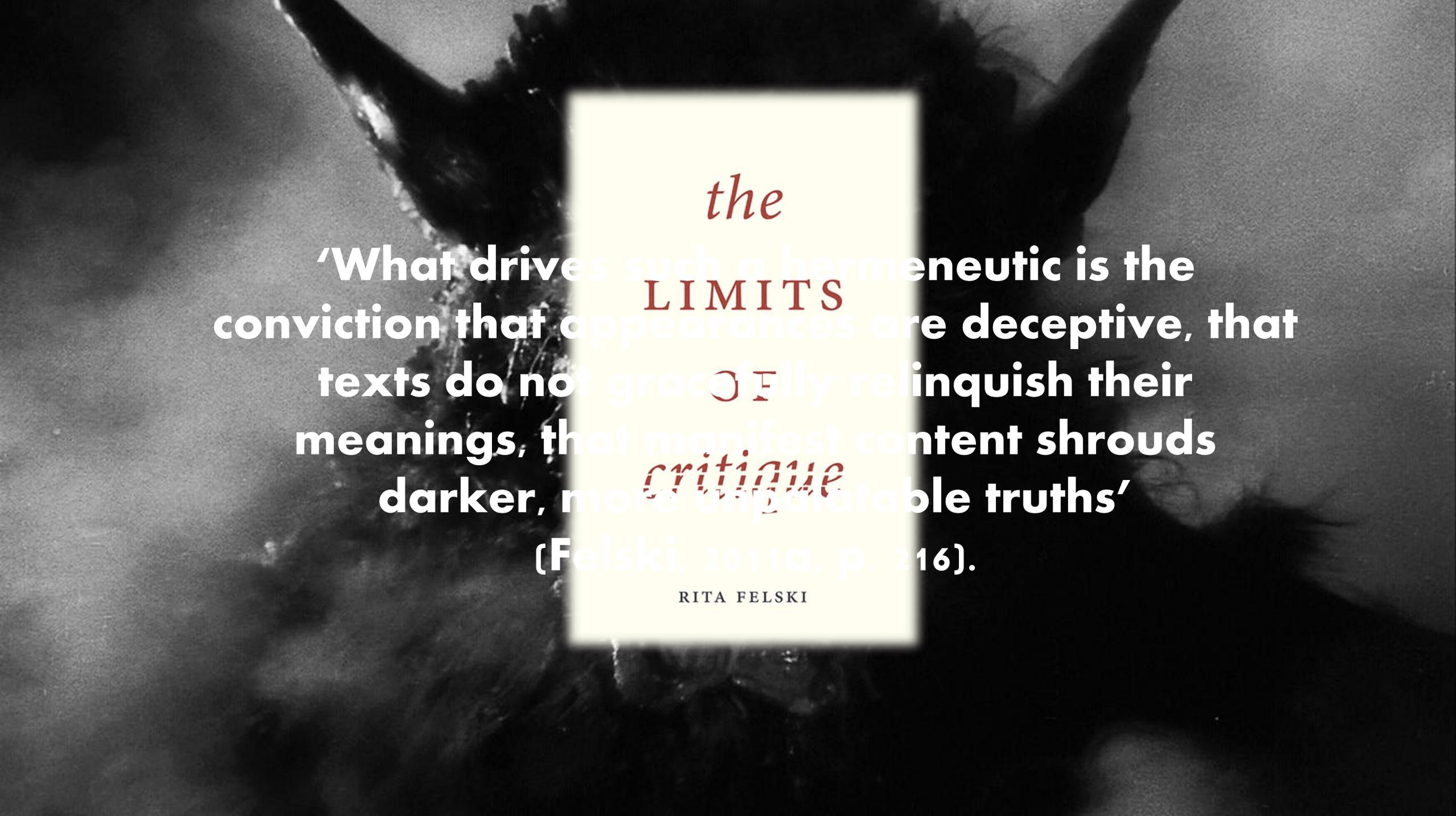
**The 'hermeneutics
of suspicion'
– Paul Ricoeur**





the
LIMITS
OF
critique

RITA FELSKI

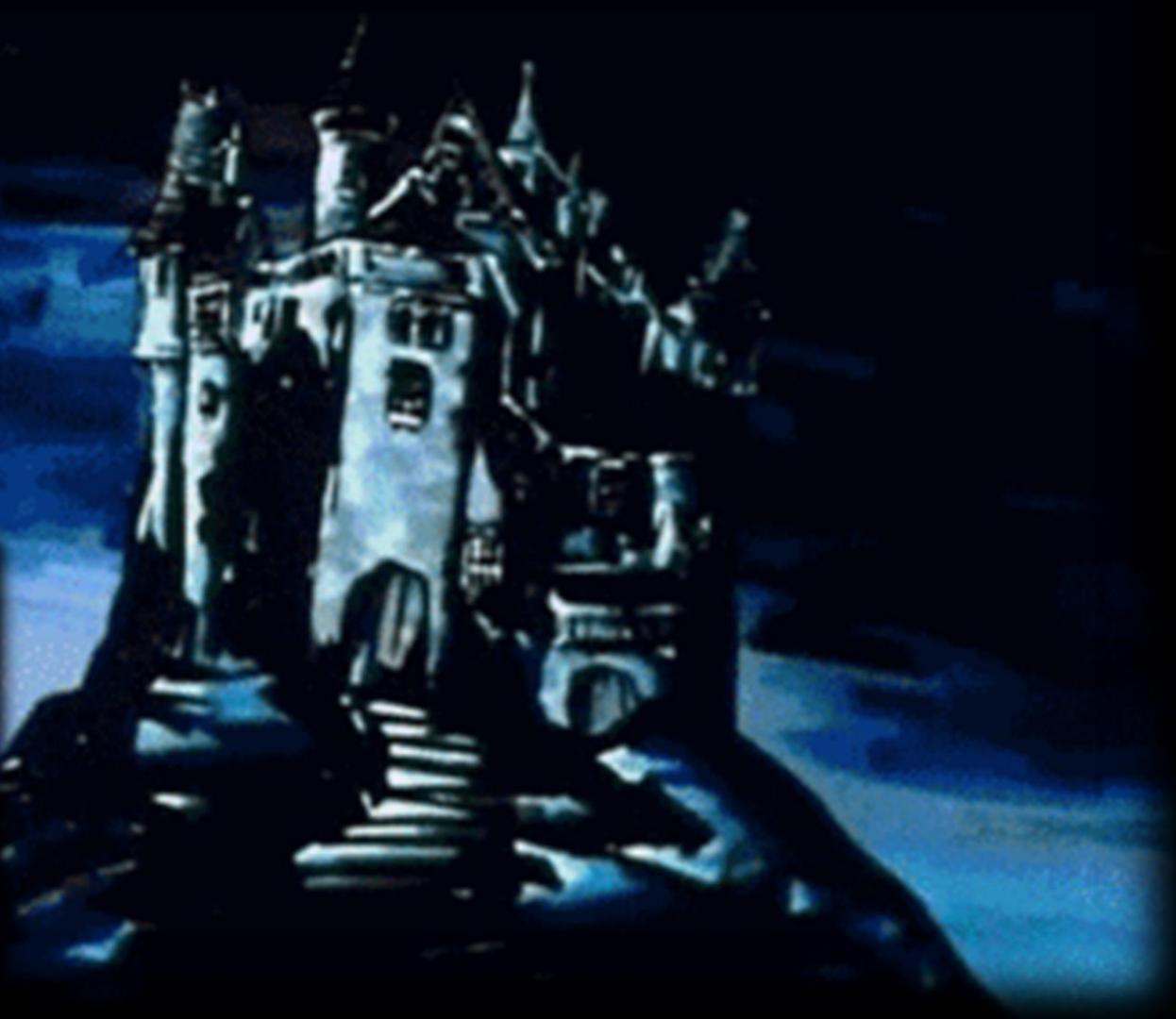


the

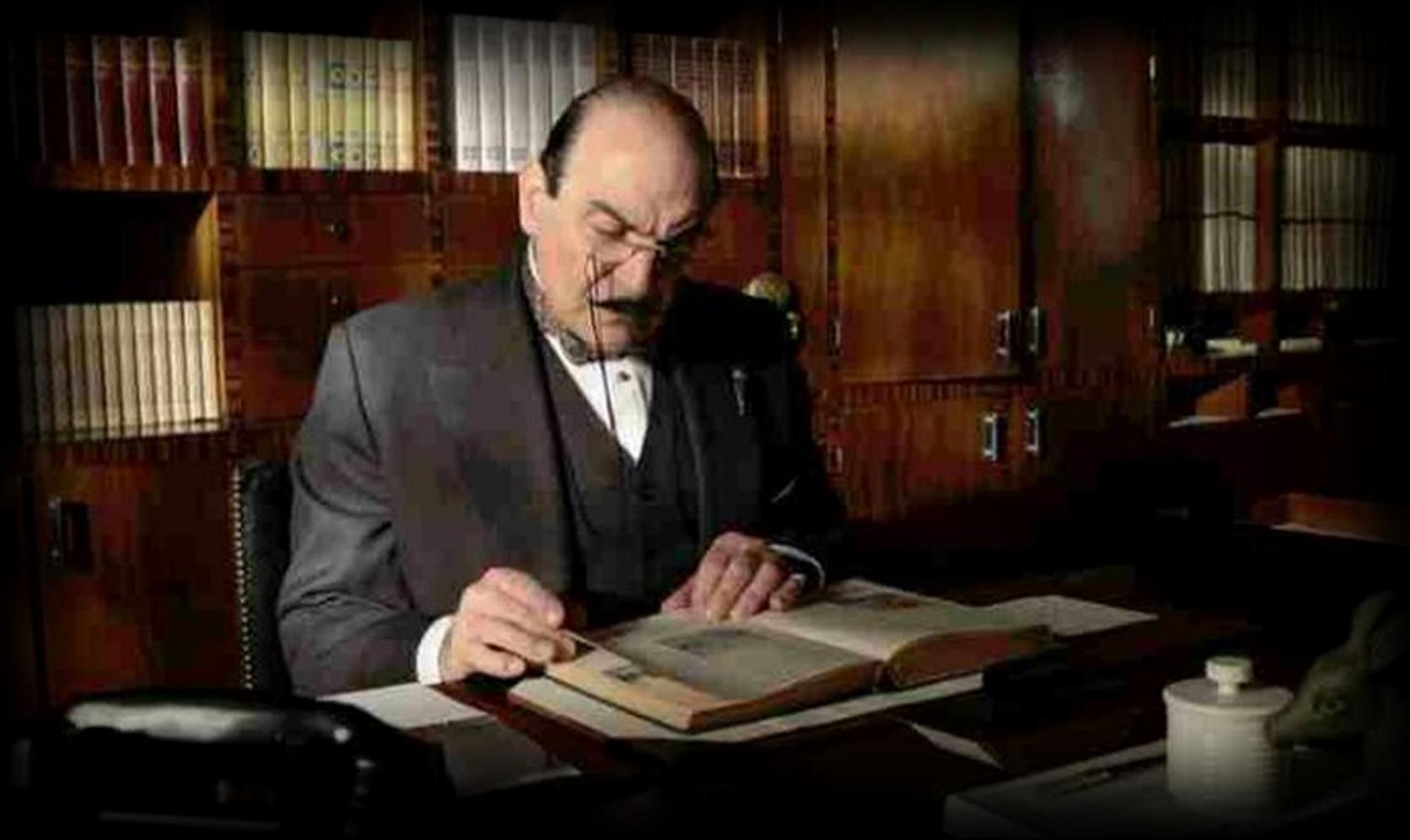
'What drives such a hermeneutic is the conviction that appearances are deceptive, that texts do not gracefully relinquish their meanings, that manifest content shrouds darker, more unpalatable truths'

(Felski, 2011a, p. 216).

RITA FELSKI







Is it not evident to even the most guileless of graduate students that texts do not willingly yield up their meanings, that apparent content shrouds more elusive or ominous truths? Seizing the upper hand, critics read against the grain and between the lines; their self-appointed task is to draw out what a text fails—or willfully refuses—to see.

(Felski, 2015, p. 1).



Unchecked by counterforces, locked into a complacent and self-confirming circle of augmentation, a hermeneutics of suspicion dissipates its problem-solving powers and loses much of its allure. It no longer tells us what we do not know; it singularly fails to surprise. (Felski, 2011b, p. 231)



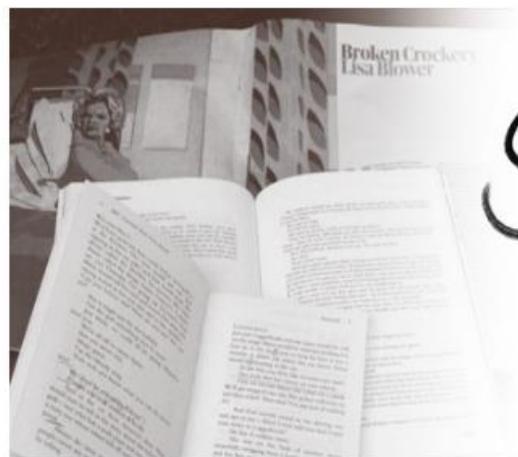
Welcome to ENU520-FEB2016

Open to Interpretation: Theory and Fiction II



Welcome to ENU508-FEB2016

Welcome to



Short Fiction

With? Kerry Myler

When? Semester 2

Where? Check your MyNewman timetable





'driven by
in search of

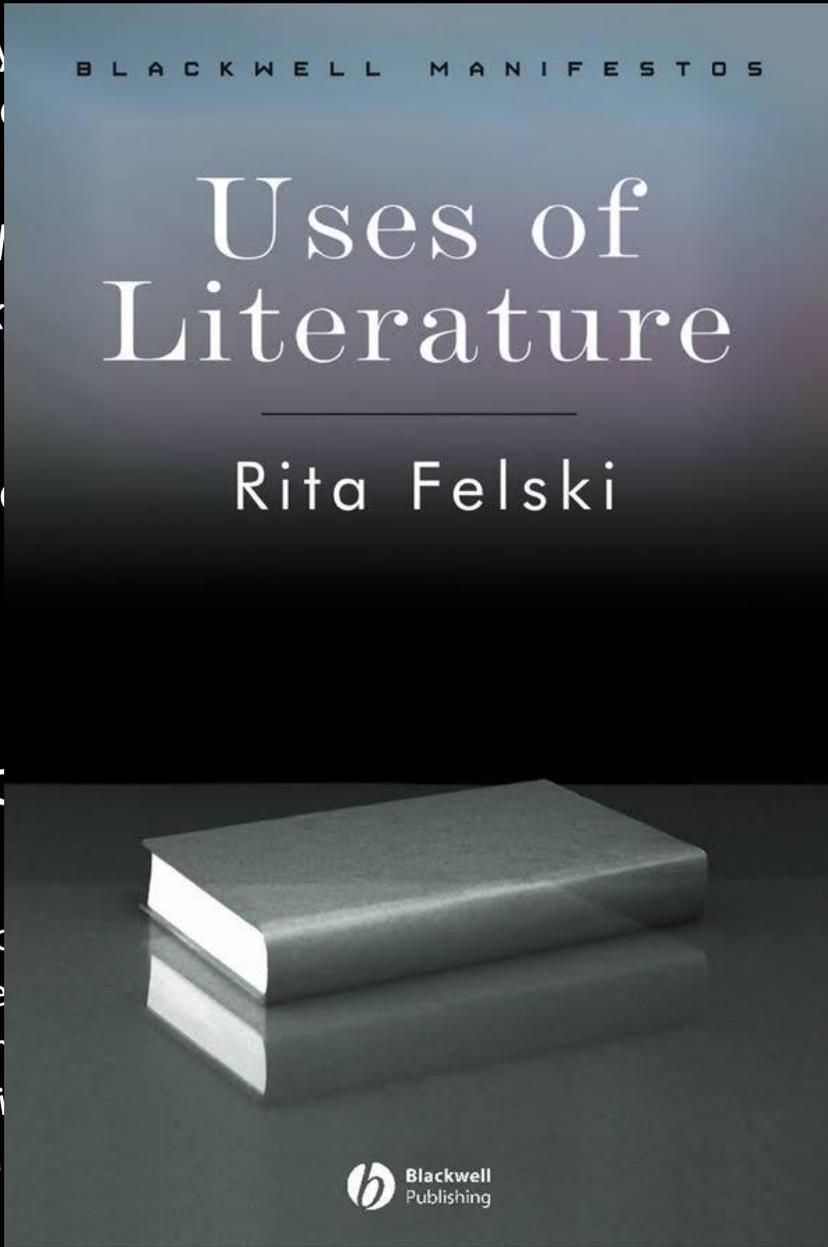
Nikolas Kompridis's 'receptivity', d
to let ourselves be 'marked, struck
we read' (Felski, 2013, p. 21).

'hermeneutics of

'unmasking' 'unveiling'

'postc

Ellis Hanson - 'being not so much deep c
food, the pleasure for Hanson lies more
swallowing ... Hanson both practices an
that renounces the will-to-possess whi
delay, distraction, and deferral' (Felski



to the text

ent of the text, reflecting on what it unfurls,
makes possible' (Felski, 2013, p. 22).

orative reading', Sharon
ading' and Timothy Bewes's
g' (Felski, 2012a)

phen Connor - 'beyond the deciphering of
tical or hidden meaning to encompass a wider
of actions and processes – including a sense
tting-into-practice, as when one interprets a
al score or a dramatic character.
etation, in this view, is less a matter of
ion than of performance or actualization'
(2014, viii).

Bruno Latour and 'non-human actors'

'... a way of thinking about art works as "non-human actors" that neither reflect or subvert hidden social forces but that come together with many other actors in changing constellations of affiliation and attachment' (Felski, 2013, p. 22).



aces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white. White feet toes joined like sewn heels together right angle invisible. Eyes alone
cover given blue light blue almost white. Murmur only just almost never one second perhaps not alone. Given rose only just bare w
ody fixed one yard white on white invisible. All white all known murmurs only just almost never always the same white invisible. Bare
hite body fixed ping elsewhere. Only the eyes only just light blue almost white fixed front. Ping murmur only just almost never one s
rhaps a way out. Head naught eyes light blue almost white fixed front ping murmur ping silence. Eyes holes light blue almost white
outh white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmur perhaps a nature one second almost never that much memory almost never. White
alls each its trace grey blur signs no meaning light grey almost white. Light heat all known all white planes meeting invisible. Ping mu
ly just almost never one second perhaps a meaning that much memory almost never. White feet toes joined like sewn heels togethe
ght angle ping elsewhere no sound. Hands hanging palms front legs joined like sewn. Head naught eyes holes light blue almost white
ont silence within. Ping elsewhere always there but that known not. Eyes holes light blue alone uncover given blue light blue almost
ly colour fixed front. All white all known white planes shining white ping murmur only just almost never one second light time that m
emory almost never. Bare white body fixed one yard ping fixed elsewhere white on white invisible heart breath no sound. Only the e
ven blue light blue almost white fixed front only colour alone uncover. Planes meeting invisible one only shining white infinite but th
own not. Nose ears while holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmurs only just almost never one second always the s
known. Given rose only just bare white body fixed one yard invisible all known without within. Ping perhaps a nature one image sar
one a little less blue and white in the wind. White ceiling shining white one square yard never seen ping perhaps away out there one
cond ping silence. Traces alone uncover given black grey blurs signs no meaning grey light almost white always the same. Ping perha
t alone one second with image always the silence. Given rose only just nails fallen white over. Long hair fallen white invisible over. W
ars invisible same white as flesh torn of old given rose only just. Ping image only just almost never one second light time blue and wh
e wind. Head naught nose ears white holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible over. Only the eyes given blue fixed front light blue
most white only colour alone uncover. Light heat white planes shining white one only shining white infinite but that known not. Ping
ature only just almost never one second with image same time a little less blue and white in the wind. Traces blues light grey eyes ho
ht blue almost white fixed front ping a meaning only just almost never ping silence. Bare white one yard fixed ping fixed elsewhere n
und legs joined like sewn heels together right angle hands hanging palms front. Head naught eyes holes light blue almost white fixe
ont silence within. Ping elsewhere always there but that known not. Ping perhaps not alone one second with image same time a littl



James Hannaham

American, born Bronx, New York. 1968–

Planet 2011

Found object

Entire contents of the planet Earth

5,972,000,000,000,000,000 tons

Gift of the artist

Planet, one of Hannaham's first wall placard pieces, presents the world as a found object, thus subordinating physicality to text on a relatively small card. In this way, the artist plays with the idea that the text on a wall placard can dominate the experience of a viewer, encouraging us to interact viscerally or emotionally with the work. This may help us to understand or justify the work's meaning, often in order to figure out or even de-familiarize it. Museum-goers may also informally assess an artwork on the fame of the artist, their judgment of his or her materials with which the work was fabricated, the artist's creation, and other factors.

In addition to complicating our relationship to the world by re-framing it as an art object, *Planet* asks us to consider our own existence as well. The world is indeed a found object, one with which we are expected to interact successfully. The piece suggests, as a work of art we must strive to understand without guidance from museum curators. Indirectly, Hannaham asks us to consider our world a commodity produced by a human hand, which may cause spectators to question the value of the world as world history, private property, mass culture, se-



James Hannaham

American, born Bronx, New York. 1968–

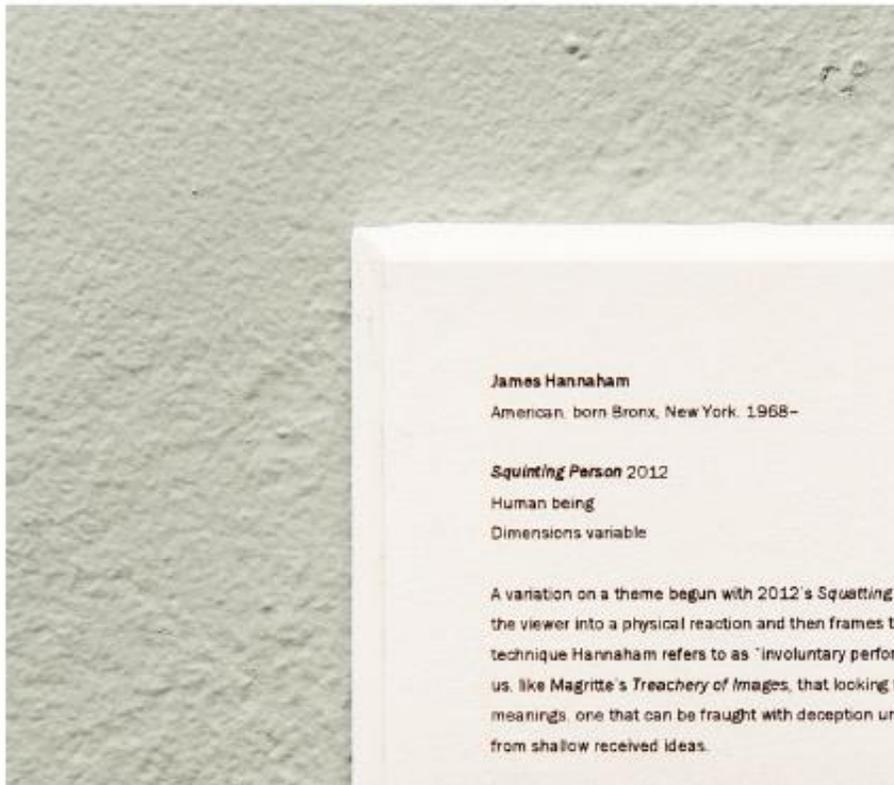
Squatting Person 2012

Human being

Dimensions variable

The nature of authority and the manifestation of power through seemingly benign forms such as advertising and signage inform much of Hannaham's work. *Squatting Person*, a short piece of text mounted very low on the wall, compels viewers to lower their bodies to a level on which the piece becomes legible, predicting their reaction as well as their posture. The piece then reverses expectations by framing the viewer's physicality as the artwork itself, thus increasing the likelihood that they will feel manipulated. In this way, the piece exposes the way in which informational material in common areas—airports, malls, departments of motor vehicles—moves viewers through a space,

'Hannaham performs an ingenious reversal: the subject illuminated by the plaques ends up being us, the reader-viewers. And our experience of reading and viewing them—in what order we choose, in what state we're in that day or night, in what company, in what mood, in what weather, is the narrative. It's different for each of us, and it changes every time. The experience has something in common with theater, a medium Hannaham worked in for many years' (Egan, 2015).



James Hannaham

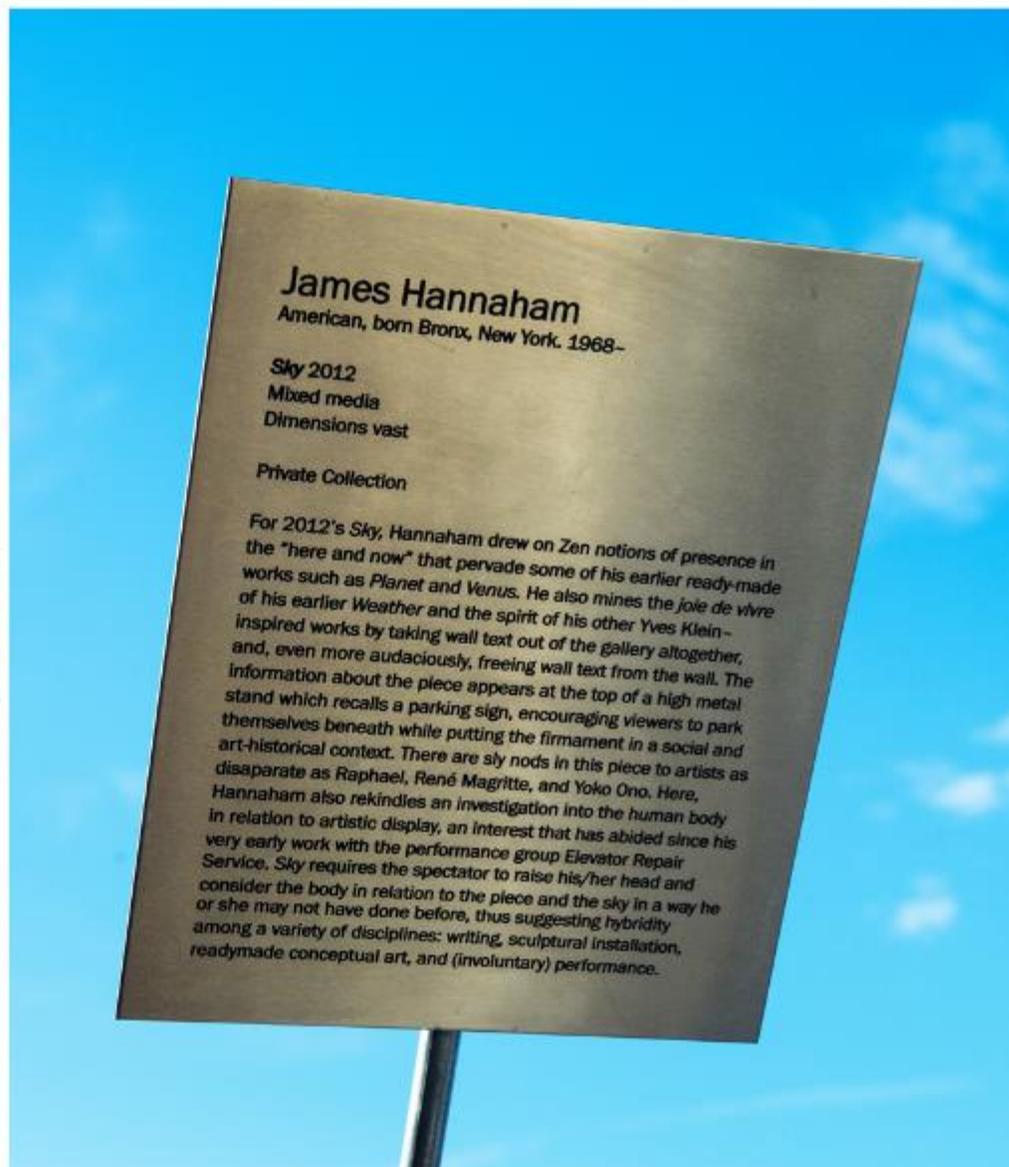
American, born Bronx, New York. 1968-

***Squinting Person* 2012**

Human being

Dimensions variable

A variation on a theme begun with 2012's *Squinting*, the viewer into a physical reaction and then frames the technique Hannaham refers to as "involuntary performance," like Magritte's *Treachery of Images*, that looking for meanings, one that can be fraught with deception unless the viewer liberates him or herself from shallow received ideas.



James Hannaham

American, born Bronx, New York. 1968-

***Sky* 2012**

Mixed media

Dimensions vast

Private Collection

For 2012's *Sky*, Hannaham drew on Zen notions of presence in the "here and now" that pervade some of his earlier ready-made works such as *Planet* and *Venus*. He also mines the *joie de vivre* of his earlier *Weather* and the spirit of his other Yves Klein-inspired works by taking wall text out of the gallery altogether, and, even more audaciously, freeing wall text from the wall. The information about the piece appears at the top of a high metal stand which recalls a parking sign, encouraging viewers to park themselves beneath while putting the firmament in a social and art-historical context. There are sly nods in this piece to artists as disparate as Raphael, René Magritte, and Yoko Ono. Here, Hannaham also rekindles an investigation into the human body in relation to artistic display, an interest that has abided since his very early work with the performance group Elevator Repair Service. *Sky* requires the spectator to raise his/her head and consider the body in relation to the piece and the sky in a way he or she may not have done before, thus suggesting hybridity among a variety of disciplines: writing, sculptural installation, readymade conceptual art, and (involuntary) performance.

References

Felski, R.,

'Context Stinks!', *New Literary History* 42.4 (2011a)

'Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion', *M/C* 15.1 (2012a)

'Digging Down and Standing Back', *English Language Notes* 51.2 (2013)

'Introduction', *New Literary History* 45.2 (2014)

'Introduction', *New Literary History* 43.3 (2012b)

***The Limits of Criticism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015)**

'Suspicious Minds', *Poetics Today* 32.2 (2011b)

Egan, Jennifer, 'Editor's Note', *Recommended Reading*, Issue 101 (2015) <http://recommendedreading.tumblr.com/post/83610069418/jennifer-egan-recommends-card-tricks-by-james> (Accessed 12.5.2016)

Lodge, David, *The Novelist at the Crossroads* (London: Routledge, 1986)

March-Russell, P., *The Short Story: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012)