

Benjamin:

A classic text dealing with that classic proto-metropolis: Paris. Interactivity between a series of events and transformations are linked together to form the object of Benjamin's fascination. Haussmannization, the Arcades, the *flaneur* (dandyism), public and private space, and finally its relation to the political sphere as well as (and an implicit part of) the greater urban ("cultural") "eye" (I?). As history of art: he discusses the contextual activity of specific historical actions. Appears as a critique of recent history/Benjamin's present. He writes having lived through it (parts of it); and in one sense, he writes from a specific point of view about a specific group/class. Still, Benjamin appears to me to be more closely aligned with "sociology" than "art history" - a comment I make knowing full well that Pollock would take me to task for it.

Clark:

I enjoyed this. (I feel silly for saying such things as there's an element built into our program that silently condones or rejects certain texts. Should I like the "wrong" thing I run the risk of intellectual eviction!) Clark's chapter is both a contextual history (what did Manet's contemporaries say?) and a recent history (Clark's mentioning of why no one saw the cultural/political/social statement Manet had made). On one hand, his discourse strikes me as being very thorough. On the other, I'm always a little dubious of such perfectly clear hindsight. The article does make its point well, even if not briefly. As a historical analysis I could drearily accept it; though maybe only because lately I'm dubious of all history so as not to be bothered by the particularities of Clark's. It is, I believe, one way to read and view Manet's work. It might even be accurate! The problem is in the historical documents rendering the specific ideas Clark is looking for. Then again, it is reminiscent of the issues surrounding the analysis of "Las Meninas".

Pollock:

Fabulous. Both her article in Fernie (her introduction, really) and in the reader. Regarding the "Introduction", her outline for feminist "method" appeals to me. In part, because it strikes me as a good way to view any number of things besides feminism. It also goes a long way towards answering a question that was formulated when I read Salomon's article. In some ways I wish I could read them together, side by side. The Reader article then becomes a good application of the more general ideas from her "Introduction". Of special note to me were both the dialogue between the older system of art history method, and the new interpretation in light of a recontextualization that Pollock offers. This dialogue allowed me to see both the shortcomings specific to the reification of women artists historically as well as a "new" history that read its *objects* in a light more familiar to themselves - and hence more educating for me. The exploration of "interior space" is, for me, becoming less about the discovery of feminine space and more about the exhumation of the rest of my existence. (Although it does the job of writing feminist critical history - my being a "man/individual" tends to create a different but equally astonishing aspect of historical exploration.)

(530 words)