



From Lowbrow to Nobrow

Peter Swirski

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Swirski begins with a series of groundbreaking questions about the nature of popular fiction, vindicating it as an artform that expresses and reflects the aesthetic and social values of its readers. He follows his insightful introduction to the socio-aesthetics of genre literature with a synthesis of the century long debate on the merits of popular fiction and a study of genre informed by analytic aesthetics and game theory. Swirski then turns to three "nobrow" novels that have been largely ignored by critics. Examining the aesthetics of "artertainment" in Karel Capek's *War with the Newts*, Raymond Chandler's *Playback*, and Stanislaw Lem's *Chain of Chance*, crossover tours de force, *From Lowbrow to Nobrow* throws new light on the hazards and rewards of nobrow traffic between popular forms and highbrow aesthetics.

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