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can explain our emotional reactions to fiction. Goldman agrees with Nichols that pretense representations elicit mental states that are very similar to the genuine states they mimic but claims that these are better explained by enactment imagination, which has as its aim the production of states that replicate genuine states.

He then moves on to consider some of the issues that have been raised about the role of simulation in our involvement with fiction. Beginning with the paradox of fiction, Goldman disputes the claim that we do not have genuine emotional responses to fiction. Taking an approach similar to that of Jenefer Robinson, he rejects the judgmentalist (or cognitive) theory of emotion, which makes belief an essential component of all emotions. The basis of this rejection is empirical, namely, the findings discussed in Chapter 6 on emotional contagion and FaBER. Although work has already begun on the relevance to aesthetics of this research on mirroring, including work by Goldman, there is still much more to do. As we learn more about the mechanisms involved in transmitting emotions, our understanding of why and how we react to fictions will increase.

After concluding that our emotional responses to fiction are genuine, Goldman considers simulation (or empathy) as explanations for them. He first examines Noël Carroll's arguments for rejecting the view that our emotional responses to characters are based on perspective taking or simulation. Although he says that Carroll has good reasons for his position, he claims that there are other reasons for thinking simulation plays a role in our involvement with fiction. Drawing on Currie's account, he explains that we can simulate a hypothetical observer (or reader) of fact who experiences the narrative events as facts. This does not mean we cannot also simulate characters' perspectives. We can, and there is a growing body of empirical research suggesting that we do. If both types of simulation occur, then Carroll's concerns can be addressed.

The final section of the chapter on aesthetics comprises Goldman's responses to Matthew Kieran's objections to the simulation theory of fictional engagement. He characterizes Kieran's construal of simulation theory as unnecessarily strong, since few if any simulation theorists claim that simulation is needed for understanding characters or that simulation is the only mode of engagement with fictions. Goldman then challenges Kieran's grounds for claiming that readers acquire deep and sophisticated understanding of narratives without simulation and argues that the question of whether a process of simulation or one involving inference is at work is not one that can be answered through armchair theorizing.

Goldman's treatment of topics in aesthetics demonstrates why aestheticians should read this

book. Issues and research in philosophy of mind have important implications for the philosophy of art, and aestheticians, particularly those who are empirically minded, cannot afford to ignore this literature. Goldman has already performed the enormous task of refining and systematizing a huge amount of data and revealing its relevance to various problems and debates in philosophy and psychology. He has also begun to draw connections between this research and problems in philosophy of art.

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JOSELIT, DAVID. *Feedback: Television against Democracy*. MIT Press, 2007, xvi + 214 pp., 53 b&w illus., \$19.95 cloth.

Histories of video art often begin with studies of Nam June Paik's disruptions of the conventions of television viewing in order to establish that video is not television, and then go on to address video art in art historical categories, as if the disciplinary complications entailed by video—between art, pop culture, technology, and mass communication—had been effectively neutralized. In *Feedback: Television against Democracy*, David Joselit adopts a contrary tack. He seizes upon the complicated nature of video, as both a fine art and a commercial mass media, to examine the politics of aesthetics. And he takes the work of early video artists, including Paik, Andy Warhol, Joan Jonas, and others, as the point of departure for critically engaging television and rethinking art history as a resource for activism.

What interests me most about Joselit's study is the formulation of his problem and the methodology he develops to address it. Joselit brings together the art historical dilemmas presented by the amorphous pluralism of contemporary art and the confused state of politics since 1989, in which there seems to be no remaining vantage point from which to critique the institutions of capitalism and liberal democracy. Art historians, he contends, too often still rely on Marxist categories inherited from the Frankfurt School to explain the significance of artworks in quasi-revolutionary terms. Instead he "take(s) it as axiomatic that there is no longer a position outside capitalism in the United States, and that under such conditions, facile revolutionary claims for art (not to mention television) are little more than posing" (p. 30). Whether one entirely concedes the exhaustion of Marxist critical theory or not, Joselit's argument finds further support in contemporary art. In its heterogeneity, the work of artists no longer stands strictly opposed to products of the "culture industry." By

bringing televisions into the gallery, Paik not only elevated video to an art form, but he also corrupted the field of art with the paradigmatic consumer technology. And Warhol not only painted soup can labels but also lent his talents to produce television commercials and his name to endorse consumer goods. Not only is there no longer a clearly defined social horizon for resistance to capitalism, but also it may be no longer possible *even to imagine* a world altogether beyond the demands of commodity exchange.

Joselit contends that this calls for a novel critical theory that would be both more true to the place of art in contemporary society and, in this honesty, reinvigorate the political possibilities articulated by artworks. Against the Frankfurt School's concept of "reification," which, he contends, reduces the commodity form to an absolute stasis, he draws upon the works of Paul Virillo, Homi Bhabha, Arjun Appadurai, and others to argue that the politics of contemporary culture would be better understood in terms of *the tension between commodities and networks*. He offers a synopsis of the structure of broadcast television in which he outlines the mutual implication of the two and argues that, while commodities coalesce networks (of information and social relationships) in apparently fixed objects, their coimplication also presents the contrary possibility, that is, to dissolve commodities into the networks they otherwise stabilize. In the process, the commodity form would be not altogether overcome, but objects might be set in motion along new trajectories and infused with novel social significances.

At the same time, Joselit works to surmount contemporary disciplinary disputes between art history and the emerging field of visual culture, in which conventional, formal analyses of artistic productions are suspended in favor of considerations of commercial artifacts, new technologies, and modes of aesthetic consumption. He contends the terms in these debates are too fixed and proposes to move beyond the opposition, central to them, between fine and commercial art, by reconceiving the distinction between *medium* and *media*. Rather than the material substrate of artwork, Joselit follows Rosalind Krauss in thinking of 'medium' in terms of the recursive, self-limiting conditions of cultural practices. And to define 'media,' he appeals to Marshall McLuhan's concept of 'ratio,' as the dialectical effect that distinct technologies have on one another. Rather than simply distinguished, for Joselit, 'medium' and 'media' address the dynamics of inner and outer direction, which play complimentary roles in constituting the practices, audiences, and institutional frameworks of diverse phenomena. And he brings them together in his central concept, *feedback*, which he explains as the figure that arises from the interaction between medium and media.

Joselit conceives history on the model of television technology as "a scanned image whose apparent stasis is in constant motion—a fabric that at every moment is being undone and replenished" (p. 63). Accordingly, historical changes take place not through revolutions along a teleological path, but through interferences in the play of presence and absence that constitutes experience. And diverse fields do not stand simply segregated from one another, but help define one another through the dynamics of their interactions. He explains his art historical approach as an "eco-formalism," in which the study of discrete images gives way to considerations of whole ecologies as the fundamental units of analysis; and yet the formal concerns of art history are not abandoned in favor of what would ultimately amount to sociology. Instead, he studies artworks alongside other cultural productions as disruptions, which resonate throughout these broader ecologies, by (re)defining the fundamental dynamics of figure and ground that structure them as fields. "Art," he contends, "stands against television as figure stands against ground, and television, in its privatization of public speech . . . stands against democracy" (p. xi). Completing the hermeneutical circle, he then concludes: in this era of politics conducted largely through media icons, democracy stands against the background provided by art.

Joselit's interdisciplinary approach fills his book with analyses of richly diverse phenomena, which provide provocative compliments to one another and together articulate *aesthetic strategies for social and political change in ontological terms*. Feedback is, for Joselit, a figure not only for aesthetic form but furthermore for *politically sovereign subjectivity itself*. His interest in television as an impediment to democracy concerns not the limited distortions it produces in the already established, empirical field of politics, as one might find in a piece of more conventional political science, but its role in constituting identities and communities as such. And he explores the work of artists not merely as potentially applicable to activism, but as the articulation of subject positions fundamental to social and political life.

By transforming standard broadcast images into swirling colored lines, and constructing raging, oversaturated montages on walls of televisions, Joselit contends Paik reversed the dynamics of figure and ground in the structure of television viewing and not only revealed new dimensions of the visual field, but also disrupted "the nature of objectivity at its very roots" (p. 50). In this way, Joselit explains Paik's video-works as inheritors of the ontologically destabilizing project inaugurated by Duchamp's readymades. But he also connects Paik's work to 1960s counterculture and invests it with explicit social significance. He compares Paik's videos to the ecstasies

of psychedelic drugs, ties his techniques to the existential, political, street theater of Haight-Ashbury's *The Diggers*, and traces a broader map of experiments in transforming social consciousness with expanded media, through work by Ken Kesey, Stan Brakhage, and others.

Similarly, Joselit argues that pieces by Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas, Vito Acconci, and Peter Campus tear figure and ground out of alignment and render the video image conspicuous as a construct. The effect, he argues, is not a self-conscious opening onto reality, but rather the liberation of the image as a vehicle for forming identities—"as a process, not a televisual presence" (p. 163). And he takes issue with Rosalind Krauss's now classical argument that video is fundamentally narcissistic. Instead, Joselit contends, "video's medium is community," insofar as it constitutes the collective identities that provide the foundation for social formations (p. 105). On this basis, he provocatively explores Abby Hoffman's and Andy Warhol's respective engagements with media celebrity and follows Huey Newton's lead in tracing the figures of political agency in a film by Melvin Van Peebles. By engaging and articulating media identities, Joselit contends these three, in their distinct ways, were engaged in community building.

Joselit's writing is lucid, and he works out a remarkably cohesive theory of art history and the politics of aesthetics. The only significant problems I find with his book concern the substance of the matter and my ultimate disagreement with the idealism of his position. If Frankfurt School Marxists recognized the importance of culture in constituting social formations, rather than dismissing it merely as an epiphenomenal superstructure determined by a material base, Joselit does away with considerations of material bases altogether. To speak in this way of ideal and material phenomena is perhaps to maintain the kind of theoretical distinction that Joselit generally works to dissolve, but, in his appeal to image and information networks, he decidedly collapses the opposition in favor of one of its terms. To his credit, Joselit acknowledges the need to consider the investments that inform distinct artworks and cultural practices; but this is the one promise of his methodology on which he does not make good. He examines the structures of images, without reference to the social, psychological, and economic forces that produce them and sustain their enjoyment. So, while I found his analyses generally compelling, he did an injustice to political groups like the Black Panthers by treating them almost exclusively as "media activists" (p. 144), and he claimed too much for the authority of images by arguing that they themselves constitute subject positions and communities, rather than merely playing an essential role in the process.

Joselit's study also verges on abandoning critical praxis in favor of speculative synthesis. He employs his interdisciplinary strategies almost exclusively for the sake of comparison, without working out the disjunctions necessary to define the objects in question. For example, when he relates Paik's video to 1960s counterculture, he never questions whether counterculture is a politically potent force, whether it is in fact progressive, or whether it is an instrument and effect of dominant institutions. What about the contrary example provided by the merging of artist's video and counterculture with the development of MTV in the 1980s? Did this not instead mark a further refinement in the commodity form, as popular songs were reduced to soundtracks for their own advertisements? And what about contrary examples from the history of video art? In the end, Joselit offers fairly conventional readings of canonical, early, artist's video, which indeed maintained a dissonant opposition to mass culture. But has it continued to maintain this dissonance, as it has emerged as a predominant art form? To the contrary, does not much video art—including work by Pipilotti Rist and Mathew Barney—further extend the spectacles of consumer culture into the museum? The tendency to relinquish critique in favor of speculative synthesis may be a danger in interdisciplinary studies, insofar as they might seem to allow one to shift focus before establishing the intradisciplinary contrasts that would give an object concrete determinacy. But, in the context of Joselit's study, it seems more like a further effect of his idealism. When one supposes that artists and activists can cause "a public to flash into being with feedback" (p. 131), the success, failure, and actual character of those publics cease to be concerns. And the critic is free to map an open-ended field of possible analogues.

In the end, I wonder how one might take into consideration the role of material conflict in social formations and avoid these speculative tendencies without thereby compromising the significant accomplishments of Joselit's excellent book.

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BENSON, STEPHEN. *Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, vii + 175 pp., \$89.95 cloth.

Literary Music: Writing Music in Contemporary Fiction joins the sizable population of studies of the relationships between music and literature. It studies representations of music within fictional literature, taking off from certain assumptions about the structural and ontological elements shared in the