



# The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles

*Hillel Schwartz*

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## **The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles** Hillel Schwartz

The Culture of the Copy is an unprecedented attempt to make sense of our Western fascination with replicas, duplicates, and twins. In a work that is breathtaking in both its synthetic and critical achievements, Hillel Schwartz charts the repercussions of our entanglement with copies of all kinds, whose presence alternately sustains and overwhelms us. Through intriguing, and at times humorous, historical analysis and case studies in contemporary culture, Schwartz investigates most varieties of simulacra, including counterfeits, decoys, mannequins, ditto marks, portraits, genetic cloning, war games, camouflage, instant replays, digital imaging, parrots, photocopies, wax museums, apes, art forgeries, not to mention the very notion of the Real McCoy. At the same time Schwartz works through a range of modernist, feminist, and postmodern theories about copies and mechanical reproduction, posing the following compelling question: How is it that the ethical dilemmas at the heart of so many fields of endeavor have become inseparable from our pursuit of copies -- of the natural world, or our own creations, indeed our very selves? The Culture of the Copy is a stunning, innovative blend of microsociology, cultural history, and philosophical reflection that will fascinate anyone concerned with problems of authenticity, identity, and originality.

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