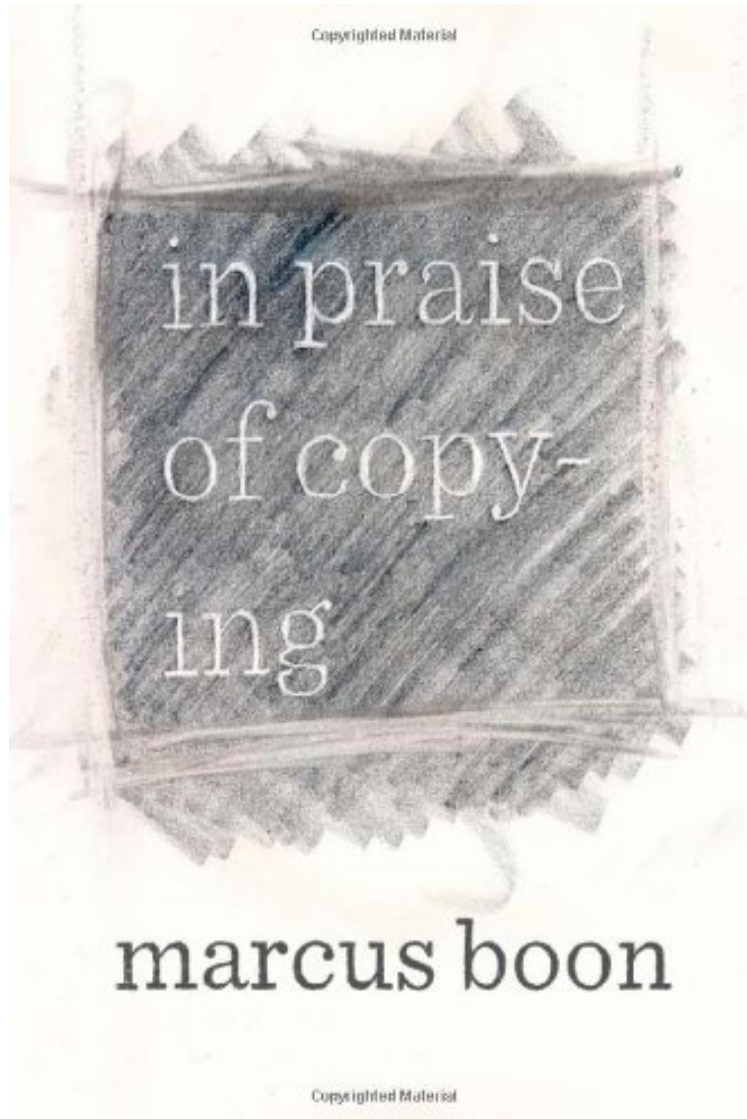


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In Praise of Copying

Marcus Boon

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Marcus Boon : In Praise of Copying before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Praise of Copying:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An engaging and helpful reminder of our imitative nature By Andrew J McKenna The author restores imitation, which Aristotle first labeled as our specific human disposition, to its rightful place: in our imagination, our culture, our actions. This is an important antidote to all the blather about uniqueness and originality that we entertain when we think of human self-expression. The books also includes intriguing information

on copyright issues concerning intellectual property. 0 of 7 people found the following review helpful. What will the world look like when there are enough copies for everyone? By ROROTOKO "In Praise of Copying" is on the ROROTOKO list of cutting-edge intellectual nonfiction. The book interview of Professor Boon ran here as the cover feature on November 10, 2010.

This book is devoted to a deceptively simple but original argument: that copying is an essential part of being human, that the ability to copy is worthy of celebration, and that, without recognizing how integral copying is to being human, we cannot understand ourselves or the world we live in. In spite of the laws, stigmas, and anxieties attached to it, the word copying permeates contemporary culture, shaping discourse on issues from hip hop to digitization to gender reassignment, and is particularly crucial in legal debates concerning intellectual property and copyright. Yet as a philosophical concept, copying remains poorly understood. Working comparatively across cultures and times, Marcus Boon undertakes an examination of what this word means historically, culturally, philosophically and why it fills us with fear and fascination. He argues that the dominant legal-political structures that define copying today obscure much broader processes of imitation that have constituted human communities for ages and continue to shape various subcultures today. Drawing on contemporary art, music and film, the history of aesthetics, critical theory, and Buddhist philosophy and practice, *In Praise of Copying* seeks to show how and why copying works, what the sources of its power are, and the political stakes of renegotiating the way we value copying in the age of globalization.

At last a taboo-breaking "Western" humanities scholar who doesn't just discuss Buddhism, but employs it in a profound rethinking of what it means to copy. Marcus Boon is that very rare thing, someone who doesn't stop thinking for no good reason. Brimming with fresh, accessible insights beckoning the reader into strange depths. Despite its title, *In Praise of Copying* is unique. (Timothy Morton, author of *The Ecological Thought* and *Ecology without Nature*) Bringing Buddhist insights into a startling and necessary conversation with critical theory, Boon challenges our given notions of copying by dissolving them into an illuminating interdependence. From Glen Gould to Louis Vuitton bags (and "Louis Vuitton" bags), from the exuberant mimesis of hip hop to the wisdom of disappropriation, *In Praise of Copying* delves far beneath the legal surface of today's copyright wars to discover a phenomenon that not only defines human culture, but is intrinsic to reality itself. (Erik Davis, author of *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information*) Much has been written on the subject of the copy in recent years, none of it so singularly illuminating as Marcus Boon's *In Praise of Copying*. Where the contemporary intellectual-property debate seeks endlessly to distinguish between good copies and bad, Boon cuts straight to the fatally unasked question at its core: What is a copy? From the evolution of counterfeit handbags to the confounding multiplicities of Being, Boon pursues his answers through rich fields of popular culture, technological history, and philosophy both Eastern and Western. A vast, secret life of the copy is here revealed, a road map through the deepest meanings of our age of mechanical reproduction. (Julian Dibbell, *WIRED Magazine*) German critic Walter Benjamin wrote some immensely influential words on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Luxury fashion houses would say something shorter and sharper and much more legally binding on the rip-off merchants who fake their products. Marcus Boon, a Canadian English professor with an accessible turn of phrase, takes us on an erudite voyage through the theme in a serious but engaging encounter with the ideas of thinkers as varied as Plato, Hegel, Orson Welles, Benjamin, Heidegger, Louis Vuitton, Takashi Murakami and many more, on topics as philosophically taxing and pop-culture-light as mimesis, Christianity, capitalism, authenticity, Uma Thurman's handbag and Disneyland. (Miriam Cosic *The Australian* 2010-10-30) In some ways the disarming modesty and accessibility of Boon's prose--something of a rarity in contemporary scholarship in the humanities that issues from academic presses--disguises its profound ambition. *In Praise of Copying* ranges widely in its interests and seriously and knowledgeably invokes the Western metaphysical tradition, contemporary post-structuralist theory, and the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism to suggest that commonplace distinctions between "genuine" and "fake" or "original" and "copy" compromise rather than enable a comprehensive and responsible understanding of ourselves and the world around us... Boon has a gift for turning the material of the mundane world into the matter of sophisticated intellectual investigation... [This is] a book that deserves real attention and consideration, both in academia and the larger world. (James Williams *PopMatters* 2011-01-12) The issues this excellent book discusses can only become more urgent as a generation comes to power that simply takes a free exchange of information for granted. (Bradley Winterton *Taipei Times* 2011-01-16) Despite its title, Marcus Boon's book is not so much a manifesto as a philosophical meditation on... a world in which Chinese sneaker manufacturers make original Nikes during the day and fake Nikes at night; in which private copyright enforcers "bust" copy shops for selling unauthorized university course packets, while Google Books posts the same texts online with impunity; in which a young student in Rwanda might use a laptop provided free by the Gates Foundation to distribute illegal copies of Microsoft software. In the midst of an astonishing abundance of copies, and almost limitless networks of duplication--what Boon calls *copia*, from a Latin word meaning plenitude--we suffer from a near-hysterical fear of unchecked duplication, in the form of "fakes," bootlegs, plagiarized assignments, counterfeit, or pirated goods... *In Praise of Copying* is too important, and too ambitious, to ignore. (Jess Row *New Republic* online 2011-05-23) Boon

takes a stand in praise of copying, seeing it not as a limitation but as a fundamental, if unappreciated, human preoccupation...The aim of this work is to demonstrate the historical, political, and philosophical advantages of rethinking the how and why of copying, thereby uncovering the roots of its power to help people understand themselves and the world they live in. (J. M. Boyle Choice 2011-09-01)About the AuthorMarcus Boon is Associate Professor of English at York University, Toronto.