

Our Authentically Fake and Hypocritical Society of Copies. Bob Dylan's New Book

By [Edward Curtin](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

Global Research, December 05, 2022

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"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

- Lewis Carroll, Through The Looking-Glass

Sometimes a trifling contretemps can open a window onto significant issues.

As a case in point, *The New York Times*, a newspaper that regularly publishes U.S. propaganda without a bit of shame or remorse, recently [reported](#) on a controversy involving Simon & Schuster and Bob Dylan's new book, *The Philosophy of Modern Song*. The report with the same information was repeated across the media.

The publishing company had offered limited-edition, authenticated, hand-signed copies of the book for \$600 each. Nine Hundred collectors and die-hard fans bought a copy, many, no doubt, caught in hero worship and the thought that a Dylan-penned signature would grant them a bit of his fame through the touch of his hand upon their lives.

The quest for immortality takes many forms, and the laying on of hands, even when done remotely through a signature, has long been a popular form of sleight-of-hand.

I once shook hands with an Elvis hologram impersonator and the thrill vibrated for days.

But these Dylan aficionados noticed something strange about the signatures: They didn't seem to be actual signatures individually written with a pen by Dylan. As anyone knows

from their own handwriting, no two signatures are the same, since the human hand is not a copy machine. These signatures were identical.

It turned out that those who smelled a deception were right. Under pressure from astute purchasers, Simon & Schuster had to come clean – sort of. They offered to refund all purchasers for the deception. They released the following statement:

To those who purchased The Philosophy of Modern Song limited edition, we want to apologize. As it turns out, the limited editions books do contain Bob's original signature, but in a penned replica form. We are addressing this immediately by providing each purchaser with an immediate refund.

This statement is a perfect example of double-talk, and more.

Then Dylan also apologized, saying that he used an auto-pen since he was suffering from vertigo and "during the pandemic, it was impossible to sign anything and the vertigo didn't help." His apology seems sincere compared to the publisher's double-talk, but then again, so did his signatures. And the controversy has spread to the limited edition prints of his artwork.

"Limited edition prints" – a deception in itself, as if limiting the number of copies of an original painting makes them more original. Ten dittos instead of eleven.

However, I am not primarily concerned with the nuances of this tempest in a teapot, which might disappear as fast as yesterday's bluster, or it may forever tarnish Dylan's reputation, which would be a shame if it also damaged the genuine greatness of his songs.

I would like to focus on the following matters that I have seen through its window: language usage, a society of copies, reading texts closely, and the degradation of literacy, all of which are tangled together with non-stop government propaganda disseminated by the corporate mass media to form a major social issue.

First, language. Note in the Simon & Schuster apology the words: "As it turns out, the limited editions books do contain Bob's original signature, but in a penned replica form." This is a clear deception twice over. The books **do not** contain original signatures; they contain machine copies of it. Phrasing it that way allows the company to plead innocent while also apologizing for its innocence as if they consider themselves guilty. What exactly are they saying they are apologizing for? Deceptions dittoed?

And the phrase "As it turns out," implies that Simon & Schuster was surprised that the signatures were machine generated, which is highly improbable. It also suggests they are not responsible; such verbiage approximates the common, passive introductory phrase "it so happens" or the equally non-literate "hopefully" to begin a sentence.

"It so happens" that I am writing these words and "it so happens" that you are reading them...as if we are victims of our own free choices. Passive language for victims of fate who have learned to write and talk this way to avoid responsibility even for their own hope, as in: "I hope." Or maybe the widespread copycat use of "hopefully" is an unconscious attempt to deny pervasive hopelessness. No matter how many times you repeat something doesn't make it true.

The use of such language is a reflection of an age in which determinism has for decades been repeatedly promulgated to extinguish people's belief in freedom. Ditto: Saying "the exact same" doesn't make the same more same through redundancy. You can't get any more same than same since same means identical, or any more opposite than opposite even if you say "the exact opposite." The English language is suffering.

To top it off, an esteemed book publishing company nearly a century old concludes with a sentence that a high school freshman - circa 1960 before all the dumbing-down of schooling - would realize was redundant with the words "immediately" (misplaced) and "immediate," as if repetition would emphasize their contrition. "We are addressing this immediately by providing each purchaser with an immediate refund." Ditto.

But who notices these things?

Discerning readers - whether of the examples above or of a subtle controlled-opposition media article suggesting one thing while meaning another - are becoming rarer and rarer. Ideology, political party allegiances, and plain stupidity block many from grasping propaganda and media claims made out of thin air.

Anonymous sources, subtle phrasing, real or imagined intelligence sources, the use of words such as may, might, possible, could be, etc., are a staple of so much writing and broadcast news that they fly by people used to the speed of the digital life with texting and internet browsing where repetition and copying are king. Yes, speed kills in so many ways. The repetition of talking points across the major corporate media, something carefully studied and confirmed years ago, has become so obvious to anyone who chooses to take the time to investigate. It's not hard to do but few bother; they are too "busy." Thus propaganda and gibberish pass unnoticed.

Just as "The Real McCoy" (see the opening "Refrain" of Hillel Schwartz' [The Culture of the Copy](#)) was a fake and the phrase came to represent the genuine to supposedly confirm authenticity, we are now living in an era of the counterfeit everywhere. Counterfeits of counterfeits. Imposters. Actors playing actors. Counterfeit traitors. Fabricated reality and copies of copies. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Lies about not lying. (See *The New York Times*, *The Guardian's*, etc. deceptive, hypocritical, and self-serving joint [letter](#) asking the U.S. government to end its prosecution of Julian Assange for publishing secrets.)

The Dylan controversy is a very minor example of a major issue that is little appreciated for its devastating impact on society.

For another minor example, we may ask how many times does one have to see the replay of Christian Pulisic's recent goal against Iran in the 2022 World Cup to grasp its brilliance and to see that he was injured? Two, three, five, ten? And this is a sporting event, not some mall shooting or serious issue of war. In a digital high-tech world repetition is the norm. What does repetition do to the mind?

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Despite the great sportsmanship shown by the players from both the U.S. and Iran on the pitch, U.S. Men's Soccer executives, by deleting the Islamic Republic emblem from Iran's flag on its social media sites, and the U.S. media tried repeatedly to politicize the game into a battle between the good Americans and the evil Iranians, even while a [U.S. regime change](#)

[color revolution](#) was being attempted on the streets of Iran.

What does repetitious propaganda do to the mind?

Technology has not just allowed for machine signatures but has made us in many ways machine people who need to be hammered over the head time and again – and to like it. To go back again and again for more. Everything but life has become repeatable.

Scott Fitzgerald's Gatsby's reply to Nick's statement In *The Great Gatsby* – “You can't repeat the past,” Nick tells Gatsby, who responds, “Can't repeat the past? Why, off course you can!” – perfectly captures the “reality” of a digital screen culture of illusions in which many people have unconsciously come to believe that you can instantly replay life as well.

Indeed, to make people into machines is the goal of trans-humanists **Klaus Schwab** of the World Economic Forum with its Great Reset and the U.N.'s 2030 Agenda. Artificial intelligence (AI) for artificial people. While there are innocent examples of repetition, the use of it is a fundamental tactic of propaganda, whether that be through words or images. And we are drowning in repeated media/government propaganda about the U.S. war against Russia in Ukraine, Covid19, Iran, China, Syria, etc.

It's as easy as pie to innocently repeat, as I learned recently when my wife asked me to use her cell phone to take a photograph. Bumpkin that I am who despises these machines, rather than briefly hitting the button I held it down for a few seconds and took the same photo 67 ½ times. It just so happened.

But the propagandists' repetitions are no accident. You can't condemn **Julian Assange** year after year for posting U.S. war crimes – the Afghanistan War Logs – and then try to save your own ass after the man has been persecuted for more than a decade and counting. The media who did this and then wrote the recent letter are counterfeit traitors to the truth and agents of the war criminals. To call them journalists is to misuse language: They are imposters.

What does repetition do to the mind? asked Tweedledum to his identical twin Tweedledee.

Tweedledee replied, Look what it's done to us.

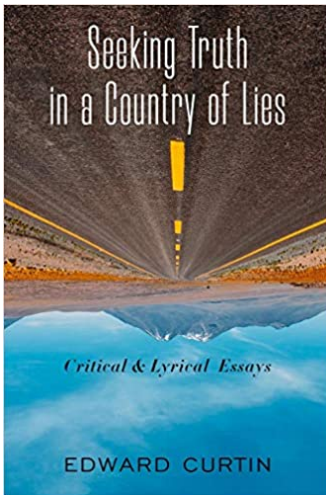
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This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).

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Featured image is from [Simon & Schuster](#)



He is the author of ***Seeking the Truth in a Country of Lies***

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