

Title: Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Cloning as Metatext in 20th-Century Science Fiction

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In Vladimir Sorokin's novel *Goluboe salo*, the production of people and the production of literature stand in a metaphorical relationship to each other. The classic writers of the Russian tradition are cloned and compelled to write in order to generate "blue lard," an elixir of everlasting life. The technological reproduction of people and of text are linked in a single manufacturing process; so too is Russia's "immortal" literary tradition and the immortality desired by the novel's political elite.

Cloning appears as a metaphor for artistic production throughout modern literature. Like more studied themes such as the mirror or the doppelganger, it is a figure through which texts represent their own status as works of mimetic art. However, cloning fulfills this role in a double sense: not only does it figure the mimetic copying of nature, it opens up the possibility of an endless proliferation of copies of the individual. As I plan to argue in this paper—largely through reference to Sorokin, but with comparative material from authors of genre fiction—cloning thus represents for us not just the production of art, but the dissemination of artworks through mass production; in imagining a future technology of reproduction, cloning represents the effect of current technologies on liberal ideology and the Romantic aesthetics of self-expression.

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