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Imitating Nature -- Playing within the Play -- Virtual Reality -- Acting Out in Politics -- Ironie Tangos -- Chapter 2: The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Horse -- The Marriage of Udayana -- Ratnavali, The Lady of the Jeweled Necklace -- Priyadarshika, The Woman Who Shows Her Love -- The Marriage of Figaro -- The Self-Replicating Wife -- Chapter 3: The Double Amnesia of Siegfried and Brünnhilde -- Thidreks Saga -- Völsunga Saga -- Nibelungenlied -- Ibsen's The Vikings at Helgeland -- Wagner's The Ring of the Nibelung -- The Sword in the Bed -- Chapter 4: Resurrection and the Comedy of Remarriage -- True and False Accusations and Ordeals of Adultery -- Sita's Ordeal of Resurrection -- Resurrected Marriage in Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale -- The Self-Replicating Child -- Self-Replicating, Self-Sacrificing Mothers -- Resurrected Marriage in Hollywood -- My Favorite Wife (1940) -- The Comedy of Remarriage in Hollywood -- The Awful Truth (1937) -- The Lady Eve (1941) -- Chapter 5: Amnesia and the Tragedy of Remarriage -- The Comedy of Amnesiac Remarriage -- The Matrimonial Bed (1930) -- Remember? (1939) -- I Love You Again (1940) -- The Romance of Amnesiac Remarriage -- As You Desire Me (1932) -- Random Harvest (1942) -- Julia Misbehaves (1948), Memory of Love (1948), and Love Letters (1945) -- Chapter 6: Reincarnation -- Déjà Vu All Over Again -- The Man Who Forgot He Was God: The Monk's Dream -- The God Who Forgot He Was God: Chandrashekhara and Taravati -- The Romance of Reincarnation in India: The Two Lilas. The Romance of Reincarnation in Hollywood and Bollywood -- Here Comes Mr. Jordan (1941) -- The Reincarnation of Peter Proud (1975) and Chances Are (1989) -- Late for Dinner (1991) and Forever Young (1992) -- Madhumati (1958) and Karz (1980) -- Chapter 7: Face-Lifts -- The Aging Wife -- Face-Lifts: The Myths -- Face-Lifts: The Films -- Return from the Ashes (1965) -- Ash Wednesday (1973) -- Face of a Stranger (1979) -- Shattered (1991) -- A Face to Die For (1996) -- Face/Off (1997) -- Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978) -- Face-Lifts: The Surgery -- Chapter 8: Mind Lifts -- Murder: Vertigo (1958) -- Black Science: Duplicates (1992) and Dark City (1998) -- Espionage: Total Recall (1990) (and True Lies [1994]) -- Masquerading in the Red and the Noir -- Chapter 9: Passing: Race and Gender -- Black as White as Black -- Women Masquerading as Men as Women: Chudala -- The Stage as World: Call Me Rosalind -- The World as Stage: Beaumarchais and the Chevalier d'Eon -- Women Masquerading as Women, Men as Men -- Conclusion: The Zen Diagram of the Self -- The Truth beneath the Mask -- Appointment in Samara -- Loopholes -- 1. The Rabbi from Cracow -- 2. Second Naïveté -- 3. The Happy Hypocrite -- 4. The Deep Surface -- 5. The Authentic Postmodern Copy -- 6. The Multiplicity of Masks -- 7. Tautological Self-Coincidence -- 8. Hiding in Plain Sight -- The Analyst from Cracow -- The Recursive Cunning of the Unconscious -- The Möbius Strip Tease of the Self -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index -- A -- B -- C -- D -- E -- F -- G -- H -- I -- J -- K -- L -- M -- N -- O -- P -- Q -- R -- S -- T -- U -- V -- W -- X -- Y -- Z.

Sommario/riassunto

Many cultures have myths about self-imitation, stories about people who pretend to be someone else pretending to be them, in effect masquerading as themselves. This great theme, in literature and in life, tells us that people put on masks to discover who they really are under the masks they usually wear, so that the mask reveals rather than conceals the self beneath the self. In this book, noted scholar of Hinduism and mythology Wendy Doniger offers a cross-cultural exploration of the theme of self-impersonation, whose widespread occurrence argues for both its literary power and its human value. The stories she considers range from ancient Indian literature through

medieval European courtly literature and Shakespeare to Hollywood and Bollywood. They illuminate a basic human way of negotiating reality, illusion, identity, and authenticity, not to mention memory, amnesia, and the process of aging. Many of them involve marriage and adultery, for tales of sexual betrayal cut to the heart of the crisis of identity. These stories are extreme examples of what we common folk do, unconsciously, every day. Few of us actually put on masks that replicate our faces, but it is not uncommon for us to become travesties of ourselves, particularly as we age and change. We often slip carelessly across the permeable boundary between the un-self-conscious self-indulgence of our most idiosyncratic mannerisms and the conscious attempt to give the people who know us, personally or publicly, the version of ourselves that they expect. Myths of self-imitation open up for us the possibility of multiple selves and the infinite regress of self-discovery. Drawing on a dizzying array of tales—some fact, some fiction—*The Woman Who Pretended to Be Who She Was* is a fascinating and learned trip through centuries of culture, guided by a scholar of incomparable wit and erudition.
