

ARTS & LETTERS

voices became, as Bercovitch says, "increasingly shrill" as the egalitarian Jacksonian Democrats threatened the status of mercantile New England and New York. Revolution in the abstract was fine, the Puritans seemed to say, but the best way for Americans to express revolutionary ardor was to transform it into support for a working and workable society. Melville's Ishmael, who followed even Captain Ahab's demented orders, alone was left to tell the tale of *Moby Dick* and became "the exemplum of shirt-sleeve democracy." Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, stigmatized as an adulteress, learned that in Puritan society the way to redemption was acceptance of the status quo.

*Art Forgery:
Is It Ever Art?*

"The Aesthetic Status of Forgeries" by Mark Sagoff, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Winter 1976), Temple University and the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

If a Constable painting is "a skillful, ingenious, and accurate representation of clouds, would not an excellent forgery be as skillful, as ingenious, and as accurate a representation?" According to Sagoff, a Cornell semanticist, the answer is no.

Aesthetically, originals and forgeries exhibit radical differences in texture and line, which can be readily detected by a knowledgeable historian or critic. Moreover, the original artist must solve a problem—conjuring up a convincing image by revealing, through design, the "symbols" that represent certain objects. The work of art records that discovery and advances a theory concerning the way we see things. It is an "experiment ending in a solution."

A forgery, however, merely repeats the solution to a problem that has already been solved. Even if both original and forgery are skillfully executed, the forgery "lacks the artist's representation" and substitutes only imitation. This aesthetic rule does not apply to admitted copies of works of art. According to Sagoff, a child's copy of a Constable would count as a "primitive," the art student's as a "study."

*Who Really Owns
What's on Film*

"The Case for Film Piracy" by John Ziniewicz, in *Case and Comment* (Nov.-Dec. 1976), P.O. Box 1951, Rochester, N.Y. 14603.

The movie industry prefers to destroy or sell films for scrap rather than sell them to private or nonprofit collectors—who often operate outside the law when they acquire film prints. Collectors, says Ziniewicz, a Glendale (Calif.) University law professor, are liable to search and seizure, arrest, and prosecution for receiving stolen goods.

Ziniewicz tells of films and portions of films now lost for all time