COPYING THE "OLD MASTERS": WILKIE COLLINS, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, AND THE TRANSATLANTIC POLITICS OF ART

by

JACQUELINE SHIN

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Department of **ENGLISH**

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date **August 28th, 2003**
Abstract

In “Copying the ‘Old Masters’: Wilkie Collins, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the Transatlantic Politics of Art,” I explore the depiction of the copying of the “Old Masters” in Collins's *A Rogue's Life*, *Hide and Seek*, and Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun*, and attempt to position these representations within a wider transatlantic field of power. I take up questions of originality and imitation, tradition and innovation, the authentic and the fake, cultural maturity and immaturity, the Old World and the New, and map the ways that the tensions and unresolved relations between originals and copies within the space of the text reflect a larger struggle in which economic, cultural, and symbolic power are fundamentally at stake.

In my introduction I set forth my argument and provide a critical context for my reading of these three works. I also offer a close reading of Collins’s “Considerations on the Copyright Question, Addressed to an American Friend,” in order to demonstrate the rhetorical coding of relations of power and the way that texts often exceed authorial control. Each of my three chapters then explores a specific text and locates it within a transatlantic framework. The first chapter considers *A Rogue's Life* in relation to British accusations of American “piracy,” while the second explores *Hide and Seek* and argues that the novel can be read as reflecting a concern over the growing American literary “canon.” The third chapter brings together the issues of copyright and literary tradition through an analysis of *The Marble Faun*.

I conclude this study with a postscript that positions these texts and my discussion of the transatlantic field of power within the context of representational shifts that were taking place during the nineteenth century. I argue that the impossibility of drawing clear
distinctions and constructing strict dichotomies in Hawthorne's novel reflects a far wider condition of instability in which traditional relations of power, whether between originals and copies, the Old Masters and the modern masters, or the Old World and the New, were being reconfigured, tested, and reformed within the fictional space of representation.
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INTRODUCTION

The “Old Masters” and the Transatlantic Field of Power

In the March 1861 volume of the *Art Journal*, S.C. Hall, the founder and editor of this prominent fine arts periodical, declares that “the trade in Raffaelles and Titians” has been “entirely arrested” in England, and transferred instead to “the dealers in modern Art.” Hall contends that this revolution in the Victorian art world can largely be attributed to the journal’s devoted labouring over the years to show its readers the “impolicy of buying old masters and the wisdom of purchasing British pictures.”¹ His bold assertion of the *Art Journal*’s merit “of having directed the tide of ‘patronage’” into the “good and right channel” of modern Art is submitted as evidence that the editor’s cautions against the dangers inherent in passing the bill for artistic copyright then introduced into the House of Commons are motivated only out of the deepest concern for the welfare of British art. While the bill would secure for artists the “sole and exclusive right of copying, reproducing, and multiplying” their works for a given period of time, and was intended to remedy the extensive forgery and piracy of modern pictures, Hall gloomily predicts that instead of benefiting these artists such a bill, if passed, would in fact cause the “downfall of British art.” As the English cannot tolerate any “shadow of a right” over their property, he insists that buyers and collectors of art would inevitably “decline to collect objects over which they have not entire control.” The trade in Old Master paintings, which the journal consistently exposes as equivalent to a trade in Old Master fakes, is here revealed as inextricably linked with the rise of an authentic national

tradition in art; both of these concerns, moreover, are shown to be intimately connected with the debate then raging over artistic ownership and copyright law.

While phenomena such as the decline in the market for Old Master paintings and the rise of a British tradition of art in the early to mid-nineteenth century have been examined by art historians such as Dianne Macleod in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* (1996), this study explores what has not yet received critical attention – the way in which such matters became the subject of fictional representation in the literature of this period, specifically in the work of Wilkie Collins and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and how such texts can be read as reflecting a transatlantic struggle over national authority and cultural power. By analyzing the depiction of the copying of works of art by the Old Masters in Collins’s novella *A Rogue’s Life* (1856), his novel *Hide and Seek* (1861) and in Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (1860), I take up questions of originality and imitation, tradition and innovation, the authentic and the fake, cultural maturity and immaturity, the Old World and the New, and argue that the copying of the “Old Masters” – and what precisely the “Old Masters” are mobilized to signify in these works – reveals not only an engagement with contemporary concerns over a national tradition of visual art and the debate over artistic copyright, but with the issues of national literary traditions and international copyright law as well. Through this limited study of three works of fiction, I map a transatlantic politics of art in which the coding of relations of power between originals and copies within the space of the text reflects a larger struggle in which economic, cultural, and symbolic power are fundamentally at stake.

From the publication in 1944 of Clarence Gohdes’s *American Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, which claimed to be the very first study of the “influence of
American literature in the British Isles” (143), literary critics have acknowledged the complex reciprocal relations between England and its American “scion” during the nineteenth century. Recently, Robert Weisbuch, in “Dickens, Melville, and a Tale of Two Countries” (2001), has discussed the “literary relations between British Victorian novelists and their American contemporaries” (234), by bringing together the figures of Charles Dickens, Herman Melville, and (as a secondary figure) Hawthorne. Weisbuch suggests that “American writers in the mid-nineteenth century enacted a second war of independence in their major writings” (234); a “spirit of hostile assertion, its vehemence in each case a function of cultural insecurities, prevails on both sides of the Atlantic” (237-38), striking a keynote of “competitive mockery” (238). Weisbuch’s emphasis on American resistance to British authority and on the perceived need to reevaluate the coding of transatlantic relations of power is also prominent in Raoul Granqvist’s *Imitation as Resistance* (1995). Granqvist maintains that while American society, in its “recourse to imitation” in the nineteenth century, opened the United States up to accusations of being “culturally dependent, underdeveloped, primitive, and uncivilized” (18), such allegations failed to take account of the subversive “energy, creativity, and consciousness” (19) apparent in American practices of literary imitation. Meredith McGill’s recently published study, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* (2003), also challenges accepted views of American literature from a transatlantic perspective. McGill insightfully examines the way in which a print culture dominated by the “proliferation of cheap, reprinted texts” (2) flourished in the United States between the years 1834 and 1853, and she maintains that this “culture of reprinting” reveals a culture “not opposed to the production of a national literature as copy to original” but
rather one that used "foreign texts to refract an image of the nation as a whole that was seemingly impossible to produce by domestic means alone" (20). Instead of merely indicating the nation's lack of originality, the practice of literary "piracy" instead offers a "calculated resistance to the model of authorship and the system of publishing that was operative in Britain" (42).

In his or her own way, each critic mentioned above responds to traditional codings of American literature and culture in relation to England's as imitative, subordinate, inauthentic, primitive, and slavish copies to a British "original." Such accusations, or what Weisbuch refers to as "goadings," were articulated not only by English critics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but by American authors as well, who, in the early years of the nineteenth century, called for the creation of an authentic American literature to reverse the stultifying effects of their nation's excessive copying, defined both in terms of literary "piracy" and stylistic imitation. As Weisbuch notes, Walt Whitman is one author who commented on the state of affairs, when, in 1847, he insisted that "'as long as we copy with a servile imitation, the very cast-off literary fashions of London,' American cultural destiny will be doomed to imitation and impoverishment" (238). It is this binary model of original versus copy, and the relations of power that such a model encodes, that I examine in this thesis. My intent, like the critics mentioned above, is to challenge the accuracy of this model within a transatlantic framework, but also to take this very model as a subject of interrogation – to explore its contours, shifting referents, inconsistencies, mobilization and destabilization within fictional works, and ultimate inadequacy to fully define the nature of transatlantic relations from the mid-century onwards.
While McGill’s study concludes with the year 1853, with what she sees as the demise of the culture of reprinting in the United States, the three fictional works that I consider were published between the years 1856 and 1861 – a time when American literary “piracy” (which was not literally piracy, however, as no law yet existed to regulate the practice of unauthorized republication) coexisted with an emergent and increasingly powerful American literary tradition, and when accusations of American copying jarred against evidence of a distinctive and original American literature as well as against the potential for reorigination within unauthorized republication, revealing ruptures in the model of British original versus American copy. It was a period when, as Macleod demonstrates, not only did the marketplace of art witness a sea change in how works by the Old Masters and British artists were respectively valued, but when the very notions of originality and copying were also being reevaluated. By bringing together a transatlantic literary perspective with an art historical approach and focusing on their point of intersection in the fictional depiction of the copying of the “Old Masters,” I consider how *A Rogue’s Life*, *Hide and Seek*, and *The Marble Faun* can each be positioned within a wider transatlantic “field of power” that reflects struggles over the possession and distribution of economic as well as cultural and symbolic capital.

One of the central tenets of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s work is “the idea that there are different forms of capital: not only ‘economic capital’ in the strict sense (i.e. material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc.), but also ‘cultural capital’ (i.e. knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications), ‘symbolic capital’ (i.e. accumulated prestige or honour), and so on” (Thompson 14). This concept is one that my project is largely
indebted to, as I see transatlantic debates over literary ownership and artistic tradition as involving a struggle not only over monetary capital, but cultural and symbolic capital as well. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu defines a "field of power" as a "space of relations of force between agents or between institutions having in common the possession of the capital necessary to occupy the dominant positions in different fields." In other words,

It is the site of struggles between holders of different powers (or kinds of capital) which, like the symbolic struggles between artists and ‘bourgeois’ in the nineteenth century, have at stake the transformation or conservation of the relative value of different kinds of capital, which itself determines, at any moment, the forces liable to be engaged in these struggles. (215)

I contend that the works of Collins and Hawthorne, in their common representation of the copying of the “Old Masters,” can be seen as imbricated within a mid-nineteenth century transatlantic “field of power” in which the conservation or transformation of originality and copying as valued or derided characterizations of a work of art (or literature) and as forms of capital are crucially at stake. My primary focus is the struggle between “ageing” and emerging “authors, works, or schools” – a struggle that, as Bourdieu insists, is not a “mechanical sliding into the past,” but rather a “fight between those who have and those who cannot make their own marks in their turn without consigning to the past those who have an interest in stopping time, in eternalizing the present state; between the dominants whose strategy is tied to continuity, identity and reproduction, and the dominated, the new entrants, whose interest is in discontinuity, rupture, difference and revolution” (157).
Each chapter of this thesis explores a specific text and attempts to locate it within this wider transatlantic framework. While Weisbuch is concerned in his article with the question of literary influence and a sense of “competitive jousting” between Victorian novelists and their American counterparts, I instead explore how specific texts register authorial and cultural insecurities, and respond less to each other in an outspoken dialogue than to a larger transatlantic field. I share McGill’s contention that a literary text is not a space of absolute control where an author escapes the determinations of the market, or where, as Sundeep Bisla insists in her article on Collins’s *The Woman in White* and publishing history, the author “after-the-fact” polices external lawlessness. I, like McGill, “seek to unfold a mode of reading that would address the question of authorial mastery without being governed by it” (16), and envisage the text as a site of instability and contention, rife with potential contradictions, dissonances, ruptures and gaps.

Furthermore, although my perspective is a transatlantic one, I do not see Europe or the “Old World” (whether the Italy of Raphael, Titian, Guido, da Vinci, and Michelangelo, the Netherlands of Rubens, van Dyck, Rembrandt and Vermeer, or the France of Poussin and Lorraine), as a fixed or negligible third term within my transatlantic perspective, but rather as a shifting referent that is crucial to locating England and the United States, Collins and Hawthorne, within a transatlantic field of power.

In my first chapter I consider the novella *A Rogue’s Life* and argue that Collins’s depictions of the copying of the Old Masters in terms of the production of Old Master forgeries can be read in relation to his anxieties over the unauthorized reproduction of his texts, and those of other British authors, by American “pirate” publishers. I examine how the text’s coding of the production of Old Master forgeries as reiterative, economically
driven, illegal, and as empty mechanical reiterations that do not preserve the “aura” of the original, ratifies a strict hierarchy of art that privileges authentic originality over unauthorized copying. I consider the analogy between counterfeit Old Masters and the manufacture of counterfeit coins in *A Rogue’s Life*, and relate both of these activities to the manufacture of unauthorized reprints of British texts in the transatlantic debate over international copyright law. I then argue that the destabilization of a hierarchy of art and the displacement of the original that is evident within the American remanufacture and reorigination of British texts allows us to trace the displacement of the original in the narrative and in the novella’s relation to a prior, paternal text, revealing the way that the novella’s attempts to code copying as a purely slavish and reiterative activity ultimately escapes authorial mastery, as it does within the transatlantic field of power.

My second chapter considers Collins’s *Hide and Seek* and argues that while in *A Rogue’s Life* Collins codes copying negatively and invests British art with a power of originality and innovation that distinguishes it from an industry of art based upon the mere repetition of ageing originals, in this novel he depicts the more positive aspects of visual replication in order to ratify a strict hierarchy of art that valorizes the “old” and continuity with tradition over the radical innovations of the new. I analyze this movement towards the Old Masters and the Old World civilization that these artists and their works represent, as a maneuver for symbolic power that can be read in relation to wider cultural anxieties in Britain about the growing “canon” of American literature. I demonstrate how Collins’s positioning of English culture as aligned with the civilized tradition of the Old World and Old Masters, while it positions British artists as copyists, posits a dichotomy between the Old and New Worlds that depicts America’s New World
savagery as a kind of colonial backwardness and blankness that lacks the cultivation requisite for the production of works of art, and thus positions the nation outside the realm of representation. I then show how this dichotomy and alignment of England as coterminous with the Old World is destabilized not only by the text’s enactment of the displacement of the “old” by a newer original, but by the space of difference that exists between the Old Masters and modern British artists.

In my final chapter I take up Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* and contend that while the text seems at first to ratify a strict hierarchy of art that positions originals over copies, tradition over innovation, and the Old Masters over the new, such a hierarchy is in fact dismantled in the novel by a recognition of the impossibility of drawing clear distinctions between these terms. Further, I demonstrate how the novel clearly distinguishes England from the Old World and the cultural capital of the tradition of Old Masters, thus highlighting the very space of difference that *Hide and Seek* attempts to obscure, and reflecting a potentially radical transatlantic politics – a subversive potential, however, that is tempered by the deep ambivalence within the text.

I conclude this study with a postscript in which I more fully locate my discussion of the transatlantic field of power within the context of representational shifts that were taking place during the nineteenth century.

In order to make the coding of relations of power clear, and to demonstrate some of the ways that texts exceed authorial control, I will turn now to an examination of “Considerations on the Copyright Question, Addressed to an American Friend.” Collins’s polemical piece was published in 1880, and attempts to analyze the question of international copyright in the rational light of a distinctly British perspective. It is written
in the form of a letter addressed to the author’s “American friend,” a colonel who had apparently inquired about Collins’s views of the “pirating” of his works by American publishers. Collins begins his letter by “relating a little anecdote,” set in the beginning of the seventeenth century – a transparent yet curiously problematic allegory in which one of the colonel’s ancestors is described as a Dutch colonizer who serves as the “prototype” or parent of “the whole European family of modern authors,” while an Iroquois chief represents the “first American publisher.”

The colonel’s ancestor, “voyaging with the illustrious Hendrick Hudson, got leave of absence from the ship, and took a walk on Manhattan Island, in the days before the Dutch settlement.” Collins remarks to the colonel:

He was possessed, as I have heard you say, of great ability in the mechanical arts. Among the articles of personal property which he had about him was a handsome watch, made by himself, and containing special improvements of his own invention.

The good man sat down to rest and look about him, at a pleasant and pastoral spot, now occupied, it may be interesting to you to know, by a publishing-house in the city of New York. Having thoroughly enjoyed the cool breeze and the bright view, he took out his watch to see how the time was passing. At the same moment an Iroquois chief --- whose name has, I regret to say, escaped my memory --- passed that way, accompanied by a suitable train of followers. He observed the handsome watch; snatched it out of the stranger's hand, and then and there put it into the Indian substitute for a pocket,--- the name of which, after repeated efforts, I find myself unable to spell. (609)
The Dutch colonizer, realizing that "resistance on his single part would be a willful casting away of his own valuable life," wisely decides to try "the effect of calm remonstrance" instead (610). He inquires why the Iroquois chief has taken the watch, and is answered with the simple assertion that the chief wants the article. When asked why he wants it,

The Indian checked off his reasons on his fingers. "First, because I am not able to make such a watch as yours. Secondly, because your watch is an article likely to be popular among the Indians. Thirdly, because the popularity of the watch will enable me to sell it with considerable advantage to myself. Is my white brother satisfied?"

Making the allegory even more transparent in its disclosure of the need for an international copyright agreement between England (and Europe more generally) and the United States, Collins depicts the colonel's ancestor asserting, "'I say my watch is my lawful property'"

The noble savage reasoned with him. "Possibly your watch is protected in Holland," he said. "It is not protected in America. There is no watch-right treaty, sir, between my country and yours."

"And, on that account, you are not ashamed to steal my watch?"

"On that account, I am not ashamed to steal your watch. Good morning." (610)

Within this short anecdote, Collins not only reveals his anxieties about American lawlessness and the vulnerability of authors in the face of this unruly power of publishers in the United States, but also attempts to contain that power by coding the publisher as a racial other, who steals the settler's watch (the uniqueness of which is emphasized)
because he lacks the ability to manufacture the desired item himself, and because he wants to make a handsome profit by capitalizing on its popularity among the Natives. American “piracy,” with the very use of this term in itself reflecting a rhetorical positioning of power, is here coded not in terms of replication or copying, but as outright theft. The Iroquois chief does not reproduce the settler’s watch without authorization, but rather steals a unique and singular item of personal property because of his own lack of mechanical skill, and, it may be presumed, due to his lack of originality.

By coding transatlantic relations in terms of colonialism and theft, Collins immediately marshals a sense of cultural superiority and priority to the Old World or an “old Europe” (611) that British culture and authors are alternately aligned and equated with. The cultural backwardness of the American publisher as a Native other, or as a “noble savage” whose lack of nobility is disclosed, is further emphasized in the text by Collins’s account of the New World’s history of colonization:

The Dutch emigrants settled on Manhattan Island about two hundred and fifty years ago. They might have "pirated" the island, on the ground that it was not protected by treaty. But they were too honest to commit an act of theft: they asked the Indians to mention their price. The Indians mentioned twenty-four dollars. The noble Dutchmen paid, --- and a very good price, too, for a bit of uncultivated ground, with permission to remove your "wigwam" to the neighboring continent.

Collins’s tone of flippancy and condescension, particularly in discussing the Indian chief’s “wigwam,” and earlier in the text, his name and the spelling of the word for “pocket,” neither of which can be produced, can also be read as a maneuver for power
within this textual space, as it positions those he is describing (and the figures that they represent) as subordinate and “uncultivated” or uncivilized.

Yet while Collins highlights the lack of cultivation in the New World, he also acknowledges, even as he seems to justify, America’s history of displacing Native Indians in the process of colonization. Indeed, when Collins notes that the great Republic of the United States has provided for “the literary interests of its own people within its own geographical limits” while Congress “definitively turned its back on all further copyright proceedings in the Old World” (611), the qualification of American interests with “literary” interests is noteworthy. Collins’s assertion that twenty-four dollars was a fair price for European settlers to pay the Native Indians for Manhattan Island may be read as a defense of America’s colonization, but it may also subtly register the hypocrisy of a “great Republic” which denies basic rights to those who reside not only without, but within, its geographical boundaries, thus critiquing the very political system that to a large extent defined America’s essential difference from its repudiated “fatherland.”

Even as Collins appropriates the figure of the lawless “savage” to illustrate the immorality of American “piracy,” he also perhaps hints at the disenfranchisement of a whole group of American inhabitants within this purportedly democratic nation, revealing a gap between American ideology and practice that further ratifies his coding of this young nation.

Collins’s allegory of American “piracy” is destabilized, however, by his emphasis on the theft of an item of personal property – a unique and singular article constructed and modified by hand, which shifts attention away from Collins’s actual concerns in the text. The stolen watch of the Dutch settler, in its materiality and distinctiveness, elides
the reality of the mass production of texts and the immateriality of copyright, as the text itself attempts to do in its supposed composition as a private, personal letter which happens to be printed and widely disseminated in the public realm. In her study of the case of *Wheaton v. Peters* (1834), the “first Supreme Court case to provide a ruling on the nature of the constitutional copyright provision” in the United States (50), McGill observes a similar phenomenon in the argument of one of Wheaton’s lawyers, Elijah Paine, who attempted to argue for Wheaton’s copy-rights by insisting upon the “text-as-object, characterizing it as an ideal type of personal property.” Like Collins, Paine “short-circuits the process of [the text’s] production and distribution, permitting a narrative of loss and reclamation to stand in for one of exchange and profit” (54). “Implicit in this repression of the market is the elision of the fact of mass-production” – an elision that overlooks “the entire sphere of production, glossing over the crucial technological and commercial difference between the author’s manuscript and the printed book. In Paine’s argument, the extraordinary materiality of the book bears the burden of overcoming not only the difference between producer and consumer, but also between author and producer” (55). As I demonstrate in the following chapter, it is this very fact of mass production, or what McGill refers to as the “technology of print” (55), that Collins explores in *A Rogue’s Life* through his depiction of the manufacture of Old Master forgeries.
CHAPTER ONE

Counterfeits and Copyrights: A Rogue's Life in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction

_A Rogue’s Life: From Birth to Marriage_, was first published serially in 1856 on both sides of the Atlantic, in Charles Dickens’s periodical _Household Words_ and in the American _Harper’s Weekly_. It is narrated retrospectively by Frank Softly, a “rogue” of good family, whose mischievous exploits and rebellion against his father early in the narrative result in his being disowned by his parents, from which point he attempts to support himself financially in various ways. Softly’s occupations range from drawing caricatures for publication while incarcerated for debt to portrait painting, from producing counterfeit Old Masters to manufacturing false half-crowns under coercion, and finally, to speculating in cattle and real estate in the New World of Australia, where he eventually establishes himself as a respectable and wealthy married man. This chapter focuses on Collins’s depiction of the industry of painting Old Master counterfeits in _A Rogue’s Life_, and considers the way that this activity is represented by Collins as comparable to the manufacture of counterfeit coins. I take up the issues of the mechanical reproduction of works of art and the technological “sphere of production” as these relate to a point of considerable transatlantic contention in the nineteenth century – the debate over international copyright law and British accusations of American “piracy.”

_I. Copyrights and Counterfeits_

The United States Copyright Act of 1790, while it granted American citizens the sole right to print, reprint, publish, and vend their works for a period of between fourteen to twenty-eight years, denied these same rights to those beyond the nation’s boundaries.
Indeed, rather than protecting foreign authors from the unauthorized reprinting of their texts in America, the law instead seemed to write this very practice into the law itself—“were it not for the double negatives in which it is couched,” the fifth section of the copyright act could be read, as McGill insists, “like a ringing endorsement of international literary piracy” (80). This provision states that:

...nothing in this act shall be construed to extend to prohibit the importation or vending, reprinting or publishing within the United States, of any map, chart, book or books, written, printed or published by any person not a citizen of the United States, in foreign parts or places without the jurisdiction of the United States. (qtd. McGill 80)

Due to the lack of legal protection for non-American authors, the “mass-market for literature in America” during the nineteenth century was largely “built and sustained by the publication of cheap reprints of foreign books and periodicals” (1), rendering foreign authors – particularly British, whose works dominated the American literary marketplace – essentially powerless, without a court of appeal to apply to. While American publishers and printers possessed a great deal of power over English writers in their practice of “piracy,” the sense of vulnerability on the authors’ part was often countered by a rhetoric of theft, piracy, colonial dependency and derivative copying, expending what the publisher George Putnam deemed a “considerable amount of harsh language” in England upon “American publishing houses” (91). Not only does Collins’s “Considerations on the Copyright Question” expend its own share of “harsh language,” but his novella, in its encoding of the relations of power between originals and copies, can also be read in relation to this transatlantic struggle.
Sundeep Bisla, in “Copy-Book Morals: The Woman in White and Publishing History,” briefly examines *A Rogue’s Life* in relation to the unauthorized reprinting of British texts by publishers in the United States. Bisla’s argument focuses primarily, however, on Collins’s novel, *The Woman in White*, contending that this work can be read as a “copyright allegory” that attempts subliminally to discipline its American readers (here conflated with American publishers) against the immoral practice of piracy through a type of “aversion therapy.” *A Rogue’s Life* is offered as one example of the author’s “nascent attempts at allegorical lobbying against the mind-set of those copyright infringers across the ocean” (122-23) before the publication of *The Woman in White* in 1860, and as a confirmation of the fact that “the relationship between villainy and American publishing” was established “quite early in Collins’s career,” even “before he had begun selling well unauthorizedly in the Wild West” (123). Bisla suggests that the depiction of the copying of Old Masters in the novella can be attributed to Collins’s concern over the indirect affects of artistic piracy on the income of his “eminent painter father, William Collins, R.A.” (124) – an assertion that, while it may be accurate, fails to take account of the more complex intersections between the copying of the Old Masters and the international copyright debate that can be mapped in the text.

Before looking more closely at Collins’s depiction of the production of Old Master counterfeits in *A Rogue’s Life*, it will be useful to delineate briefly the traditional coding of the relations between originals and copies that Collins, as well as British critics of American culture in the period, persistently draw upon. In his chapter on “Plato and the Simulacrum” in *The Logic of Sense*, Gilles Deleuze argues that Platonism, and the entire realm of Western representation, is founded upon a fundamental distinction
between essence and appearance, intelligible and sensible, Idea and image, original and copy, model and simulacrum (256). While Deleuze is primarily concerned with the way in which the simulacrum, as a false copy that preserves an external similarity to the original while concealing an internal difference, threatens to unravel the realm of representation, it is his discussion of Platonism and the notion of copies as “secondary possessors” – as “well-founded pretenders, guaranteed by resemblance” (256) – that is particularly pertinent to my argument. Deleuze contends that the “domain of representation” founded by Platonism is “filled by copies-icons,” which are defined not by “an extrinsic relation to an object, but an intrinsic relation to the model or foundation”:

The Platonic copy is the Similar: the pretender who possesses in a secondary way.

To the pure identity of the model or original there corresponds an exemplary similitude [...] (259)

The task of the copy, in other words, is to reproduce faithfully the intrinsic essence of the original. The very notion of representation thus relies upon a hierarchical distinction between originals, which are invested with power and authority, and copies, which are valued only to the extent that they truly resemble the “Idea” of the original in an exemplary similitude. Copies are secondary rather than primary possessors, and as secondary works, are coded as derivative, dependent on, and inferior to the originals that they repeat. The concept of art crime and the notion of counterfeit works of art that Collins more specifically draws upon in A Rogue's Life in his depiction of the copying and making of the Old Masters rely upon this distinction between originals and copies and police the boundary between the authentic and the fake through the regulation of the law. Counterfeits, whether fakes or forgeries, are opposed to original works of art and
share in common a false claim to the status of authentic originality. They are a type of theft and a repetition of another artist’s ideas, as well as “a way of deceiving the world” (Conklin 49) that cashes in on the conception of the creative genius of the individual artist.

Walter Benjamin, in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” differentiates not only originals from copies, and the authentic from the forged, but the manual from the mechanical reproduction of works of art as well. He maintains that the copying of works of art by hand before the age of mechanical reproduction, whether “by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works,” or “by third parties in pursuit of gain” (218), preserves the essential “aura” of the original, which is what “withers in the age of mechanical reproduction” (221). By substituting “a plurality of copies for a unique existence,” or uniqueness and permanence for “transitoriness and reproducibility,” and by exhibiting a greater independence from the original in the process of production than a hand-made replica, the mechanically reproduced work contributes to a “tremendous shattering of tradition” whereby art is emancipated from its “parasitical dependence on ritual” and instead “begins to be based on another practice—politics” (224). Collins’s depiction of the making of Old Master counterfeits as a type of mechanical reproduction, or as akin to a process of mass production, envisions this process not as a form of radical emancipation, but as a far more conservative ratification of a strict hierarchy of art that privileges originals and their “aura” above mere mechanical copies. By describing the substitution of a “plurality of copies for a unique existence” in rigorously negative terms, Collins aims to bolster rather than shatter the tradition of Western representation.
II. Old Master-Making and Half-Crown-Making

The novella's protagonist, after attempting to earn money by drawing caricatures for publication and painting portraits that are rejected by the Royal Academy, is left destitute. He turns for help to his "generous friend and vagabond brother artist, whose lodger [he] now was" (26). Noticing that this friend, known to him familiarly as "Dick," never manages to sell any of his own paintings yet nevertheless always has money in his pockets, Softly asks to be let in on the secret. Dick responds by declaring, "'My dear fellow, whenever my pockets are empty, and I want a ten-pound note to put into them, I make an Old Master'" (28). Softly accompanies his friend to a Jewish picture-dealer named Mr. Ishmael Pickup, who commissions and sells Old Master forgeries, and who is depicted by Collins in disturbingly anti-Semitic terms. After agreeing to his conditions, Softly is taken to Mr. Pickup's "workshop," where he later industriously practices his craft and produces a counterfeit Rembrandt that is entitled "The Burgomaster at Breakfast," which, in its chiaroscuro technique, seeks to imitate Rembrandt's characteristic style (Fig. 1).

Collins's depiction of the industry of Old Master counterfeits resembles the accounts of Old Master "manufactories" offered by S.C. Hall in the pages of the *Art Journal* and in his *Retrospect of a Long Life* (1883). Hall describes, for instance, a "house in Richmond known as the 'Canaletti Manufactory,' where at least eighty 'Canalettis' had been 'baked,'" and "Mr. Zachary's house on the Adelphi Terrace where 'Old Masters,' recently painted, were smoked over a stove and sold by the score" (Maas 42). Similarly, James Jackson Jarves, in *Art Studies: The "Old Masters of Italy* (1861), refers to "the vulgar shams distributed so widely over the world from the well-known manufactories of paintings in France, England, and other parts" (36). Thus, while the notion of "making" would seem to imply a creative power, Collins (as well as
Hall and Jarves) clearly codes the products and process of this manufacture as purely reiterative, particularly by comparing the activity to another form of illicit manufacture in the text.

Fig. 1. Rembrandt, *Portrait of an Old Man*. 1651.

Softly’s occupation as a producer of Old Master forgeries is directly paralleled by Collins to the protagonist’s later work producing counterfeit coins. While courting the woman he has fallen in love with, and who eventually becomes his wife, Softly grows suspicious of her father, Dr. Dulcifer, and discovers that he conducts an illegal business of making false half-crowns. Dr. Dulcifer comes upon Softly when he first detects this
operation, and rather than taking his life, forces him to become one of his workers, with pay however (which Softly feels he would be foolish to refuse). The reader is informed by Softly that the "same regard for the well-being of society which led me to abstain from entering into particulars on the subject of Old Master-making, when I was apprenticed to Mr. Ishmael Pickup, now commands me to be equally discreet on the kindred subject of Half-Crown-making" (71). As "kindred" activities, the scandalous details of both are deemed too dangerous to describe for fear that they might be copied, yet their commonalities are highlighted rather than obscured. In Art Studies, Jarves also draws a parallel between counterfeit Old Masters and false coins, when he insists that "[n]ot even with coin has forgery been more prolific and audacious than with art in general" (33).

Both Collins's fictional text and Jarves' non-fictional one, in their comparison of Old Master-making and Half-Crown-making, present a vision of mechanical reproduction that resembles Thomas Carlyle's, as expressed in his article "Signs of the Times," published in The Edinburgh Review in 1829, more than it does Benjamin's of more than a century later. In the unsigned "Signs of the Times" Carlyle claims that the current age is "the age of Machinery": "[n]othing is now done directly, or by hand; all is made by rule and calculated contrivance" (339). Indeed, everywhere "the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one," while the "domain of Mechanism" (which for Carlyle includes not only physical machinery, but also political, religious, literary, and artistic institutions) neglects the "pure moral nature" (345) of humanity for a superficial concern with profit and "adapting means to ends" (339). Softly describes his employment with Mr. Pickup and Dr. Dulcifer as an apprenticeship in their workshops, yet the image suggests the learning of a mechanistic trade more so than it
does an artist’s workshop where artistic techniques would be mastered through contact
with a great master. Moreover, not only are the products of Softly’s occupation described
in terms of cheap, mechanistic, mass reproduction, but Softly himself becomes a kind of
machine through the process of mechanical reproduction.

Mr. Pickup’s Old Master “workshop” or “manufactory,” while it may not have
produced or “baked” eighty paintings, as with the “Canaletti Manufactory” described by
Hall, nevertheless produces enough paintings to fill the picture-dealer’s store with
“modern-antique pictures of all schools and sizes, of all degrees of dirt and dullness, with
all the names of the famous Old Masters, from Titian to Teniers, inscribed on their
frames” (28). Likewise, Softly insists that he and Dr. Dulcifer’s other workers
manufactured coins sometimes “at the rate of four hundred pounds worth in a week” (74),
Dr. Dulcifer’s profit being no less than five hundred percent. In each case, the cheapness
of the articles when compared to the profit that they bring in (for Mr. Pickup and Dr.
Dulcifer if not for their labourers) is emphasized, as is the rapid rate at which they are
churned out in a process of, or resembling that of, mass production. Collins also
emphasizes the ephemerality and disposability of the Old Master counterfeits – Softly’s
counterfeit Rembrandt, once the paint has sufficiently dried for it to be exhibited in Mr.
Pickup’s store, is soon sold to an unsuspecting and naïve collector. However, a
“gentleman related to the venerable connoisseur” pronounces the work to be an
“impudent counterfeit,” and engages “on his own account to have the picture tested in a
court of law, and to charge the seller and maker thereof with conspiring to obtain money
under false pretenses” (36). Thinking quickly, Softly delivers a bottle of what he claims
to be a miraculous “Amsterdam Cleansing Compound” to the buyer’s home, which, when
it is applied to the painting and then carefully wiped off by the collector, removes all of
the paint (and evidence) from the canvas. Afterwards, Mr. Pickup, we are told, wisely
closes his workshop temporarily and goes “off to the Continent to ransack the foreign
galleries” (38), while Softly rubs out the beginnings of his second forgery and another
scene in the protagonist’s life draws to a close. As ephemeral commodities that can be
easily disposed of, these forgeries further bolster a strict hierarchy that privileges the
products of authentic, genuine, and original creation over those of inauthentic, false and
reiterative manufacture.

Within the workshop setting, the apprentice is not replaced by (as Carlyle
imagined was the case with the artist’s workshop), but rather becomes, an inanimate
machine in Collins’s text. While Softly describes his artist friend, and himself by
implication, as a “workman-like maker” of Old Masters, the notion of labourers as
machine-like “makers” is more clearly demonstrated through Softly’s related act of Half-
Crown making. Dr. Dulcifer’s labourers are referred to as Old File, Young File, Mill,
and Screw – nicknames that are “derived humorously from [their] professional tools and
machinery” (70). Each worker is hence nominally defined by a particular tool or piece of
machinery, which stands in as a marker of personal identity. Additionally, when Softly is
forced against his will to turn out a “neat article from the flatted plates,” to prove that he
is to be depended upon and is putting his life “as completely within the power of the law”
as Dr. Dulcifer and his workers, he records the fact that he was “a kind of machine in the
hands of these four skilled workmen,” moving “from room to room and from process to
process, the creature of their directing eyes and guiding hands” (70), further emphasizing
the correspondence between labourers and tools or machines that lack any individual agency.

Once Softly has successfully placed his counterfeit coin and the other products of the workers’ “handiwork” (69) into “one of the rouleaux of false half-crowns,” and has directed the “spurious coin, when it had been safely packed up, to a certain London dealer,” both with his “own hand” (71), Dr. Dulcifer informs him that he is now “nothing but one of the workmen in my manufactory of money” (72). In other words, Softly has become a mere mechanical “hand” that can no longer associate with his daughter. In a play on the word “hand,” with Softly packing and addressing the false coins with his “own hand” and thus becoming a “new hand,” or a faceless industrial worker in the mechanical process of mass production – a tool or machine in the “hands” of the other workers – Collins teases out the doubleness of this word, and the way that it can be used to denote either the manual or the mechanical, and represent either personal identity and subjectivity or a machine-like anonymity and lack of agency.

Rather than “eliding the fact of mass production,” as McGill describes the American lawyer, Elijah Paine, doing in his argument before the Supreme Court in 1834, Collins openly explores this “sphere of production” in A Rogue’s Life, mobilizing its negative associations in order to describe the production of counterfeits in the text, and the products of such manufacture, as subordinate copies. Collins clearly draws upon a traditional coding of the relations between originals and copies, and distinguishes the criminal, reiterative, profit-driven, mechanical reproduction of unauthorized Old Masters and fake coins from the authentic, original, manually produced, and creative works of
modern English artists. As the narrator notes, in his time these living artists were sadly neglected for the “dead painters” and their dark and dingy pictures:

Year after year these martyrs of the brush stood, palette in hand, fighting the old battle of individual merit against contemporary dullness – fighting bravely, patiently, independently; and leaving to Mr. Pickup and his pupils a complete monopoly of all the profit which could be extracted, in their line of business, from the feebly-buttoned pocket of the patron, and the inexhaustible credulity of the connoisseur. (29-30)

The figures of the patron and connoisseur direct us to a space of difference between the art world and that of counterfeit currency, which possesses no such personages. There is a significant distinction to be made between the private ownership of Old Master paintings (whether authentic or fake), as symbolized by the figures of the patron and connoisseur, and the public circulation of coins, which the text, however, attempts to obscure through an emphasis on the similarities between these two fields. Another significant point of difference lies in the fact that while in the “manufacture” of counterfeit Old Masters there is a standard of manual, crafted, and artistic production against which the cheaply and quickly made forgeries are defined, in the manufacture of coins, as with texts, the processes of producing both authorized and unauthorized articles are virtually identical – a unique original to be copied is absent, and all products of the process of manufacture are wholly imbricated within a system of mass production.

Indeed, in its mode of production, the manufacture of coins more closely resembles the printing of texts rather than the production of Old Master paintings. In A Rogue’s Life Collins makes this analogy clear – Dr. Dulcifer’s operation of churning out
false half-crowns is suddenly disrupted by the interjection of Bow Street runners, and at
the end of his narrative, Softly informs the reader that his former employer (and now his
father-in-law), has relocated to America, where he edits a newspaper which prints, we are
to assume, “pirated” works, with Old File as his publisher. As Bisla notes, “Dulcifer is
cast by Collins in the iniquitous situation of having turned his already tainted hand to, in
essence, if not quite a different type of forgery, then certainly a different type of thievery,
or false ‘circulation’ – at least in English moral terms, if not American legal ones – on the
other side of the Atlantic” (123). This correspondence between the making of counterfeit
coins and “pirated” texts, and also, by implication, between the production of counterfeit
Old Masters and what Desmond Flower, in “Authors and Copyrights,” deems “inferior
edition[s], printed feverishly by night and roughly stitched” (15), allows us to discern the
alignments and gaps between the realms of art crime, counterfeit currency, and literary
“piracy” as they center upon manufacture and the coding of the relations between original
“Old Masters” and spurious copies.

III. The “Sphere of Production” and the Threat of Reorigination

According to the American publisher R.R. Bowker in his “Summary of Copyright
Legislation in the United States” (1891), it is “at the moment of publication that the
undisputed possessory right [of the author] passes over into the much-disputed right to
multiply copies, and that the vexed questions of the true theory of copyright property
arises” (4). McGill illuminates the significance of the moment of publication in terms of
the transatlantic copyright debate when she contends that “in the American courts, going-
into-print was imagined not as the moment at which personal property rights were
secured, but as the point at which individual rights gave way to the demands of the social.
Private ownership of a printed text was defined as the temporary alienation of what was essentially public property" (43). As in the circulation of coins within an economic system, the free circulation of texts among the nation's citizens was considered by many in the United States as one of the "central tenets of republicanism," or as an alliance of "the printed text with the public sphere" that was not to be abandoned for the "principles of possessive individualism" (McGill 48).

In 1842, Dickens "carried to Washington for presentation to Congress by Mr. Clay" a petition signed by several American authors, "earnestly praying for the enactment of International Copyright Law."  

Soon after this petition was submitted, a memorial was presented to Congress representing the "manufacturing view," which protested that "If English authors obtain copyrights upon their works here, and our markets are supplied with them, it is apparent that, having no power to adapt them to our wants, our institutions, and our state of society, we must permit their circulation as they are" (qtd. House 257). For a large group of publishers, printers, typesetters, and bookbinders, the adaptation of foreign texts was considered crucial for their dissemination among American readers. These individuals discerned the way that foreign works – particularly British texts, which dominated the American literary marketplace – could be "reshuffled for American purposes" (McGill 7) – an intention that British authors either ignored or failed to understand.

Adaptation was achieved not only through a change in content, but primarily through a process of remanufacture, whereby the resetting of type and the format of the text allowed printers and publishers to "to refract an image of the nation as a whole that

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was seemingly impossible to produce by domestic means alone” (McGill 21). The right to manufacture texts – to change the content to suit a democratic readership and to sell them in cheap formats, and thereby make the texts available to the “masses,” which the triple-decker format and high cost of books in England largely prevented – became a crucial site of contestation. While a number of American publishers and printers eventually did express a willingness to grant copyright to foreign authors, they maintained their right to manufacture the texts in America, in order to adapt them to their purposes. Collins quotes the opinions of two publishers in “Considerations on the Copyright Question” in order to demonstrate this view, noting that the Harper Brothers, after “reciting the general conditions on which they propose to grant us copyright in the United States,” add the further provision that “‘within six months after registration of the title the work shall have been manufactured and published in this country, and by a subject or citizen of the country in which such registration is made’” (616, italics in original). Similarly, the American W.H. Appleton, writing to the London Times, in what Collins deems a “curiously aggressive tone,” maintains that

“Our people […] would rejoice to open this vast opportunity to your intellectual laborers… But they hold themselves perfectly competent to manufacture the books that shall embody your authors’ thoughts, in accordance with their own needs, habits, and tastes, and in this they will not be interfered with.” (qtd. Collins 616)

Collins attributes this reluctance to allow British printers to manufacture the works of English authors for the American public to a fear of the pecuniary losses that would be
the result of competition in an open market, not seeing (or wishing to see) the potential displacement of the original that remanufacture would allow for.

As McGill insists, reprinting is “not simply the antithesis of a legitimately national, original culture, neither are reprinted texts merely passive vehicles for the dissemination of European culture” (23). Instead,

Reprinting is a form of textual production that is inseparable from distribution and reception. Running counter to the avowed intentions (if not always the interests) of authors and their publishers, unauthorized reprinting makes publication distinctly legible as an independently signifying act. In the multiplicity of their formats and points of origin, reprinted texts call attention to the repeated acts of articulation by which culture and its audiences are constituted. (5)

The transatlantic dispute over the rights to manufacture texts demonstrates a disagreement over the status of unauthorized reprints, and specifically over whether they qualify merely as slavish copies that indicate America’s lack of originality, or else as texts that are adapted for American purposes and American readers through a process of reorigination that threatens to displace a British “original.” While unauthorized reprinting was generally described by English critics as a demonstration of American greed, lawlessness, theft, cultural backwardness, ideological hypocrisy and colonial dependency, and while American “pirate” publishers were considered profit-driven buccaneers, and reprinted texts as cheap, disposable copies of British originals, the process of remanufacture threatened to displace the British “original” through evidence of national difference, and to displace the British author from the status of the sole originator of a text through the wider system of diversified labour that depended more on
the publisher than it did the author. Moreover, it threatened to expose the English “original” as itself a copy within the process of mechanical reproduction (Fig. 2), further challenging the strict opposition between originals and copies that such a rhetoric of “piracy” draws upon.

As in the production of coins, the process of manufacturing both authorized and unauthorized texts is identical – every printed text is technically a copy, yet at the site of manufacture there exists the potential for originality within this reiterative process. The terms “original” and “copy” oscillate as referents to the material object and as more abstract designations of value which draw upon a traditional coding of power within the realm of representation, indicating a troubled relation that threatens to escape the rhetorical purposes to which the terms are put to use, and gesturing towards the potential disruptions within the depiction of originality and copying in Collins’s text.
IV. Imitation versus Copying

As I have argued above, Collins codes Old Master counterfeits in his novella as derivative and reiterative copies that are churned out quickly and cheaply in a process akin to mechanized, mass production. Although these counterfeits, as with most spurious Old Master paintings in the Victorian marketplace of art, are not fakes which reproduce an existing work, but rather forgeries that imitate the master's characteristic style and manner, they are nevertheless depicted as opposed to original, authentic works of art.

In the hierarchy of art that is established in the text, the work of modern English artists, in their originality, authenticity, and innovation, are positioned at the top, above the paintings of the Old Masters, which are authentic but dark and dingy, placed in their turn above counterfeit Old Masters, which lack all authenticity and originality. A dichotomy between originality and copying is established in the novella that characterizes what Robert Shiff, in his article on “Originality” deems a romantic-modern conception of originality — one that is based on innovation, with the “modern artist as original deviator, forever beginning anew” (104) — in conflict with a classical definition, where tradition and continuity are emphasized, and the artist works “not to innovate but to preserve established priorities. Their originality entails a certain sameness” (107). Shiff maintains that “[b]efore nineteenth-century romantics complicated the matter, classically minded art theorists had no difficulty distinguishing two modes of transformation: ‘imitations’ of sources and ‘copies’ of the same.” In A Rogue’s Life the acts of imitation and copying are both opposed to originality, yet within a classical conception of originality, “imitation is an interpretive act involving a degree of difference between the model (the ‘original’) and its copy, whereas copying is an attempt at mechanistic replication” (106).
In the case of imitation, “the principle of transformation is free and irregular; it is as if new, potentially radical, interpretive decisions are made at every moment in the process.” In A Rogue’s Life, Softly is advised by his vagabond artist friend to hone his “powers of imitation” (34), and attend to “the light and shade of Rembrandt” in order to make a convincing counterfeit. This would allow for a potential originality within the process and render Softly’s “making” of the Old Master at least in some respects a creative rather than mechanistic act of repetition, but Collins, however, counters this possibility by providing a model for Softly to copy: Dick informs him that he will have the “professional gentleman’s last Rembrandt as a guide” (34) – that is, the forgery begun by the previous counterfeiter, who “had a turn for Rembrandts,” and whom Softly is replacing due to the man’s sudden death in the Fleet. However, while this existing model attempts to code Softly’s activity in terms of slavish copying, it in fact further displaces the original in that this forgery is taken as the new model from which to work rather than the original work of the Old Master.

Furthermore, in its relationship to a prior, paternal text, A Rogue’s Life enacts the very displacement of the original and destabilization of a distinct hierarchy of art that is evident in the text at the level of narrative representation. Collins, in the preface written to accompany the republished version of his novella in 1879, notes that the “tone of almost boisterous gaiety in certain parts of these imaginary Confessions” can be attributed to the story’s “faithful reflection of a very happy time” in his life, when he had Dickens “for a near neighbour and a daily companion,” and when his leisure hours were “joyously passed with many other friends, all associated with literature and art.” Yet rather than “boisterous gaiety,” the tone of the text might more consistently be described
as a “slip-shod kind of mock-heroic English” (Sayers 28) – a tone that Dorothy Sayers maintains, in her unfinished study of Collins, characterizes the work of Collins’s grandfather, *Memoirs of a Picture* (1805). This narrative, which follows the fortunes of a painting by Guido Reni that has been stolen from the Royal gallery in France by a chevalier, and which includes an account of “two exact copies” (Sayers 30) that were made of the painting, was published half a century before *A Rogue’s Life*. Interestingly, the two texts share several striking similarities, from a common concern with the Old Masters, counterfeits, and revealing the “tricks of the picture-trade” (29), to specific episodes and scenes, particularly one in which the enterprising chevalier, in order to rub out the traces of a forged Old Master, provides a naïve collector with a miraculous cleansing liquid:

The count having supplied Seraphini with a phial of liquid, the latter immediately proceeded to his master, telling him, with every mark of joy in his countenance, which Garrick himself could not have better counterfeited, that the count had left behind him by some accident an invaluable liquid, which the landlord where he lodged had found, and along with it directions how to use it in the removal of any varnish ever yet used, and of any length of time remaining upon a picture. (128-29)

The amateur collector, as in *A Rogue’s Life*, instantly applies the liquid, and later, “rubbing the surface gently over with a piece of flannel,” is “panic-struck” when he sees that not only had “the Virgin and her Son” been removed, “oil varnish and all, but the very priming vanished along with them, leaving the bare copper as a clear proof of the merit of the all-potent elixir” (130-31). Rather than a “faithful reflection” of a past time,

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Collins's novella can be read as an "imitation" of a paternal text that makes it. The grandson, in his act of re-writing and even re-origination, conceals the text's debt to *Memoirs of a Picture* in its displacement of the earlier original. Thus, the destabilization of a hierarchy of art that is evident in the narrative is enacted in the novella's relationship with a prior text. While the potential for remanufacture and reorigination within a mechanical process in which copies can be made anew is distinct from the potential for originality within imitation, both reveal a refusal of copies to remain within their circumscribed status as slavish reiterations of the Same, and ultimately escape authorial mastery, as they do in the transatlantic copyright debate.

**V. Made in America**

An Anglo-American copyright agreement was finally passed in 1891, two years after Collins's death. This agreement, which granted British authors copyright over their works in United States, included the stipulation that "It is made a condition of such copyright for all authors, whether resident or non-resident, that all the editions of the works so copyrighted must be entirely manufactured within the United States; the term including the setting of the type, as well as the printing and binding of the books" (qtd. Putnam 176). This provision reveals what McGill deems "the continued importance of the resetting of type as a point of reorigination and mark of national difference" (301) for American publishers and printers. While the copyright act granted British authors the rights to "copy," or essentially to be remunerated for the publication of their works according to the law in the United States, their right to fully control the manufacture of their works was denied them. Thus, while the American government's long refusal to grant legal protection to foreign authors was considered throughout the nineteenth
century as evidence of the backwardness of America as a nation, and was coded in terms of fraudulent, derivative copying, the potential for reorigination and the apparent disparity between a rhetoric of copying and the realities of the transatlantic copyright debate over the rights to manufacture British texts in America was not contained by the passing of the Chace Act.

In his outline of the history of the copyright debate between America and England, Putnam claims that,

Between no two countries has the exchange of literary productions been so considerable or so important as between Great Britain and the United States. The interests of authors, of readers, of publishers, of national literature and of national morality, have alike demanded that the exchange should be placed under international regulation, and that this extensive use by the public of each country of the literature of the other should be conditioned upon an adequate acknowledgement of the rights of the producers of such literature. (64)

As the “two great English-speaking people, claiming to stand among the most enlightened of the community of nations,” the failure to achieve an international copyright agreement is seen as a disgrace (64). Putnam’s insistence upon the equality of Britain and the United States and the extensive use of American literature in England in addition to the use of British works in America, while published in 1884, nevertheless reveals a sense of growing American power that was materializing in the years in which Collins’s *A Rogue’s Life* was published and republished.
CHAPTER TWO

*Hide and Seek: The Old Masters and the New World*

Whereas in *A Rogue’s Life* Collins endorses a “romantic-modern” conception of originality, valorizing the English “modern masters” over the foreign, dingy and ageing Old Masters (and spurious Old Master counterfeits), in his novel *Hide and Seek* he subscribes to a classical notion of originality in which artists “work not to innovate but to preserve established authorities” (Shiff 107). While Collins’s novella begins with the protagonist’s rebellion against his father and ends when he establishes himself in the New World of Australia, with Dr. Dulcifer located in the New World of America, *Hide and Seek* maps an opposing narrative trajectory. It, too, begins with a son’s rebellion against his father, but concludes with their reconciliation and with another character’s rejection of the wilderness of the American New World for his old home in England. In this text Collins depicts the manual reproduction of works of art as a necessary part of a system of art education that valorizes continuity with the tradition of the Old Masters over radical innovation. While this copying positions British artists as copyists rather than as innovative geniuses within a hierarchy of art, Collins does not depict copying as a spurious, mechanical, or profit-driven industry as he does in *A Rogue’s Life* – one aligned with the unauthorized reprinting of texts in America – but rather aligns English culture with the civilization of the Old World as embodied by a tradition of art that includes the Old Masters, and which is opposed to New World savagery. This coding of the New World as lacking the culture that the production of art requires throws America outside the realm of representation, and can be read in relation to another aspect of the transatlantic realm of power – the rise of an American literary “canon” and British
anxieties about the growing cultural authority of the United States, which threatened to break from “tradition” and displace England’s hegemony within the transatlantic literary field.

I. “The A B C of Art”

In *Hide and Seek* the identities of a deaf and mute girl, nicknamed “Madonna,” and that of her father, whose identity is unknown to her, and who seemingly abandoned her mother before Madonna was born, are hidden and sought after. The novel’s cast of characters includes Madonna; her first foster mother, Mrs. Peckover; her adoptive parents, Valentine and Lavinia Blyth; Matthew Grice, who turns out to be Madonna’s uncle, and who uncovers the true identity of her father; a rambunctious young man named Zack Thorpe; and Zack’s mother and father (whom Grice discovers is Madonna’s biological father). Valentine Blyth is an artist, and as such, his life offers “as strong a practical contradiction as it is possible to imagine to the lives of his neighbors” (39). In his youth he had chosen the career of an artist over a secure profession in business that was offered to him by his father, although he lacks any signs of true genius, holding “not the smallest spark of the great creative fire in his whole mental composition” (41). However, Blyth perseveres in his craft, not only because of his own deep passion for the art of painting, but also as a means to support his bed-ridden wife.

Patricia Frick, in “Wilkie Collins and John Ruskin,” argues that “while Blyth remains technically an inferior artist, he proves himself morally worthy of his profession and through love, compassion, and loyalty makes an art of his life” (16), thus exemplifying a “true” artist as defined by Ruskin— that is, one who produces “art infused
with moral purpose and sanctified by human interest” (15). It is certainly true that Blyth commits himself to “cheap portrait-painting, cheap copying, and cheap studies of Still Life” in order to beautify the life and surroundings of his wife, who insists, however, than he not give up “High Art or Classical Landscape altogether” and ensures that he divide his time between what the narrator deems “the production of great unsaleable ‘compositions,’ which were always hung near the ceiling in the Exhibition, and of small marketable commodities, which were as inevitably hung near the floor” (51). However, while Frick argues that *Hide and Seek* is an example of the extent to which Collins’s work reflects Ruskin’s views, I am more interested here in how the novel moves away from the values presented in Ruskin’s critique of the Old Masters. Instead of critiquing these artists and valorizing modern art, as Ruskin does in *Modern Painters*, and as Collins does in *A Rogue’s Life*, Collins positions them in a place of reverence – as a standard which must be faithfully copied in order for an artist to become educated and hope to attain a similar standard. The “Old Masters” in this text refer not only to a group of European painters who lived and worked during the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, but to the even older “masters” of the classical world of Greece and Rome, who were themselves “old masters” to Renaissance artists such as Raphael, thus extending the reach and weight of the designation.

In *Hide and Seek* Blyth’s young friend Zack rebels against his father and insists that he would like to become an artist – an aspiration that his older friend sympathizes with and agrees to help him attain. Blyth establishes an informal art academy in his studio, with Zack, Madonna, and his wife as his pupils, intent on teaching Zack the “ABC of art” in order to prepare him for a position in his friend’s private academy, and
eventually in the Royal Academy, where Blyth himself was educated. In fact, during the
nineteenth century, there was a heated debate in the British art world over the proper
mode of educating young artists – the two alternatives, both of which have their roots in
the Renaissance, were the artist’s workshop and the art academy. According to Quentin
Bell in *The Schools of Design* (1963), academic theorists “predicate a distinct hierarchy
of art, certain subjects being considered base, while others were evidently noble […]” (2).
Students in art academies were taught the history of art, the rules of perspective and the
details of human anatomy, and advanced from copying existing works of art to the study
of the human figure, which was of central importance in the academy tradition.
Meanwhile, instructors would correct pupils’ work “with reference to the accepted
canons of antique beauty” (Bell 15). This system of educating young artists positions
copies as subordinate to originals, yet also considers them necessary for the practice of
artistic technique and the dissemination of fundamental values and tastes.

Collins’s depiction of Blyth’s “regular little academy” (189) reflects such
nineteenth-century conceptions of the “Academic Idea” (Bell 2), emphasizing the
copying of the “Old Masters” as a legitimate activity in the education of young artists,
and as necessary in order for them to “perfect their techniques” (Macleod 72). This
copying is far removed from the spurious, mechanized manufacture of counterfeit Old
Masters in *A Rogue’s Life*, or the depiction of authentic Old Masters as dingy and dark,
underscoring instead a continuity with and valorization of tradition. When Zack visits
Blyth’s studio and expresses a serious intent to study art, Madonna is described as
“modestly occupied in making a copy of the head of the Venus de’ Medici” (176). Blyth
later praises the faithfulness and accuracy of her drawing, and advises Zack to “copy her
example” (186). The practice of copying is thus a manual form of reproduction that preserves the aura of the original, with copies as accepted fixtures in the art academic setting, ratifying a strict hierarchy of art.

In Blyth’s academy, as in the art academies of the Victorian art world, the copying and studying of the “Old Masters” served to represent and promulgate a cultivated artistic “taste.” When Blyth first points to Madonna’s copy of the Venus de’ Medici he insists that:

“First of all, you must purify your taste by copying the glorious works of Greek sculpture – in short, you must form yourself on the Antique. Look there! – just what Madonna’s doing now; she’s forming herself on the Antique!” (184)

As Macleod notes in *Art and the Victorian Middle Class*, the term “taste” has “eighteenth-century elitist connotations” that were represented by the indulgence in “the leisured contemplation of Old Master paintings” (15). Indeed, Bell maintains that the “art academy was there to instill good principles, to purify taste, to bring the youth into contact with that philosophy of painting which lay beyond the workshop,” as well as to “provide educational facilities such as models, casts, examples for copying and so on, which would otherwise have been lacking” (13). The elitism that the cultivation of “taste” connotes in the study of the “Old Masters” functions as a marker of civility and culture. When Zack inquires about the exact meaning of “drawing from life,” Blyth responds by exclaiming, “‘Good heavens, Zack, in what barbarous ignorance of art your parents must have brought you up!’” (186). Similarly, when Blyth’s art academy is officially inaugurated, Blyth sets Zack the task of copying a cast of the “Dying Gladiator”
"Hullo!" cried Zack, looking at the Dying Gladiator. "The gentleman in plaster's making a face--I'm afraid he isn't quite well. I say, Blyth, is that the statue of an ancient Greek patient, suffering under the prescription of an ancient Greek physician?"

"Will you hold your tongue and take up your drawing-board?" cried Mr. Blyth.

"You young barbarian, you deserve to be expelled from my academy for talking in that way of the Dying Gladiator. [...] Order! order! order!" shouted Valentine, suddenly forgetting his assumed dignity in the exultation of the moment. "Mr. Blyth's drawing academy for the promotion of family Art is now open, and ready for general inspection. Hooray!"
In both instances, Zack's lack of aesthetic taste and complete ignorance about art, particularly classical art, is coded by Blyth, albeit good-naturedly, as a type of savagery—a "wildness" that is emphasized by the young student's disorderly and unregulated behaviour.

This "wildness" and the playfulness with which Collins depicts Blyth's art academy is emphasized in the illustration that accompanies the scene of Madonna's copying of the Venus de' Medici in the 1874 Harper and Brothers edition of the novel (Fig. 4). This image depicts Madonna's copy of the head of the Venus de' Medici on her easel, while she holds on to the replica that she has been "keeping from being shaken down, while she look[s] on" at Blyth's and Zack's childish game of leap-frog (179).

Fig. 4. From the Harper and Brothers edition of *Hide and Seek*, 1874.
In contrast, the Peter Fenelon Collier edition of *Hide and Seek* presents an illustration of a later moment in this same scene in Blyth’s studio, when Zack greets Madonna (Fig. 5).

![Image of illustration from Peter Fenelon Collier edition of *Hide and Seek*, 1900.](image_url)

"HOW IS THE DEAREST, FREEST, GENTLEST LOVE IN THE WORLD?" RIED ZACK, TAKING HER HAND, AND KISSING IT WITH BOUNTIFUL FONDNESS.—*HIDE-AND-SEEK*, VOL. XI., PAGE 170.

Fig. 5. From the Peter Fenelon Collier edition of *Hide and Seek*, 1900.
Rather than an unruly game, with the artist’s materials scattered on the floor, this later image depicts Zack courteously and civilly bending over Madonna’s hand, with Madonna’s papers resting in her lap, and the cast of the Venus de’ Medici’s head obliquely visible on the table before her. Here, the studio is orderly, as is Zack’s behaviour, representing an ideal of civility and order that art academies emphasized in terms of artistic “taste” and principles. The two illustrations emphasize different aspects of the same scene, with the later, more mannered image investing the text with a sentimental rather than Dickensian tone, highlighting a ritual of courtship (which is actually rendered problematic in the narrative by the discovery that Zack is Madonna’s half-brother) rather than the rambunctious play of Zack and Blyth. In their different perspectives on Hide and Seek, these illustrations reveal the way that the reprinting (and re-illustration) of a text can function as a potential site of re-making and reorigination, particularly in the work’s dependence not only upon the creative genius of the author, but also upon a network of individuals, from typesetters to illustrators, who collectively help to determine how, and within what contexts, the work is read.

The very notion of the copying of the “Old Masters” as a form of education in civility, which is visible in the Peter Fenelon Collier illustration’s depiction of a display of social courtesy within the art academic setting, is likewise apparent in the history of Madonna’s name. This appellation is bestowed upon her because of the close resemblance that is apparent between her features and “that immortal ‘Madonna’ face, which has forever associated the idea of beauty with the name of RAPHAEL’” (67). As the narrator notes,

The resemblance struck everybody alike, even those who were but slightly
conversant with pictures, the moment they saw her. Taken in detail, her features might be easily found fault with. Her eyes might be pronounced too large, her mouth too small, her nose not Grecian enough for some people’s tastes. But the general effect of these features, the shape of her head and face, and especially her habitual expression, reminded all beholders at once, and irresistibly, of that image of softness, purity, and feminine gentleness which has been engraven on all civilized memories by the ‘Madonnas’ of Raphael. (67-68)

Instead of displacing Raphael’s Madonnas through her greater beauty, however, Madonna’s face, a living “copy” of that depicted and made famous by the Old Master, recalls and pays tribute to Raphael’s vision of feminine purity, as, for instance, in his “Madonna dell Granduca” (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Raphael, *Madonna dell Granduca*, c.1505.
Collins radically represents the child of a “fallen woman” as the “nearest living approach” (67) to the immortal face of the Madonnas of Raphael rather than bearing any degenerative marks of her mother’s “sin” and “immorality” in her physiognomy, as was believed to be possible in the period. Moreover, Madonna’s face becomes a site of recognition whereby the viewer’s “civilized” status is tested through the existence or absence of the engraven image of Raphael’s Madonna on their memories. As the novel’s narrator contends, this image is familiar to even those “but slightly conversant with pictures,” and serves as a reification of the Old Master’s status. In the struggle between the ageing and the new, the traditional and innovative, which Bourdieu describes in *The Rules of Art*, it is obviously tradition and the Old Masters, representing culture and civility, which are valorized in Collins’s *Hide and Seek*. In this novel, as opposed to *A Rogue’s Life*, British art or even human physiognomies are not distinguished from copying in their originality, but are instead positioned within a tradition of copying that reveals a level of respect for and continuity with the “old” or classical masters, whose works are not diminished through contact with the “young,” but maintain their position of authority within a hierarchy of art.

II. “Columbus in Sight of the New World”

Collins’s alignment of the “Old Masters” with culture and civility, and as part of a system of education in art that involves the student’s purification of “taste,” reflects a wider valorization of the Old World in the novel that is set against a disparagement of New World savagery. In his depiction of a fictional painting of Blyth’s, entitled “Columbus in Sight of the New World,” Collins visually encodes this dichotomy between
the civilization of the Old World and the backwardness and colonial dependency of the
New World of America, which is represented as reliant upon the Old World for its very
eexistence through the act of "discovery." Before the official Royal Academy Exhibition
of paintings, Blyth holds an informal exhibition of his own in his studio. Two of his most
recent works of "High Art" are on display — an "imaginative classical landscape" entitled
"The Golden Age," and a painting called "Columbus in Sight of the New World," which
the artist deems his greatest work to date. Having assembled his guests before the
paintings, Blyth delivers his *exhortatio*, gesturing towards his works with one hand, his
written disquisition held in the other. After discussing "The Golden Age" and "Art
Pastoral," the artist proceeds to "Art Mystic and 'Columbus'" (344). According to Blyth,
Art Mystic aims at "the illustration of fact on the highest imaginative principles," taking
"a scene, for instance, from history," and representing it "as exactly and naturally as
possible." More than this, however, mystical art also indicates "the spirit of the age," by
"the introduction of those angelic or infernal winged forms — those cherubs and airy
female geniuses — those demons and dragons of darkness — which so many illustrious
painters have long since taught us to recognize as impersonating to the eye the good and
evil influences, Virtue and Vice, Glory and Shame, Success and Failure, Past and Future,
Heaven and Earth — all on the same canvas" (344, 346).

This marriage of the realistic and the mystical is exemplified in Blyth's
"Columbus," which he describes in the following manner:

"The moment sought to be represented is sunrise on the 12th of October, 1492,
when the great Columbus first saw land clearly at the end of his voyage. Observe,
now, in the upper portion of the composition, how the spirit of the age is
mystically developed before the spectator. Of the two winged female figures
hovering in the morning clouds, immediately over Columbus and his ship, the
first is the Spirit of Discovery, holding the orb of the world in her left hand, and
pointing with a laurel crown (typical of Columbus’s fame) toward the newly-
discovered Continent. The other figure symbolizes the Spirit of Royal Patronage,
impersonated by Queen Isabella, Columbus’s warm friend and patron, who
offered her jewels to pay his expenses, and who, throughout his perilous voyage,
was with him in spirit, as here represented. The tawny figure with feathered head,
floating hair, and wildly-extended pinions, soaring upward from the western
horizon, represents the Genius of America advancing to meet her great discoverer;
while the shadowy countenances, looming dimly through the morning mist behind
her, are portrait-types of Washington and Franklin, who would never have
flourished in America if that continent had not been discovered, and who are,
therefore, associated prophetically with the first voyages of the Old World to the
New.” (347-48)

Throughout Blyth’s description, the New World’s dependence on the Old World’s act of
“discovery” is underscored. Not only is the “Genius of America” depicted as “advancing
to met her great discoverer” with anticipation, as if this encounter will herald a superior
phase in its history, but the “portrait-types” of Washington and Franklin – two central
political figures of American history – are seen “looming dimly through the morning
mist” in embryonic stages, as they cannot yet come into being without Columbus’s
“discovery.” This painting, and Blyth through it, and Collins through both, envisions a
colonial dependency of America on a prior civilization, and in its various features and
codings of power, recalls two existing works of Flemish art of the sixteenth century: Jan van der Straet (or Johannes Stradanus)'s “America,” and an engraving by Adriaen Collaert after van der Straet entitled “Christophorus Columbus Ligur terroribus Oceani Superatis,” or “Christopher Columbus, Victor over the Terrors of the Ocean.”

Van der Straet’s “America” (Fig. 7), as does Blyth’s painting, depicts the Old World discoverer encountering the New World, and its similarity to, as well as difference from, the fictional painting, is telling for a politics of the Old World and the New.

Fig. 7. Jan van der Straet, America, c.1580.

According to Denise Albanese in New Science, New World, the “appearance of Amerigo Vespucci at the left side of the plate, just disembarked from the ship visible at the image’s margins, suggests the indomitability of the Old World: armed and armored,
erect, bearing the standard of Christianity and the tools of navigation” (83). Vespucci confronts a nude, aboriginal, female embodiment of America, yet, as Albanese maintains, Vespucci’s conquest over the New World is “not entirely guaranteed”:

That the hammocked native seems quasi-Amazonian is betokened not only by her motility or by the club resting near her, but by the disturbingly gendered cannibalism being enacted in the background. It appears as though America’s (mostly) female companions are in the process of devouring strategically impaled haunches of some enemy – perhaps a hint of some prior encounter. (85)

In Blyth’s “Columbus,” the figure of America is also feminized in its encounter with the male discoverer, yet no traces of such a threatening, subversive potential are visible from Blyth’s description. Rather, the American “Genius” welcomes the appearance of her “discoverer.”

Adriaen Collaert’s work, done in the style of van der Straet, could be regarded as an example of Blyth’s “Art Mystic,” and indeed, it possesses many of the same features of “Columbus,” which raises the intriguing question of Collins’s familiarity with the image (Fig. 8). When Blyth recalls his spectators’ attention to his painting, he notes that, “writhing defeated behind Columbus’s ship, in the depths of the transparent Atlantic, you have shadowy types of the difficulties and enemies that the dauntless navigator had to contend with”:

“Crushed headlong in the water, sinks the Spirit of Superstition, delineated by monastic robes – the council of monks having set itself against Columbus from the very first. Behind the Spirit of Superstition, and impersonated by a fillet of purple grapes around her head, descends the Genius of Portugal – the Portuguese
having repulsed Columbus, and having treacherously sent out frigates to stop his
discovery, by taking him prisoner. The scaly forms entwined around these two
represent Envy, Hatred, Malice, Ignorance, and Crime generally; and thus the
mystic element is, so to speak, led through the sea out of the picture.” (348-49)

Such mystical, writhing “scaly forms” are visible in the churning waters about
Columbus’s ship in “Christophorus Columbus” as well.

![Fig. 8. Adriaen Collaert after Jan van der Straet, Christophorus Columbus Ligur terroribus Oceani Superatis, ca. 1585.](image)

The discoverer’s body is turned away from these creatures to his right, and instead faces
the female figures on the left of the picture, who are, unlike in Blyth’s painting, in the
water rather than winged. And as in van der Straet’s “America,” the discoverer is here
also armoured, and is holding a standard of Christianity, with an image of a crucified
Christ discernible on the flag. Each of these three images of the encounter between the
Old World and the New attempts to visually encode a hierarchy of power in which the
Old World, aligned with male authority, civilization, religion, and physical power, is
opposed to a female, uncultivated American continent that is dependent on the act of
“discovery” to bring civilization to its rude landscape. Collins’s text, in its depiction of Blyth’s painting, calls upon and marshals a prior tradition of visual works in its coding of Old and New World relations, while excising the gendered anxieties of van der Straet’s well-known “America” for an insistence upon the Old World’s cultural power and dominance.

Throughout Blyth’s disquisition, the narrator relates the various asides and interjections that are made by his spectators, which mostly consist either of critique of the art and artist’s turgidity, or exaggerated praise by the artist’s patron. Indeed, a tone of light authorial mockery can be detected in Collins’s technique of dialogic “double-voicing,” or distancing of authorial from narrative voice (Bakhtin 314), which casts doubt on the painting’s claim to “High Art,” and reveals the ridiculousness of Blyth’s efforts. The modern art of the English artist is thus coded in the text as inferior to those of the “Old Masters,” yet it is clear that Blyth’s work is positioned within a specific art historical tradition and can be aligned with the culture and civilization of the Old World.

III. “The Wild Country Over the Water”

In its depiction of American dependence on the Old World, the politics of Blyth’s “Columbus in Sight of the Old World” is reflected in the wider representational strategies of the novel, which, more so than the fictional painting, clearly align English culture with the Old World of the “Old Masters” in contradistinction to the savagery and backwardness of the New World. When Blyth invites Zack to his exhibition, he informs him that Zack can bring along anybody he likes, although the artist would prefer “intellectual people,” as his “figure-subject of ‘Columbus in Sight of the New World” is
treated mystically, and, as a work of “High Art,” cannot be understood in a hurry (288). Zack responds with a note that mentions,

“I have got a new friend – the best and most interesting fellow in the world. He has been half his life in the wilds of America; so, if you don’t give me the go-by, I shall bring him to see your picture of Columbus.” (289)

This new friend is Matthew Grice, the individual who searches for the man who caused the downfall of his sister, and who later discovers that Madonna is his niece. Grice is consistently depicted in the novel as uncultivated, as socially backwards, as rough and lacking all etiquette and civility. He has spent much of his life traveling in the New World, and shares stories of his “life among the savages and his wanderings in the wild places of the earth” (513) with Zack.

After so many years in the New World, Grice bears the marks of his experiences on his body, and has “gone native” in his behaviours. He has been scalped by what he calls “three skulking thieves of Indians,” while “dodging about after any game that turned up, on the banks of the Amazon,” and so wears a distinctive skull-cap (273). Grice also tells Zack that he is no longer fit for “the sort of things as goes on among you here”:

“I can't sleep in a bed; I can't stop in a room; I can't be comfortable in decent clothes; I can't stray into a singing-shop, as I did to-night, without a dust being kicked up all round me, because I haven't got a proper head of hair like everybody else. I can't shake up along with the rest of you, nohow; I'm used to hard lines and a wild country; and I shall go back and die over there among the lonesome places where there's plenty of room for me.” And again Mat jerked his hand carelessly in the direction of the American continent. (276)
His luggage consists of a large “corn-sack” which he carries on his back and a long rifle, and he removes the furniture in his lodgings in favour of a bearskin rug. Moreover, Grice has learned how to prepare a mixture called “squaw’s drink,” which he uses to intoxicate Blyth in order to take from him a key that he wishes to make a copy of. In the novel there is a curious conflation between North and South America, so that it seems as if the entire “great American Continent” (293) is an unpopulated, “lonesome country,” where prairies merge with jungle, Amazonian natives with Indians in their “wigwams,” and a handful of wanderers from “all parts of civilized Europe” (430) roam about. The one city that is differentiated in this wilderness is New York, where, after a period wandering together in America after Zack’s reconciliation with his father, he and Grice agree to meet the following year. While by the end of the nineteenth century, New York City would be considered by many a city to rival London, here it is only one rough outpost of civilization in an uncultivated landscape. As the text makes clear, America simply does not possess the history and tradition that would allow for “Old Masters” or other such symbols of cultural or artistic power. Zack’s status as a “young barbarian” in his ignorance of art is directly related in the text to the backwardness of his new friend, in that he becomes enamoured with Grice’s former lifestyle, and desires to lead a life of wandering in the wilderness himself, which he eventually does for a time, with Grice at his side.

Opposed to the savagery of the New World is the “Old Country” of England, a longing for which first brings Grice home after his years of wandering. Great Britain is aligned with “civilized Europe,” and is the “old land” that Zack persuades Grice to return to at the conclusion of the novel. The reader is told that the “first kiss with which his
dead sister’s child welcomed him back cooled the Tramps’ Fever forever; and the Man of many Wanderings rested at last among the friends who loved him, to wander no more” (624). *Hide and Seek* thus maps a narrative of return from New World savagery to Old World civilization, culture, and tradition, which are located for Grice in England. Significantly, America is depicted as a space of blankness that is not yet written by history or culture, and is therefore placed outside the realm of representation. Yet at the time that this novel was (re)published, the United States was being “written” by authors who expressed a distinctive, original, American voice and whose works were gaining both critical acclaim and popularity in England and elsewhere in “civilized Europe.”

Collins’s coding of American dependency on the Old World, as well as its uncultivated savagery and lack of tradition, can be read as a response to wider British anxieties in the period about America’s growing cultural power. *Hide and Seek* was first published in 1854 and was later significantly revised and republished in 1861. While I discuss the implications of this revision later in the chapter, it is significant to note that, particularly at the time of the text’s republication, an American literary marketplace “suffused with unauthorized publications” (McGill 1) coexisted with a growing tradition of American literature. While those in favour of international copyright on both sides of the Atlantic often maintained that the lack of an Anglo-American copyright agreement “fatally diminished the popularity of American writers” (Granqvist 29) and stifled the growth of a distinctive American literary “canon,” in fact evidence of the forging of a powerful literature by American authors was becoming increasingly apparent.

By the end of the 1860s, H.C. Carey, in *Letters on International Copyright*, was able to answer the question posed by a critic in *The Edinburgh Review* in 1829, “Who
reads an American book?” with the answering query, “Who does not read American books?” (177). Thus, anxieties over the lawless power of American “pirates” were amplified by the authorized production of American works, which not only competed with British texts in the literary marketplace, but embodied an emerging cultural authority, which, in its originality, threatened to displace the hegemony of English texts within a transatlantic literary field of power.

Within Collins’s novel, the representative figure of British literature, William Shakespeare, is positioned in the same great tradition with the “Old Master” Raphael as well as Mozart, who are all, in their genius, described as “gods in this world” (41). Additionally, it is clearly evident in the text that the American continent has no such figures who represent cultural power. Indeed, it is Washington and Franklin, not Ralph Waldo Emerson or Hawthorne, whose embryonic faces loom dimly on the national horizon in Blyth’s “Columbus in Sight of the New World.” By ratifying a strict hierarchy of the Old World over the New, originals over copies, civility over savagery, and tradition and continuity over revolutionary innovation, Collins reifies the cultural authority of America’s “fatherland.”

IV. The Dialectic of Distinction

In The Rules of Art, Bourdieu defines what he calls the “dialectic of distinction” — a “specific law of change within the field of cultural production,” whereby “institutions, schools, works and artists which have ‘left their mark’ are destined to fall into the past, to become classic or outdated, to see themselves thrown outside history or to ‘pass into history,’ into the eternal present of consecrated culture, where trends and schools which were totally incompatible ‘in their lifetime’ may now peacefully coexist, because they
have been canonized, academicized and neutralized” (154-55). While in *A Rogue’s Life* it is the Old Masters who have “left their mark” and are challenged by the “modern masters,” in *Hide and Seek* Collins’s alignment of English culture with the tradition of the “Old Masters” and the Old World reflects a classical notion of originality that is ultimately destabilized by the romantic-modern conception of originality apparent in his novella. And as with *A Rogue’s Life*, this destabilization is in part enacted in the text’s history or relationship to a prior text – in this case an earlier version of the novel.

In his preface to the reprinted edition of *Hide and Seek* in 1861, Collins notes that the text was “originally published in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-four, at the outbreak of the Crimean War,” when the minds of readers were “preoccupied or indifferent” due to the war (3). Collins comments that the “demand among the book-sellers” for this first edition was “just large enough to exhaust the first edition, and there the sale of this novel, in its original form, terminated.” After waiting until *Hide and Seek* could “make its appearance on a footing of perfect equality with [his] other works,” and obtaining for the text “the advantage of a careful revisal, guided by the light of the author’s later experience,” the improved text was reintroduced to the public. Collins assures the reader that,

> My project of revisal has, at the same time, been carefully and rigidly executed. I have abridged, and in many cases omitted, several passages in the first edition, which made larger demands upon the reader’s patience than I should now think it desirable to venture on if I were writing a new book; and I have, in one important respect, so altered the termination of the story, as to make it, I hope, more satisfactory and more complete than it was in its original form. (4)
The potential to improve upon rather than simply displace or re-make a prior model is here written into the novel’s history of revision and republication.

Moreover, Collins’s alignment of English culture with the tradition of the Old World as embodied by the “Old Masters” reveals a significant space of difference in the gap that exists between the “Old Masters” and modern British artists. While in *A Rogue’s Life* the “modern masters” possess the revolutionary power of innovation, in *Hide and Seek* Blyth, the novel’s representative English artist lacks any signs of genius. His reverence for the work of the “Old Masters” can only repeat rather than revise and re-make them, and in their repetition they cannot be entirely equated with the tradition and symbolic power that they represent. It is precisely this disparity between England and the Old World and the destabilization of a dichotomy between British “Old Masters” and American copyists that Hawthorne, in *The Marble Faun*, exposes and explores.
CHAPTER THREE

The Marble Faun: The “Master Genius of American Literature” and the “Mighty Old Masters” in the Old World

In a review of The Marble Faun, or, The Romance of Monte Beni, published in The Atlantic Monthly in April 1860, James Russell Lowell remarks that the “nineteenth century has produced no more purely original writer than Mr. Hawthorne” (509). The reviewer insists that not only have Hawthorne’s works “received the surest warranty of genius and originality in their appreciation downward from a small circle of refined admirers and critics, till it embraced the whole community of readers” (509), but it is also “impossible to think of Hawthorne without at the same time thinking of the few great masters of imaginative composition” (510). As a critically acclaimed and popular author, not only in the United States, but also in England – indeed, Gohdes notes that after 1850 “the approval of Hawthorne was all but universal in British critical circles” (139) – Hawthorne embodies the potentiality of a distinctly American literature that is not dependent on the imitation of English works, and which could coexist with the American practice of literary “piracy.” By manifesting signs of original genius, Hawthorne’s work threatened to unravel the customary model of British original versus American copy that was a standard rhetorical tool of English critics of American culture throughout the nineteenth century, and which Collins attempts to bolster in Hide and Seek through a polarization of Old World (English) civility and New World savagery.

Benjamin Lease, in Anglo-American Encounters, cites Hawthorne’s portrait of a young man in the short story, “A Select Party” (1844), which describes the “Master Genius, for whom our country is looking anxiously into the mist of time, as destined to
fulfil the great mission of creating an American literature, hewing it, as it were, out of the
unwrought granite of our intellectual quarries” (101-102), as a depiction of Hawthorne
himself as a young writer. By the time of the publication of *The Marble Faun* or
*Transformation*, Hawthorne’s last major work, in 1860, the author was certainly heralded
by several critics as a “master genius” of American literature at a time when the
establishment of a “canon” of American literature was already considerably underway.
*The Marble Faun* is fundamentally concerned with the issues of modern “master genius”
and the excellence of the “mighty Old Masters,” and with the unresolved relations
between originals and copies, yet because it focuses on the experiences of a group of
youth in Italy – an American copyist of Old Masters, Hilda, and her countryman, a
sculptor named Kenyon, as well as a mysterious woman artist, Miriam, and a young
Italian count named Donatello, who resembles the Faun of Praxiteles – rather than in
England, critics have not typically read the work in a transatlantic context.

For instance, Frederick Newberry, in *Hawthorne’s Divided Loyalties*, examines
the author’s preoccupation with England throughout his career, contending that a sense of
the “lost cultural and aesthetic inheritance America experienced in the historical split
with the mother country” (16), as opposed to a patriotic pride in the republican nation of
the United States, functions as a site of deep ambivalence in Hawthorne’s work.
However, Newberry does not accord a great deal of critical attention to *The Marble Faun*,
only mentioning Hawthorne’s preface to the novel, in which the author attributes his
decision to set the narrative in Italy rather than America to the “difficulty of writing a
Romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no
picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a common-place posterity, in broad and
simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land” (4), as an indication of America’s lack of tradition when compared to the Old World traditions of England. Furthermore, while critics have explored the national politics of the novel, whether in terms of pre-Civil War America or revolutionary Italy, I argue that the issues of American and Old World genius, the Old Masters and modern artists, and a struggle between reverence and irreverence for ageing traditions that are crucially at play in the novel can be fruitfully positioned in relation to trans-national rather than simply “national anxieties,” as Blythe Ann Tellefsen contends in “The Case of My Dear Native Land: Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Vision of America in The Marble Faun” (462). Through a focus on what Carol Hanbery MacKay, in “Hawthorne, Sophia, and Hilda as Copyists: Duplication and Transformation in The Marble Faun,” deems the “theme of copying” in the novel (93), I will consider how Hawthorne’s work does not necessarily reflect a deep nostalgia for the heritage of Old England in contradistinction to a patriotic pride in the political ideology of America, as Newberry insists is the case with most of Hawthorne’s works, but instead dismantles the distinctions between the old and new, tradition and innovation, the original and copy, while revealing the discrepancy between England and the cultural inheritance of the Old World.

I. “The Handmaid of Raphael” and the “Raphaelic Machines”

A central character in The Marble Faun is an American artist named Hilda, a pure and virginal “girl of New England birth and culture” (285), who lives in a white tower among doves above the grime and pollution of the city. We are told that Hilda, “in her native land, had early shown what was pronounced by connoisseurs a decided genius for the pictorial art”:
Even in her school-days, (still not so very distant), she had produced sketches that were seized upon by men of taste, and hoarded as among the choicest treasures of their portfolios; scenes delicately imagined, lacking, perhaps, the reality which comes only from a close acquaintance with life, but so softly touched with feeling and fancy, that you seemed to be looking at humanity with angels’ eyes. (45)

If Hilda had “remained in her own country, it is not improbable that she might have produced original works, worthy to hang in that gallery of native art,” which, the narrator remarks, “we hope is destined to extend its rich length through many future centuries,” yet Hilda has “ceased to consider herself as an original artist.” Her almost religious worship and valorization of the Old Masters leads her to becomes a “handmaid” or copyist – the most perfect copyist, as many believe, in Rome – of these “mighty Old Masters,” whose “miracles of art” she reproduces with “all the warmth and richness of a woman’s sympathy” (46). Hilda’s copying is coded as a subordinate and essentially feminine activity, in which her own genius is subsumed in her reverence, humility, and gratitude for the genius of the men who have come before her.

Beholding their paintings, Hilda perceives that the world is “already rich enough in original designs,” and for her, nothing becomes more desirable than to “diffuse those self-same beauties more widely among mankind”; she forms the resolution that all “she would henceforth attempt” would be to “catch and reflect some of the glory which had been shed upon canvas from the immortal pencils of old” (47). A distinct hierarchy of art would thus seem to be bolstered in this text through this coding of the relations between Hilda and her “masters,” whose works she attempts to reproduce faithfully. Indeed, while the narrator insists that he knows not “whether the result of [Hilda’s] Italian
studies, so far as it could yet be seen, will be accepted as a good or desirable one,” for him there is “something far higher and nobler” in her copying, and in “her thus sacrificing herself to the devout recognition of the highest excellence in art,” than “there would have been in her cultivating her not inconsiderable share of talent for the production of works from her own ideas” (48). Hilda chooses “the better, and loftier, and more unselfish part, laying her individual hopes, her fame, her prospects of enduring remembrance, at the feet of those great departed ones, whom she so loved and venerated.” At the same time as Hilda’s decision is depicted as a noble and honourable one, the possibility of her ever securing fame or the “enduring remembrance” of posterity are depicted as unrealistic ideals. Her own original production of “a picture or two” would, the narrator conjectures, inevitably amount to no more than “pretty fancies of snow and moonlight; the counterpart, in picture, of so many feminine achievements in literature” (49). The realm of the feminine, whether in visual art or literature, is, in this light, a fanciful and insubstantial one that is inferior to a perfect copying of the “Old Masters.”

Valued for their faithfulness to the original, Hilda’s copies are perfect in their sympathy and preservation of the essence or “aura” of the original. As such, they are aligned with Benjamin’s description of manual reproduction, and contrasted by Hawthorne, as Collins does in A Rogue’s Life, to a mechanical form of replication that is more akin to mass production. The narrator avers that

Other copyists – if such they are worthy to be called – attempt only a superficial imitation. Copies of the Old Masters, in this sense, are produced by thousands; there are artists, as we have said, who spend their lives in painting the works, or
perhaps one single work of one illustrious painter, over and over again; thus, they convert themselves into Guido machines, or Raphaelic machines. Their performances, it is true, are often wonderfully deceptive to a careless eye; but, working entirely from the outside, and seeking only to reproduce the surface, these men are sure to leave out that indefinable nothing, that inestimable something, that constitutes the life and soul through which the picture gets its immortality. Hilda was no such machine as this; she wrought religiously, and therefore wrought a miracle. (48)

The mechanized realm of profit-driven copying is derided as a slavish activity that aims only to replicate a superficial appearance, while true copying is a religious act of capturing the essence of a work of art. In its emphasis on essence versus appearance, and faithful copying versus “deceptive” repetition, the sentiments expressed in these passages seem to ratify the principles and dichotomies upon which the realm of Western representation is founded. However, it soon becomes clear that the distinctions between these opposing terms are not as distinct as it would at first appear.

Even in Hilda’s practice of copying, there is a definite potential for originality and a displacement of the original, which is not concealed in the text, but openly described. Hilda does not paint exact replicas of the Old Masters, but rather works through a process of selection, choosing, with her discerning eye, portions of the original paintings in which “the spirit and essence of the picture culminated.” Further, in “some instances, even, (at least, so those believed, who best appreciated Hilda’s power and sensibility), she had been enabled to execute what the great Master had conceived in his imagination, but had not so perfectly succeeded in putting upon canvas” (47):
In such cases, the girl was but a finer instrument, a more exquisitely effective piece of mechanism, by the help of which the spirit of some great departed Painter now first achieved his ideal, centuries after his own earthly hand, that other tool, had turned to dust. (48)

The Old Masters are rendered curiously dependent on Hilda’s hand, as a “finer instrument,” in order to execute an ideal that they could not achieve while alive. In her function as a handmaid, then, Hilda not only aids in giving a renewed birth to the visions of the Old Masters in the present, while subordinating her own originality and genius to their own, but in fact gives a life to the images that they would otherwise not be able to express without her mediation. Hence the copy, while it aims to faithfully capture and disseminate the essence of the original, nevertheless harbours the potential to surpass and displace it from a position of absolute privilege. This displacement of the Old Masters is more fully apparent in Hawthorne’s depiction of the work and opinions of Hilda’s artist friend, Miriam, which contributes to his wider dismantling of a strict hierarchy of art or “dialectic of distinction” in The Marble Faun.

II. “To Give it What it Lacks”

Miriam, unlike Hilda, produces original works of art, and possesses a mysterious past that is tainted by the hint of crime and miscegenation. And, unlike Hilda, Miriam does not possess a religious reverence for the Old Masters, but consistently critiques their works throughout the narrative. In a chapter entitled “Beatrice,” Hawthorne brings together the figures of Miriam, Hilda, and a portrait of Beatrice Cenci (Fig. 9), whose likeness Hilda has copied from a painting by the Old Master Guido Reni (although this
work is now attributed to another artist, and is not considered a representation of Beatrice at all).

The two artists meet in Hilda’s studio and discuss the copied painting, providing an opportunity for Hawthorne to underscore the contrast between the women and their aesthetic principles. Miriam examines Hilda’s portrait of Beatrice, and remarks,

"...you have done nothing else so wonderful as this. But by what unheard-of solicitations or secret interest have you obtained leave to copy Guido’s Beatrice Cenci? It is an unexampled favour; and the impossibility of getting a genuine copy has filled the Roman picture-shops with Beatrices, gay, grievous, or coquettish, but never a true one among them.” (52)
Hilda answers that while she has heard of one "exquisite copy" by an American artist, she obtained permission to copy from the original work through sheer persistence, and sat down "before the picture, day after day," until the image sank into her heart. She maintains that this "picture"

"...is now photographed there. It is a sad face to keep so close to one's heart; only, what is so very beautiful can never be quite a pain. Well; after studying it in this way, I know not how many times, I came home, and have done my very best to transfer the image to the canvas." (52)

This assertion of Hilda's, as MacKay observes, discloses the fact that the copyist's work "is already two steps removed from reality; working from memory," she in fact copies not the original, but the image of the original that has been "photographed" in her mind (MacKay 100).

Moreover, it becomes clear that the image's contact with Hilda's heart, which signifies her female sympathies, has yet left something missing, which is absent in both the original and Hilda's perfect copy, as Miriam points out. After Hilda draws a cloth over Beatrice's portrait, Miriam withdraws it again to take "another long look at it," exclaiming, "'Poor sister Beatrice! For she was still a woman, Hilda, still a sister, be her sin or sorrow what they might. How well you have done it, Hilda! I know not whether Guido will thank you, or be jealous of your rivalship.'" (54). Hilda is shocked at this notion of competition between herself and the Old Master, and insists that if Guido had not wrought his image through her, her "pains would have been thrown away."

However, Miriam insists that "'if a woman had painted the original picture, there might have been something in it which we miss now. I have a great mind to undertake a copy
myself, and try to give it what it lacks” (55). Rather than a feminine form of submissive service to a higher master, Miriam believes that her copy would constitute a definite improvement upon the original through the contribution of a much needed female perspective – a form of female sympathy, not for the Old Master’s vision, but for the female subject who is represented by him. As MacKay demonstrates, Miriam’s “more passionate sympathy allow[s] her to identify not with the painter but the subject, until her own expression almost duplicates that of the portrait – and seeing this near-copy of her own copy so unnerves Hilda that she finds relief only when Miriam becomes herself again” (99). The boundaries and coding of power between originals and copies, tradition and innovation, and copies and near-copies, is overturned and challenged by Miriam, and Hawthorne through her.

Miriam’s critique of Guido’s portrait of Beatrice Cenci is later echoed and amplified in her later critique of another of his paintings, described as “the picture of the Archangel Michael, setting his foot upon the Demon, in the Church of the Cappucini” (108). The group of friends in the novel encounter a drawing of this painting, which Hilda believes is the original drawing by the Old Master, with the only difference being that “the Demon has a more upturned face, and scowls vindictively at the Archangel, who turns away his eyes in painful disgust.” Miriam responds to Hilda by saying,

“The expression suits the daintiness of Michael’s character, as Guido represents him. He never could have looked the Demon in the face!”

“Miriam!” exclaimed her friend reproachfully. “You grieve me, and you know it, by pretending to speak contemptuously of the most beautiful and divinest figure that mortal painter ever drew.”
“Forgive me, Hilda!” said Miriam. “You take these matters more religiously than I can, for my life. Guido’s Archangel is a fine picture, of course, but it never impressed me as it does you.” (108)

The friends arrange to visit the original in order to determine the likeness of the Demon to the face of a man who haunts Miriam’s footsteps, and who later, because of an unspoken and unconscious command in her eyes, is murdered by Donatello. Only Kenyon and Miriam keep their appointment in the church, however, and Miriam again offers a critique of this work of the Old Master (Fig. 10).

She insists that the defects of the picture are even more apparent to her than before, and that if Hilda’s “‘soul were less white and pure,’” she would be “‘a more competent critic of this picture, and would estimate it not half so high’” (143). Miriam then presents
Kenyon with a vision of what the painting could or should be, to which the sculptor cries that she must “paint the picture of man’s struggle against sin, according to [her] own idea! I think it will be a master-piece” (144). Again, the female artist is able to point out what is lacking in the art of Guido, and presents a vision of improvement upon the original, and a critique of the existing work, which contrasts greatly with Hilda’s religious reverence and intentions, if not the potentially radical originality of her actual practice of copying.

III. “I Do Not Own It, Yet Cannot Utterly Contradict You”

The juxtaposition of Hilda’s reverence and Miriam’s critique of the Old Masters in the novel is reflected in the ambivalence of the narrative voice itself, which oscillates between sympathy for the views of one and then the other, between reverence and critique for the Old Masters and the tradition and history that they represent. For instance, while the narrator first praises Hilda’s copying as an occupation more noble than the production of original works, he later gives voice to (and augments) her growing awareness of the inadequacy of the Old Masters after her disillusionment with Miriam. Hilda fears that she has lost her “faculty of appreciating those great works of art, which heretofore had made so large a portion of her happiness,” and grows acquainted “with that icy Demon of Weariness, who haunts great picture-galleries” (262). After expressing the whisperings of this “Demon,” which blend with the narrator’s (or author’s) own, the narrator notes that “no sooner have we given expression to this irreverent criticism, than a throng of spiritual faces look reproachfully at us,” and the narrator then attempts to “withdraw all that we have said” (263).
However, once spoken, this critique of the hollowness, reiterativeness and sensuousness of the Old Masters and their works cannot fully be retracted. The voice of the narrator-author is encapsulated in the statement made by Kenyon, when after Miriam has demanded that he admit to the truth that sculptors are “the greatest plagiarists in the world,” he replies, “I do not own it... yet cannot utterly contradict you” (97). In The Marble Faun, the narrator does not completely own his critique of the Old Masters and the Old World, yet cannot utterly contradict this critique either; moreover, he cannot fully deny or accept his reverence for them either. While this oscillation may be read as a wavering indecisiveness, or as a frustrating inability to choose one position or the other, it can also be read as a radical maneuver that dismantles firm distinctions or boundaries within a hierarchy of art, rendering any strict dichotomies impossible, while at the same time tempering this subversive potential by the deep ambivalence in the text.

The blurring of boundaries between originals and copies that is evident in Hawthorne’s treatment of Hilda and Miriam, and which is apparent in the narrative voice, is also evident in what MacKay deems the “worlds upon worlds of duplication” (155) in the space of the text, whereby originals are confused with copies, copies with originals, and copies with copyists. Not only does Miriam seem to Hilda for a moment to become a near-copy of her copy of Beatrice, but later Hilda herself notices a resemblance between her own face reflected in a mirror, and that of the portrait beside her, transforming “copyist to copy” (MacKay 100). Moreover, an original portrait of Hilda that is painted by an Italian artist during one of Hilda’s gloomy wanderings about the picture-galleries is engraved and mass-produced, with copies still to be “found in print-shops along the Corsco”:
By many connoisseurs, the idea of the face was supposed to have been suggested by the portrait of Beatrice Cenci; and, in fact, there was a look somewhat similar to poor Beatrice’s forlorn gaze out of the dreary isolation and remoteness in which a terrible doom had involved a tender soul. But the modern artist strenuously upheld the originality of his own picture, as well as the stainless purity of its subject, and chose to call it, (and was laughed at for his pains,) “Innocence, dying of a Blood-stain!” (258)

This original work, which is later copied from an engraving, is mistaken for a copy of Guido’s original, which Hilda has herself copied. The distinctions between originals and copies are further dismantled and blurred when the reader is informed that Kenyon’s sculpture of Donatello is most often taken as a copy of Praxitele’s marble faun, and when Miriam and Donatello discover a sculpture of the Venus de’ Medici (Fig. 11) that is either the true original or a “better repetition” (329) of the famous statue.

Fig. 11. *Venus de’ Medici*
The Old and the New, and the original and copy cannot then be fully separated, and a coding of the relations of power between them is rendered radically unstable, revealing the insufficiency of a hierarchical model of originality and copying to describe the relations between them.

IV. The “Barbarians from Gaul”

In his preface to The Marble Faun, as I have noted, Hawthorne attributes his decision to locate his romance in Italy rather than in England to Italy’s greater tradition and history. Yet it is significant that he does not choose to set the narrative in England – in fact, it is quite clear in the novel that the British nation is not aligned with the Old World, but is instead positioned in between the Old and New worlds. While England does lay claim to a longer history than America’s, the English are nevertheless categorized along with the Americans in Rome as “barbarians from Gaul,” and as part of the same Anglo-Saxon or Gothic race. This displacement of the British from the Old World divests from them the weight of symbolic power and cultural inheritance that Collins, in Hide and Seek, attempts to shore up for English culture. As essentially “barbarians” when compared to the far-reaching traditions and genealogies of the Old World of Europe, the English and their nation do not represent an ideal that is nostalgically longed for as an ancestral homeland or seat of civilization, but rather represent a middle position between youth and age that partakes of the positive and negative codings of both. The Old World of Rome and Europe is not necessarily favourable in the text in that it possesses associations of both cultural power and senility, the works of the Old Masters both depicted as a standard of excellence that can only be
aspired to and as "pathetic relics" (237) which retain only a "traditionary charm" (262); nor is the New World coded in a completely positive or negative light.

It is clear in the novel that British artists as well as Americans are copyists of the Old Masters and cannot fully align themselves with this tradition. Yet Hawthorne does depict one English sculptor who is copied by American artists, which creates an interesting scenario in terms of the transatlantic field of power. We are told that "[o]ne sculptor there was, an Englishman, endowed with a beautiful fancy, and possessing at his fingers' ends the capability of doing beautiful things":

This eminent person's weight and authority among his artistic brethren were very evident; for, beginning unobtrusively to utter himself on a topic of art, he was soon the center of a little crowd of younger sculptors. They drank in his wisdom, as if it would serve all the purposes of original inspiration; he, meanwhile, discoursing with gentle calmness, as if there could possibly be no other side, and often ratifying, as it were, his own conclusions by a mildly emphatic - "Yes!"

(104-5)

The "veteran sculptor's unsought audience" is composed "mostly of our own countrymen," which, as the narrator's voice is firmly located in "New" England, refers to American artists. Like Hilda when confronted with the Old Masters, these artists idealize the British sculptor to such an extent that their own originality is lost, yet the artist whom they reverence is critiqued by the narrator as a man perverted into "a pagan idealist," and who quite ridiculously bolsters his own words with mild exclamations of assent. Both British artist and American "copyists" are thus disparaged, further dismantling a strict hierarchy between them. The rhetoric of British originality and superiority over
American derivativeness and copying that was commonplace during the nineteenth century, and which Hawthorne, as an American author, would most likely be familiar with, is represented in the text, only to be invalidated by the interpenetrations of these designations.

The impossibility of separating the Old World from the New is further displayed in *The Marble Faun* through the merging of geographies and spatial markers in the text. While Tellefson argues for an Africanist presence in the novel as represented by Donatello and Miriam, which, she argues, reflects the author’s concern with the “how to include, exclude, or otherwise amalgamate both the African American and the huge influx of European immigrants” into American nationality (457), it might also be argued that the same concern with the rights of America’s ethnic minority to citizenship within the United States is reflected in the aboriginal presence that can be detected in the text. Donatello, in his prelapsarian, uncultivated existence in a pastoral landscape of Arcadian abundance, could be read in terms of traditional depictions of the “New World” as a new Eden inhabited by the “noble savage.”

Newberry argues that in *Mosses From an Old Manse*, Hawthorne represents an American space in terms of a classical Arcadia, which serves to extend the reach of the United States to include the Old World of England and also of continental Europe. In *The Marble Faun*, the classical pastoral landscape is instead extended to embrace the New World in a reverse national trajectory. Kenyon visits Donatello’s home and the reader is informed that “trim vineyards were there, the fig-trees, and the mulberries, and the smoky-hued tracts of the olive-orchards; there, too, were fields of every kind of grain, among which waved the Indian corn, putting Kenyon in mind of the fondly remembered
acres of his father’s homestead” (201). Afterwards, we see that “in the gray, martial
towers, crowned with ruined turrets,” which have been “converted into rustic
habitations,” ears of Indian corn hang from the windows (229). The presence of Indian
corn, this signifier of a distinctly American homestead and conjurer even of the figure of
the displaced Native American – representing what Newberry, in reference to another of
Hawthorne’s works, calls the “Indian life predating the Puritan migration” (144) – within
this Old World Arcadia, demonstrates the inability to draw clear distinctions and
establish clear dichotomies, and enacts a further displacement of England within the
geography of the text. While Britain is situated in the novel between the Old and New
worlds, it is apparently not a necessary third position within a vertical hierarchy, but one
that can be bypassed for an older “original” or the newer homeland of Hilda and Kenyon.
Neither artist wishes for a repossession “of English ties, or hereditary continuities
disrupted during the Puritan and Revolutionary epochs” (Newberry 18), but instead each
feels a deep nostalgia for America. Hilda longs for “her native village, with its great, old
elm-trees, and the neat, comfortable houses, scattered along the wide grassy margin of its
street, and the white meeting-house, and her mother’s very door, and the stream of gold-
brown water, which her taste for colour had kept flowing, all this while, through her
remembrance” (266), while Kenyon desires to return to his “native country,” where “each
generation has only its own sins and sorrows to bear” (236). The traditional distinctions
between the Old and New worlds, and originals and copies, as espoused by British critics
(including Collins in “Considerations on the Copyright Question”) are revealed as
inadequate, and as denying the greater complexity of the situation.
V. British Copyright and Transformation(s) in the Transatlantic Literary Marketplace

Both the narrative and publishing history of the novel, including its two (or three) alternative titles which in their multiplicity refuse to draw firm distinctions, can be read in relation to a transatlantic politics, from an American rather than British perspective. Rather than being faced with the anxieties of the growing power of American culture, authors from the United States, including Hawthorne, had to contend with accusations of American copying and imitation of British precedents, which were coded as forms of colonial dependency. *The Marble Faun, or the Romance of Monte Beni,* or *Transformation,* refuses to separate originals and copies and dismantles national boundaries, unraveling the very hierarchy that it seems at first to bolster, and which Collins attempts to ratify in both *A Rogue's Life* and *Hide and Seek.* The concerns in each of these texts over American and British power within a transatlantic field can be read in the publication history of Hawthorne’s novel.

In “*The Marble Faun and the English Copyright,*” Rosemary Mims Fisk presents the details of Hawthorne’s contract with the British publishers Smith, Elder. Along with a number of conditions, one of the stipulations of the contract was that the book must first be published in England – Fisk notes that while “Smith, Elder obviously wanted to cover themselves from all angles in the written contract,” in fact they “informally agreed to what amounted to simultaneous publication on both sides of the Atlantic,” as Hawthorne’s American publisher Ticknor and Fields “did not want to chance pirated reprints of the work in America any more than Smith, Elder wanted their competitors Bohn and Routledge reprinting the work before the legitimate English edition could be circulated” (266).
That Hawthorne's publishers felt that they must secure themselves from both American and British "piracy" demonstrates that the realities of the transatlantic literary marketplace, as in the textual space of *The Marble Faun*, or *Transformation*, were not as clear-cut as many had argued. Indeed, part of Hawthorne's popularity as an author of "modern genius" was established by his earlier work, *Twice-Told Tales*, which was circulated in England through a "pirated" British edition (Scharnhorst 14). Furthermore, the fact that American authors could take steps to secure copyright over their works in England (although they weren't always effective) while the same rights were not extended to English authors in America, while taken as evidence of the lawlessness and backwardness of the United States, also demonstrated another aspect of American power that provoked anxiety in authors and critics on the other side of the Atlantic.

Hawthorne composed a series of "English Notebooks" during his stay in Great Britain, and sent these to a British friend for safekeeping, with an accompanying note, that read:

Dear Mr. Bright, -- Here are these journals. If unreclaimed by myself, or by my heirs or assigns, I consent to your breaking the seals in the year 1900 – not a day sooner. By that time, probably, England will be a minor republic, under the protection of the United States. If my countrymen of that day partake in the least of my feelings, they will treat you generously. (qtd. Newberry 196)

While Newberry maintains that "Hawthorne's nationalistic jesting should not distract us from how valuable he felt the journals one day would become," the author's vision of England as one day becoming a minor republic "under the protection of the United States" is fascinating in that it presents an image of American power that the standard
dichotomy between British original and American copy sought to contain and repress. Ultimately the Old Masters and the new, the traditional and innovative, the original and copy, the dominants and new entrants, function as shifting referents within a transatlantic field of power in which representation becomes a site of struggle and contention rather than anchored terms in a specific hierarchy of art.
Dismantling the "Hegemony of the Copy"

A Rogue’s Life, Hide and Seek, and The Marble Faun were written, published, and republished at a time when not only was the nature of American identity still fluid, as Tellefson maintains, but when the nature of British national identity, transatlantic relations, and, moreover, the field of representation, were also in a considerable state of flux. In these works by Collins and Hawthorne the common depiction of the copying of the “Old Masters” can be read as reflecting concerns over transatlantic relations of power as well as shifting relations between originals and copies in the midst of debates over artistic copyright law and national traditions of art, the dismantling of the early nineteenth-century “hegemony of the copy” (Macleod 322), the challenging of the traditional valorization of the old over the new, and the mass reproduction and dissemination of images on a hitherto unprecedented scale. In their fictional representations of visual replication, each of these works reveals what Jonah Siegel, in Desire and Excess: the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Art (2000), deems “the deep presence of the fine arts in literary culture” (xxi), as well as the interconnectedness of artistic and literary concerns in the field of cultural production. While my primary purpose in this study has been to position the copying of the Old Masters in these texts within a transatlantic framework that involves anxieties over literary copyright and literary “canons,” I would here like to consider briefly the context of representational shifts within which each of the three works can be located.

As I mentioned at the start of this study, the issues of artistic copyright and an authentic national tradition of art, as opposed to a trade in the Old Masters, are explicitly
linked by S.C. Hall in the pages of the Art Journal. Hall maintains that were artists to be granted the sole rights to multiply and disseminate their works, the practice of artistic "piracy" would be prevented or regulated, resulting in the downfall of British art, as no buyer would consent to purchase any article over which he or she had not entire control. Collins's A Rogue's Life, in its contrasting of the production of counterfeit Old Masters with the original and authentic works of living artists, also reveals an awareness of, and concern with, the production of counterfeit "modern masters." The author in an instance of the overlaying of an authorial voice over the narrative voice of Frank Softly in the text, insists that since his day, "good modern pictures have risen in scale":

The modern painters who have survived the brunt of the battle, have lived to see pictures for which they once asked hundreds, selling for thousands, and the young generation making incomes by the brush in one year, which it would have cost the old heroes of the easel ten to accumulate. The posterity of Mr. Pickup still do a tolerable stroke of business (making bright modern masters for the market which is glutted with the dingy old material), and will, probably, continue to thrive and multiply in the future: the one venerable institution of this world which we can safely count upon as likely to last, being the institution of human folly.

Nevertheless, if a wise man of the reformed taste wants a modern picture, there are places for him to go to now where he may be sure of getting it genuine [...] (31)

The works of the "modern masters" may be forged, yet Collins seems far more confident than Hall does about the power of these artists to further forge an authentic national tradition of art – whether with artistic copyright or without it – opposed to the "dingy old
material” that has formerly dominated the art industry. Rather than underscoring the problems with regulating or preventing the practice of artistic “piracy,” Collins, understandably, given his views on literary “piracy,” emphasizes the inevitability of “human folly” and the growing value that is being placed on the authentic, original, and genuine, which cannot but enhance the popularity and critical estimation of modern works of art.

According to Macleod, the “art of replication” thrived in the early Victorian art world (16), with buyers willing to pay the same prices for copies of modern works of art as the originals, as they rated “accessibility or ‘utility’” higher on “the scale of art appreciation than aesthetics” (68). However, Macleod contends that during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, the hegemony of the “ubiquitous Victorian copy” (324) was dismantled by shifting “aesthetic and economic relationships,” which caused buyers of art to become “more and more obsessed with possessing the solitary original” (322). Collins’s *Hide and Seek*, in its expression of an earlier Victorian conception of the copy as an accepted fixture in the art world – one which preserves the aura of the original in a continuity with rather than radical break from tradition – can be read as a maneuver for symbolic power in that it overlooks the valorization of the original and unique that was becoming more and more evident in the art world, and which is visible in *A Rogue’s Life*. While the novel was originally written before the novella, and might be interpreted as a reflection of an earlier and as yet unreformed view of art rather than as a representational tactic, not only did Collins choose not to alter this more classically-oriented perspective when he significantly revised the text for republication, but the author was also very much aware of the current issues and concerns of the art world through his father’s and
brother's (as well as his own) involvement in this sphere of cultural production. The tension that exists between the perspectives offered in *Hide and Seek* and *A Rogue's Life* indicate that the dismantling of the "hegemony of the copy" was not a "mechanical sliding into the past" (Bourdieu 157), but rather a more animated struggle between opposing conceptions of originality and the very notion of representation.

The unstable relations between originals and copies and the shifts within the field of representation that are apparent in Collins's texts are also reflected in Hawthorne's novel. In "Photography and the Museum of Rome in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun,*" Timothy Sweet notes that *The Marble Faun, or Transformation,* Hawthorne's most popular novel-length work in the nineteenth century, was accompanied by photographic illustrations beginning in the 1860s. Booksellers in Italy would paste "photographs of the objects and locations referred to in the text onto blank pages supplied by the publisher" Tauchnitz for this very purpose, while in 1889, the Boston publishers Houghton, Mifflin published an edition of the novel that was illustrated with photographs, thus "appropriating and consolidating the process begun by Italian booksellers" (25). In a review of "Holiday Books" published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in January of 1891, a reviewer attributes the current fashion for illustrating books with photographs to "the issue of Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* in this style" the previous year (122). The novel's concern with visual replication and the tensions between originals and copies at the level of the narrative is thus reflected in the material text's relation to its illustrative photographs. While the process of book illustration was also a mechanical process of reproduction that allowed for the dissemination of works of art on an unprecedented scale, the mechanical and chemical process of photography displaced the figure of the
artist, who would have drawn and engraved the illustration by hand, thus accelerating the
destruction of the “aura” of the original work of art in the period. By exhibiting a degree
of independence from the original and by putting, as Benjamin maintains, “the copy of
the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself,” enabling
the “original to meet the beholder halfway” (220-21), such mass-produced images greatly
aided in the “tremendous shattering of tradition” that took place in the nineteenth-century
art world, and which each of the three texts discussed in this study in some way reflects.
The impossibility of drawing clear distinctions and constructing strict dichotomies in
Hawthorne’s novel reflects a far wider condition of instability in which traditional
relations of power, whether between originals and copies, the Old Masters and the
modern masters, the Old World and the New, the authentic and the fake (whether works
of art or individuals who attempted to “pass” as the “genuine article”), and between
appearance and reality, were being reconfigured, tested, and reformed within the fictional
space of representation.
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