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The issue of likeness: Reinterpreting American portraits from the Revolutionary era

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Rice University, 1993
RICE UNIVERSITY

THE ISSUE OF LIKENESS: REINTERPRETING
AMERICAN PORTRAITS FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

by

SUSAN JENSEN

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS

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May, 1993
ABSTRACT

THE ISSUE OF LIKENESS: RE-INTERPRETING

AMERICAN PORTRAITS FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

by

Susan Jensen

American painting from the Revolutionary period, 1760-1790, is commonly evaluated according to the British Academic standard adopted by scholars of earlier colonial painting. This standard argues that a particular or realistic style is characteristic of provincial and less educated regions, encouraging theoretical assumptions about 18th century American portraiture: that it was void of intellectual and theoretical value; that its style resulted from limitations inherent to learning from books and prints; and, finally, that it sought to emulate British fashion.

Trained in the Academic style and patronized by many individuals well-versed in British taste and tradition, Charles Willson Peale and Ralph Earl suggest that choice for a particular style resulted from native values and interests, the influence of issues like individualism and whiggism, and an awareness of the socio-political differences separating America and Britain.
I would like to thank my advisors and readers, Dr. Ronald Bernier, Dr. William Camfield, Dr. Joseph Manca, and Dr. Rebecca Mersereau, for their constructive criticisms, patience, and scholarly advice both with this project, and during the two years I studied under their guidance. I am most grateful to my parents for their constant support.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1768, the British Royal Academy was founded and its president, Sir Joshua Reynolds, marked its opening with a lecture to its students. This lecture, the first of Reynolds' *Discourses*,¹ was followed annually with essays on painting and sculpture. In this way, the first official British theory of art was established and promoted.

The period between the founding of the Royal Academy and the retirement of its first president in 1791 coincides with the American Revolutionary era. In 1768, America was a British colony; by 1791, it was an independent nation. Despite the political freedom that came to the colonies during the Revolutionary period, and the growing conflict in values, interests, and goals between Britain and colonial America that encouraged colonial revolt, the issue of American cultural autonomy seems confused, for American painting from both the Colonial and the Revolutionary periods is commonly interpreted and evaluated according to a British Academic standard. Generally, scholarship on American art concludes that pre-nineteenth century Anglo-American artists were provincial craftsmen, incapable of achieving fine art because they lacked access to London's

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technical and intellectual institutions.

There is evidence to indicate that, at least with regard to much colonial painting, the conclusion drawn by American art scholars is well-founded; many colonists were either disinterested in or self-conscious about the condition of native painting. Copley wrote in 1762, for example, in a letter to Jean Etienne Liotard:

You may perhaps be surprised that so remote a corner of the Globe as New England should have any d[e]mand for the necessary eutensils for practiceing the fine Arts, but I assure You Sir however feeble our efforts may be, it is not for want of inclination that they are not better, but the want of opportunity to improve ourselves.\(^2\)

Other colonists believed that the arts had no place in a moral and upright society, arguing that attention to the arts usually paralleled economic instability and did not convey the simple, republican values of their ancestors.\(^3\)

Most early Americans, however, were more moderate; most believed that art was an important part of civilized society, but not as critical as more fundamental concerns

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like education and industry. In each case, colonial opinions were founded on the example of British and European culture, making conventional use of a British standard seem both reasonable and justified.

The influence of Britain on colonial culture was considerable. Artists and patrons alike relied heavily on evidence from and access to British taste and trends. Those who could afford to patronize the arts frequently owned works by both native and English painters, thereby encouraging a native assimilation of English style. This influence is suggested by Charles Carroll in a letter to Charles Willson Peale, dated 1767. The Annapolis barrister and patron indicates that the skills of colonial artists were thought enhanced through foreign study. He writes:

I was a little surprized to hear from Mr. Anderson that you had thoughts of leaving England to sail for Maryland... as I supposed you would make your stay in England as Long a Possible to Git all the Insight you Could....

The evidence of colonial society thus suggests that those interested in the arts looked to England as their guide.

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4 Miller, Patrons and Patriotism, p. 12.
5 Ibid., p. 4.
During and after the revolution, however, a different tone suggests that a new interest in and appreciation for native artists pervaded colonial culture. The Englishman John Wilkes wrote to Nathaniel Barber in 1770:

I was very happy to observe to what a degree of excellence the most elegant art of Painting is arrived in New England, and as you rival us in every essential good, so you now equal us in the refinements of Polished Life.

Although Wilkes' praise seems somewhat exaggerated, it does highlight a growing awareness of distinctions between colonial American and British culture.

Lillian B. Miller, author of *Patrons and Patriotism* (1966), claims that the evolution of an independent colonial culture resulted in part from nationalism; the rapid and pronounced expansion of the arts "was hastened," she argues, "by the intense nationalism that pervaded American thought...." It was further encouraged, she goes on, by "the philosophical traditions of the British eighteenth-century Enlightenment[, which] endowed the fine arts with a social and national value that helped to justify the nationalist cause." \(^8\) This "nationalist psychology," she goes on, "had begun to permeate American life and thought even before the Revolutionary War, as the colonists increasingly regarded

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themselves as Americans rather than transplanted Europeans."\(^9\)

The connection between art and politics is critical to the consideration of Revolutionary American culture. It surfaces in a 1770 letter from John Singleton Copley to Charles Willson Peale, in which Copley addresses the style and content of Peale's mezzotint of William Pitt. Copley writes:

It gave me a twofold pleasure; first because it is the portrait of that great Man, in the most exalted character human Nature can be dignified with, that of a true Patriot vindicating the rights of mankind; & secondly for the merit of the work itself, and the fair prospect it affords of America rivaling the continent of Europe in those refined arts that have been justly esteemed the greatest glory of Greece & Rome....\(^10\)

Copley's note suggests two newly-prevalent themes in American Revolutionary culture: the "patriot vindicating the rights of mankind," and the westward movement of the arts. By the middle of the eighteenth century, a few American painters were beginning to incorporate social and political issues in their work. In 1770, when Peale's mezzotint of William Pitt was introduced and discussed in a colonial broadside, its content was explained in terms of symbols and ideas, suggesting that art had taken on an intellectual responsibility in colonial culture. The

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\(^9\) Miller, p. 8.

broadside reads:

The Principal Figure is that of Mr. Pitt, in a Consular Habit, speaking in Defence of the Claims of the American Colonies, on the Principles of the British Constitution.

With Magna Charta in one Hand, he points with the other, to the Statue of British Liberty, trampling under Foot the Petition of the Congress at New-York. -- Some have thought it not quite proper to represent Liberty as guilty of an Action so contrary to her genuine Spirit; for that, conducting herself in strict Propriety of Character, she ought not to violate, or treat with Contempt, the Rights of any one....

An Indian is placed on the Pedestal, in an erect Posture, with an attentive Countenance, watching, as America has done for Five Years past, the extraordinary Motions of the British Senate -- He listens to the Orator, and has a Bow in his Hand, and a Dog by his Side, to shew the natural Faithfulness and Firmness of America.

It was advised by some, to have had the Indian drawn in a dejected and melancholy Posture: And, considering the apparent Weakness of the Colonies, and the Power of the Parent Country, it might not perhaps, have been improper to have executed it in that Manner; but in Truth the Americans, being well founded in their Principles, and animated with a sacred Love for their Country, have never disponded.

An Altar, with a Flame is placed in the Foreground, to shew that the Cause of Liberty is sacred, and, that therefore, they who maintain it, not only discharge their Duty to their King and themselves, but to God.... 

... And it is observable, that the Statue and Altar of British Liberty are erected near the Spot where that great Sacrifice was made, through sad Necessity, to the Honour, Happiness, Virtue, and in one Word, to the Liberty of the British People....

Peale's efforts indicate the interrelationship between culture and politics in the Revolutionary period and, consequently, the potentially more complex nature of Revolutionary painting than Colonial art. This new sense of

painting's cultural responsibility may also have resulted from additional economic and demographic influences.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the colonial artist's status rose from the level of tradesman to professional. Up until about 1750, the portrait painter was ranked among the middle class. During and after the revolution, however, the artist was no longer excluded from the upper class.¹² This shift may be in part explained by the extensive and concentrated economic growth that took place during the Revolutionary period. Between 1760 and 1790, urban centers like Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston, and Baltimore became successful pockets of commerce and trade, broadening the American leisure class and creating the excess wealth necessary to sustain a growing number of both native and foreign painters.¹³ According to Miller, in the fifty years between 1726 and 1776, only eight painters advertised their services in New York, as compared to thirty-four in the twenty years between 1777-1799.¹⁴

Evidence indicates, then, that the Revolutionary era of American history was distinguished from the Colonial period

¹² Miller, Patrons and Patriotism, p. 6.
¹³ Ibid., pp. 5-6.
¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 6.
by critical political, social, economic, and cultural goals. Despite this, interpretations of American painting tend to group the Colonial and Revolutionary periods together; despite political autonomy, American painting of the Revolutionary period is commonly interpreted and evaluated according to the British Academic standard popular in scholarship on Colonial American art. Against this measure, formal differences between British and American painting from both the Colonial and Revolutionary periods are read by scholars as symptomatic of technical and intellectual limitations. Little consideration is given to the possibility that painting from the Revolutionary era may constitute something more.

The formal differences between American Colonial portraiture and British Academic painting are considerable. The same holds true for much American Revolutionary painting. One might consider, for example, the formal differences between the earliest known colonial portrait, Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Daughter Mary (Figure 1), dated c. 1674, and the Portrait of Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond (Figure 2) by an unknown English painter practicing in the Academic style of Sir Peter Lely. The former work appears shallow, almost two-dimensional, its forms outlined and stiff, its materials clearly articulated. The latter, on the other hand, uses landscape to create the illusion of
three-dimensional space, its forms are more modeled, and its textures, while significant, do not seem to take on the same importance as in the Freake image.

A greater similarity in technique can be found in a comparison between the portrait of Mrs. Freake and that of an unknown provincial British artist. The seventeenth-century Portrait of George Abbot (1562-1633), Archbishop of Canterbury (Figure 3) also appears flatter, more linear, and less modeled than the Richmond portrait. It does not, however, share the material quality of the Freake image.

Similarities between colonial American and provincial British portraiture continue throughout the eighteenth century. The Portrait of a Lady with Her Son (Figure 4), attributed to Isaac Whoode (1688/1689-1752), who painted a number of portraits for the Duke of Bedford, appears similar in technique, costume, and composition to Mrs. Mann Page II and Child (Figure 5), attributed to Charles Bridges and dated circa 1744. Both echo Sir Godfrey Kneller's portrait, Her Grace, Mary, Duchess of Ormonde, and Thomas, Earl of Ossory, dated circa 1690, which was reprinted in mezzotint by John Smith in 1693 (Figure 6).

Intellectual and stylistic differences between colonial American and British portraiture have been convincingly argued by a number of American art scholars. Examples from
this scholarship are considered more thoroughly in Chapter One of this thesis. The focus of this study, however, is the validity of conventional arguments with regard to works from the Revolutionary War period, when the relationship between colonial America and Britain was rapidly changing and American artists and patrons were gaining first-hand experience with British art and theory.

This thesis investigates the relationship between American and British portraiture of the Revolutionary period in the context of the contemporary political, economic, and social climate. Concentrating on the issue of likeness in works dating between 1760 and 1790, it explores the way in which an artist or patron conceive of a sitter's image not only physically, but symbolically, as indicated by costume, accoutrements, and setting.

In the interest of investigating Revolutionary American cultural autonomy, portraits from both the Colonial and Revolutionary periods are considered here against the measure of a British Academic standard. To help define this standard, this thesis has borrowed heavily from the writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the most influential academic during the Revolutionary period.\(^{15}\) Based on notions of public and

\(^{15}\) In a letter from Captain R. G. Bruce to Copley, dated 1766, Bruce writes: "the sentiments of Mr. Reynolds [with regard to The Boy with the Squirrel], will, I suppose, weigh more with You than those of other
private taste, reason, and civic good, Reynolds' theory
derives from early eighteenth-century influences in British
philosophy. It is reminiscent, for example, of the writings
of Lord Shaftesbury, who attributed political and social
conflict to differences in Reason, and considered Taste a
privilege of the independent and educated man. As Lord Kames
added, those "who depend for food on bodily labor are
totally devoid of Taste." 16 Thus, Miller observes, "in
England, the ideas of the Enlightenment became a philosophy
of behavior for the upper classes, establishing an
aristocratic responsibility for the political, moral,
intellectual, and cultural well-being of the nation." 17
These sentiments are echoed in the British Academic theory
posited by Reynolds.

Essentially, Reynolds' theory divides styles of
likeness into two technical and intellectual levels. On the
higher level of fine art, a public good is linked with
mental agility and what Reynolds terms a "general" style. On
the lower level of craft, "vulgar" private interests are
linked with a "particular" style. A more detailed account of

Criticks." This suggests Reynolds' influence even prior
to his leadership in the Royal Academy. Massachusetts
Historical Society, Letters, p. 41.

16 Quoted from Miller, Patrons and Patriotism, p. 15.
17 Ibid., p. 15.
general and particular styles is provided in The Discourses. Reynolds outlined a clear standard for likeness in Discourse VIII (1778). Here, he argues that a likeness based on physical truth is merely imitative and vulgar. According to Reynolds, the particular style—a truthful rendering of the physical image—is symptomatic of societies not yet advanced to the level of civilization found, for example, among London's educated elite. He writes: "painting... ought to be as far removed from the vulgar idea of imitation, as the refined civilized state in which we live is removed from a gross state of nature." 18 He continues: "higher efforts of [art]... do not affect minds wholly uncultivated...."; 19 "Such men will always prefer imitation to that excellence... addressed to" the mental "faculty that they do not possess." 20

As evidenced in the comparison between the Freake (Fig. 1) and Richmond (Fig. 2) portraits, formal differences between colonial American and British painting parallel divisions in the Academic standard, providing the basis for claims to the inferior and craft-like status of early American art. Whereas Reynolds and the Academy endorsed a

19 Ibid., p. 233.
likeness in which the ideals of the state were projected and promoted through a general style, American artists and patrons appear to have preferred a more truthful rendering of the physical image. This difference has resulted in the imposition of a negative interpretation on most American Revolutionary portraits; accepting the authority of Reynolds' theory, most scholars read the formal differences as indicative of American provincialism. In this argument, the lack of local cultural and educational resources during the eighteenth century effected an American style void of the liberal content fundamental to fine art. Without intellectual substance, conventional theory argues, American portraiture became merely a craft.21

While technical limitations are evident in much Colonial and Revolutionary portraiture, there is evidence to suggest that the style of a few American Revolutionary painters resulted from a native taste that both adopted and rejected certain elements of British culture. The style that resulted from this process was deliberately more realistic

than that encouraged by the Academy. Although part of its visual popularity may well have stemmed from its historical familiarity and simplicity, this provincialism may in itself have been attractive because of its disconnection from the contemporary and elite British culture.

Historically, likeness has been rendered in a variety of ways. Seventeenth-century Dutch painting employed a realistic or particular style. As Reynolds argues, likeness can be generalized; it can symbolize certain universal traits with which the sitter, artist, or patron are linked. A likeness can be idealized, rendering each feature in its most perfect form. It can also register a type; by rendering a specific accoutrement or costume—a doctor's stethoscope, for example—an artist can present the viewer with elements understood to belong to a particular class or profession. To effect a form of likeness, then, an artist might modify facial features, stance, costume, or


23 See Wark, Discourse IX, pp. 169-171, in which Reynolds writes: "it is therefore necessary to the security of society that the mind should be elevated to the idea of general beauty, and the contemplation of general truth; by this pursuit the mind is always carried forward in search of something more excellent than it finds, and obtains its proper superiority over the common senses of life by learning to feel itself capable of higher aims and nobler enjoyments...." (p. 170)
accoutrements.

The various forms of likeness suggest that the traditional argument of American art scholars for the inferiority of American painting is premised upon two basic assumptions: the primacy of British taste and the authority of the British Royal Academy in making American and British art. The evidence of British portraiture suggests, however, that this was not always the case. Whereas early on in Reynolds' career there was a general stylistic homogeneity among the work of academically-trained British portrait painters by the end of Reynolds' term, provincial portraiture by Academically-trained artists showed an increased interest in the particular style; during this period, provincial British painting came increasingly to resemble American art.24

Up to now, little consideration has been given by scholars to the possible link between the form and content of American Revolutionary and provincial British portraiture. Instead, traditional scholarship persists in drawing three critical conclusions about Revolutionary portraiture: that it served a utilitarian function; that its particular, realistic style of likeness represented the formal limitation of learning from prints; and, finally, that it reflected America's interest in emulating

24 This issue is examined more closely in Chapter Four.
European--particularly British--fashion.

This study explores the issue of likeness in American and British portraiture from the Revolutionary era to test the appropriateness of a British Academic standard in evaluating and interpreting American art of this period. Chapter One begins by outlining the critical assumptions of conventional scholarship as discussed in four texts: Virgil Barker's *American Painting, History and Interpretation* (1951); Oskar Hagen's *The Birth of the American Tradition in Art* (1940; reprinted in 1964); Jules Prown's "American Painting: From the Beginnings to the Armory Show" (1977); and Robin Simon's *The Portrait in Britain and America* (1987).

Against this measure of traditional scholarship, Chapter Two considers the new ideas of a few recent scholars. Again, four texts are considered: Lisa Andrus' *Measure and Design in American Painting, 1760-1860* (1977); Richard Saunders' "American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1750" (1987); Ellen Miles' "American Colonial Portraits, 1750-1776" (1987); and Wayne Craven's

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Colonial American Portraiture (1986). This chapter examines how more recent investigations challenge or conflict with the assumptions of traditional scholarship.

Two primary criteria have determined the authors considered here: general recognition in the field and a concern for issues influential to likeness. Generally, Barker focuses on constructing a survey of American painting. Hagen adds to this a concern for identifying distinctly American traits. Prown's work examines these traits within the context of American history. And Simon explores the influences of training on differences between American and British portrait styles.

In terms of revisions to conventional scholarship, Andrus argues an intellectual content to American art. At the same time, however, she concedes that a dependence on prints yielded technical limitations in American painting. She also agrees with claims to American dependence on British taste. Like Andrus, Saunders recognizes a intellectual value to American painting, but he credits it


29 See Wanda Corn, "Coming of Age: Historical Scholarship in American Art," Art Bulletin, LXX/2, 1988, pp. 188-207. This article offers an excellent overview not only of the training and theory of generations of American scholars since the 1930s, but constructive insight as to its weaknesses, strengths and areas of potential change.
to British influence. Ellen Miles has a different agenda. Without refuting standard assumptions, she considers subject matter and the commission process in America and, in the process, posits other influences on the issue of likeness. Finally, Craven argues the role of native values and interests in shaping American style.

Despite investigations of recent scholarship, little attention has thus far been given to the visual evidence of the portraits themselves. In light of this, Part Two examines the form, content, and influences on likeness in eight British and American portraits.

The selection of artists and paintings in Part Two was determined by a number of factors. Because of the growing dissimilarity between British provincial and urban portrait styles of the Federal period, work from both regions is included. Additionally, it was necessary to choose artists about whom general biographical information was known. Moreover, it seemed essential, since we are concerned with national influences, to choose artists whose careers were centered at home; although, for example, John Singleton Copley's art and letters provide critical information about contemporary American culture, his withdrawal to England makes him a less effective resource for the Federal period. As a result, this study examines portraits by Americans
Charles Willson Peale\textsuperscript{30} and Ralph Earl\textsuperscript{31} and Englishmen George Romney\textsuperscript{32} and Joseph Wright.\textsuperscript{33}

Finally, two works by each artist have been chosen. These portraits date from the Colonial and Federal Periods. In general, the early works date from 1760 to 1775 and the later works from 1776 to 1790. Discussion of these images focuses on three specific issues: the artist's conception of likeness; how that notion might relate to Academic interpretations of a general or particular style (as defined by Reynolds); and the extent to which similarities and differences between American and British styles of likeness may be informed by regional influences. The works chosen are not intended to represent all art of the Revolutionary period in Britain and America. They serve, rather, as a means for exploring the cultural autonomy of Revolutionary

\textsuperscript{30} For more information on Peale, refer in the bibliography to texts by Theodore Bolton, Phoebe Lloyd, Lillian B. Miller, Edgar P. Richardson, Charles Coleman Sellers, and Horace Wells Sellers.

\textsuperscript{31} For further biographical information on Ralph Earl, refer in the bibliography to Laurence Goodrich, Colleen Heslip, Elizabeth Kornhauser, and William Savitsky.

\textsuperscript{32} For more information on George Romney, refer in the bibliography to texts by David Buttery, Randall Davies, Hilda Gamlin, and Lewis C. Hind.

\textsuperscript{33} For further biographical information on Joseph Wright, refer to texts by William Bemrose, Allan Braham, Judy Egerton, Nicola Kalinsky, Benedict Nicolson, and S. C. Kaines Smith.
America and the appropriateness of a British Academic standard in the evaluation and interpretation of American Revolutionary art.
CHAPTER ONE

This chapter is concerned with outlining traditional claims in American art scholarship. Essentially, it performs two functions: it provides this study with a measure against which to consider the ideas of revisionist scholars; and it forms the basis for a later examination of the formal similarities and differences between eight British and American portraits from the Revolutionary period.

Virgil Barker's American Painting, History and Interpretation is the first text to be considered in this study. Essentially, Barker discusses Colonial art production in two parts, that which preceded and that which post-dated 1725. In the period up until 1725, Barker argues that American painting, like early British art, never attained the status of fine art because its function was strictly utilitarian. This, he argues, is evident from the lack of any subject matter other than portraiture.¹ This focus on portraiture, moreover, also indicates the close connection between British and Colonial art production, for, until the eighteenth century, Britain followed Continental fashion much in the same way that seventeenth and eighteenth-century colonial America followed British fashion. In both cases, he

¹ Barker, p. 9
argues, the artist's and patron's goal reflected "a fondness which paid little attention to artistic quality and cared only for a craft displaying the new nobility and merchant class with a specious richness of effect."  

Barker explains colonial taste for portraiture in terms of British religious history. The religious wars that plagued Britain from the mid-fifteenth century, he argues, caused two things: the primacy of portraiture and the absence of religious significance in British and colonial American art. Unfortunately, Barker neither specifically addresses American painting in his argument nor gives evidence of the connection between American painting and British religious history. Instead, he assumes that the religious wars affected America in the same way they affected Britain, concluding: "In the experience of America generally, the disassociation between painting and religion has been so complete that the art has been emptied of the most powerful emotion possible in either the private or the communal life..."  

Barker's discussion of religious history serves to illustrate his implicit assimilation of a British standard.

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2 Barker, p. 10.
3 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
4 Ibid., p. 10.
And this standard shapes Barker's reading of form and content in all pre-nineteenth century American portraiture. Generally, he argues, once void of religious meaning, American portraiture performed a strictly utilitarian function. In view of this, he explains, the "predominant awkwardness" of Colonial portraits, "their mixture of belated medievalism and halting fashionableness, were appropriate to the society then transplanted into frontier conditions." He concludes: "The sum of the first century of painting in this country was the establishment of an all-round craft along the healthily useful level of the artisan and the amateur."

The utilitarian function that shapes Barker's understanding of American portraiture also influences his interpretation of American style. Like Reynolds, Barker equates American style with a lack of "esthetic awareness." Moreover, like Reynolds, Barker attributes this esthetic ignorance to the socio-economic fabric of America. American patrons, he argues, "did not often rise to the level of esthetic awareness; those patrons very

5 Barker, p. 9.
6 Ibid., p. 74.
7 Ibid., p. 74.
8 Ibid., p. 81.
clearly illustrated the mental pattern of all societal
groups newly coming into culture as well as into money."\textsuperscript{9}

As evidence of the less intellectual, more mercantile
nature of American painting, Barker cites \textit{Mrs. Elizabeth}
\textit{Freake and Daughter Mary} (Figure 1). Dating from around
1670, the sense of shallow space and lack of modeling in
this portrait are given as evidence of the mechanical
quality of colonial art.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, the detail of the
lace and the formal attention to textiles are cited as
evidence of colonial material interests.\textsuperscript{11} Together,
Barker argues, these elements demonstrate the colonial
artist's and patron's interest in projecting the economic
status—rather than the mental virtues—of the sitter.

According to Barker, then, early America's preference
for a particular style was determined by the intellectual
limitations of a trade-oriented society. This conclusion
corresponds to Reynolds' argument about general and
particular styles and the kind of society that uses them. In
\textit{Discourse IX}, for example, dated 1780, Reynolds writes:

\begin{quote}
The estimation in which we stand in respect to our
neighbours, will be in proportion to the degree in
which we excel or are inferior to them in the
acquisition of intellectual excellence, of which Trade
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{9} Barker, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 74.
and its consequential riches must be acknowledged to give the means; but a people whose whole attention is absorbed in those means, and who forget the end, can aspire but little above the rank of a barbarous nation.”

The issue of economic interests as an impediment to fine art production is critical in our comparison of British and colonial American painting. If in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Britain was thought an economic power, by the eighteenth century it had added to that reputation a cultural prestige. Colonial America witnessed a similar beginning. According to Miller, Thomas Grattan, the English Consul in Boston, admired American "physical and material energy, but he saw little in literary or artistic achievement... to indicate that the United States was a 'civilization'." In Grattan's opinion, America did not have an intellectual mission. Its goal, he writes, was "to clear the forests, hunt the wild beasts, scatter the savage tribes... till the soil, dig in the mines, and work out the rude ways of physical existence...."

Opinions about American provincialism and, even, barbarianism were countered by those who compared America with Renaissance Italy. Miller writes:

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12 Wark, Discourse IX, p. 169.
13 Barker, p. 215.
14 Ibid., p. 216.
15 Ibid., p. 218.
Eighteenth-century intellectual associations provided Americans with their sense of continuity... for the eighteenth century saw in its own Enlightenment a continuation of the earlier flowering that had taken Europe out of... barbarianism... into the light of Nature and Science."

Under this view, "America's materialism and democracy were not, then, to be considered impediments to artistic development; if history pointed out lessons for the future, America's mercantile economy and republican form of government were bound to lead to a similar artistic renaissance."\[17\]

Despite Barker's more conventional assimilation of a traditional British standard, he does credit an "American" quality to colonial portraiture. The "expressiveness" of the Freake portrait marks an important distinction between colonial and British painting, he argues. That the colonies were not officially "American," he goes on, does not in any way diminish the regional identity of its people. He writes: "Americanism at any given time is what Americans then are. Nor is there any inherent improbability about the occurrence even so early of a local accent in painting; it had already happened in the people, and it was even then happening in the crafts."\[18\]

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16 Barker, p. 218.
17 Ibid., p. 218.
18 Ibid., p. 74.
In his discussion of Copley's work, Barker adds to his note on "Americanism" an additional consideration. Copley's style, he writes, is commonly referred to as "objective," meaning that it is concerned primarily with close observation rather than ideas. In The Boy with the Squirrel (Fig. 7), however, Copley reveals more than merely observation. He writes:

consider the single detail of the squirrel.... The first perception of the creature in all its minute particularity was necessarily an act of good eyesight; such a convincing statement in paint of the original perception involved the further activity discriminated as conception, and that act of the mind is much too complex to be narrowed down to the operation of sight alone. What is called the objectivity in Copley's work consists in the close correspondance of the resulting image to appearance, but that very result is attained by the mind's reshaping of the eye's perception.  

In his review of native portraiture, Barker reiterates his opinion on the complex nature of Copley's style. "The individualities of his sitters are so convincing on canvas that it is easy to credit them as existing in life, but it is possible to claim that Copley gave them a more intense existence in their portraits."  

Although Barker, like many others, considers Copley's work a unique phenomena in colonial painting, his consideration of qualities and ideas distinctly American

19 Barker, p. 147-148.
20 Ibid., p. 134.
raises critical issues about the style and function of art produced specifically by and for Americans. This would essentially isolate portraits produced from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Having stated this, however, Barker concludes along more traditional lines. "The most significant development in painting... was clearly the stamp put upon it by the emergence of a privileged class at the top of society; the taste of that class was consciously exerted in accordance with its own conception of fashionable taste in England."21

The British standard influences not only Barker's text, but Hagen's as well. Like Barker, Hagen begins The Birth of the American Tradition in Art with an account of British history and, similarly, he proposes the absence of other subject matter as evidence both of portraiture's craft status and England's influence on colonial art production. "In the era of Charles II, when art was first produced" in the colonies, he writes, "England, alone of all European nations, continued to confine her artistic production almost exclusively to likeness painting. She had done so since the Reformation."22 The American style, Hagen goes on, was also determined by its British dependence. The medieval

21 Barker, p. 189.
22 Hagen, pp. 6-7.
manner continued to dominate provincial art production until after the Restoration; only at court was it "superseded by a cavalier's style given to splendor and ocular deception."\(^{23}\)

Although there are certain similarities between the texts by Hagen and Barker, they are not wholly in agreement. Whereas Barker adopts Reynolds' theory of general and particular styles to analyze both British and colonial painting, Hagen uses it only for evaluating colonial art. In fact, unlike either Reynolds or Barker, Hagen credits the particular style with intellectual interests; however, he limits this application to British painting.

Hagen begins with a discussion about portrait production in the Tudor and Stuart periods. Both the Tudor period, which culminated under Elizabeth I, and the Stuart period, which ended under Charles II, he argues, employed artistic styles suited to the specific political interests of the court. In the Elizabethan era, this style was a particular one. Hagen terms it both "medieval" and the "British branch of manierismo" for its decorative quality.\(^{24}\) Essentially, however, it is characterized by the linear, two-dimensional, detailed, and unmodeled traits

\(^{23}\) Hagen, p. 9.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 9.
considered craft-like and non-intellectual by Reynolds.

In his discussion of Elizabethan portraiture, Hagen outlines why this style held such appeal for the court. Generally, he argues, the styles was popular because of its association with an earlier, more conservative period in British political history. To make his point, Hagen compares the 1470 portrait of Lady Margaret Beaufort (Fig. 8) with Hilliard's portrait Queen Elizabeth (Fig. 9), dated 1600. Over a century after its peak, he argues, Elizabeth adopted the familiar British style to symbolize the security, conservatism, and historical foundation of her reign. Thus, whereas style in the former portrait reflects contemporary taste, that of the latter conveys social and political interests. 25

The proven skill of Elizabeth's court painters further indicates that her adoption of the particular style was not the result of technical or intellectual limitations. Elizabeth solicited the skills of Continental painters at the same that she endorsed the medieval style. The extent to which these artists modified their style to suit her interests is evidenced in the works commissioned. In the case of Hans Holbein, for example, a comparison between Lais Corinthianca (Fig. 10), dated 1526, and Anne of Cleves (Fig.

11), dated 1539, reveals two significant modifications in the artist's manner: a shift in the illusion of space from three-dimensional to two-dimensional, and a change from modeled to linear forms. In encouraging these formal changes, Elizabeth made fashionable the conservative values that would keep her in power.26

Although Hagen's argument for the political function of Elizabethan portraiture challenges claims that a particular style is indicative of inferior intellect and skill, the author does not apply his theory to American painting. He concludes, instead, that the colonial limner's "honest though unsuccessful endeavors to build up every separate form in the round make it evident that plasticity was his aim, but what he got, due to his unskilled technique, was flatness."27 In his argument, Hagen proposes that the lack of traditional apprenticeships or foreign travel resulted in making colonial painting "independent and underived"28 from European art; "a wholesale derivation of colonial limning from Elizabethan art is untenable."29

By the turn of the century, colonial painting had

26 Hagen, p. 9.
27 Ibid., p. 17.
28 Ibid., p. 23.
29 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
advanced beyond the level of the limner and arrived at the level of "amateur." This, Hagen argues, is evident in the Self-Portrait (Fig. 12) by Thomas Smith. According to the author, this work marks the beginning of colonial America's "progressive assimilation of the European tradition." He cautions, however, that American never wholly assimilated European culture; "the American milieu," he writes, "possessed from the start a curious power of making over immigrants into Americans. Very few continued to paint in the New World as they had in the Old." In America, he goes on, a "new goal was pursued. Another will was at work."

Although Hagen is unclear about the determinants behind colonial modifications to European taste, he does suggest they were linked to certain social and economic conditions. Comparing Britain with ancient Rome and America with early Christian Europe, Hagen argues that American style was informed by influences symptomatic of "primitive" societies and eras. He writes:

Transmutations of style... occurred inevitably whenever archaic civilizations departed from mother

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30 Hagen, p. 30.
31 Ibid., p. 31.
32 Ibid., p. 30.
civilizations that had grown overripe.... It is not an accidental coincidence that colonial archaism seceded from the Old-World baroque exactly at the moment when the colonists were deserting the old civilization in search of another more primitive one." \[33\]

The similarity between Hagen's view of America as a "primitive" society and Reynolds' view of America as a "state of nature" suggests that Hagen's interpretation of America and, hence, American Revolutionary portraiture has altered little from that of the earlier writer. What Hagen seems to argue is that, although the Academic standard may change to accommodate contemporary interests, its authority as an intellectual and technical resource is fundamental to the content of fine art; societies void of such tradition are necessarily producing craft. Without that essential foundation, then, American Revolutionary portraiture lacked the substance of British art and became, essentially, a construct of economic conditions.

Despite innovative aspects to his argument, Hagen's interpretation of form and content in early American portraiture uses conventional theory to interpret the evolution of colonial style. Jules Prown, in "American Painting: From the Beginning to the Armory Show," similarly adopts an Academic standard in his concern for the formal

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33 Hagen, p. 37.
characteristics of American art.  

Prown begins with a discussion of Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Daughter Mary (Fig. 1). He calls it a "distant provincial echo of the courtly style that blended playful, colorful, linear, anti-classical Mannerism flowing northward from Italy with the indigenous and stylistically comparable Gothic tradition." Like Hagen, Prown notes the unusual pattern and color of the Freake portrait, calling attention to its possible esthetic value. He writes: "The quality of the drawing suggests that the style may reflect conscious esthetic selection fully as much as, or even more than, insufficiency of technique." This re-consideration furthers the scholarship of Prown's predecessors, creating a venue in which an American likeness may be read as more than merely a provincial form with a utilitarian function.

Prown's theory draws on an Academic standard to read American style. He interprets the Freake likeness, for example, as a "distillation" of Holbein's form, which, he argues, arrived in Boston "a century and a half later."

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35 Prown, p. 15.

36 Ibid., p. 15.

37 Ibid., p. 15.
He concludes: "Long after the European Baroque masters... had lived and died, a flickering flame of the Middle Ages, fueled by Mannerism, still burned in the art as it did in the life of Colonial America." 38

Prown follows the progress of American style into the eighteenth century, by which time, he argues, new influences are evident in colonial painting that suggest a greater interest in subject matter and less in decorative effect. 39 As evidence of this new style, Prown cites Thomas Smith's Self-Portrait (Fig. 12), calling attention to three traits indicative of its Baroque influence: the three-dimensional illusionism caused by the sheet of paper held by Smith; the sense of distance generated by the window view; and the pictorial reference—the skull and the ship—to the sitter's mortality and career. 40

Like Hagen and Barker, Prown attributes the Baroque's delayed arrival to events in British history. In what is perhaps the clearest expression of his sympathy with traditional scholarship, Prown writes:

transmission of the Baroque, diluted but recognizable, westward to the colonies, was facilitated when the restored English monarchy revoked the original

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38 Prown, p. 15.
39 Ibid., p. 15.
40 Ibid., p. 15.
commercial charters of the American colonies and issued new royal charters, setting up royal governors in provincial courts where the latest London fashions were introduced. 41

The parallel between America's stylistic reform and heightened British contact suggests a number of possibilities: that the style had been unfamiliar to colonial artists and patrons; that the evidence of original works inspired colonial artists and patrons to modify their tastes; that colonial artists and patrons reacted against the increased tension by adopting a formal language recognizable to their British peers; or that the concurrent reforms in American style and British rule were merely coincidental.

Generally, the primary source of stylistic change in the colonies was prints. These Prown calls "the dominant artistic influence on American painting in the eighteenth century, transmitting European designs to America." 42 As the primary court painter of this period, Sir Godfrey Kneller had considerable influence on American painting, and this influence extended not only to technique, but to taste. 43 Both Copley and Peale writes about their reliance

41 Prown, p. 15.
42 Ibid., p. 17.
43 Ibid., p. 15.
on graphic arts. Peale made note to John Adams that engravings after the Italian masters served as guides for his figures and compositions. Copley, on the other hand, complains that there are "no examples of Art, except what is to [be] met with in a few prints indifferently executed." In addition to the graphic arts, the lack of resident mentors encouraged both artists to turn to Nature for instruction, a resource Copley called "the fountain head of all perfection."

In addition to being a formal resource, Prown argues, prints are also evidence of colonial interest in emulating British taste and fashion. He writes: the "reliance upon European prints by American artists during the eighteenth century" is both "a measure of their dependence" and an "index of the intensity of their aspirations.... not only to produce pictures, but to... remain au courant with European art." As an example, Prown cites the work of Robert Feke, whose "highly developed sense of surface plane at the expense of solid forms and space" is indicative, he argues,

44 Miller, *Selected Papers*, p. 87, footnote 3.
of the artist's greater interest "in the decorative possibilities of the picture surface than in the character of the subject."49 This "highly developed sense of surface plane," Prown continues, is also symptomatic of Feke's "provincial origin."50

The issue of colonial American interest in emulating British fashion is critical to this study. Copley was very clear about his interest in being "au courant." In a letter to Benjamin West dated 1766, he writes:

I think myself peculiarly unlucky in Liveing in a place into which there has not been one portrait brought that is worthy to be call'd a Picture within my memory, which leaves me at a great loss to gess the stile that You, Mr. Reynolds, and the other Artists pracktice.51

Unlike Copley, however, Peale never prioritized an assimilation of the Academic style once he returned to America. In fact, he came more and more to rely on Nature.52 Miller notes the connection between this preference and a Renaissance belief that in imitating nature, one was imitating the creativity of God.53 Perhaps Peale sought to offset the disadvantages of his

49 Prown, p. 22.
50 Ibid., p. 22.
51 Massachusetts Historical Society, Letters, p. 51.
52 Miller, Selected Letters, p. 101.
53 Ibid., p. 103, footnote 8.
circumstance, for, in teaching others, he encouraged an acquaintance with ancient statues and a knowledge of the original source of beauty. In his own case, however, he called his "variety of characters" his "Antiks."^{54}

Prown's discussion continues with a consideration of economic influences on American style. Like Reynolds and Barker, Prown argues that the particular style and utilitarian function of colonial art were shaped by the mercantile interests of American society. As evidence of his theory, Prown cites Copley's circa 1776 portrait, *Thaddeus Burr* (Fig. 13). He writes:

> Although his success was guaranteed by technical competence alone, his real secret lay in his knowledge of his sitters and their requirements. Copley understood that what New Englanders valued in a portrait above all else was a good likeness.... this was a pragmatic society, wedded to the facts of life, more concerned with the material realities of this world than the potentialities of the next.^{55}

Prown's theory complements Reynolds' reading of a particular likeness—that it is a pragmatic, material presentation of the sitter. And it is Prown's acceptance of this interpretation that links his study with those of Barker and Hagen. Yet, although Prown concludes that American painting lagged behind British art, and although this notion of American provincialism influences the

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^{54} Miller, *Selected Letters*, p. 127.

^{55} Prown, p. 27.
author's interpretation of form and content in both Colonial and Revolutionary American portraiture, two aspects of Prown's argument distinguish him from the earlier writers: a distinct attention to works dating from the Revolutionary period, and a general recognition of greater substance in American painting than is posited by Hagen, Barker, or Reynolds.

According to Prown, American style was conditioned not only by European tradition, but by the interests and goals of American colonists. He explains: "In the colonies, conditions were ripe for the acceptance of stylistic innovations as second and third generation Americans, bored with the Puritan rigidity of their forebears, wanted to begin to enjoy the fruits of the economic success they had gained." Like Hagen, then, Prown reads distinctions in American style as an influence of economic interests. Thus, although Prown does not ascribe a theoretical content to the particular style of American Revolutionary portraiture, he does suggest it was guided by more than intellectual and technical ignorance.

Robin Simon's more recent study, The Portrait in Britain and America (1987), dates from the next decade of American scholarship. Essentially, he concurs with the

56 Prown, p. 16.
opinions of earlier scholars; he posits American painting as poor cousin to British art, adopted from and guided by events and styles in England. Even after the Revolutionary era, Simon argues, Americans sought to emulate British taste and fashion.\textsuperscript{57}

Simon's discussion focuses on the evidence of American artists' travel and training in Britain. According to Simon, without the academic opportunity afforded British painters, American artists were overly-dependent on prints for technical training. Prints, moreover, could not provide the kind of intellectual experience gained by study in the Academic tradition. This circumstance, Simon argues, resulted in "Colonial American painters... without proper grounding in perspective, figure-drawing, painting techniques or the handling of color and tone."\textsuperscript{58} And this effected, he concludes, a likeness "inevitably primitive"\textsuperscript{59}

Like Prown, Simon attributes American style to the influence of graphic arts and the lack of professional training and models in colonial America. For example, the absence of color in engravings and mezzotints, he argues,

\textsuperscript{57} Simon, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 22.
effected the strong tonal quality in American Revolutionary portraiture not found in European painting.60 Simon adds: "Closely linked to this capacity for tonal control was an interest in effects of light and shade, to which was added a fascination with reflected light...."61

Although Simon's argument is convincing as an explanation for the style of early colonial painting, it fails to take into account the change in circumstances afforded artists and patrons of the Revolutionary period, when native painters could and did study abroad and American patrons could travel, see, and own paintings of the Academic style. The influence of traditional theory, then, limits the applicability of Simon's argument and raises again the issue of specific influences on the style of Revolutionary portraiture.

The four authors we have considered posit three claims common to studies on colonial American painting: that Americans sought to emulate British fashion; that American style resulted from limitations implicit to learning from books and prints; and that American painting functioned, like craft, to project the image of its sitter and the status of its owner without concern for intellectual

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60 Simon, p. 22.
61 Ibid., p. 24.
content. There is much to recommend these theories. Americans did rely heavily on the importation of prints, particularly in the early colonial years, when travel was less frequent and professional training was virtually unknown. As part of the British Empire, colonists probably also felt as though the culture in England was their own. Certainly the style of colonial painting was familiar and probably comfortable for those whose contact with fashion was at a minimum. Yet, while these arguments are convincing for works produced by itinerant artists before the mid-eighteenth century, they do not explain the taste, style, and purpose of American painting once patrons and artists were no longer isolated from or dependent upon British culture. The following chapter will continue to examine this issue with regard to new theories and agenda in American art scholarship.
CHAPTER TWO

Chapter One reviewed some of the central arguments concerning the issue of American cultural autonomy and its relationship to conventional interpretations of American Revolutionary painting. This chapter continues with this examination by exploring more recent investigations in American art scholarship. Generally, we are again concerned with issues of style, the cultural relationship between Britain and America, and how this relationship might influence evaluations of American portraiture.

Lisa Fellows Andrus' doctoral dissertation, *Measure and Design in American Painting, 1760-1860* is contemporary with Prown's study on American art. Like Prown, Andrus focuses on style in her discussion of colonial painting. Moreover, following Prown, Barker, Hagen, and Simon, Andrus explains the flatter and more linear characteristics of American painting as resulting from the influential role of prints and crafts in American society. Unlike her predecessors, however, she also acknowledges an intellectual content to American Revolutionary portraiture. This aspect of her theory is examined here more closely.

Andrus identifies two levels of content to American portraiture. On a basic level, she argues, eighteenth-century colonial painting focused on "a clear understanding
of the separate parts and of the purpose the final product was meant to serve.... Whether it was a saddle, a machine, or a picture... suiting a form to the function... characterized by simplicity and the harmony of parts."¹

The style of the Freake portrait (Fig. 1) serves as an example of this form.² On a more intellectual level, Andrus continues, the style of American portraiture "signified a faith in reason and order...through a study of God's creation."³

The primary difference between Andrus' theory and traditional scholarship is the evidence she ascribes to this second, intellectual level. In many ways, she adopts a stance for American art similar to the one taken by Hagen;

¹ Andrus, p. 11.

² The fundamental assumptions which inform scholarship highlighted in the first chapter of this study should make clear the caution to be taken in assuming that any portrait served a purely decorative function. Indeed, Craven notes that the materials depicted in this portrait are linked to specific historical conditions which would have had more significance for a contemporary viewer than for us. The lace of Mrs. Freake's gown, for example, may represent a defiance of the authority of the New England theocracy, which demanded simplicity in dress. It additionally suggests her status and wealth; prohibited from export, lace was very expensive as well as decorative. See Craven, pp. 38-43.

³ Andrus, p. 11. Refer again to Thomas Smith's Self-Portrait (Fig. 12) in which he refers to mortality both symbolically (by the skull) and metaphorically (in the poem).
she recognizes the technical quality of American painting as resulting not from ignorance, but from a connection between style and, for example, political, social, or religious interests.

Challenging claims for a British cultural authority, Andrus further suggests that the intellectual value of American portraiture may derive from non-British sources. In general, Andrus writes: "Adherence to pragmatism, dependence on ingenuity, and concern with specificity and order were not restricted to craftsmen and self-taught artists but were widely recognized as characteristics of American society as a whole." As evidence of this regional trait, Andrus posits that native philosophy recognized a connection between Nature and Reason influential to its cultural development. For example, she cites the series of lectures arranged in 1755 by Judge Dudley, which were concerned with the issue of "Natural Religion" and the role of God as creator of logic and order. This notion of a natural and logical order was further supported by the painting manuals used by colonial artists. William Salmon's *Polygraphice* (London, 1685) proposes: "It is almost impossible to do anything in the Art of proportion commendable, without the knowledge of *ARITHMETICK* and *GEOMETRY.*"[5]

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4 Andrus, p. 16.

Math and science and their relationship to Nature and God appear to shape considerable stylistic differences between British and colonial painting. This difference parallels contemporary criticisms of American style. Copley, for example, while very successful, was censured by Benjamin West for producing portraits such as The Boy with the Squirrel (Fig. 7) that were "to liney." 6 Captain R. G. Bruce passed on similar comments to Copley from Reynolds, who "observed a little Hardness in the Drawing, Coldness in the Shades, An over minuteness, all which Example would correct." 7 In reply, Copley wrote: "It was remarked the Picture was too lind. this I confess I was concious of my self and think with You that it is the natural result of two great presition in the out line, which in my next picture I will endeavour to avoid." 8

Despite Copley's letters, which suggest his interest in overcoming this deficiency, Andrus concludes that most American portraiture was consciously or unconsciously shaped by a native appreciation for mathematical and scientific reason that encouraged specificity in depictions of

6 Massachusetts Historical Society, Letters, p. 51.
7 Ibid., p. 42.
8 Ibid., p. 50.
Americans and their world. Essentially, she argues, Revolutionary era artists and patrons were confronted with the option of two styles, each of which was characterized by specific technical and intellectual interests. The first emphasized lines, planes, and tonal values through outline and color. The second, which required a simultaneous application of line and color, is more sketchy and painterly, emphasizing space, color, and modeling. In their concern for natural order, she argues, American painters adopted the first manner because it represented a mathematically-based interpretation of God's divine law, whereas "painterly brushwork and showy coloring seemed to be superficial and without basis in reality." She concludes: "The elements of geometry served as a useful skeleton for the depiction of pictorial forms and for compositional organization, but geometry [was] also... associated with universal laws of harmony."

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9 Andrus, p. 16.
10 Ibid., p. 101.
11 As an example of these modes, see Sarah Geddes Latimer (Fig. 29), in which the clearly outlined forms and surface texture of Peale's portrait illustrate the first style, and, Romney's portrait of Mrs. Alexander Blair (Fig. 19), with its sense of space and modeling, illustrates the second.
13 Ibid., p. 32.
Andrus' argument challenges the premise of a British standard by positing influences distinctive to colonial society and, consequently, to colonial portraiture. This approach to American painting has become increasingly widespread. Richard Saunders and Ellen Miles, in their work *American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1776*, for example, also avoid conventional approaches to American painting by considering native influences.

In his essay "American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1750," Saunders begins by discussing the composition of colonial society. He writes: "immigrants did not come to the colonies unless they were deceived by great expectations, stirred by some searing resentment or compelling ideal, or forced.... [They were] a middling sort." Saunders' view of a "middling sort" influences his interpretation of colonial American painting, for he equates the mechanical skill of early Americans with an interest in craft and the absence of esthetic interests. This results in his dismissal

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15 Saunders, p. 1.
of colonial portraits as "functional identifiable 'effigies', not great works of art."¹⁶

Like Prown, Barker and Hagen, then, Saunders reads the seventeenth-century portrait as the "decorative"¹⁷ construct of a "tradesman."¹⁸ Yet, Saunders contributes to traditional theory a new and perceptive note. Examining developments in mid-eighteenth-century colonial style, Saunders argues that the American taste for "an accurate likeness,"¹⁹ and the corresponding shift from the decorative craft style of the Freake limner to the particular form of Copley and Peale, paralleled the rise of native-born painters and the onset of the Revolutionary period. This suggests four new possibilities: that American artists were more attuned than foreign painters to the stylistic interests of their American patrons; that just prior to revolutionary change, colonial artists and patrons were modifying the styles and tastes of their predecessors; that these modifications reflected America's keen interest in physical truth; and, finally, that these stylistic interests reflected a different cultural ideology than

¹⁶ Saunders, p. 4.
¹⁷ Ibid., p. 22.
¹⁸ Ibid., p. 19.
¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.
found in Britain.

In her essay "American Colonial Portraits, 1750-1776," Ellen Miles discusses the portraiture of the late colonial era. Like Andrus and Saunders, she does not so much challenge conventional claims as add to them. For example, sympathetic to Hagen's argument about the early colonial painter's craftsman status and subsequent rise to "amateur" painter, she adds to this hierarchy the level of "gentleman professional." As evidence of this higher standing, she notes the emergence of signatures. These, she argues, are suggestive of portraiture's higher status in late eighteenth-century American culture.

According to Miles, cost was also influential in effecting this higher status. Approximately one percent of the colonial population could afford to commission a portrait. These patrons most often came from the merchant or landowner classes; only on occasion were they lawyers, ministers, and other professionals. Once commissioned, various elements contributed to the cost of a portrait: the size of the canvas; the choice of artist

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20 Miles, p. 37.
21 Ibid., p. 37.
22 Ibid., p. 44.
23 Ibid., p. 44.
(dependent upon location and references); an artist's status (enhanced by London exhibition experience); the artist's study and knowledge of appropriate poses, attitudes, and drapery; and his ability to borrow, when necessary, from a supply of studio accoutrements and prints.

Miles' investigation of the commission process provides this study not only with specifics about late eighteenth-century American art production, but with a means for comparing the patronage of American painters like Earl and Peale with that of British artists like Romney and Wright. That Peale studied in London with Benjamin West and worked most often in urban regions suggests that his portraits were more expensive than those produced by Earl, whose London study was more self-guided and patrons were more often provincial. For the same reason, it is likely that Romney's work was more expensive than Wright's. These criteria effect a hierarchy in which Romney ranks at the highest level and Earl the lowest. They are less successful, however, in distinguishing the patrons of Wright and Peale.

In summing up, Miles writes: "Any search for aspects of

24 Miles, p. 67; one major source for the artist was Jonathan Richardson's Theory of Painting, London, 1715. It states: "The Figures must not only do what is Proper ...but as People of the best Sense, would or should perform such Actions." (pp. 190-191)

25 Ibid., p. 44.
colonial American portraiture that might be uniquely American could perhaps be made, not in the styles of the painters, but in the self-image of the sitters." In other words, likeness, not as a pictorial form, but as a visual presentation of ideas, may well instruct differences between American and British portraiture. And this is where Craven's study seems to make headway. In what may be the first cohesive study of American portraiture within the context of American history, Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations (1986), considers the sources of influence on this "self-image."

Craven begins with a discussion of Calvin, whose teachings, the author claims, encouraged colonial society to recognize portraits as signs both of status and God's favor. The crime and disgrace of poverty, he argues, was countered in portraiture by the projection of success and industry. Calvinism's jurisdiction, however, was generally limited to the Northeast and, more generally, to the earlier colonial period; by the late seventeenth-century, Craven argues, even power once granted

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26 Miles, p. 68
27 Craven, p. 9.
28 Ibid., p. 12
the New England theocracy was modified in the interest of economic, social, and political gain. Essentially, he notes, as second and third generation non-Puritans moved in and concentrated their efforts on economic success, trade interests became inter-denominational, encouraging the priority of cultural and social gain over religious homogeneity.  

Although evident in colonial American society, Craven's theory attributes this change in taste to seventeenth-century Europe, where prosperous northern burghers, for example, preferred a portrait, landscape, or interior scene to images of angels or nobles. This link between American and other European cultures reiterates this study's earlier speculation about the influence of non-British sources on American art. Moreover, it illustrates that, while the popularity of portraiture in America may derive directly from British contact, stylistic differences were likely shaped by other, sometimes conflicting, interests.  

In support of his theory, Craven compares early colonial American and British portrait styles. While both,

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29 Craven, p. 13.
31 Ibid., p. 22.
Craven argues, are characterized by the "compression of form and space... [a] timid use of light and shade... decorative coloring, linear patterning and rich detailing"\(^{31}\) (refer again to the Freake portrait, Fig. 1), many Americans, like the Dutch, valued greater naturalism for its symbolic reference to low-church Protestant teachings; Calvin, for example, endorsed naturalism as a symbol and celebration of God's creation,\(^{32}\) encouraging his followers to do so as well. This concern for Nature is reiterated by Peale, who commented in a letter to Edmund Jennings dated 1771: "one rude line from Nature is worth an hundred from coppys, enlarges the Ideas and makes one see and feel with such senscessations -- as are worthy of the author."\(^{33}\) As naturalism translates formally into a particular style, its persistent appearance in Revolutionary American portraiture may correspond with the authority of native values incompatible with British taste.

The relationship between naturalism and the values of a middle-class or burgher society may explain formal differences between colonial and Academic painting. Craven argues that middle-class society understood beauty as truth and was intellectually more attracted by the particularities

\(^{32}\) Craven, p. 9

\(^{33}\) Miller, Selected Papers, p. 101.
of a natural likeness than the generalizations of courtly idealization. He writes: "The English aristocracy, under the influence of the art of foreign courts, might prefer an artistic style that idealized, but the pragmatic, middle-class English merchant, close both to the real world and to Calvin, would turn to a naturalistic, truthful style."\(^{34}\) Even Copley, who made every effort to gain the approval of Academic critics, was subject to this "attitude that finds beauty in truth." Craven cites, for example, an instance in which "the subject is so plain as nearly to exclude the possibility of beauty;" in Copley's portrait of Mrs. Thomas Boylston (Fig. 14), dated circa 1766, he argues, the priority of a physical likeness is demonstrated by the beauty attributed to such an "excruciatingly plain" face.\(^{35}\)

In failing to adopt a particular style, Craven goes on, English painting under Kneller and Lely became increasingly alienated from colonial values and taste. This made it necessary for native painters to establish a separate code of dress, setting, and gesture specifically suited to the interests of the colonial American. These differences, Craven argues, demonstrate the certain authority of native values in American painting. He explains:

\(^{34}\) Craven, p. 27.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 27.
The socio-cultural traits of independence, self-confidence, and egalitarianism were present in the personality of the subjects, of course, before they were woven into the fabric of the portrait, and they were the result of middle-class origins and the patterns of life that developed in colonial America.\textsuperscript{36}

Craven traces the development of American painting into the second quarter of the eighteenth century, by which time, he argues, the colonial style was again similar to that of England. In this period, he writes, it was "more important..." for American sitters "to have their position in society represented than their individual character,"\textsuperscript{37} a circumstance reminiscent of their English heritage.

As one explanation for this stylistic change, Craven notes the blurred class distinctions caused by marriage between the merchant and noble classes. This resulted, he claims, in merging the artistic tastes and values of these two social groups, which again suggests the influence of socio-economic influence on American style. The ensuing blend of the more fashionable style patronized by the elite and the conventional values of the American merchant\textsuperscript{38} is witnessed in New England. Here, Craven argues, portraits show more texture, a more painterly expression, as well as

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{36} Craven, p. 264.
    \item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 153.
    \item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., pp. 110-111.
\end{itemize}
greater attention to flesh, modeling, light, and shade.\textsuperscript{39}

As evidence of this new style, Craven compares the portraits of Samuel Shrimpton (Fig. 15), dated circa 1675, and Nicholas Roberts (Fig. 16), dated circa 1674. He writes: "Roberts, a prosperous London merchant and Shrimpton's father-in-law, had his and his family's portraits painted in the old style" which was "championed for nationalistic and societal reasons...." Shrimpton opted for a style "that was of the current mode at court and among the nobility;" its "fluid, loose brush-stroke, the tactile sensuality, the feeling for corporeal form and fleshiness, the three-dimensional quality achieved by a rich play of light and shade" reveals that he "undoubtedly saw himself as a different social creature... and he wished his painted likeness to bespeak the transformation" in a style practiced by Sir Peter Lely.\textsuperscript{40}

Despite its temporary popularity, the Anglo-American style of the Shrimpton portrait was short-lived; by mid-century, the Colonial American style had returned to accommodating a preference for realism and "truth."\textsuperscript{41} Craven explains:

\textsuperscript{39} Craven, p. 115.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 115.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 156.
Such portraits [as Samuel Shrimpton] exerted some influence at this moment in the history of Colonial American portraiture, but in the end they were too aristocratic, too purely English, for most New Englanders; their style would have to be modified to suit the taste of colonial mercantile society.  

With its combined use of modeled forms and naturalistic detail, Charles Carroll the Settler (Fig. 17), dated c. 1700-1714, serves as an example of this reform. Craven writes: Although it "generally belongs to the Kneller style, its unidealized directness, boldness, and simplicity of execution indicate that it is the work of a provincial painter...." As one of the "straightforward and unidealized" portraits of this period, Craven argues, it illustrates both the formal modification made to the European manner and the influence of a native individualism. The importance of the individual as an influence on American portraiture of this period is worth further consideration. The emphasis on individual freedoms--a man's personal beliefs and behavior, for example--distinguished American society, generally, from that of London. Indeed, Craven argues that it "implies many things that are quite revealing of the colonial American character: distrust of a system that bases a person's worth on something other than

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42 Craven, p. 125.
43 Ibid., p. 237.
44 Ibid., p. 236.
personal accomplishment... of anything false or deceitful... of anything pretentious... an attitude of 'what I am is good enough, so paint me as I am'."45

It is difficult to identify when the concept of individualism first influenced British and colonial culture. Generally, however, one could at least date it to the period of the Reformation, when the first schism to define Whig and Tory interests came to the fore. Essentially, Whigs sought to counter the unified power of the British monarchy and the Church of England in order to protect individual interests. Founded on principles of morality and self-guidance, the primary concern of whiggism was the preservation of individual rights. G. H. Guttridge explains: "against the positive tory conception of the state the whigs visualized a negative function, to make possible the free play of individual and corporate energies in religion, politics, and trade."46

By the close of the seventeenth century, greater attention to personal rights, morality, and economic attainments had caused the demise of the New England theocracy. At the same time, whig interests effected changes in American political, religious, and social institutions:

45 Craven, p. 170.
46 Guttridge, p. 1.
politics became more the jurisdiction of the community and less that of the church; economics was influenced by individual ambitions; and society evolved into a construct of private individuals rather than a public whole.47

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the situation had reached a state of crisis that was echoed in American politics. John Dickinson, for example, wrote in 1774: "If the colonies were to submit to parliamentary supremacy, they would be guilty of the greatest crime against themselves and their posterity."48 He goes on: "It would mean submission to a change in the existing laws of England, laws that protected and provided justice for British subjects throughout the Empire."49

By 1760, British whiggism had re-emerged to challenge the goals of toryism.50 This re-surfacing paralleled the American revolutionary movement. As Trevor Colbourn argues, the American Revolution began, essentially, as a rebellion against the threat of tory interests. He explains: "Revolution became both a preventative and a preservative course of action.... Americans wanted to preserve their

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49 Ibid., p. 79.

50 Refer in Guttridge to pp. 13 and 16.
Inherited rights and liberties.51 In the writings of Peale, a further connection is made between whiggism, revolution, and American culture of the late Colonial and Federal periods. In the portrait of John Beale Bordley, for example, the use of jimson weed serves "to symbolize the deathly consequences of any attack on American rights."52 With regard to his political position, Peale writes: "the Tories now & then give a terrible alarm, but I believe by the Time you get this that very few will be left here. some ask why they may not be left neuter, that they will not act against us, but I believe [it] us allmost a Settled point that those who do not enter [the] fight with us is against us."53

By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, then, individualism had fundamentally affected the political, social, and economic fabric of American life. In New England, New York, and Philadelphia, Craven writes, individualism was characterized by two features: the "mores, ethics and virtues of a middle class"; and the religious beliefs of Protestantism.54 Its evolution begins to


52 Miller, Selected Papers, p. 97, footnote 3.

53 Ibid., p. 146.

54 Craven, p. 253.
explain the critical difference between the content of Revolutionary American and British Academic portraiture.

Like Saunders, Craven claims that the "culmination of the colonial American portrait in its purest form comes at the hands of those native-born artists who worked from about 1740 to 1785 or 1790."\(^{55}\) During this period, American artists like Peale, for example, "rejected the painterly mode of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney and West... and drew upon a deep-rooted characteristic of colonial society--the adulation of material things--to form the foundation of his art."\(^{56}\) Similarly, in contrast with their British peers, American patrons "seem to have equated Art with the union of a highly individualized likeness and the successful re-creation of material things... the overt symbols of their prosperity, social position, and favor in God's eyes."\(^{57}\)

During the Revolutionary era, then, critical movements were shaping American culture: the rise of native painters; political discontent; the impact of whiggism; a growing appreciation for the arts and their expanding national and social role; economic self-sufficiency. Each of these movements had a more profound impact on American

\(^{55}\) Craven, p. 254.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 262.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 262.
Revolutionary culture than they had had in the preceding era. Furthermore, he goes on, the "high-level scientific inquiry into the physical world paralleled the pragmatic interests of merchants, planters, and tradesmen." And this middle-class or merchant influence was translated into a concern for "the real, physical world and not with abstract speculation or ideals of the Platonic or Cartesian sort." Moreover, Craven argues, there were also academic issues to consider. Native painters tended to work more empirically and objectively than their British peers, demonstrating their "awareness of current scientific knowledge....""60

In portraiture, evidence of these Revolutionary era developments are visible, Craven argues, in works dating between the late Colonial (1760-1775) and early Federal (1776-1790) periods. In these portraits, "a respect for the physical substances of the sitters and their immediate surroundings" is conveyed by what the author calls a "direct sensory observation of the physical matter before them."62 Earl and Peale, for example, were not interested

58 Craven, p. 275.
59 Ibid., p. 275.
60 Ibid., p. 275.
61 Ibid., p. 275.
62 Ibid., p. 275.
in generalizations, Craven continues, but "wanted their portraits to be, as much as possible, optical re-creations of the actual physical fact...."  

The ideas posited by Craven, Andrus, Saunders, and Miles challenge the appropriateness of a British Academic standard for interpretations of American Revolutionary portraiture. In a theory similar to Hagen's claims for Elizabethan portraiture, Andrus ascribes an intellectual purpose to the American "archaic" style. Saunders furthers this claim by noting its specific relationship to native-born painters. And Miles contributes information and evidence about American art production. In this way, these authors provide important insight to the subtle transitions occurring in American portraiture of the Revolutionary period.

Craven's study takes this insight further. It argues that stylistic differences between American and British portraiture reflect varied attitudes of reason, harmony, science, and mathematics. And it ascribes formal differences to national religious, social, political, and cultural

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63 Craven, p. 275.
64 Andrus, pp. 16 and 101.
65 Saunders, p. 22.
66 Miles, pp. 44.
values. This theory suggests not only that American painting was founded upon a more solid theoretical and learned basis than American craft, but that America experienced greater cultural independence than is assumed by traditional theory.

In an illuminating concluding passage, Craven highlights the influences he believes critical to the stylistic distinctions in American portraiture. Specifically, he calls attention to two elements: the intellectual theories of philosophers such as Locke and Hume; and the influence of an art heritage. He begins this passage by posing the question: "if the thought and writings of Locke and Newton contributed to the development of the style of a colonial American painter, why did a similar influence not occur in eighteenth-century English painting--in, say the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds or Thomas Gainsborough?"67

Craven's position raises the issue of social and political reform as variables influencing cultural differences between American and British painting. Craven goes on: "one suspects it is because the art of the English painters was based on a long-standing artistic tradition reaching back to Renaissance and baroque theory."68

Unfortunately, the convincingness of Craven's argument is

67 Craven, pp. 275.
68 Ibid., p. 275.
weakened by the lack of evidence suggesting, for example, Peale's familiarity with these philosophical writings. Craven's argument depends on a general acceptance of the pervasive influence of enlightened theory in colonial culture.

Nonetheless, two points are critically challenged by Craven's theory: the appropriateness of a British standard in interpreting and evaluating American painting of the Revolutionary period and the implicitly utilitarian function of a particular style. We close this chapter, then, with three critical questions: to what extent might American style reflect reformatory intellectual theories; to what degree might this register a national response against the status quo values supported by the elite construct of the Royal Academy; and, finally, is it possible that Reynolds advocated a general style to symbolically counter this threat against the established British system? We will turn to these issues in the following chapters.
CHAPTER THREE
Portraits by George Romney

With Chapter three, this study begins its examination of the formal evidence in eight British and Anglo-American portraits of the Colonial and Federal periods. Starting with two portraits by George Romney, it considers similarities and differences between works completed in what might be termed both academic and provincial styles. Generally, this investigation is concerned with three issues: the artist's conception of likeness as expressed through physical features, costume, accoutrements, and setting; the relationship between that conception and conventional and revisionist theories of art; and the possible relevance of political, economic, social, and religious context in its production.

A contemporary of Sir Joshua Reynolds and trained in the Academic tradition, George Romney was born in 1734 to a modest family from provincial England. Having spent his early years copying engravings from a monthly magazine,\(^1\) Romney was apprenticed to the itinerant painter Christopher Steele at nineteen. In 1762, he left Steele and went to

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\(^1\) Hilda Gamlin, *George Romney and His Art*, New York, 1894, pp. 6-7.
London, where, in the following year, he exhibited his work for the first time at the Society of Artists. For a brief period, he left London to study painting and sculpture in Italy, returning in 1776 with a number of antique casts. From 1776 until the mid-1780s, Romney was settled in London as a fashionable portraitist of the British upper class. Unfortunately, despite his popularity, there is little recent scholarship on Romney's work; indeed, mostly biographical, the primary texts on Romney date from the turn of this century.²

The 1764 portrait Mrs. Wilbraam Bootle (Fig. 18) dates from Romney's second year in London. An early example from the artist's oeuvre, it follows shortly on the heels of his disputed second place in the 1763 Society of Artists Exhibition,³ over a year prior to his travels to Italy, and some time before his reputation was established.

The portrait of Mrs. Bootle is divided into three

² Major texts on Romney include: Randall Davies, Romney, London, 1914; Hilda Gamlin, George Romney and His Art, New York, 1894; Lewis C. Hind, Romney, New York, 1907; Humphrey Ward and W. Roberts, Romney, London, 1904. Perhaps because of their early date, most of the literature on Romney is biographically-oriented; there is an obvious need for an interpretive study on this artist.

³ Gamlin, p. 56; apparently, it was Reynolds who voted against Romney's reception of first prize. This vote against him caused a permanent rift in the relationship between the two men.
vertical sections. The first, to the viewer's left, includes both an animal portrait and a landscape view. The second, centralized, includes the sitter's figure. To the viewer's right, a landscape scene, featuring an urn atop a high stone wall, forms the third. The sitter, Mrs. Bootle, is shown knee-length. Her pale, pink-cheeked and heart-shaped face features large, almond-shaped, brown eyes, small, colored lips, and a nose rendered by parallel lines that branch outward to form brows. The dark hair, accentuated by a widow's peak, is simply dressed. From the left foreground, a brown and white dog stretches its head upward, resting its front paws on the sitter's right thigh.

Romney's treatment of the face signals his interest in an idealized likeness. The perfect symmetry of its heart shape, the flawless quality of the skin, the perfectly oval and richly-colored brown eyes, the symmetrical arch of her brows and the pink glow of her cheeks all suggest at least partial idealization. Ellis Waterhouse, author of Painting in Britain, 1530-1790 (1978), concurs; Romney, he writes, "brings forward all those neutral qualities which are valued by society--health, youth, good-looks, an air of breeding, or at least of the tone of the highest ranks of the social scale."4 Only those elements near to the subject, such as

4 Waterhouse, p. 306.
the urn and dog, are clearly depicted.

Yet, although the features appear idealized, the sketchy and unmodeled landscape in which Mrs. Bootle stands suggests that Romney's intention is to generalize. In the landscape to the right, for example, a distant mountain is silhouetted against a mottled blue sky that is ridged and shadowed in varying shades of blue and violet. Overhead and more centralized, dark, brushy leaves in soft, autumn colors stretch from the trunk of a towering oak and hang low to the side. Overall, blurred outlines and pastel, smoky colors evoke a universal or timeless quality.

The landscape to the left furthers the sense of generalization. Here, an oak, colored in tones of brown, yellow and green, is hung with golden, translucent, swirl-brushed leaves. Similarly, light, which spots the base of the trunk, the side of a branch, and the urn, streams from the upper left in brushwork that echoes the generalized style of the leaves and distant sky. This treatment of the landscape intimates that the physical features of Mrs. Blair are not idealized, they are not merely perfected versions of her own physical traits, but generalized, in that they are impersonal, standard, or universal traits. Together, they signal Romney's lack of concern for a truthful likeness.

To interpret the form and content of likeness in Romney's portrait, then, one needs to reconsider the Academic theory of a general style. According to Reynolds,
fine artists render likenesses that present the viewer with an ideal. This ideal is not concerned with individual, physical distinctions of figure or landscape, but with universal, timeless values that connect the sitter with a larger political and social whole. In an Academic model, then, "likeness," Reynolds writes, "consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature...."^4 He goes on:

Thus figures must have a ground whereon to stand; they must be cloathed; there must be a back-ground; there must be light and shadow; but none of these ought to appear to have taken up any part of the artist's attention.... [which must] sometimes deviate from the vulgar and strict historical truth, in pursuing the grandeur of... design.  

Use of the Academic form becomes, in Reynolds' theory, the distinguishing factor between the true liberal artist and the craftsman. According to Reynolds, the fine artist "will permit the lower painter... to exhibit the minute discriminations... while he, like the philosopher, will consider nature in the abstract, and represent in every one of his figures the character of its species."^6 In a successful, Academic portrait, then, Mrs. Bootle would not

^4 Wark, p. 59.
^5 Ibid., p. 59.
^6 Ibid., p. 50.
be depicted as her physical self in a localized setting, but as a member of this higher ideal in which individual particularities are sacrificed for the moral and intellectual progress of the whole.

In addition to endorsing a general style, Reynolds encouraged the use of classical motifs in portraiture. In Reynolds' estimation, the use of classical elements served to affiliate contemporary goals with the noble or heroic ideals he ascribed to the ancients; a style that incorporates both the general form and classical content, he argues, symbolizes the peak of civilization. This notion is articulated by Reynolds in Discourse III.

Dated December 1770, Discourse III reads: "Nature herself is not to be too closely copied," for "the genuine painter... instead of endeavoring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations... must endeavor to improve them, by the grandeur of his ideas." Michael Greenhalgh, author of The Classical Tradition in Art (1978), explains this style in another way. He writes:

For a neoclassical artist... style must eschew the prettiness and lushness of Rococo... [to] reflect the rugged morality of the subject [through a] simplicity of setting, figures and... technique.... In an age of such varied subject-matter from so many periods of history, we may perhaps consider as neoclassical that

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7 Wark, p. 41.
8 Ibid., p. 42.
which is treated in a heroic and moralistic manner, and in a style which bears... balance and restraint.°

Reynold's goal in promoting ancient values may similarly inform his theory of costume. According to Reynolds, a portrait painter can "raise and improve his subject... by approaching it to a general idea... [leaving] out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and [changing] the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent." In the portrait by Romney, Mrs. Bootle appears dressed in a silver-white gown that folds and drapes about her like a simple sheath. This dress is topped by a short-sleeve cloak of rose velvet, whose scalloped sleeves are trimmed with ermine. At her waist hangs a golden tassel suspended from a royal blue silk sash. Each of these materials is more surely detailed and deliberately rendered than the background.

The style of Mrs. Bootle's dress is different from contemporary London fashion. Eighteenth-century dress was characterized by a number of features. Bodices, for example, were form-fitting and skirts were full. Bows and ribbons were also popular. And muslin was used to project a light and airy quality. The dress worn by Mrs. Bootle, on the

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10 Wark, p. 72.

11 See Anne Block, *Dress in 18th-Century England*, London
other hand, is of loose construction: the bodice drapes and the narrow skirt falls without the use of crinoline or stays. The ermine trim and the tassel and sash decoration similarly indicate that Romney was not interested in clothing Mrs. Bootle in contemporary fashion. Instead, Reynolds' theory indicates, Romney is likely clothing Mrs. Bootle in an eighteenth-century interpretation of "permanent"--ancient--dress. This probability is reiterated by Waterhouse, who calls Romney's portraits "Roman statues... with gestures more momentary and less eternal than ancient statues...."

Romney's use of costume in the Bootle portrait, together with the evidence of Academic theory, indicates that his goal is to link his sitter with the values or interests of classicism. This affiliation with Academic convention is further suggested by the artist's use of iconography. The dog, for example, as Ferguson writes, "a

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1979. See also Los Angeles County Museum's *An Elegant Art*, New York, 1983, in which Edward Maeder's essay, "The Elegant Art of Dress" is particularly informative.

12 The Bayou Bend Collection Education Program discusses the rigid codes of dress in eighteenth century Britain and America. According to this program, the term "loose women" derives from these dress codes. A "loose woman" was one who did not wear stays. The extreme immodesty attributed to this circumstance suggests that Mrs. Bootle would not have linked herself with such a condition save under circumstances in which it conveyed a different meaning.

symbol of faithfulness in marriage... is often shown at the feet or in the lap of married women."\textsuperscript{14} Similarly, the towering oak symbolizes "the strength of faith and virtue."\textsuperscript{15} And, finally, the whiteness of Mrs. Bootle's dress, Ferguson writes, is "symbolic of innocence of soul... purity, and... holiness of life."\textsuperscript{16}

According to Reynolds, the goal of art is the transmission of ideas; the "value and rank of every art," he argues, "is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade."\textsuperscript{17} A painter's ability to transmit these ideas, Reynolds goes on, is expressed by his use of a general style; "mental labour," he writes, is demonstrated by the absence of "all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind."\textsuperscript{18} Achieving fine art, then, requires what Reynolds terms "intellectual dignity" or "the power of discovering what is deformed in nature, or in other words, what is particular

\textsuperscript{14} Ferguson, \textit{Symbols in Christian Art}, New York, 1959, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 91.

\textsuperscript{17} Wark, \textit{Discourse IV}, p. 57.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, \textit{Discourse III}, p. 44.
and uncommon."\(^{19}\) And it is this intellectual dignity, Reynolds concludes, that separates an artist like Romney from the mere "mechanik."\(^{20}\)

In *Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle*, Romney adopts the Academic tradition defined by Reynolds; the classical dress and generalized physical and natural features heed the Academic prescriptives for elevated art. In *Mrs. Alexander Blair*, (Fig. 19), however, which dates from 1787-1789, a subtle change appears in Romney's style.

The portrait of Mrs. Blair follows the mid-1780s peak in the artist's career. Arranged in a simple division of foreground and background, it uses fewer colors than the Bootle portrait and a more painterly mode. But there are both differences and similarities between Romney's earlier portrait of Mrs. Bootle and this portrait of Mrs. Blair. And they appear in the setting, costume, and physical features of the two portraits.

In terms of setting, Reynolds' prescription for a universal locale seems to have been discarded in the Blair portrait. In the earlier painting, Mrs. Bootle is located in a landscape of large trees and distant mountains. Failing to define boundaries, the high stone wall seems disconnected from anything tangible; its function appears symbolic. The

\(^{19}\) Wark, *Discourse IV*, p. 57.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., *Discourse III*, p. 44.
effect places Mrs. Bootle in an environment neither contemporary nor localized.

In the open-window view of the Blair portrait, a distant sky of billowing clouds is formed by light strokes of mauve, gray, blue, and white similar to the landscape of the Bootle image. Yet, there is a clear difference between the two works. Whereas Mrs. Bootle occupies a universal setting, Mrs. Blair occupies an interior space decorated in contemporary fashion. For example, to the viewer's left, barely visible through a deep shadow, is a patch of fashionably-striped wallpaper in alternating tones of russet and cream. From the upper right, a heavy brocade curtain of deep rust drapes behind the sitter. Moreover, Mrs. Blair herself is seated in a russet-covered, French-Style arm chair of contemporary fashion.21 Finally, obscured by shadow, the portrait's only accoutrements are a folded square of needlework (to the right) and a white, crewel-work case held in Mrs. Blair's lap by her right hand.

The effect of these differences is to date the portrait and sitter to a specific period. The absence of classical motifs and the incorporation of domestic needlework, for example, enhance the sense of private and local space. These

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distinctions suggest that, whereas Mrs. Bootle was understood through her affiliation with a "permanent" time and place, Mrs. Blair is meant to be understood within an environment contemporary to herself.

In addition to giving up a universal setting, Romney has relinquished the "permanent" costume of the Bootle portrait for one more fashionable. Mrs. Blair's costume consists of a very large and heavily-feathered black hat. Her hair, arranged in a chignon beneath the hat's brim, is curled and teased, colored in shades of gray, taupe and white. Her dress, whose wide skirt of ecru silk-taffeta billows out to either side, is topped with a fitted bodice trimmed with bows and a ruched collar. This collar, like the three-quarter sleeves of the dress, is trimmed with muslin.

Edward Maeder, curator of textiles and costumes at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, explains the significance of eighteenth-century clothing in his essay, "The Elegant Art of Dress." He argues that costume relayed one's social position; it was, in the eighteenth century, an accepted barometer of one's class and political affiliations. Moreover, Maeder argues, there were certain unwritten rules about elements of fashion and who was allowed to wear them. He writes: "The importance of clothing is confirmed [by]... descriptions relating clothing to financial status or social appearances...[; a] wealthy person's station was certainly
obvious from the rich brocaded silks and embroideries that adorned the most elaborate dress...."22

Maeder's discussion touches upon the function of dress as both a social and a political language. He writes: "Dress, as a symbol of social position, was a major concern of both seventeenth- and eighteenth-century societies. It reflected the influences of a powerful political atmosphere... represented by the notion of absolute sovereignty...."23 Maeder argues, for example, that the political tensions of the eighteenth century, during which period "private property and the political state [were viewed] as causes of inequality and oppression,"24, and Rousseau's ensuing theory of the "noble savage" were evident in costume of the elite. At the same time, he goes on, convention continued to dictate rules of dress among the middle classes. Maeder writes: "Poor and middle-class people felt that common sense and morality ought to be reflected in one's dress...."25

Thus, although the dress worn by Mrs. Blair is not of a "permanent" fashion, its function is likely similar to that

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22 Maeder, p. 22.
23 Ibid., p. 15.
24 Ibid., p. 16.
25 Ibid., p. 16.
of Mrs. Bootle's. Both portraits, in other words, use costume to inform the viewer about the sitter's social identity and values. That Romney has relinquished a permanent style for a contemporary one suggests only that the values and ideas with which Mrs. Blair is linked are no longer based on classicism.

The greatest similarity between the two portraits is in the facial treatment. Like Mrs. Bootle, Mrs. Blair's pale and peach-toned skin appears clear and flawless. Her heart-shaped face, with its slightly pink cheeks, hosts almond-shaped brown eyes beneath full and arching brows. Her nose, formed by a single graceful line, rests above colored lips. Although more linear in the earlier image, the eyes of the two women are both wide-set, almond-shaped, brown, and highlighted by arching brows. The same heart-shaped form, both defined by a clefted chin and widow's peak, the similarly shaped noses, and the almost identically-fashioned mouths prompt one to consider the extent to which Romney's work has actually changed.

A few other differences are evident in Romney's later style. Color in the earlier work is more varied, with a predominance of red and blue tones; that of the later work is limited to variations of white, black, and rust. Technically, the Blair portrait appears more three-dimensional, an effect achieved by frequent, curving
lines, a more subtle use of light and shadow, and a more successful integration of fore- and backgrounds. The greatest change in Romney's work, however, is a shift in emphasis from the universal or classical to the localized and contemporary; whereas Mrs. Bootle's likeness is concerned solely with generalized ideals, the contemporary accoutrements and fashionable dress in Mrs. Alexander Blair suggest greater attention to the individual. Despite this, Romney stops short of presenting the viewer with a physical likeness; the generalized facial traits indicate that Mrs. Blair's portrait continues to be informed by Academic theory. Furthermore, the role of dress in conveying social and political affiliations suggests that Romney's goals, if not his means, have remained the same.

To explain, then, Romney's greater attention to contemporary and personal detail in the later portrait, one might turn to other influences. Nadia Tscherny, for example, discusses the rising interest in the individual and its affect on England in the 1770s and 1780s.26 Author of "Likeness in Early Romantic Portraiture," Tscherny calls specific attention to the growing relationship between

portraiture and issues of biography and physiognomy. With regard to physiognomy, for example, she notes the considerable attention given the work of Johann Caspar Lavater.27 Beginning in the late 1770s, she argues, Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* encouraged a new consideration of likeness that had direct bearing on portraiture; no longer merely imitative, a portrait image came to have associations with "the talent of discovering the interior of man by the exterior."28 Lavater explains:

The most natural, manly, useful, noble, and, however apparently easy, the most difficult of arts is portrait painting.... [T]he best text for a commentary on man is his presence, his countenance, his form.... Each perfect portrait is an important painting, since it displays the human mind with the peculiarities of personal character. In such we contemplate a being where understanding, inclinations, sensations, passions, good and bad qualities of mind and heart are mingled in a manner peculiar to itself.29

By the late 1770s, then, new ideas about the private or particular man were challenging established public and universal values. Increasingly, as Richard Wendorf notes, the face became the "index of the mind."30 Despite this

27 Tscherny, p. 196.


trend—or perhaps because of it—Reynolds became even more insistent on "taking the general air." In Discourse XI, for example, dated 1782, he argues: "The detail of particulars, which does not assist the expression of the main characteristic, is worse than useless, it is mischievous, as it dissipates the attention, and draws it from the principle point." Reynolds' persistence on this issue may inform the composite nature of Romney's later style; despite the appearance of a more private or contemporary approach, the lack of particulars in *Mrs. Alexander Blair* suggests that Romney is still drawing from an Academic standard. In the end, then, likeness for Romney still carries with it some purpose more important to his content than truth.

There is, however, another issue at hand. Reynolds argues that a particular style represents technical and intellectual limitations. Tscherny, however, gives evidence of its contemporary popularity among an educated elite. This conflict between Academic theory and progressive trends raises a critical issue for this study: at what point does "provincial" as a term meaning stylistically or intellectually inferior give way to "provincial" meaning merely "outside of London." If, as Tscherny's article

31 Wark, p. 192.
suggests, the trend is towards greater attention to the individual, Reynolds' measure—the Academic standard—of content and style may be misleading. The question becomes, then: to what extent can an Academic standard based on outdated criteria be an appropriate measure of stylistic or intellectual provincialism? We will turn to this issue again in the following chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR

From the General to the Particular
in Provincial Britain

The general lack of scholarly attention to British provincial portraiture makes a discussion of it somewhat problematic for this study. In very simple terms, the artists and patrons of British provincial portraiture might be divided into two camps: those who were trained or educated in an academic tradition, and those who were self-taught or self-informed. In this chapter, we consider the work of an academically-trained artist whose patrons numbered among the British gentry. Our purpose in doing so is to compare the portraits of academically-informed provincial British artists and patrons with that of comparable colonial American artists and patrons. This means that no consideration is given either the untrained British painter or the uneducated British patron.

Joseph Wright, commonly known as Wright of Derby, has recently drawn the attention of scholars and museums. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and London's Tate Gallery sponsored a joint exhibition of the artist's work in 1990. This exhibition led to the publication of a catalogue and
text on the life and art of this Midlands painter.¹ This catalogue is a major contribution to the scholarship on Wright; in addition to examining the better known candlelight works, it considers Wright's portraiture, providing important documentation about Wright's patrons and sitters—the kind of material lacking in general literature on Romney and most American artists.

Wright's early portrait Nicholas Heath (Fig. 20) dates from 1762-1763. It follows a period of studio training with Thomas Hudson,² but predates Wright's first exhibition with the Society of Artists in 1765. The portrait is organized into foreground and background areas. In the foreground, the sitter faces the viewer's right in a two-thirds profile. Behind, a taffeta curtain adds variation to the gold-colored wall. Light flows from the viewer's left, spotting the back side of Heath's cloak, the tail of his jacket, and the knees of his breeches; all else is left in shadow. The brushwork is neither painterly nor obscured.

Cast in a glow of light, Heath's oval face is pale and framed by dark hair. It features dark brows above oval-shaped brown eyes, a straight nose, and a thin mouth. Seated in a simple, ladder-back chair, whose rush seat and

¹ See Egerton, Wright of Derby, 1990
² Sir Joshua Reynolds also trained in Hudson's studio.
stretchers are indicative of its provincial make and informal function, Heath is costumed in a dusty-blue velvet cloak, red riding jacket and yellow breeches. His right hand, perched upon his hip and gloved in tan leather, holds a riding crop, and a riding hat is perched upon his head. Tied at his neck, a white cravat echoes the white stockings that appear above his brown-topped, black leather boots. The color of his jacket, termed 'pinks', and the brown top of his boots are indicative of Heath's status as master of the hunt. This status seems appropriate, for Nicholas Heath belonged to a series of hunting portraits completed by Wright for Markeaton Hall. Indeed, the confident ease suggested by Heath's pose successfully conveys his position as a country squire.

Significantly, the similar treatment given the other three Markeaton portraits suggests that Wright's conception of likeness comprised both the particular and the ideal. Comparing the four portraits from Markeaton Hall, although an interest in the particular can be found in the varying physical features, the generalized background and repetitive use of costume in the four works suggests that Wright was

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3 Egerton, figure seven. This portrait was painted prior to Heath's inheritance of Boy Court, Ulcombe, Kent, at which time he adopted the surname "Nicholas."
sympathetic to Academic codes for the general style. For example, Frances Noel Clarke Mundy (Fig. 21) Harry Peckham (Fig. 22), and Edward Becher Leacroft (Fig. 23) all portray sitters dressed as masters of the hunt. Similarly, although the latter three portraits are rendered in exterior settings, all share like poses and accoutrements.4 Together, these elements suggest that Wright had two goals: to identify the sitter, and then to link him with a socio-political type.

Wright's concern for the individual distinguishes Nicholas Heath from the general ideal projected by Romney in Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle (Fig. 18). But, despite the twenty five years that separate the two works, Nicholas Heath does seem to share traits with Mrs. Alexander Blair (Fig. 19). Both portraits, for example, use contemporary costumes and accoutrements. And this results in removing their sitters from the universal time-frame characteristic of the general style. Romney and Wright would, therefore, appear to share at least two similar goals: a desire to locate the subject in a period setting and an interest in casting the subject as a social type. One should note, however, the different facial treatment given the two subjects; while Mrs. Blair's features are completely generalized, Heath's are not. Again,  

4 See Egerton, figures V through VIII.
Wright seems more intent on capturing something of the individual through a measured use of the particular style.

Wright's use of a more particular style may result from any number of influences; for example, it could reflect his greater interest in a truthful likeness. Or, the greater generalization in the Blair portrait may reflect an Academic tendency to use idealization in portraits of women.\(^5\)

Consistent, however, is the use of dress to convey the social and, perhaps, political identity of the sitter. And while this may reflect the interests of the artist or sitter, it may also reflect the audience; as Maeder's discussion suggests, costume in portraiture was likely understood by the viewer as symbolic of social and political ideas.\(^6\)

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5 Decorum seems to have encouraged the British painter towards greater generalization of women. Yet, while this topic requires further research, the evidence of American portraits suggests that this aspect of decorum had less influence on American portraiture. Note, for example, the portrait Sarah Geddes Latimer by Charles Willson Peale (Fig. 29).

6 This possibility needs further investigation, but it is strongly implied by Reynolds' statements on the use of a general and particular style and the type of people who use and commission them. It should be noted that a style combining the general and particular, while possibly indicative of the artist and patron's concurrent appreciation for individual traits and Academic theory, may also be connected with what Reynolds terms the Historical Style. Outlined in Discourse V, dated December of 1772, the Historical Style is described by Reynolds as "neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal..." See Wark, p. 88.
Generally—at least in the case of the Heath portrait and probably also in the examples of Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle and Mrs. Alexander Blair—the private residence dictated the kind of audience encountered by these portraits. Markeaton Hall, owned by Heath's brother-in-law, F.N.C. Mundy, was located in Derbyshire, where Mundy and Wright were acquainted. The audience of Nicholas Heath, then, was probably comprised of minor gentry and wealthy industrialists prominent in the region. This is also the group with whom Wright most commonly and successfully dealt. 7

One of these successful industrialists was Richard Arkwright. Wright's portrait, Sir Richard Arkwright (Fig. 24), dates from 1789-1790. It portrays Arkwright seated in a rich mahogany and red damask armchair, looking to the viewer's left against a plain wall of mottled rust and taupe tones. Unlike the provincial chair in the Heath portrait, the chair in which Arkwright sits is of an elegant and contemporary fashion. 8 Beside the chair stands a walnut side table on which Arkwright rests his left hand. To the viewer's upper left, a rust-colored silk-taffeta drapery hangs, suspending both fringe and a corded tassel.

7 Egerton, p. 12.
8 Refer again to Blunt and Chippendale.
Arkwright's head is rendered in an unusual pear shape. And this oddness suggests that Wright is rendering, here, a physical likeness. This sense of realism is reinforced by the other physical features. Fashioned at the neck with a white cravat, Arkwright's head is topped by a fair wig elegantly adorned with two rows of tight curls. His face features small, baggy eyes beneath fair brows, a somewhat bulbous nose, and a round lower lip.

The costume Arkwright wears also suggests individual taste. It consists of a brown coat trimmed with large but simple brass buttons, black breeches, white stockings, and silver-buckled shoes. The waistcoat, however, is quite elegant; edged in golden silk and trimmed with brass buttons, it is decorated with stripes of light and dark gold. This display of wealth by a newly-monied industrialist is discussed by Maeder, who writes that "the Industrial Revolution produced a new wealthy class... and they could also afford luxury goods. This threat to the aristocracy's supremacy caused them to instigate elaborate social ritual and manners that subtly distinguished them from the rising bourgeoisie." The source of Arkwright's economic status is clearly indicated by the only other addition to the painting: the cotton-spinning rollers.

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9 Maeder, p. 22.
The cotton rollers held specific significance for Arkwright, as they were the means to his financial success. Born in Lancashire to a modest family, Arkwright died in 1792 with an estate valued at a half-million pounds; a result of his invention of these rollers. Having begun his career as a barber, however, Arkwright never had the education or social advantages equal to his wealth. And this might explain why, as Egerton writes, Arkwright appeared "never to be at ease in society; he marred his triumphs such as his knighthood in 1786 and his appointment as High Sheriff of Derbyshire, by ostentatious celebrations, and was too preoccupied to enjoy lesser parties."\(^{10}\) While the certainty of this statement is arguable, it seems likely that Arkwright sought to counter his modest birth with displays of wealth. This speculation is supported by his obvious attention to fashion, evidenced by such accoutrements as his elegantly-striped waistcoat.

The rollers are also important for our understanding of the portrait's content. Nicolson explains: "Wright instinctively associates each sitter with his profession or class, and whatever he holds or displays before him are the symbols of his standing or attainments...." This association is based "on what is there" before him, "every nut and bolt

\(^{10}\) Egerton, p. 198.
of which had to be scrutinized."\textsuperscript{11} Wright's interest in such individual particulars clearly distinguishes him from Romney. And it raises again the critical issue with which we closed chapter three: to what extent was this particular style intellectually provincial, and to what extent was it a progressive response to the dynamic changes taking place in the British provincial regions?

Wright's involvement in scientific and intellectual organizations registers his interest in new or progressive trends.\textsuperscript{12} As a native of Derby and a painter of Midland industrialists, minor gentry, and intellectuals, many of whom were his friends,\textsuperscript{13} Wright was likely more directly affected by manufacturing, scientific, and intellectual reform than his urban peer, Romney. He was also more geographically and, perhaps, theoretically distanced from established Academic influences. This may help to explain the shift in Wright's work from a more general to a more particular style.

Wright's increased interest in a particular style is evident in a comparison between Nicholas Heath and Sir

\textsuperscript{11} Nicolson, pp. 69-70.

\textsuperscript{12} Egerton, Antiques, p. 501. See also Fraser, "Joseph Wright of Derby and the Lunar Society," in Egerton, Joseph Wright of Derby, p. 19, and Nicolson, pp. 29, 67-68, 95-96.

\textsuperscript{13} Nicolson, p. 3. See also Egerton, p. 12.
Richard Arkwright. In his portrait of Heath, Wright depends in part on generalization to convey Heath's status as a country squire. Romney, we noted, adopted a similar approach in his portrait of Mrs. Blair. In the portrait of Richard Arkwright, however, there is little generalization; indeed, the unusual--almost caricatured--shape of Arkwright's head, the mole on his chin, the odd cap of golden hair all effect a kind of realism. This particularized quality of Wright's later portrait indicates a shift in the artist's conception of likeness. Where Heath represented the fusion of individual truth and general idea, the portrait of Arkwright shows a realistic depiction of a unique personality; where the early work celebrated a type of man, the later work highlights the individual.

According to Nicolson, this change in Wright's style was effected by environmental factors; "Wright," he argues, "was not an inward-looking man, but reacted to the world and to people around him, transforming himself... in the process." And this suggests that both Arkwright's fortune and Wright's realism were conditioned by a variety of influences, among which was included the influence of scientific, manufacturing, and philosophical reforms on the complex social, political, and economic fabric of the region.

14 Nicolson, p. xiii.
Sir Richard Arkwright thus provides this study with an opportunity to explore the impact of eighteenth-century reform on provincial portraiture.

Andrus and Craven argue that the progress of science, mathematics, and philosophy affected Britain and America in different ways. Americans, Craven argues, incorporated the reason and harmony philosophized by Locke, Hume, and others into the basic premise of their lives. And this resulted in an American appreciation for realism and truth strong enough to offset the influence of established authorities like the British Royal Academy. When Nicolson claims, then, that Wright's use of "realism... is based on knowledge," he is, in fact, raising another critical point: to what extent did the reforms effected by science, manufacturing, and philosophy in America find comparable influence in the industrializing areas of provincial Britain?

In a study of influences on early American and British values, Jack Greene examines this issue. In Pursuits of Happiness (1988), he suggests that the traditional, semi-feudal relationship between British urban and provincial regions was upset by eighteenth-century reform. Rooted in the provinces, the infrastructure of progress actually provided the means to usurping the traditional

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15 Nicolson, p. 31.
seats of wealth and power. By the mid-eighteenth century, Greene argues, reality for provincial Britain was not the calm of an idealized rural community, but the pulsing pace of a large, commercially-minded market center fed on commodified labor, profit, and social inequality.\textsuperscript{16}

Greene's conclusion suggests that the influence of reform in provincial Britain was easing the gap between this region and colonial America. Generally, the reforms of science and manufacturing concentrated power and wealth into the hand of a new manufacturing elite. Essentially, as Nicolson notes, men like Arkwright were the early beneficiaries of "a middle-class revolution, set in motion in the towns by scholars and tradesmen, in the first case as the disinterested pursuit of truth, in the second as a means of amassing a quick fortune."\textsuperscript{17} While this economic reform generated any number of changes in provincial political and social life, two particular issues stand out as having evident bearing on likeness in provincial British and American portraiture: individualism and whiggism.

Individualism, as an element of whiggism, was considered in Chapter Two of this study in terms of its relationship to colonial American society. Both individualism and whiggism,

\textsuperscript{16} Greene, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{17} Nicolson, p. 111.
however, were also influential in British society, particularly in the provincial regions. Generally, the British provinces witnessed the heightened popularity of whiggism about the time of American rebellion. Paralleling the rise of extensive scientific and manufacturing reforms, the re-emergence of whiggism, Dickinson argues, "provided philosophical and ideological justification for those political and social privileges which men of property... wished to enjoy."

Consequently, "whig policy," Guttridge adds, "was more successful in guiding the popular movement in the counties than in a great urban constituency." While provincial British whigs shared with contemporary colonial Americans similar political, social, and economic goals, the same interests were not shared by the traditional tory government. These traditional political interests, John Barrell argues, stemmed from the early eighteenth-century British philosophy of civic humanism and shaped the academic standard defined by Reynolds. Its goal, Barrell argues, was to promote the sanctity of public, rather than private, interests. In general, Guttridge explains, "the whig [sought] to assert particular rights."

19 Guttridge, p. 38.
If, as this evidence suggests, Wright's assimilation of a more individual or particular style was conditioned by the progressive trends taking place in provincial Britain, it seems relevant to consider that Reynolds' promotion of a general style might similarly reflect his interest in maintaining the status quo. This is John Barrell's argument in *Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*. It is also suggested by the tone of Reynolds' *Discourses*.

Reynolds' opposition to the particular style became increasingly heated during the Revolutionary era. From being an uncultivated or vulgar form in *Discourse VIII*, the particular style became "mischievous" in *Discourse XI*. Barrell argues that Reynolds' goal was to perpetuate the interests of civic humanism by "creat[ing] and confirm[ing] a public" whose purpose was to preserve established interests. This persistence of an earlier tradition is supported by the writings of Lord Shaftesbury, who argued, for example, that good painters and poets "hate minuteness, and are afraid of singularity.... The mere face painter, indeed, has little in common with the poet." The philosophy of whiggism, the argument of John

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22 Wark, *Discourse XI*, p. 192.
23 Barrell, p. 99.
24 Tscherny, p. 193.
Barrell, and the evidence of Reynolds' *Discourses* suggest that the particular style had more complex connotations than is suggested by conventional scholarship. The growing divergence between provincial and Academic portraiture demonstrated in the work of Romney and Wright appears to be linked to the dichotomy of conservation and reform similarly echoed between London and the industrializing provinces. This dichotomy suggests a schism in British society—caused, perhaps, by the profound impact of change that penetrated and influenced multiple facets of British life: from science and manufacturing to politics and art—in which the goals of the status quo were best complemented by the ideals of the Academic or general style, and the goals of reform were accommodated by a manner more particular.

As argument in evidence of the link between this socio-political schism and the issue of likeness in British portraiture, one could cite both Wright's failure to build a patronage among the traditional British elite and his tendency to adopt a particular style for his more liberal patrons. In Bath, for example, Wright's particularized style effectively alienated him from the aristocratic patrons of a general style. To counter this treatment, he adopted academic prescriptives. But this effort was unsuccessful; in

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25 Nicolson, p. 95.
the case of Wright's 1776 portrait of Mrs. Edward Witts (Fig. 25), for example, his truthful likeness is made awkward by his effort to accommodate conservative tastes.

The growing tension between liberal and conservative interests is similarly apparent in the formal evidence of Wright's oeuvre. As Nicolson argues: "rearrang[ing Wright's] portraits... in a descending scale of sitters' social eminence... [one] shall see that he tended to grow more boldly realistic, the lower he sank."26 If, as Nicolson also claims, Wright's use of a particular style resulted from a tendency to project in his painting the dynamic nature of the world in which he lived, the contrasts between his early and late works, and between Sir Richard Arkwright and Mrs. Alexander Blair, may register the distinct influences of his historic and regional place.

Wright's provincial style became increasingly particularized in the course of his career; it became less like that of his urban peers and more like that of American artists. This development in Wright's style was likely informed by progressive trends whose nucleus was in the provinces--the same kind of reforms, Craven argued, which had earlier been embraced by colonial America. In Chapter Three, we discussed Reynold's response to this trend;

26 Nicolson, pp. 95-96.
although rooted in the provincial regions, individualism was finding at least enough support in London—in the form of biography and physiognomy, for example—to trouble Reynolds, encouraging his more vehement support of a general style.27

The style of Wright's portraiture suggests that his conception of likeness more closely compared with that of American artists than that of Academic portrait painters. It also suggests that he moved from a more general to a more particular style for reasons unrelated to intellectual or technical limitations. It is worth noting, moreover, that Wright's portraits were often confused for those of Copley.30 With regard to Copley's portrait The Boy with a Squirrel (Fig. 7), Benjamin West wrote in 1766: "Mr. Reynolds... was Greatly Struck with the Piec, and it was first Concluded to have been Painted by one Mr. Wright, a young man that has just made his appearance in the art in a surpring Degree of Merritt."31 Comparing, for example, Copley's Mrs. Thomas Boylston (Fig. 14) and Wright's

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29 Tscherny notes that even Reynolds became fascinated by physiognomy. She that his own portrait, Samuel Johnson reflects Reynolds' experimentation with the new taste for realism. See "Reynolds' Streatham portraits and the art of intimate biography," The Burlington Magazine, v. 128, pp. 4-11. January 1986. This supports claims for the conservative taste of contemporary Academic theory.

30 Goodrich, pp. 3-4 and 36.

31 Massachusetts Historical Society, Letters, p. 44.
Mrs. John Ashton (Fig. 26), the same interest in empirical truth is conveyed. This suggests that, at least in the latter part of the Revolutionary era, the goals of British provincial portrait painters differed from those of the Academy in ways similar to that of their American peers. This growing similarity between the portraiture of Revolutionary America and that of a progressive, provincial Britain—as well as its relevance for the re-interpretation of American portraiture—will be considered in the remaining chapters.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Particular Style in American Portraits

Chapter Three concluded that Romney's early portraiture was rendered in a general style to accommodate the social and political ideals of the British ruling elite. His later work, although it omitted overt classical references and took on a more contemporary and localized setting, continued to endorse an Academic standard, compromising the individual by projecting him as a social type. This persistent use of a general style indicates that, throughout his career, Romney's portraiture was linked to the conservative interests of his elite urban patrons.

The evidence of Chapter Four indicates that the Academic standard carried less influence in the provinces than in London; Wright's portraits suggest that the Academy's influence in encouraging a moral and formal ideal through the use of a generalized style, while initially influential, became less so in his later work. The evidence also implies—although less decisively—that Wright's use of a particular style was influenced by progressive trends in such areas as science and philosophy. This formal development in Wright's style suggests that his goals
differed from those of Romney and, consequently, that an Academic interpretation of Wright's portraiture may be misleading.

The evidence of Wright's work indicates that Academic goals were not always accepted by British artists and patrons. It also indicates that British taste was neither fixed nor homogeneous. Yet, traditional scholarship depends upon Academic authority and British cultural homogeneity in its argument about the particular style; this is the basic premise for claims to the technical and intellectual limitations of American art. The example of Wright, then, makes traditional arguments problematic by providing alternative influences on the use of realism. This possibility of alternative influences opens the way for new theories about the function and meaning of realism in Revolutionary American portraiture. Appropriately, recent scholarship has begun to explore the intellectual content of American art, ignoring prior claims to its purely mechanical function. The work of Wright suggests that this content may be informed by social, political and/or economic trends. Discussion of works by Peale and Earl will consider these issues.

This chapter examines portraits by Charles Willson Peale. Although there is much literature on Peale, it is primarily biographical, and it tends to alternate between

Born in Maryland in 1734, Peale is commonly described as an American patriot.\(^4\) Appropriately, then, Peale's early portrait *John Beale Bordley* (Fig. 27) seems to celebrate patriotism. Following Peale's term of London training with Benjamin West—the cost of which was paid for by Bordley and others\(^5\)—the portrait dates from 1770. Like

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1 Sellers, "Charles Willson Peale, Artist-Soldier," p. 263. Sellers, a descendent of Peale, is somewhat subjective in his evaluation of the artist and his work.

2 Refer to Miller, pp. 33-34, and Richardson, who writes: "He had taught himself to make and repair watches, why not try making pictures?", p. 25, in *Charles Willson Peale and His World*.


4 Not only was Peale a militia captain in the Revolutionary War, but during the period of his London training, when he heard that Parliament had annulled the Charter of New York, he is said to have refused to remove his hat for the King when he passed him in the street. (Sellers, "Artist-Soldier," p. 263) Sellers also credits him with supplying his company with food and tending to the needs of their families. (Ibid, p. 269)

5 Sellers, p. 263.
Romney's portrait of Mrs. Blair, it is divided into three vertical sections. The first occupies the region to the viewer's left and portrays a large oak tree against a dark landscape scene. The second is formed by the standing figure of Bordley. The third, to the viewers right, contains a landscape of grazing sheep. As in the portraits by Romney and Wright, costume, setting, and physical features provide evidence for interpreting the artist's conception of likeness.

Bordley is attired in simple dress. Facing slightly to the viewer's right, he wears a coat, jacket, and breeches of matching brown cloth. In addition, he wears plain white stockings, a white stock and cuffs, and silver-buckled, black shoes. Together, these elements suggest that Bordley is a man concerned with frugality and restraint, for only the most "sternly unfashionable"\(^6\) dressed with such sober simplicity.

Bordley's face features small brown eyes beneath arching brows, a long straight nose and a simply-modeled mouth. Presenting the viewer with a controlled gaze, Bordley stands with his right hand raised and pointing to his left. This gesture is thought to have been inspired by Lairesse's Art of Painting in all its Branches, a copy of which Peale

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owned.7 Andrus, for example, proposes that Lairesse's handbook informed Peale's 1768 mezzotint William Pitt (Fig. 28), which, in turn, she argues, influenced his portrait of Bordley. Sidney Hart, author of "A Graphic Case of Transatlantic Republicanism," furthers this position by arguing that Bordley, like Pitt, is intended to represent an American heroic figure.8 And this is where the setting is particularly informative.

The background landscape is divided into sections. To the viewer's right, just visible between the rock, pediment and branching leaves of the oak, green pasture and grazing sheep rest beneath a blue, cloudy sky. In the middle of this sky, however, just above the head of Bordley, the color turns dark, constrasting the clear palette of the right-hand landscape with one that is smoky and gray. Similarly, the subject matter of the left landscape also appears in contrast; the sense of peaceful reciprocity between man and nature evoked to the right is juxtaposed by a sense of tension between two figures to the left. Prown reads this left-hand scene as "a horse laden with a wool pack (local

7 Andrus, p. 143-144; Gerard de Lairesse's Essays was translated by John Frederick Fritsch and available in London in 1738.

produce of the sheep] head[ing] for market, all suggesting the self-sufficiency of America. But the dark palette and tense confrontation may be better understood in a metaphorical sense; Peale may be juxtaposing the landscape to suggest a "spiritual darkness" that threatens a society not at peace with itself.

Thus the content and coloring of these two landscapes effects a sense of opposition between them; they are not a single scene, but two disjunctive images. This interpretation is supported by the symbolism of the torn parchment at Bordley's feet and Bordley's gesture toward the landscape of the pastoral idyll. The probability of this juxtaposition is further suggested by the "faith and virtue" symbolism of the oak and the statue of Justice towards which Bordley directs our gaze.

In rendering this gesture, Peale may have been linking Bordley with the virtues and responsibilities of Justice, for Bordley himself held both political and judicial posts.

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10 Ferguson, pp. 22 and 24.

11 Identified as Justice by Prown, who cites as evidence the liberty pole and scales. The "American" character of Justice is further suggested by the cornucopia that graces her feet. See Prown, from Miller and Ward, eds., p. 41.
in Maryland, serving as judge of the Maryland Provincial Court in 1766, judge of the Admiralty in 1767, and as a member of the Governor's Council under the administrations of Sharpe and Eden.12 Yet, the statue may have still deeper implications.

Standing before the landscape of a pastoral ideal, there is some implicit connection made between this idyllic way of life and the ideals of justice. And Bordley's gesture may symbolize his endorsement of agricultural reform. In the interest of American values and goals, Bordley advocated the priority of staple crops like corn and wheat over cash-crops like wine and tobacco.13 This endorsement, Hart argues, was based on two ambitions: an "agricultural plenty and self-sufficiency that would insulate the colonies from British economic restrictions"14 and the formation of a society composed of "independent and virtuous people."15

A second theme is suggested by Bordley's setting. The complex of signs--the statue of justice, inscribed "Lex/ Angliae", the jimsonweed, a symbol of colonial resistance,16 the torn parchment, which reads "Imperial

12 Hart, from Miller and Ward, eds., p. 75.
13 Ibid., p. 76.
14 Ibid., p. 76.
15 Ibid., p. 77.
16 Ibid., p. 76.
Civil Law--summary/proceeding", and the open book, which reads "Nolumus Leges/ Angliae Mutari"--appears to address the contemporary political issue of "no taxation without representation." The writings translate as "English Law," "Imperial Law," "We are unwilling that the laws of England be changed," thereby making reference to that system of mixed government that protects the rights of individuals from "the 'unbounded power' of Parliament."\(^{17}\) Hart argues: "The Answer--with its code phrase Nolumus--came to be used by the republican opposition to refer to the dangers involved in any alteration to the mixed constitution."\(^{18}\)

In this reading of Bordley as an American hero, setting takes on a critical role in the interpretation of likeness. Landscape becomes a metaphor for American values and the natural order with which America is periodically affiliated. Reynolds and Hagen use a similar metaphor; but whereas they attribute ignorance to this natural condition, Peale does not. As Sidney Hart suggests, Peale seems to have attributed specific theoretical values to the natural elements which surround Bordley; the rock pedestal, the towering oak and the untended earth appear to provide the podium, strength, and foundation for a new republican order.\(^{19}\)

\(^{17}\) Hart, p. 79.

\(^{18}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 77.

\(^{19}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 76.
Thus the notion of a "natural state" would appear to have conflicting interpretations. Whereas Reynolds links the state of nature with uneducated "mechaniks," and Hagen relates it to dark ages, Peale does not seem to separate a natural state from a civilized and intellectual one. Rather, as Michael Greenhalgh notes, the natural world is celebrated as a means for overcoming the weaknesses of the Old World; it is equated, in fact, with the moral, social, and political virtue that allegedly guided Reynolds' endorsement of a general style.20

Reynolds' goal was to use painting to raise public sympathy for certain ideals. And he endorsed a general style for this purpose. In some ways, Peale's portrait of Bordley suggests that he, too, sought to sanction public support for certain ideals. Why then, having studied under the Academy's influence, has Peale chosen to connect these ideals with a particularized likeness; why, having been schooled in a general style, would he employ a particular one to project American interests? Moreover, how does Peale's use of a particular style comply with Reynolds' estimation of the type of artist or society which might adopt such a form?

As Craven suggests, it is possible that Peale did not consider Reynolds' general form appropriate to moral ideals;

it is possible that Peale connected religious piety or morality with truth and truth with realism. Furthermore, Greenhalgh indicates that the state of nature was considered by many as in itself representative of virtue. And Peale's metaphorical use of a natural order suggests that he may have held such an opinion. If so, it seems probable that this opinion only reinforced his tendency towards "near imitation." Moreover, it alternately suggests that the general style could well have been linked with the corrupt, courtly values against which Peale is directing his call to republicanism. Indeed, the setting and accoutrements suggest that Peale is trying to distinguish New World values and interests from those of a corrupted Old World.

As in Romney's portrait of Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle (Fig. 18), historical motifs have been used to link contemporary issues with a recognized past event; Peale has sought to

21 See Craven, p. 27.

22 Greenhalgh, p. 200.

23 Andrus, p. 144; Sellers, p. 104.

24 In this case, the terms written and inscribed in the portrait, were adopted from England's Civil War. (Hart, p. 79) Silverman writes: Historicism was "for the democratic middle class an ideal artistic language, imparting grandeur to its domestic ideals." Furthermore, he writes, it "served naturally to justify radical changes in values and goals by fixing their origins. Imposing the present on the past, it gave new beliefs an ancestry, therefore the legitimacy of descent." (p. 130)
legitimize American republican demands by linking them with values historically connected with British liberty. Peale thus projects Bordley as the uncorrupted, natural hero of an uncorrupted, virtuous, American idyll. To do so, he employs standards once part of the established British system, but more idealistic than was ever realistic in the hierarchical structure of British society. In this way, Peale uses a particular style both to endorse specific values and to disassociate himself, Bordley, and colonial society from contemporary British politics; by eschewing a general style, Peale effectively rejects British corruption.

There is much that distinguishes John Beale Bordley from the English paintings we have discussed. It is the first of our eight portraits to give any narrative detail to a background landscape. But it does recall the issues of individualism and whiggism discussed in connection with Sir Richard Arkwright (Fig. 24).

As a member of the Republican army, Peale was, perhaps, more aware of the principle of individual rights than his peer Wright, if only because of contemporary national politics. For Americans, individual rights were linked with a democracy that defied "the consolidated and unlimited authority of the state;" it protected Americans from the unlimited authority of British rule. As such, it came to be equated with the highest form of freedom; it was "the
greatest of political truths." In Revolutionary America, then, the individual reigned supreme; Americans saw the "highest, almost [the] only duty" of the state as the correction of "abuses, one after another, until the nature of individual man is thoroughly emancipated."^27

The context, then, of the Peale portrait--its response to a specific socio-political conflict between America and Britain--may partly explain Peale's use of a particular style. It does, in any case, challenge Academic notions about the kind of artist and society who would use it. Comparing Romney's Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle (Fig. 18) with Peale's John Beale Bordley, for example, the problems with traditional assumptions is demonstrated. Both portraits, for instance, rely on classical references and interpretations of higher ideals; that the same goal is sought by different means suggests that the patrons of the two artists understood a different stylistic language. Moreover, it implies that their ideals were not the same. Although he used them to define the character and values of his patrons, Romney, for example, understood ancient principles as the jurisdiction of ancient society. Peale, on the other hand,

^25 Arieli, p. 185
^26 Ibid., p. 191.
^27 Ibid., p. 191.
valued ancient principles, but seems to have recognized them as the jurisdiction of a republican people.

Peale's concern for the individual is reiterated in his portrait of Sarah Geddes Latimer (Fig. 29), which dates from 1788-1789. The simplicity of this portrait, however, contrasts with the compositionally-complex portrait of Bordley. Against a background of mottled blue-gray, its only adornment a rust-colored velvet curtain falling to the viewer's right, Mrs. Latimer is seated in a mahogany armchair. Aside from the Bible she holds in her lap, however, no other elements inform her likeness; it depends almost completely upon her physical image.

The physical features and costume of Mrs. Latimer tell us much about her. Gazing directly at the viewer with small eyes, Mrs. Latimer's face is slightly angular, featuring a long nose, thin curving lips, and a somewhat ruddy complexion. The effect of this combination of features is rather somber. And this sense of somberness is reinforced by the severe and conservative bun of hair she hides beneath a simple ecru bonnet. Moreover, dominated by gray, rust, and white, the little color variation in this image adds to the sense of sobriety and pious conservatism effected by her upright posture and closed expression. This impression is made even more effective by the absence of physical brushwork, lending a clear illusion of space and
intensifying the sense of realism. Combined with the portrait's clear and linear style, this realism effects an austerity more striking than the busier composition of the Bordley portrait.

Costumed in a steel-gray dress trimmed with muslin (more of which forms an apron and shawl), Mrs. Latimer appears to sit calmly, the pages of a Bible held slightly open by the fingers of her right hand. The style of Mrs. Latimer's dress is a simpler version of the one worn by her contemporary, Mrs. Blair; indeed, similar materials are used to achieve almost opposite effects. Whereas, for example, the white color of Mrs. Blair's dress is suggestive of one who is more concerned with fashion than practicality,²⁸ the steel-gray of the Latimer dress suggests both practicality and sobriety. Similarly, whereas the decorative bows and fashionable collar indicate the ostentation and considerable economic resources of Mrs. Blair, the simple but well-made clothing of Mrs. Latimer suggest means without concern for fashion or show. According to Maeder's discussion of class distinctions in dress, these differences indicate that Mrs. Blair is of a higher social strata than Mrs. Latimer, despite their possible economic equality. And the best indication of this is the apron. Maeder writes:

²⁸ Maeder notes that "Laundry day... occurred every five weeks or so...." An Elegant Art, p. 28.
As the century progressed, the sheerest of cotton muslin aprons increased in popularity among the bourgeoisie.... It should be noted, however, that the early forms of embroidered aprons were never worn by the true aristocracy, who considered them middle class.  

A similar contrast of style is evidenced by the seating. While of good quality and the finest wood, the American Chippendale-style armchair in the Latimer portrait is not as ostentatious as the French-style chair in the portrait of Mrs. Blair. Yet, despite this difference in costume and accoutrement, both likenesses suggest the marriage of image and idea. In the portrait of Mrs. Blair, for example, where the use of generalized features blurs our recognition of an individual and encourages our reading of a class or type, the image functions to present us with an idea about that section of society to which she belongs. In the portrait of Mrs. Latimer, however, the detailed realism would appear to indicate that it is specifically this woman with whom the artist is concerned. Yet, the severe nature of Peale's style and the absence of a localized background may mean that the idea with which the artist is concerned has deeper implications.

The sense of concern for more universal ideas seems to distinguish the image of Mrs. Latimer from that of Richard Arkwright. The portrait of Sarah Latimer contains only the

29 Maeder, p. 28.
subject, the chair upon which she sits, and a Bible. For the small audience of this portrait—it was likely composed only of her friends and family—Peale has highlighted three things: her piety, symbolized by the Bible; her non-ostentatious wealth, indicated by the quality of the materials used in the dress and chair; and her sobriety, conveyed by her posture and expression. The specific attention given the cotton-spinning rollers in the Arkwright portrait, on the other hand, suggest Wright's focus on the sitter's socio-economic achievements, not on his heroic or moral virtues; whereas in Arkwright's portrait attention is given to wealth, in the Latimer portrait, it is given to character.

With the renewed influence of whiggism, the late eighteenth century witnessed a heightened awareness of the individual. Also by this time, Peale has adopted the influence of physiognomy in his work, using it to suggest the character of his sitters. Of one "Jimmy Tory" he writes: "if I can judge of a man by his Pizono:y and Carriage, he is proud, imperious, superficial a mere gi gan [fool] a Silly Fop."

The role and character of the American hero seems to be a persistent theme in Peale's work. And the notion of an

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30 Miller, Selected Papers, pp. 172-173.
American hero would appear, at least in Peale's portraiture, to be consistently linked with notions of the individual. Whereas in Bordley's portrait Peale relied heavily on symbols to convey American values and character, in the Latimer portrait, Peale has removed the props and focused his attention on the qualities of the individual herself. Ironically, this formally results in greater realism, greater simplicity, and a wholly particularized likeness. Moreover, any symbolic evidence of Mrs. Latimer's patriotism is absent from the image. Sarah Latimer and her husband were staunch revolutionaries, responsible for the transport of supplies to troops, which they paid for from their own pockets. Rather than give evidence of this heroism with symbols, Peale depends upon her physical appearance and basic accoutrements. This focus on personal character would seem to comply with contemporary ideals of the revolutionary American. Neil Harris explains:

Before the Revolution what distinguished Americans from Europeans was a level of material opportunity.... After the Revolution the distinguishing marks were supposed to be different: a dedication to certain ideas, a holy conformity to virtuous goals and behavior, a collective will that could demonstrate the possibilities of self-government and popular sovereignty. True revolutionaries, then, sought cultural reformation, the exaltation of spiritual values, and the abandonment of materialism as a natural trait.

32 Wall plaque, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.
The conflict between American and British goals and values during the Revolutionary era suggests that Peale's interests and those of his British Academic peers were incompatible. As these goals and values appear to inform Peale's conception of likeness, it seems inappropriate to interpret Peale's painting according to the Academic standard. Peale's portraits were clearly concerned with individual character and beliefs. This suggests that Peale had a different opinion of the particular style than his Academic peers; like Wright, he neither adopted nor endorsed the authority of Academic standards and taste.
CHAPTER SIX
Portraits by Ralph Earl

Ralph Earl has attracted the attention of a number of American art scholars. An itinerant American portraitist, he is one of the few provincial American artists about whom biographical information is known. The recently completed Ph.D dissertation by Elizabeth Kornhauser is perhaps the best available biographical source on Earl. Additionally, perhaps the most probing analysis of his art can be found in the 1991 collaborative effort titled Ralph Earl: The Face of the Young Republic. Together with earlier texts by Goodrich and Savitsky (unpublished until its inclusion in Kornhauser's dissertation), these recent studies form the basis for this chapter.

Colleen Cowles Heslip argues in her essay, "The Artisan Painter between the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers,"¹ that Ralph Earl's style was based on an English tradition. She argues: "Perhaps the most important late eighteenth-century purveyor of English portraiture in the grand manner was Ralph Earl."² She goes on to argue that this style had

² Heslip, p. 757.
little to do with fine art; according to Heslip: "They painted to order, neither seeking to express themselves nor practicing a fine art. Their patrons asked them only to record their likenesses, houses, or towns."³ Elizabeth Kornhauser argues in "Regional Landscapes in Connecticut River Valley Portraits, 1790-1810," however, that Earl's Connecticut portraits, considered among his most successful works, departed noticeably from this English-based convention.⁴

Ralph Earl was born in Worcester County, Massachusetts, in 1751. The son of a farmer active both in politics and the Congregational church, Earl left his family in 1774 to practice art in New Haven, where he had little competition.⁵ He remained in New Haven until 1777, when he declared himself a loyalist and fled to England. Here, he worked briefly in Norwich County before moving to London. Studying occasionally under the guidance of Benjamin West, Earl exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1783 until 1785, when he returned to America. Arriving in New York in 1785, Earl's debts put him in prison, where he continued to paint the portraits of the city's Anglican elite. In 1788, Earl left New York and returned to New England, working in

³ Heslip, p. 757.
⁴ Kornhauser, Antiques, p. 1015.
⁵ Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 16.
Connecticut from 1788 until 1798 and in Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1798 until his death in 1801.

Ralph Earl's portrait Roger Sherman (Fig. 30) dates from about 1775, following his arrival in New Haven and before his travel to England. It is evidence of Earl's earliest and most simple style, which Kornhauser calls "a restrained manner that was flat, linear, and lacked the subtleties of shading and modeling." This style recalls the earlier colonial manner of Thomas Smith. Its sense of having been drawn, moreover, suggests that Earl's primary interest was to capture on canvas a realistic image of his sitter. Kornhauser seems to support this hypothesis; "Above all," she writes, "the subjects of these portraits demand a 'true' likeness of themselves, one based on empirical knowledge rather than artistic convention, no matter how unflattering the reality."

The portrait depicts Sherman seated in a large, painted, windsor-style arm chair. He is dressed in a simple costume whose color blends almost unnoticeably into the seat of the chair. Horizontal shadows on the waistcoat and breeches and vertical shadows on the breeches and jacket offer the only variation in tone. Otherwise, plain round buttons and a simple, white collar and cuffs appear as

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6 Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 5.
7 Ibid., p. 5.
modest adornments to his costume. In her discussion of Sherman's dress, Aileen Ribiero remarks that it was "in keeping with the austere simplicity of his physical appearance." She goes on to argue that the color of Sherman's suit, and its unvaried use of wool for coat, vest and breeches, are indicative of its outdated style. The worn appearance of the knees support her claim. Furthermore, she adds: "only the sternly unfashionable wore a plain fringed muslin cravat and shirt sleeves unadorned with any kind of ruffle...." 

That Sherman sat for his portrait in a worn and old-fashioned costume--moreover, that Earl painted Sherman's aged and worn dress truthfully--suggests that Sherman valued the frugality or conservatism conveyed by such attire. And evidence indicates that Sherman was no average man. Considered "one of the most notable patriots of the revolutionary period," Roger Sherman began his career as a shoemaker before his independent study of law propelled him to position of judge on the Connecticut Supreme Court. A graduate and Treasurer of Yale College (1768 and 1768-1776, respectively), Sherman "acted as an influential participant

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8 Kornhauser et al, p. 106.
9 Ibid., p. 106.
10 Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 19.
at the Philadelphia constitutional convention."\textsuperscript{11}
Moreover, serving on the Connecticut General Assembly,
Sherman signed the Declaration of Independence, the Federal
Constitution, and the Articles of the Confederacy. That he
is seated in a Philadelphia windsor chair\textsuperscript{12} seems
particularly appropriate, for this portrait commemorates his
participation in the First Continental Congress.\textsuperscript{13}

Sherman's reputation suggests that he was an avid
American patriot who endorsed specific revolutionary
principles like individual liberty. One might read his
costume, then, as symbolic of these values. Ribiero, for
example, makes this claim with reference to Sherman's bare
head. She writes: "The sobriety of the costume is completed
by the sitter's lack of wig. His short hair could, of
course, be worn under a wig... but many American men
deliberately dispensed with wigs as an egalitarian gesture,
a rejection of the Old World."\textsuperscript{14}

The sense of simplicity and sobriety conveyed by
Sherman's costume is similarly projected by his physical
features and setting. Sherman looks directly at the viewer

\textsuperscript{11} Goodrich, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{12} Kornhauser et al, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 106.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 106.
with an open, complacent, perhaps even slightly self-conscious expression. Much in Earl's technique is unsophisticated: the lines of the lower right corner of the wall fail to meet accurately; there is a geometric influence in the blocky head, the triangular nose, the precision with which the face has been divided and the eyes have been placed. All lines, including the mouth, appear as arcs and angles. And buttons appear as lines. Earl's awkward attempts at drapery, nonetheless, attest to his awareness of fashionable portraiture.

The lack of technical sophistication adds to a sense of the sitter's character; the aged and weathered appearance of facial lines, the deep set of Sherman's eyes, and the overly-blocky appearance of his head suggest Earl's effort to capture on canvas a true physical likeness of this man. While Sherman appears somewhat uncomfortable, there is no denying the visual impression that he is a solidly grounded, honest, and respected citizen of this place: his feet rest firmly planted on the foreground; his posture is upright; and the relationship of back to thigh, thigh to calf, calves to feet forms a succession of ninety degree angles that effectively anchor Sherman in place. Like his British contemporaries, then, Earl's conception of likeness was comprised of both form and content.

In many ways, Earl's portrait of Sherman differs
considerably from the other works we've discussed. There is nothing in this painting that is generalized, and there is no visible evidence of loose brushwork. Its clarity of form, direct flow of light, and simple composition recall Sarah Geddes Latimer (Fig. 29) and Sir Richard Arkwright (Fig. 24), but neither one of these paintings shares the sharp distinctions of light and dark or the extreme linearity present in Roger Sherman. And whereas each of our previous works identified the subject with some accoutrement—a cotton-spinning roller, a Bible, needlework, a riding crop and habit—or ancient dress, there is nothing outside of his physical features, clothing, and setting to link Sherman with a profession, type, or class; we know only what his physical image tells us.

Earl's portrait of Sherman indicates that character is fundamental to the artist's conception of likeness. Despite the technical limitations in this portrait, Earl's expression suggests that Sherman is meant to be linked with some larger noble virtue; the portrait appears more concerned with the sitter's personal qualities than with Sherman's economic or professional importance. But significantly, the impression of Sherman's strength and integrity comes, from the highly particularized and plain style with which he is rendered. And, appropriately, the technical limitations in the portrait likeness comply with a
contemporary description of Sherman himself. According to John Adams, Sherman was "one of the soundest and strongest pillars of the Revolution [even if his] air is the reverse of grace; there cannot be a more striking contrast to beautiful action, than the motions of his hands...[;] it is stiffness and awkwardness itself."\textsuperscript{15} In this portrait, then, Earl's use of a particular style complements his interest in portraying Sherman's physical form and personal character.

Later in his career, Earl returned to Connecticut, at which time he practiced a slightly different style. His painting, Daniel Boardman (Fig. 31) represents his work from this period. Dating from 1789, it presents the merchant-landowner in full height in the midst of a prominent landscape. As in the other portraits, likeness is conveyed by the sitter's physical appearance, costume, and setting.

Earl's portrait of Boardman features an oval face topped with a head of grayed hair. Highlighted by dark and arching brows, Boardman's face hosts oval, brown eyes and a straight nose. His mouth, curving up in a slight smile, is complemented by a slight dimple. Together, these elements effect a sense of the sitter's open and pleasant

\textsuperscript{15} Kornhauser p. 20.
disposition.

A graduate of Yale College, Daniel and his brother Elijah were partners in a prosperous drygoods business. But Boardman was also active and successful in real estate. The success met by Boardman throughout his career is echoed in the costume he wears. More elaborate than Sherman's, Boardman's dress includes a rich, blue-velvet coat trimmed with intricately-ornamented brass buttons, satin breeches and white silk-embroidered stockings. Holding a beaver hat, Boardman complements this costume with ruffled white cuffs and a gleaming white stock and cravat. Tied "à l'anglais," the fashion of Boardman's cravat signals his status and wealth. A gold-edged waistcoat, trimmed with two rows of brass buttons, is similarly indicative of Boardman's position, as are the two gold seals, which are suspended from his waist, and the silver buckles of his black shoes. As Ribiero explains: "By the eighteenth century man's jewelry was limited to buckles... and... seals...." Boardman is posed in a slight profile carrying a brass-trimmed and satin-tasseled mahogany walking stick. Considered the appropriate accoutrement for the American gentry, this walking stick further conveys Boardman's status

16 Kornhauser et al, p. 152.
17 Ibid, p. 152.
as a gentleman. Ribiero explains: "The cane was a fashionable accessory for walking outdoors; even in Europe by the late eighteenth century it had largely replaced the sword. In America, a country with no nobility, swords were considered inappropriate for civilians."\textsuperscript{18}

The setting of the Boardman portrait adds to the detailed image of costume and accoutrement. The ground on which Boardman stands is made up of brown earth and scattered patches of grass. Behind him stands a large and leafy oak tree that frames the distant landscape. This landscape is composed of a winding river that branches behind woods and pasture before reaching a large white house enclosed by a white picket fence. Further in the distance, beyond more white fence, a large white church is visible, the steeple of which reaches upward into the outline of hills and sky. The sky, painted thinly and with a loose brush, is overlayed with leaves of large and round brushstrokes.

The landscape of the Boardman portrait is not the generalized ideal of Romney's settings, nor is it the metaphorical construct found in \textit{John Beale Bordley} (Fig. 27). That Boardman stands to one side and shares the canvas with a landscape suggests the importance of setting for

\textsuperscript{18} Kornhauser, p. 152.
interpreting this likeness; in addition to the wealth and position conveyed by Boardman's costume and accoutrements, Earl depicts Boardman's status as a "landed" gentleman.

The evidence of recent scholarship indicates that the portrait of Boardman is based on actualities. In the recently-published catalogue of Earl's work by Elizabeth and Stephen Kornhauser, Richard Bushman, and Aileen Ribiero, the landscape of this portrait is identified as New Milford, Connecticut, the hometown of the successful and locally-prominent Boardman family. The oldest son of Sherman and Sarah Boardman, Daniel is shown before the Housatonic River and a number of accurately depicted New Milford homes. Behind him rise distant mountains and the church where his grandfather, a Congregationalist minister, may have served.19

The focus on material qualities as indicative of character as well as socio-economic success is stronger in the portrait of Boardman than the works previously discussed. It is, however, very similar to Wright's portrait of Arkwright. Yet, whereas both artists give considerable attention to material qualities of costume and physical realism, Earl's image gives more attention to the relationship between man and environment. Whereas Wright

19 Kornhauser et al, p. 152.
gave the symbol for Arkwright's success—the cotton-spinning rollers—Earl projects both formally and symbolically Boardman's harmonious relationship with nature. Formally, interdependence is indicated by the manner in which the canvas is divided to give equal attention to both parts. Similarly, economic reward is suggested by the fertile greenness of the pastures.

Although the composition of the Boardman portrait suggests a similarity between it and such English portraits as Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews* (Fig. 32), the pairing of sitter and landscape as separate and related subject matter suggests an appreciation for nature that is only implied by the Bordley portrait and otherwise not found among the other seven images. It signals, as Silverman argues, "a new willingness to treat the humble local scene on its own terms, a love of the American landscape for its own sake...."20 This sentiment is echoed by Earl's contemporary, Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, who wrote of his 1790 visit to Connecticut:

... it is really the paradise of the United States... a fertile plain, enclosed between two mountains.... The riches of this state are here more equally divided, since they are based upon agriculture. There is here more virtue, less misery more of everything which constitutes republicanism.21

20 Silverman, p. 592.

21 Kornhauser, p. 119.
Warville's correlation between land, virtue, and republicanism is in concert with Peale's earlier image of Bordley as well as Earl's portrait of Boardman. It serves to reiterate key symbols in American painting. And these symbols seem to have more to do with native goals than decorative taste.

Earl's focus on Boardman's economic success also distinguishes this portrait from that of Sherman, in which concern appears to be with character. This difference is indicative of Earl's varying approach to likeness. The artist's Connecticut and New York portraits, for example, reveal the variety of styles in which Peale worked. Essentially, from 1785 until 1788, Earl practiced a more general style. This seems to have suited the taste of New York's Anglican elite. Mrs. John Johnston (Fig. 33) is an example of Earl's more general manner.

A comparison between the realistic detail and clear form of the Boardman portrait and the looser brushwork and generalized details of the Johnston work suggest the extent to which Earl's style was probably influenced by the commission process, but it also reveals Earl's technical capabilities. Earl was not dependent upon a particular style for his painting, despite the fact that his most noted works

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22 For a discussion of Earl's New York patrons, see Kornhauser, pp. 87-104.
have been painted in this manner. Additionally, despite Earl's London study, he rejected Reynolds' claim that "the likeness consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature." 23 Furthermore, while the commission process likely affected Earl's choice of form, his noted success with New England patrons may stem from their common background. 24

Earl's perception of likeness seems to have been shaped by a number of factors. Personal character, economic success, religious values, and social position all appear to condition the form and content of his work. The influence of the patron on Earl's style supports what appears to be an individual focus in his conception of likeness. This attention on the sitter distinguishes Earl's portraits from those of the British Academy. Moreover, they suggest the authority of the individual in the making of American art.

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23 Kornhauser, p. 60.

24 Kornhauser argues that Earl was Congregationalist, more comfortable in provincial regions than urban centers, economically ambitious and independently-minded. Earl's own taste and values, then, may well inform his most successful works. See Kornhauser, pp. 9, 15-17.
CONCLUSION

The Revolutionary era did not produce an art theory in America. To some extent, this lack of a documented standard for colonial painting severely limits our knowledge of American art; it leaves us without a form of measure to understand and interpret native portraiture. Perhaps for this reason, the authority of a British Academic standard has permeated the scholarship on American Revolutionary painting. Yet, the appropriateness of this measure for American portraiture has not, to this date, been examined.

By 1768, when Sir Joshua Reynolds became President of the British Royal Academy and began the process of outlining a British art theory, there had already been instances of political and economic revolt in the colonies. In 1764 and 1765, colonists met the imposition of a sugar tax and the Stamp Act with uproar. In 1767, the Townsend Revenue Act forced a confrontation with British troops that resulted in the death of colonial civilians. These conflicts inspired the creation of poems and skits condemning the corrupt behavior of the British government, presenting it as the adversary to traditional British liberty. Among these cultural artifacts are George Lillo's play, The Christian Hero, and John Dickinson and Arthur Lee's "The Liberty
"Song," which censured the seizure of John Hancock's boat, *Liberty*, for failure to pay importation taxes.¹

The economic and political schism between colonial and British interests encouraged a colonial unity separate from Britain. This sense of there existing a separate "American" ideology even prior to political independence is supported by both conventional and revisionist scholars. Hagen, Prown, Andrus, and Craven all posit that colonial America underwent a gradual process of cultural definition. Saunders and Craven argue, furthermore, that by the middle of the eighteenth century, this posturing had led to the rise of a group of native artists whose style of painting no longer represented the merely decorative and imitative qualities of earlier colonial painting, but, rather, reflected the taste, values, and interests of "Americans."²

The style of colonial painting between 1760 and 1790 appears to echo earlier, more conservative, British styles. There are certain elements of formal continuity between, for example, *Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Daughter Mary* (Fig. 1) and *Sarah Geddes Latimer* (Fig. 29). Both share a concern for objectivity and project a sense of having been drawn. The similarity between them suggests that colonial taste was

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² Refer to chapters one and two in this study.
unwilling to relinquish historical familiarity for fashion. Both colonial and Revolutionary styles, then, indicate a concern for the past, suggesting a preference for continuity characteristic of provincialism.

There are, however, sharp differences between works dating from the colonial and Revolutionary periods. Formally, they include distinctions in spatial effects and modeling. Yet, marked differences are also indicated by what appears to be a theoretical progress; from more decorative constructs like the Freaeke portrait, to more symbolic gestures like the Bordley image, colonial painting arrives, finally, at the more sophisticated and intellectual art form suggested by the Latimer portrait.

The letters of Peale and Copley, together with the evidence of political and economic change, suggest that colonial culture undertook to modify the influences of British culture in creating a national ideology of taste. Whereas in Britain the writings of early eighteenth century philosophers like Shaftesbury made art and culture the realm of an elite class, in the colonies, the absence of this socio-economic group appears to have shifted the responsibility for educating and improving society to an ever-growing and prosperous middle class.\(^3\) Miller proposes

\(^3\) Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, p. 16.
that these colonists, while initially guided by British
example, came, eventually, to join the neo-classical
influence of British culture with elements of
associationism. This associationism, Miller argues, rejected
the Academic standard of an ideal nature and, based on
British empirical psychology, proposed, instead, that
knowledge was derived from "the particular and the
sensational."  

Peale's decision to practice in a style influenced by
nature, rather than by the Academic theory and manner in
which he was trained, provides support for Miller's claim.
Miller's argument, however, is also reinforced by the
interest of Peale's contemporaries, who sought to create an
"American Taste" based on "'one's own good eyes and untaught
good sense,' that 'critical faculty [which] has its source
altogether in Nature... [and which] pleases all classes, and
in all ages'."

By the Revolutionary era, then, new influences make it
less convincing to speak of American style as the product of
ignorance; by this time, many painters were practiced in an
Academic tradition and many patrons were familiar with
Academic production. Philadelphia, for example, had by this

4 Miller, Patrons and Patriotism, p. 18.
5 Ibid., p. 219.
time an established art community. More and more, American families, successful in banking, law, and commerce, traveled abroad and returned from their trips "with 'art books, prints, drawings, copies, and one or two old masters'."\(^6\)

Although the work of Ralph Earl indicates that the taste of American patrons varied and could even tend toward a more Academic style, the variety in itself suggests the real influence of economic and political factors on Revolutionary art production.

This thesis has been concerned with examining the issue of American cultural autonomy in the period between 1760 and 1790. Generally, American art scholarship is somewhat ambiguous about the art production of this period, grouping it together with earlier colonial painting. The convincingness of current scholarship with regard to Revolutionary developments, however, seems weak; Revolutionary American artists and patrons, for example, were no longer completely dependent on the graphic arts for their training or taste. Indeed, colonial modifications to British taste suggest that the popularity of the particular style derived from more complex regional interests.

The paralleling popularity of realism and political autonomy raises the possibility that American art reflected

\(^6\) Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism*, p. 103.
the corpus of values, beliefs, codes, and interests contemporary to its production. Linking historical ideals and economic interests, the clearest example of this connection between art and politics would seem to rest with the influence of individualism.

John Barrell argues that the connection between taste and politics is at the very root of colonial and British art heritage. He writes: "it was not secret, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, that the criticism of painting had no language to employ but a political language, and had no ambition to develop and approach to painting which was not political." In *The Social Production of Art* (1981), Janet Wolff posits a similar line. She argues that judging the art production of one country against the standards of another ignores the unique conditions intrinsic to one's environment. Art, she goes on, is "the product of specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions, and therefore bear[s] the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of existence of those groups, and their representative in particular artists."  

It is the opinion of this paper that Revolutionary cultural developments paralleled contemporary political and

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8 Barrell, preface.
economic trends; colonial cultural autonomy was resident in American society even prior to political independence. This means that there are potential insights to be gained from reconsidering the standards and history of American art production. But it also suggests something more for British provincial art. The evidence of this study indicates that the growing stylistic similarity between provincial British and American painting of this period may have resulted from the similar political and economic interests of these regions. This is not to suggest that British provincial painting was directly influenced by American art, but that similar influences were simultaneously affecting the art production of these two regions and, moreover, that the socio-political and formal inconsistencies which inform differences between American and Academic painting may also have influenced provincial British art. This possibility highlights the need for reconsidering the influence of an Academic standard on style in "provincial" art.
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Fig. 1  *Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Daughter Mary.* Freake Limner, c. 1674. Oil on canvas, 42-1/2 x 36-3/4 inches. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert W. Rice.
Fig. 2  Portrait of Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond. After Sir Peter Lely.
Oil on canvas, 14-1/2 x 12 inches.
Fig. 3 Portrait of George Abbott (1562-1633), Archbishop of Canterbury.
English School, 17th century.
Oil on canvas, 48-3/4 x 39-1/2 inches.
Fig. 4 Portrait of a Lady with her Son. Attributed to Isaac Whood, 1689-1752. Oil on canvas, 47-1/2 x 37-1/2 inches. Sold at Sotheby’s, London, October, 1989.
Fig. 5 Mrs. Mann Page II and Child. Attributed to Charles Bridges, c. 1744. Oil on canvas, 46 x 36 inches. College of William and Mary.
Fig. 6 Her Grace, Mary, Duchess of Ormonde, and Thomas, Earl of Ossory. John Smith, 1693, after the original painting by Godfrey Kneller. Mezzotint, 12-1/2 x 9-3/4 inches. British Museum, London.
Fig. 7 Boy with a Squirrel. John Singleton Copley, 1765. Oil on canvas, 30-1/2 x 25 inches. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
Fig. 8 Lady Margaret Beaufort. Anonymous, c. 1490. National Portrait Gallery, London.
Fig. 9 Queen Elizabeth. Nicholas Hilliard, c. 1600.
Oval, 3-3/4 x 2-3/4 inches.
Ham House, England.
Fig. 10 *Laís Corinthianca*. Hans Holbein, 1526.
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Fig. 11 *Anne of Cleves*, Hans Holbein, 1539-1540.  
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National Gallery, London.
Fig. 12  **Self-Portrait.** Thomas Smith, c. 1680-1690.
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Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts
Fig. 13 Thaddeus Burr. John Singleton Copley, c. 1758-1760.
Oil on canvas, 50-5/8 x 38-7/8 inches.
City Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.
Fig. 14 Mrs. Thomas Boylston. John Singleton Copley, c. 1777. Oil on canvas, 50-1/2 x 40-1/2 inches. Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Portrait Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Fig. 15 Samuel Shrimpton. Anonymous, c. 1675. Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
Fig. 16 Nicholas Roberts. Anonymous, c. 1674.
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches.
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Fig. 17 Charles Carroll the Settler. Anonymous, c. 1700-1714.
Oil on canvas, 31-1/2 x 43-1/2 inches.
Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
Fig. 18 Mrs. Wilbraham Bootle. George Romney, c. 1764.
Oil on canvas.
Private Collection.
Fig. 19  Mrs. Alexander Blair. George Romney, c. 1787-1789.
Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches.
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Fig. 20 Nicholas Heath. Joseph Wright, c. 1762-1763.
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Fig. 23  **Edward Becher Leacroft. Joseph Wright, c. 1762-1763.**

Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches.

Stanford University Museum of Art, gift of the Committee for Art at Stanford.
Fig. 24 Sir Richard Arkwright. Joseph Wright, 1789-1790.
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Fig. 25  Mrs. Edward Witts. Joseph Wright, 1776.
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Fig. 26 Mrs. John Ashton. Joseph Wright, c. 1769.  
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Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
Fig. 27 John Beale Bordley. Charles Willson Peale, 1770.
Oil on canvas, 84-1/2 x 58-1/2 inches.
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Fig. 28  William Pitt. Charles Willson Peale, 1768.
Mezzotint, 23 x 14-3/4 inches.
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Fig. 29 Sarah Geddes Latimer. Charles Willson Peale, 1788.
Oil on canvas, 39-3/5 x 27-3/5 inches.
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Fig. 30 Roger Sherman. Ralph Earl. c. 1775.
Oil on canvas, 64-5/8 x 49-5/8 inches.
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Fig. 31 Daniel Boardman. Ralph Earl, 1789.
Oil on canvas, 81-5/8 x 55-1/4 inches.
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Gift of Mrs. W. Murray Crane.
Fig. 32  Mr. and Mrs. Andrews. Thomas Gainsborough, c. 1758.
Oil on canvas, 27-1/2 x 47 inches.
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Fig. 33 Mrs. John Johnston. Ralph Earl, 1785.
Oil on canvas, 30-1/4 x 25-1/2 inches.
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Courtesy of the Society of the Cincinnati.