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# Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits

## *Social Images and Self-Images*

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*Combining close visual analysis of eighteenth-century American and British portraits with insight into social attitudes and practices, Margaretta Lovell extends our understanding of the group family portrait as a primary document in the history of American colonial culture. Lovell departs from familiar historical accounts of early American art that tend to attribute the greater naturalism and complexity of composition in many late eighteenth-century American group portraits to either individual artistic achievement or increased technical mastery among colonial painters as a group. Instead, she suggests a more complex reading of these images as embodiments of a variable social order in which evolving conceptions of gender and family relations generate new kinds of pictorial arrangements.*

*Lovell argues that both the growing interest in family group (as opposed to individual) portraits and the shift from a rigidly patriarchal model of the family to one structured around animated children and motherhood as the center of domestic harmony signal an altered sense of values and beliefs about the nature of the family and the meaning of childhood. These patterns are traced through the gradual modification of portrait conventions that actively contributed to a new social consensus regarding gender and family dynamics.*

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In 1772 London-based American artist Benjamin West painted a portrait of his family. It is one of about fifty group portraits by American artists surviving from the eighteenth century. The image includes the artist himself at the extreme right, his elder son, Raphael, by the window, the seated figures of his father and half brother, and, on the left, his wife and infant son. The artist has portrayed himself and Raphael in complementary leaning poses and in similar plum-colored clothing, the two seated Quakers are dressed in somber brown and black, and all the men direct our eyes—by their gestures, poses, and gazes—toward the brightly lit maternal group. In many ways this posed vignette portraying three generations of one family confirms our expectations of an eighteenth-century domestic group. But the visual emphasis on the maternal pair—enthroned in a generous, damask-covered easy chair—seems slightly hyperbolic or at least disproportionate given the dignity one would ordinarily attribute to the patriarch or to the meteorically successful artist himself. Observation of other late eighteenth-century family portraits confirms this “matricentric” pictorial arrange-

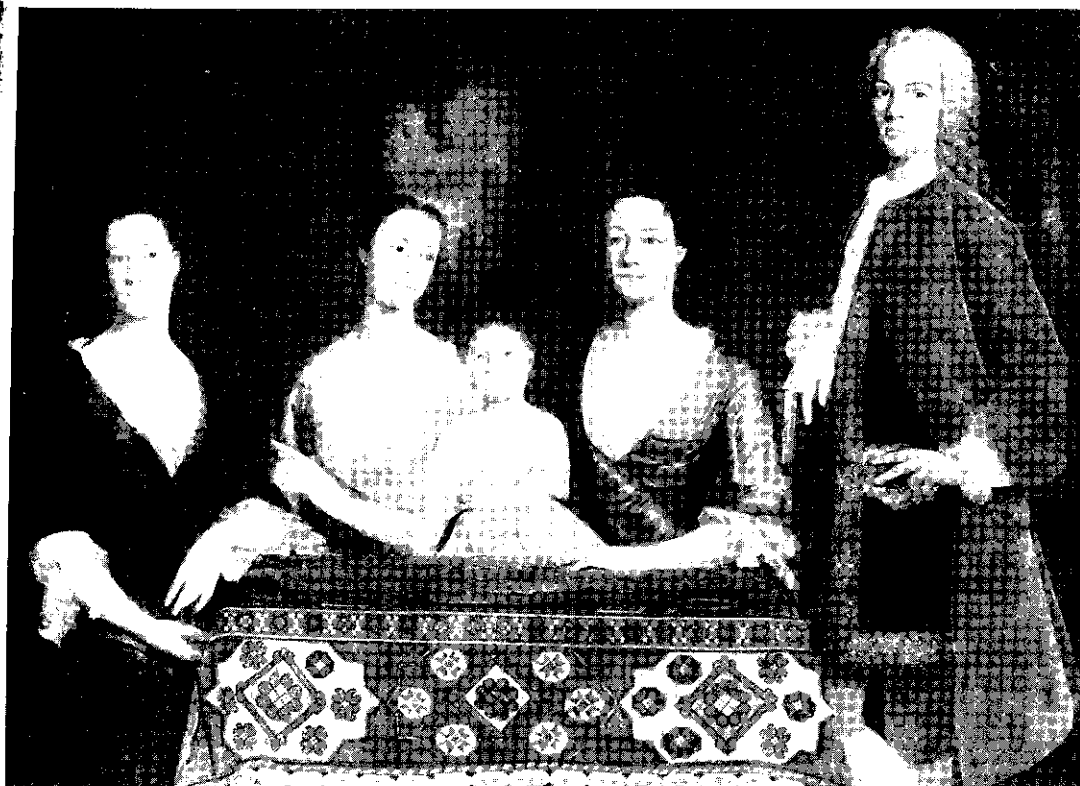
ment, and comparison with works from the first half of the century indicates that paintings by West and his contemporaries represent a departure from earlier practice in the arrangement of the figures and the focus of the composition. This distinct and somewhat puzzling change appears to point to a shift in social practice or social ideology and seems to reinforce and amplify the findings of historians investigating the late eighteenth century from other points of view.

The pictures that were painted by American artists in the eighteenth century record a specific social strata: the gentry, merchant, and professional classes (not the court on the one hand or the laboring classes on the other)—precisely those groups identified by Lawrence Stone, Neil McKendrick, and others as the “pacemakers of cultural change.” These were the classes in which new concepts of family relationships and new patterns of home-oriented consumerism were rapidly evolving in the mid eighteenth century, exactly that moment when family portraits were dramatically changing from earlier patterns—as in *Isaac Royall and Family* by Robert Feke of 1741 [1]—to those exemplified by the West family group. The matter of class is complicated in an investigation of these portraits as the artists—West, Charles Willson Peale, John Singleton Copley, Gilbert Stuart, and others—were, by and large, born into and raised in artisan, often quite impoverished, and certainly ungentle environments. They were, through marriage and the artistic achievement recorded in images of their own families, actively upwardly mobile themselves. The difference, for instance, between West’s presentation of himself—clad in pastel, embroidered silks and a fashionable wig—and that of his father—in homely wool and with lank locks—represents more than a geographical relocation to London and a weakening enthusiasm for Quakerism; West is clearly portraying the outward signs of self-propelled success. And yet it is important to note that the model of upward emulation in the

matter of consumer aspiration and social relationships that many historians enthusiastically endorse does not fully account for the actions, desires, or material acquisitions of Americans at this period. Henry Glassie and others have suggested a modified “reception theory” which postulates the priority of a felt need for an object, ideology, floor plan, facade, or style before long-extant models are appropriated or emulated.<sup>1</sup> This need is based on shifting attitudes toward time, privacy, authority, and other basic issues rather than on a superficial desire for the objects and images of a wealthier or more powerful class. According to this model, the causes of change (or of resistance to change) are more complex, more fundamental, and more interesting than many have thought. An instance of apparently deliberate nonemulation in the matter of family portraits will be touched on below.

Although this study has involved the detailed investigation of individual pictures, the overall direction has been to discover commonalities, groups of works and patterns of usage that indicate widespread practice rather than the invention or achievement of individual artists. Parenthetically it is important to note that although capturing “a good likeness” was one of the key measures of a painting’s success in the eighteenth century, there seems to have been little emphasis on penetrating the sitter’s inner character or psychological state. These are works that record, above all, the physiognomy of individuals and the posture, material attributes, and “manner” appropriate to broad class, age, and gender groups. They were at least in part intended and may usefully be read as documents of socially appropriate behavior and relationships if not of specific realities.

Family portraits are relatively rare. Most Americans choosing to be memorialized in portrait form in the eighteenth century were painted as single figures on canvases of roughly standardized sizes in a vertical format. Characteristic of the full-length portrait, Feke’s *Brigadier Gen-*



1. Robert Feke, *Isaac Royall and Family*, 1741; courtesy of Art Collection, Harvard Law School.

eral Samuel Waldo (1748–1750) records the dignity and attributes of a bewigged general who clasps his baton of command in one hand, places the other hand on his hip, and assumes the conversational posture recommended in a popular etiquette book, *The Rudiments of Genteel Behavior*, published a decade earlier in London: “The whole body must rest on the right foot and the right knee, . . . the Back be kept straight; the left leg must be foremost and only bear its own weight, and both feet must be turned outwards.”<sup>22</sup> The akimbo gesture and the firm grasp of a man-made instrument of action in the world (sometimes a quill pen, a sword, a walking stick, a maulstick, a cannon, or a similar elongated in-

strument) remain male attributes in portraits throughout the century, but the freestanding “genteel” baroque stance of Feke’s general does not. Men begin to cross their legs and *lean* on exterior support (as West and his elder son do in *The Artist’s Family*) about 1750. Posture changes; attributes remain constant. Some of this “body rhetoric” is conscious and articulated (as the text on genteel behavior makes clear). Some is less conscious, giving us outward clues to inner assumptions, values, and attitudes.

Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, most couples desiring to be memorialized would commission paired portraits. In matching frames and on canvases of

equal size, the almost life-size figures slightly inflected toward one another, paired portraits such as those by Copley of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Smith were by far the commonest form of family portraiture.<sup>3</sup> The figures are equal in size and visual weight, complementary in dominant hue, and parallel in scale and posture. The major differences between them are gender-specific attributes, environments, and gestures. As mentioned above, men often touch and are associated with elongated instruments of contact with the outside world, as in the case of Smith's papers and quill pen. Mrs. Smith, on the other hand, holds a bunch of grapes—characteristic of the more rounded organic objects, most commonly fruit, flowers, and dogs and other pets, that were seen as appropriate attributes for women. Beyond Mrs. Smith a pair of entwined trees suggests her married state. But most interesting is the limp, muscleless grasp with which she supports (or rather, fails to support) a heavy bunch of grapes. In these portraits visual and very real gender-specific social conventions differentiate between the kinds of objects (man-made or natural) and the type of appropriation (firm, possessive grasp or limp gesture) that link individuals to the outside world and to outside experience.

Surprisingly rare among eighteenth-century portrait types are double portraits of husband and wife portrayed together on a single canvas. More difficult to compose than single-figure canvases, these works are probably uncommon also because childlessness was uncommon, and, as the group portraits make clear, the presence of children within the household was important enough to warrant the inclusion of even the smallest infant. The few extant examples of American dual portraits from the first half of the eighteenth century—usually of childless couples or of those with grown children (for example, *Captain Johannes Schuyler and His Wife* [ca. 1725–1730])—follow the English convention of a standing husband accompanied by a seated wife as in Thomas Gainsborough's *Robert Andrews*

*and His Wife* (ca. 1750). The alert verticality of the husband's posture is balanced by the sedentary horizontal or pyramidal figure of his wife—a balancing composition of opposites. And parenthetically, although most of what I have found to be true of American portraiture in the eighteenth century is also true of English paintings at this time, there is one dramatic difference, perceivable in this pair. In the American painting—and this is almost universally the case—the space pictured is shallow and the setting vague; the figures are pressed close to the picture plane. In the English work the Andrewses share their canvas with a generous expanse of countryside, a distinct and enveloping setting. This seems to be a consistent pattern even when both images represent mercantile rather than landed gentry, and it may suggest that the English family retained a firmer grasp on the concept of family line (the extended family in time and space), while the Americans preferred the image of an independent unitary household vaguely located in an unancestral, unspecific space. But in most other matters, there is a close and not surprising similarity between the products of the English painters and those of the Americans.<sup>4</sup>

After about 1760, when a husband and his wife are pictured together in one composition they usually assume the same posture: they both sit or they both stand, as in the case of Copley's *Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Winslow* (1774) and John Trumbull's portrait of his parents. There is an evenness in the relationship implied. They seem equal partners in a joint enterprise with perhaps a slight hint of dominance in the husband's hand and arm gestures, and a modest deference in her recession behind the furniture.<sup>5</sup>

In the last two decades of the eighteenth century these dual-figure portraits underwent a further modification. In such works as *Benjamin and Eleanor Ridgely Laming* by Peale and *Captain John Purves and His Wife* by Henry Benbridge, the figures touch and lean on each other in postures and with gestures that suggest the

popularity of love matches and a new acceptability of public demonstrations of private affection. Stone has established that the “companionate marriage” at the heart of the modern family is characterized by an “intensified affective bonding of the nuclear core” and “a weakening of the association of sexual pleasure with sin and guilt.”<sup>6</sup> We need only to read Benjamin Laming’s telescope and Eleanor’s peaches as anatomical analogues (as the artist seems to suggest) in order to see the intensity of this new social and personal vision.

As we have seen, images of pictorially childless couples change from the early eighteenth century when active, vertical, akimbo male figures were balanced by passive, horizontal female figures to more companionate, parallel couples sitting or standing together in close harmony. The shift is significant and seems to occur about 1760. Turning to multigure groups, we find that the portrait tradition exhibits an even more dramatic change at the same time. The early eighteenth-century multigure works—such as Feke’s *Isaac Royall and Family*—include standing, akimbo males contrasted with clustered female figures and male associates. The compositions include a dizzying variety of hand gestures, neck turnings, and direct gazes, but the principal male figure coolly ignores the household and gazes intently at the spectator or, as in the case of philosopher-theologian Berkeley in *Dean Berkeley and His Entourage (The Bermuda Group [1728 or 1739])* by John Smibert, at the heavens. Most of the attributes and props that accompany sitters in single-figure portraiture disappear in the group context where gender confirmation and relationships depend on subtler clues. We can get a fairly clear sense of the social ideals and realities mapped here if we read these paintings with the interrogatives suggested by Ronald Paulson in a related context: “who is next to whom, who is how far from or inclining toward or away from or touching whom; whose eyes turn, whose eyes meet, and who is standing or sitting next to

what.” The location of the males in *The Bermuda Group* is marked and punctuated by three stout columns (fictional columns, as Berkeley’s extant house in Newport, Rhode Island, has no such embellishment), while the women in both this and the Feke images are associated with the emphatic horizontality of the foreground table. The households pictured by Smibert and Feke are characterized in pictorial terms by the balancing of opposite elements: male and female, dark and light, vertical and horizontal. The patriarch in these images remains aloof and freestanding—he neither touches nor looks at his kinfolk. The children in these early eighteenth-century paintings pose stiffly in their mothers’ arms; they are still, composed, obedient, attentive, and easily overlooked minor actors in the complex tableaux. The women sit in quiet horizontal groups and direct their attention to the spectator and their gestures to their companions. In Stone’s terms, these are families characterized by “distance, deference, and patriarchy.”<sup>7</sup>

In paintings of families by American artists after 1760, much changes. Numerically speaking, although single-figure canvases still greatly outnumber family groups, there are many more family portraits than in the first half of the century. This increase may partly be explained by the growing technical expertise of American artists willing to take on more complex pictorial problems, but it appears to reflect primarily a social fact: a greater interest in, enthusiasm for, and celebration of the family.

Taking the cast of characters one at a time, the most dramatic shift occurred in the figure of the child. Characteristic of children in family portraits from the second half of the eighteenth century, the four children in Copley’s *Sir William Pepperrell and His Family* [2] play games and cavort with a freedom and spontaneity in their gestures foreign to their pictorial predecessors. They are treated differently by the artist, and we sense that they are treated differently by their parents. John Witherspoon wrote in 1797: “In the former



2. John Singleton Copley, *Sir William Pepperrell and His Family*, 1778; courtesy of North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina.

age, both public and private, learned and religious education was carried on by mere dint of authority. This to be sure, was a savage and barbarous method. . . . Now . . . persuasion, and every soft and gentle method is recommended." The behavior of the Pepperrell children suggests that theirs is a "gentle" rather than an authoritative upbringing, one consistent with emerging attitudes toward the young. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries most parents felt compelled to apply strict adult controls to counter a deeply rooted natural depravity in youngsters, a sentiment memorably captured in Anne Brad-

street's "Stain'd from Birth with Adams sinfull fact / Thence I began to sin as soon as act." But by the 1760s a more hopeful sense of human nature prevailed, and the theories of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau concerning the impact of early experience on mature personality were becoming broadly known and endorsed. As a result, certain families—Philip Greven calls them "gentle"—developed permissive child-rearing practices, practices that shaped, in his opinion, adults with a sense of "self-worth, self-love, and self-confidence."<sup>8</sup> While Greven associates these fortunately nurtured children with distinct religious

allegiances, the evidence of the portraits suggests that the introduction of new attitudes toward the young crossed sectarian boundaries, and to some degree class boundaries, becoming almost universal among family portrait purchasers from 1760 on.

After 1760 these reaching, clamoring, grinning youngsters become the focus of the picture's action and threaten to break the elegant tone set by their parents. But these children are different from their predecessors in more than their freedom of movement, as Karin Calvert has made eloquently clear; they are equipped with toys (such as the discarded doll in the lower left and the coral and bells, on a pink sash which the baby shows to her grandfather in Copley's portrait of his own family). Moreover, Calvert has found that these children go through a complex, many staged series of costumes before donning adult garb, suggesting that, in their parents' eyes, they changed as persons in more identifiable stages than their predecessors had.<sup>9</sup>

While the painters of the revolutionary generation were clearly more talented than their predecessors, the changes that occur in portraits about 1760 are not attributable to this alone. The "stiffness" of Feke's *General Waldo* or Smibert's figures in *The Bermuda Group* compared with the "naturalness" of West's or Copley's figures suggests a shift in adult models of deportment away from the formality prescribed by early eighteenth-century etiquette and advice books as much as an increased artistic fluency. Similarly the shift from the image of the infant or very young child who boldly, motionlessly observes the spectator to that of the clamoring youngster whose attention is completely absorbed by objects and persons within the tableau represents a change in society's understanding of the child as well as a greater mastery of anatomy and perspective on the artist's part. The characteristics that mark images of family members are widespread and more period-specific than artist-

specific. Individual artists whose careers span the eighteenth century change the "body rhetoric" and relative positions of their figures as the conventions of self-presentation shift. Gainsborough, for instance, alters his interpretation of the couple from that of the early contrasting standing, vertical man and horizontal, seated woman in 1750 (*Robert Andrews and His Wife*) to that of the parallel couple who walk arm in arm in his 1785 *Mr. and Mrs. Hallett* (National Gallery, London). And his interpretation of the family group changes from the classic early eighteenth-century format of *Mr. and Mrs. John Gravenor and Their Daughters* to the matricentric *Baillie Family* of circa 1784. The pictorial evidence taken as a whole points away from issues of individual talent and toward issues of social consensus.

While the shift in the social and pictorial role of the child in Anglo-American portraiture is clearly the most significant difference between early and late eighteenth-century images, alterations in the portrayal of other family members change the look, impact, and interpretation of these portraits. The child's new centrality involves a corollary shift in the father's role: he cedes visual dominance and, turning sideways to the picture plane, leans toward, plays with, looks at, and touches the child as he never did in early eighteenth-century portraits. While in such early images as Feke's *Isaac Royall and Family* the father anchored the composition and riveted the spectator with his authoritarian gaze, in such later works as Peale's *General John Cadwalader, His First Wife, Elizabeth Lloyd, and Their Daughter, Ann* (1772) and West's *Arthur Middleton, His Wife, Mary (née Izard) and Their Son, Henry* (1770-1771), his presence is reduced and contingent. This new status is often emphasized by his recession from the picture plane and his presentation to the beholder with a marginalizing profile physiognomy. In such portraits as West's family group, the father's position, his posture, and often his attention encour-



age us to focus on his progeny and not on him. Clearly the withdrawal from a posture of authority involves an admiration for, perhaps even a nostalgia for, the special state of childhood, as it was newly perceived.

Similarly when there is a young child in the family portrait, the position of the mother vis-à-vis her infant and her husband are markedly different from the relationships perceived in the first half of the eighteenth century. Where formerly (as in Feke's *Isaac Royall and Family*) she presented a quiet foil to the assertive figure of her husband, in such late eighteenth-century works as *The Wright Family* (1793) by Joseph Wright and in the familiar West family group she commands the primary attention of the viewer and of the family members pictured. The husband retreats visually, and although he usually maintains his standing posture, his gaze, coloration, gesture, and orientation subordinate his figure to that of his brightly lit, seraphic wife, absorbed in her identity as mother. Her centrality, however, is not assertive; rather, it is unself-conscious and modest. The curious mid-eighteenth-century reversal of time-honored stereotypes of women as the sinful, deceptive, and disobedient weaker vessel to the chaste, honest guardian of domestic harmony and republican virtue has been interestingly analyzed by numerous historians including Nancy Cott and Marlene Le Gates. That this new role is in a sense artificial is rather cynically granted by such influential writers as Rousseau: "If the timidity, chastity, and modesty which are proper to [women] are social inventions, it is in society's interest that women acquire these qualities." The celebration of these virtues and ideals is well known from the verbal documents, but the concurrent retreat of the husband from centrality in the domestic sphere is nowhere as emphatic in the documents as it is in these paintings. Legal realities and written sources assure us that Stone is correct when he says: "As a social system, the nuclear family has two castes—

male and female—and two classes—adult and child. The male caste always dominates the female, and the adult class the child. . . . In the Early Modern Period, a female adult took precedence over a male child, but only up to the age of about seven." When we look at both English and American pictures, however, precedence is uniformly granted to the maternal figure; she glows and looms over the family like a triumphant Madonna—a fact that has puzzled some.<sup>10</sup> But it is clear that in the mime show of the portrait (as in the newly popular medium of the novel) certain fictions and ideals are being asserted that helped the early modern family adjust to the strains of new economic and social relationships. Where some historians point to this moment as the beginning of a dramatic decline and a disabling sentimentalization of womanhood, the paintings give us some sense of the apparent privileging of women in their role as mother. As we have seen, portraits of childless couples, even those from the late eighteenth century, give her no such precedence as we find in such incongruously titled paintings as Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Duke of Marlborough and His Family* (1778). Clearly it is the altered role of the child in the ideology of the day that is responsible for the mother's elevation as custodian. And in America—as John Adams makes clear—there was a political as well as a moral goal at stake in this enterprise: "I say . . . that national Morality never was and never can be preserved without the utmost purity and chastity in women; and without national Morality, a Republican Government cannot be maintained."<sup>11</sup>

It is no coincidence that during this late eighteenth-century period we find a rare interest among American artists in religious painting, especially in images of the Nativity, Holy Family, and Madonna. In part, of course, this interest was sparked by the ambitious goals of some of these artists to compete and establish themselves on a par with first-rank European artists at a time when taste favored history painting (and its sub-

genre, religious painting). There was little market for religious subjects in Protestant colonial America, but the general secularization of American life during the later eighteenth century permitted the experimentation, especially by American artists resident in England, in these formerly untried subjects. The degree to which these images were *secularized*—that is, liberated from their historic religious context and incorporated into a context of modern domestic life—is suggested by the literal conflation of the two spheres in such paintings as Copley's *Nativity* (1776–1777) and West's *Mrs. West and Her Son Raphael* (ca. 1770). In the former, Copley has used his wife as a model for the Madonna, and her head and upper body appear in a pose almost identical to that in *The Copley Family*. Similarly, West has incorporated his wife and elder son in a composition that consciously quotes the well-known tondo by Raphael known as *The Madonna of the Chair*. The intersection of the domestic and religious spheres in these images, and the move by these artists to reinterpret and quote the Renaissance masters in numerous other related images, suggests not only their personal artistic ambition but also their consciousness of an identity between the Holy Family and an idealized version of the modern domestic sphere.<sup>12</sup> They have appropriated for their wives—in their role as mother—the supreme example of female virtue.

While visually childless couples in the second half of the eighteenth century exhibit an evenness of emphasis between the figures with a slight element of dominance on the part of the husband, all the portraits in which there are infants and young children are dominated by the maternal group.<sup>13</sup> There is one interesting exception: folk, or naive, family portraits from the late eighteenth century. Here, in such works as *Family Group* (ca. 1795) by an unknown artist and *Family Portrait* (1804) by Ralph E. W. Earl, as in the contemporary childless couples painted by Copley, Trumbull, Peale, and others, there is an evenness of emphasis; the wife is never visually

dominant.<sup>14</sup> At this point it is impossible to determine whether we are looking at evidence of different, older, child-rearing patterns in nonurban areas, at *retardataire* painterly conventions, or at certain habits of mind characteristic of the naive painter (by and large the naive painter organized his composition for overall two-dimensional pattern rather than interlocking dominant and subordinate elements). These naive pictures are uniformly even in their tone and in their attention to family members; they present us with an interesting example of nonemulation as these artists certainly knew—at least in print form—the work of their urban contemporaries and declined to imitate the compositions and family relationships they saw there. The social gulf between the urban mercantile elite (represented by most of the portraits included here) and the rural gentry (pictured in these last two examples) was probably greater than we imagine—great enough to give us this evidence of distinctly different pictorial conventions, social ideologies, and child-rearing practices.

While much has been written on the nature of folk art and on its relation to urban art, there is little consensus on its boundaries or even on proper nomenclature. Some maintain that it is *the* locus of creativity in America, privileging it and valuing it beyond mainstream developments and European-oriented art forms, while others assert that it is simply a poorly understood, poorly executed version of its urban cousin.<sup>15</sup> In looking at this narrow group of family portraits—images that share certain characteristics of technique (and, we believe, of market, although it is difficult to find a body of conclusive research on the patrons of these elusive, often anonymous, works of often unknown sitters)—it is clear that the “rules” by which they are composed differ from those common in the urban centers of Boston, Philadelphia, and London. While the absolute number of naive family portraits rises as dramatically during this period as in the urban centers, the execution differs markedly, which supports

the complex "reception theory" of cultural change in which novel forms are selectively adopted rather than poorly mimicked.

By reading eighteenth-century family portraits in terms of the relationship of the figures, their attributes, and their activities and by finding consistent patterns in the portrayal of these elements, we can gain some insight into the larger questions of changing (and class-distinct) family manners, ideologies, and attitudes toward au-

thority. The hyperbole we read in these portraits by West, Copley, and Peale is particularly telling. In the post-1760 urban works the children are more unleashed, the fathers more reticent, and the mothers more central than the verbal documents lead us to expect. In this breach between "reality" as social historians have come to understand it and the fiction the artists have described, we can locate the confirming factors of a new social order.

## NOTES

From *Winterthur Portfolio* (1987). Reprinted by permission of the author and the University of Chicago Press.

1. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), pp. 12, 20; Neil McKendrick et al., *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 10 and passim; Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 66-193.

2. François Nivelon, *The Rudiments of Genteel Behavior* (London, 1737), n.p.

3. That the portraits were intended to be hung facing one another is indicated by such contemporary documents as the parental pair on the wall in Johann Zoffany's *Prince George and Prince Frederick in an Interior in Buckingham House* (1765, Royal Collection); that the convention was commonly understood is suggested by William Hogarth's pointed and witty inflection of the betrothed couple away from each other in *Marriage à la Mode: The Marriage Contract* (1743-45, National Gallery, London).

4. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 353; Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), pp. 228ff. Other English dual portraits from the first half of the eighteenth century include Arthur Devis's *William Atherton and His Wife, Lucy* (ca. 1744, Walker Art

Gallery, Liverpool) and *Mr. and Mrs. Hill* (1750, Yale Center for British Art).

5. Other examples include Ralph Earl's *Justice Oliver Ellsworth and His Wife* (1792, Wadsworth Atheneum) and Copley's *Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard* (1775, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

6. Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 8, 325-404; English dual-figure portraits, such as Henry Raeburn's *Sir John and Lady Clark of Penicuik* (ca. 1790, Sir Alfred Beit Collection) and Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Hallett* (1785, National Gallery, London), include similar instances of couples leaning on and touching one another.

7. Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 157; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 4. Other pre-1760 family groups by American artists include John Greenwood's *Greenwood-Lee Family Group* (1747, private collection) and Joseph Blackburn's *Isaac Winslow and His Family* (1755, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); English works exhibiting these characteristics include Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. John Gravenor and Their Daughters* (ca. 1748-50, Yale Center for British Art), Hogarth's *William Ashley Cowper with His Wife and Daughter* (1731, Tate Gallery), Devis's *Robert Gwillyn of Atherton and His Family* (ca. 1749, Yale Center for British Art), and Francis Hayman's *Margaret Tyers and Her Husband* (ca. 1750-52, Yale Center for British Art).

8. John Witherspoon, "Letters on Education" (1797), in Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Child-Rearing Con-*

cepts, 1628–1861: *Historical Sources* (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1973), p. 89; Philip J. Greven, Jr., *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 29, 274.

9. Karin Calvert, "Children in American Family Portraiture, 1670 to 1810," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 39, no. 1 (January 1982): 87–113. Surviving coral and bells include a remarkable gold example of ca. 1760–70 by Daniel Christian Fueter of New York at the Yale University Art Gallery (1942, 91).

10. Nancy Falik Cott, "In the Bonds of Womanhood: Perspectives on Female Experience and Consciousness in New England, 1780–1830" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1974), chap. 4, "Sexual Passionlessness: An Hypothesis," pp. 217–63; Marlene Le Gates, "The Cult of Womanhood in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 10, no. 1 (Fall 1976): 21–39; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre à M. D'Alembert sur les spectacles* (Paris, 1758), p. 160 (my translation). Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 22; Stephen Brobeck, "Images of the Family: Portrait Paintings as Indices of American Family Culture, Structure and Behavior, 1730–1860," *Journal of Psychohistory* 5, no. 1 (Summer 1977): 81–106.

11. For a review of recent literature on the family in early America, see Daniel Blake Smith, "The Study of the Family in Early America: Trends, Problems, and Prospects," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 39, no. 1 (January 1982): 3–28. In paintings that include only adolescent and grown children with their parents, the mother retreats from prominence. Examples include William Dunlap, *The Dunlap Family* (1788, New-York Historical Society), and Peale, *The Goldsborough Family* (1789, private collection). John Adams to Benjamin Rush, as quoted in John A. Schutz and Douglas Adair, eds., *The Spur of Fame: Dialogues of John Adams and Benjamin Rush, 1805–1813* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1966), p. 76; see also an entry on this subject in

Adams's diary as early as June 2, 1778, in Charles F. Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams*, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1851), p. 171.

12. Other examples include West, *The Holy Family* (ca. 1760–63, Old St. Joseph's Church, Philadelphia) and *The Golden Age* (1776, Tate Gallery), and Trumbull, *St. Jerome at Parma*, after West's copy of Corregio's painting of the subject (1780–81, Yale University Art Gallery), *The Holy Family* (ca. 1804, Yale University Art Gallery), and *The Holy Family* (1802–6, Yale University Art Gallery). See also Jules D. Prown, "Benjamin West's Family Picture: A Nativity in Hammersmith," in *Essays in Honor of Paul Mellon*, ed. John Wilmerding (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986), pp. 269–86.

13. Other American examples include *The Peale Family* (1770–1809, New-York Historical Society), *The Edward Lloyd Family* (1771, Winterthur Museum), and *Gov. Thomas Johnson and Family* (1772, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick, Md.) by Peale; *The Todd Family* (ca. 1785, Detroit Institute of Arts) by an unknown artist; *Sir John Temple and Family* (1784, private collection) and *The Vernet Family* (1806, Yale University Art Gallery) by Trumbull; and West's *Portrait of Arthur Middleton, His Wife, and Their Son, Henry* (private collection). English examples include *The Baillie Family* (1784, Tate Gallery) by Gainsborough.

14. Other folk or naive family portraits include Earl, *The Angus Nickelson Family* (ca. 1790, Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Mass.), William Wilkie, *Nathan Hawley and Family* (1801, Albany Institute), unknown artist, *The Sargent Family* (1780, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), and William Williams, *The Denning Family* (1772, private collection).

15. See Henry Glassie, "Folk Art," in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 253–80; and Ian M. G. Quimby and Scott T. Swank, eds., *Perspectives on American Folk Art* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980).