



Samuel Shrimpton



King Charles II



John Freake



Queen Elizabeth I

PHOTO ESSAY

A Tale of Two Portraits: Motivations Behind Self-Fashioning in Seventeenth-Century Boston Portraiture

SUSAN M. LLEWELLYN



Abstract: *In the mid-1670s, two prominent Bostonian merchants commissioned portraits of themselves. One of them, John Freake, had his completed in Boston in a manner that echoed the Elizabethan English Native School. The other, Samuel Shrimpton, traveled to London to have himself portrayed in the English Baroque style. This fascinating article reveals the political, economic, religious, familial, and personal factors that impacted their different self-fashioning choices. Completed within one year of each other, these two works provide a visual portrayal of Boston as a community in transition between its Puritan past and the secularized society of its future. Dr. Llewellyn is an adjunct professor of history at Northern Virginia Community College.*

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It begins as so many tales do: once upon a time, there were two men. Both were English citizens, both were merchants, both lived in Boston, and both were very, very successful. In fact, they were two of the wealthiest men in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They knew each other. They even invested in some of the same ships. That, however, is where their similarities end and the story begins.

In the mid-1670s, within a single year, these two prominent, wealthy Boston merchants decided to have their portraits painted. One of them, Mr. John Freake, chose to have his completed in Boston, in a style that echoed Elizabethan English Renaissance art. The other, Mr. Samuel Shrimpton, traveled to London where he elected to be represented in an English Baroque manner.

Noted art historian Wayne Cravens has asserted that the style of early American portraits was an expression of their society and culture. Yet these two men, seemingly from the same socio-economic community commissioned very different portraits. While most art historians writing on seventeenth-century colonial portraiture generally focus on society-level factors to explain popular modes of painting, perhaps a personal look at the lives of these two men will reveal more clearly the motivations behind how each man chose to have himself immortalized. Such a decision carried considerable weight in the colonial era, for, as English portrait painter Jonathan Richardson wrote in his 1715 treatise entitled, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, “To sit for one’s Picture is to have an Abstract of one’s Life written, and published, and ourselves thus consign’d over to Honour or Infamy.”¹

THE JOHN FREAKE PORTRAIT

John Freake, a portrait first completed in 1671 and updated in 1674, painted by an unknown but probably American artist, reveals a three-quarter view of a male figure standing against a solid dark background. The likeness is essentially flat, with no significant curving or shadowing. Freake's facial expression is relatively neutral, neither condescending nor subservient. He makes eye contact with the viewer, suggesting confidence. His face, framed by shoulder-length wavy brown hair with bangs, is rather



John Freake

Portrait by an unknown artist, completed in Boston, 1674.
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young, perhaps too young for his 39 years, and may be somewhat idealized. He has grown the fashionably narrow mustache of the English Restoration era. Freake's face is identifiable as a specific individual; however, the clear emphasis of the portrait is on the expensive, yet tasteful clothing that proclaim him to be a successful, stylish, upper middle-class male.

He is dressed in a brown, possibly velvet coat, cut in the fashionable Persian manner of the merchant elites of Restoration England, with the white lacy ruff sleeves of his shirt exposed. Around his neck is an ornate, elegant, and highly-detailed collar, probably a Spanish version of Venetian lace, depicting vines intertwining with flowers. His coat is decorated with more than thirty silver buttons and each buttonhole is outlined in silver thread. In his right hand, at hip level, he holds a pair of gloves. While his hand is not actually on his hip, Freake's elbow does project from his body in a way that is reminiscent of the stance of Italian and Spanish Renaissance rulers who were asserting their power and authority. His left hand is raised to a position near his breastbone, as he touches the ornament that hangs from his collar. In this position, the signet ring he wears on his left pinky, which bears his family's coat of arms, is clearly visible.

Jewelry for many Englishmen in this era, including those of the Puritan persuasion, was not only an indicator of wealth, but of authority, and specifically authority from God who, they believed, lined the streets of heaven with gold and built its gates with large pearls and precious jewels. Although Freake is a successful merchant by trade, this man's bloodline is gentry, and he wants the viewer to know it.²

THE SAMUEL SHRIMPTON PORTRAIT

Turning to the portrait of Samuel Shrimpton, significant stylistic differences from the John Freake painting are immediately apparent. Shrimpton is seated in a one-half length view. The picture is a rectangle, within which an oval is painted around the figure itself. Even though the background is relatively dark, it holds a feature that is not present in the John Freake portrait. Directly over Shrimpton's left shoulder, there is a very small insert of a man seated at a table, which holds a stack of books and an inkwell. Its scale is so small that it is almost lost next to the size of the main figure in the foreground.

Shrimpton is portrayed wearing a light brown robe or gown, while yards of vibrant blue satin are wrapped around his shoulders. The choice of color may not have been a random one, as blue in heraldic literature was often a symbol of loyalty. At his throat is an ornate lace cravat. The



Samuel Shrimpton

Portrait by an unknown London artist, 1675.

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style of dress is that of late seventeenth-century aristocratic leisure wear that was originally worn only at home, but slowly made its way into the business world. Yards of expensive material, however, do not overwhelm Shrimpton's face, which is nicely balanced with his clothing, neither overshadowing the other.³

Unlike Freake's idealized face, Shrimpton, who was 33 years old when he sat for this portrait, is painted much more realistically, with his double chin, creases around his mouth and nose, and bags and shadows under his eyes. He smiles slightly, as he gazes down on the viewer under his hooded lids. The entire portrait, with its curves and shadows, is richer, more elegant, and perhaps a little haughtier in its presentation than Freake's painting. Unlike Freake (Shrimpton's professional equal), Shrimpton is letting the viewer know that he is defining himself as a member of a lower order of the aristocracy (without the bloodline or title to support this) rather than as an upper middle-class merchant. As the tiny insert over his shoulder reveals, Shrimpton does not deny his career as a merchant. After all, it was the source of his wealth. Yet the size, darkness, and remoteness of the background picture, combined with his aristocratic attire, seems to suggest that he now sees himself as being separate and "above" his profession, particularly since the backdrop details of others who had portraits done in this style were generally larger, clearer, and more colorful.

SELECTING A PORTRAIT STYLE: RENAISSANCE VS. BAROQUE

Art historians have identified at least fourteen artists working in Boston in the seventeenth century. Yet these men, and most of their professional equivalents in England, would not have seen themselves as artists, but as craftsmen, like silversmiths or cabinetmakers, capable of painting a ship, a sign – or a portrait. Consequently, while we know who the portraits represent, neither of the artists (or "craftsmen") signed his work.⁴

Since they were considered craftsmen, the subject matter of a portrait was the choice of the one who commissioned the work, not the artist, in the same way that a carpenter or blacksmith filled an order to the satisfaction of the buyer. When trying to sell a commission to provide a portrait, artists typically presented a collection of styles and poses to help the buyer choose how he wanted to be portrayed for posterity, but this was still open to modification.⁵ In John Freake's case, for example, although his portrait was first completed in 1671, three years later, he had substantial changes made to it, particularly with regard to the hands. In the first version, each of his hands holds one glove and his left hand is located closer to his abdomen. Yet a major change made in 1674 (revealed through x-ray analysis conducted in 1981) not only placed both gloves in his right hand, but raised and turned the left hand to reveal the signet ring. Such substantial changes to a portrait were not likely to be done at the whim of

the artist, but rather at the demands of the buyer, suggesting Freake had a considerable amount of agency in how he would be represented.⁶

At the beginning of the colonial era, the Elizabethan Renaissance style was still in vogue, but by 1630, Anthony Van Dyck, invited by Charles I, had brought the newer Baroque style to the shores of England. Thereafter, two forms of art – the Renaissance (or neo-medieval) style (chiefly embraced by the middle-class) and the Baroque (or Anglo-Dutch) style (primarily adopted by the aristocracy) – were present in England.

Although the Baroque style steadily gained in popularity, the Elizabethan style was still being produced in London even as late as the 1680s. Meanwhile, in New England, as Wendy Katz's research reveals, both styles were available, and many native-trained artists specialized in producing portraits where realism was valued above flattery. Yet, in the case of John Freake's portrait, idealization is almost certainly present. Again, this would suggest that Freake knew what he wanted and sought out an artist who would complete the portrait to his satisfaction.⁷

Although some art historians have suggested that Freake chose a Renaissance style only because it was all he would have known, this is highly unlikely. Freake was the son of gentry, born only one year before Van Dyke's arrival, and was raised and given an advanced education in England. He emigrated to Boston after the Baroque style had been available to English gentry for more than twenty years. Moreover, he was a wealthy merchant who stayed on top of current London fashion. It does not seem reasonable to assume that he would have remained oblivious to the Baroque style for almost forty years. It seems more likely that he deliberately chose to be represented in the Renaissance manner. Otherwise, he certainly could have had his portrait painted on one of his business trips to England as Shrimpton had done, could have chosen an Anglo-Dutch local artist, or could have insisted on the realism that many New England portraitists used. As for Shrimpton, he, too, appears to have made a conscious decision. Both the Renaissance and Baroque styles were available in London, yet he specifically chose the Baroque. So, if neither financial concerns nor ignorance of style limited them, what led these two men to make such disparate choices?

Living in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the mid-seventeenth century meant that both Freake and Shrimpton had faced the daily struggles, challenges, and hazards associated with early colonial life. By the end of the century, however, both had not only overcome much of the initial hardships, they had achieved prosperity.

Similarly, two English monarchs had faced tremendous hardship in their early lives, suffering through circumstances that seemed to remove all hope of ever gaining the throne. Although both of them eventually did reign, when they gained their positions of power, they responded to the hardships they had endured in very different ways. These differences were reflected not only in their manner of wielding power, but also in how they chose to have themselves portrayed. In order to put our two merchants' portraits into their historical context (and thereby attempt to gain greater insight into the artistic alternatives they faced), the lives of these two monarchs need to be briefly examined.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I (R. 1558-1603) AND KING CHARLES II (R. 1660-1685)

At first glance, there appears to be very little similarity between these two English monarchs. Beginning their reigns a century apart, one was known as the Virgin Queen, and the other as a rather lascivious king. Yet, below the surface, their lives did have one striking and powerful parallel. At relatively young ages, they both had parents beheaded for treason. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed when Elizabeth was less than three years old. And, while Charles II was eighteen when his father died, most of his childhood had been spent facing life-threatening situations. When he was only eleven years old, Charles II had had to ride by his father's side as a soldier in the seventeenth-century English Civil War against Parliament's military forces. As offspring of "criminal" parents, both Elizabeth and Charles knew what it was like to be poor, unwanted, and in danger of losing their own lives. Inheriting the throne appeared to be even less likely for both of them than Freake's and Shrimpton's dream of success in a colony that was still primarily wilderness.

After her mother's death, Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, often had little to do with her, only haphazardly providing such necessities as adequate food or clothing. When her father died, Elizabeth closely aligned herself with her brother Edward VI's Protestant views, which served her well during his reign, but caused considerable hardship when her sister, Mary, the "Bloody Mary" of English history, took the throne. Mary, who bore a grudge against Elizabeth for Anne Boleyn breaking up her parent's marriage, sought opportunities to accuse Elizabeth of treason and eliminate her hated rival. As a result, Elizabeth developed subtle diplomatic skills and a keen sense of self-preservation.⁸



Queen Elizabeth I

English Renaissance-style portrait, c. 1580, by an unknown artist.
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When Mary died, Elizabeth responded to her new role as Queen by using all of the tools she had gained through years of fear and hardship. From the repercussions of her brother's more religiously-strident Protestant reign and in response to English hatred for Mary's Catholic purges, Elizabeth chose a middle ground. She adopted a moderate Protestantism which she maintained even in the face of being excommunicated by the Pope in 1570.

This firm stand endeared her to her people in general and, in particular, to the Puritans who were beginning to make political gains. From her father's reign, she understood the importance of power: exhibiting it, maintaining it, and projecting it. From the death of Anne Boleyn, and years of listening to accusations that she, too, would be a "whore just like her mother," Elizabeth evolved the image of the pure Virgin Queen. From the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, she gained the reputation of being England's protector. Finally, despite economic hardships that periodically visited the country, Elizabeth's careful use of resources left the throne in solid financial shape. These factors, and her impressively long 45-year reign, consolidated her reputation and solidified the historic glory of the Elizabethan era of English history.

Far from being oblivious to the impressions that she was leaving, Elizabeth actively cultivated her legend, and one of the important ways that she did so was through art. Her sister, Mary, had loved Italian Renaissance art, having fallen in love with her future husband, Philip II of Spain, when she saw a portrait of him completed by Titian. By Elizabeth's reign, however, Italian art had become synonymous with Catholicism and the recent burning of hundreds of Protestants. So, Elizabeth sought a style of art that would separate her from her sister.⁹

Although some historians have chosen to interpret Elizabeth's preference for direct light and lack of shadows as being due to superstition, the renowned sixteenth-century miniaturist Nicolas Hilliard offered different reasons. Hilliard related conversations he had had with Elizabeth on the subject of art in which they agreed on the "aesthetic advantages of avoiding shadows." "Beauty and good favor is like clear truth, which is not shamed with light, nor need be obscured," he wrote, "Great shadow is a sign in a picture after a life of an ill cause." These twin concepts of truth and light remained connected throughout the Elizabethan and Puritan eras. In other words, shadows were for people who had something to hide. Those who did not could handle the full exposure of light. Choosing to be portrayed with shadows was tantamount to admitting the presence of unsavory secrets.¹⁰



Charles II

English Baroque-style portrait by Sir Peter Lely, 1675, the same year that Samuel Shrimpton had his portrait painted in London. Reproduced with the permission of the Virginia Historical Society.

By 1565, this had led to the development of an English Native School of art which was generally flat, with extensive decorative costume details, exhibiting an idealized face, without shadows, and with a style that harkened back to England's medieval history. While modern viewers sometimes interpret Elizabeth's rigid posture as a sign of haughtiness or coldness, in her era it would have been seen only as an indication of strength and power. This neo-medieval approach to art was not due to a lack of sophistication, but a conscious expression of English culture, a way for Elizabeth to set off her reign from that of her sister, and her Protestant country from continental Catholic lands. And Elizabeth controlled this reputation through careful purging of all portraits of herself that did not meet her criteria and standards.¹¹

When Charles II was fifteen years old, at his father's insistence he escaped to France to protect himself from being captured by Parliamentary forces. His family was in shambles: a father imprisoned in England, facing the peculiar charge (for a king) of treason; his mother in France with him, but his brothers and one sister all under guard back in England. Life continued in this uneasy manner for the next three years, three years that the French court helped Charles pass by distracting him with entertainments that introduced this young man to many beautiful women.

Finally, when he was eighteen years old, Charles II received the news that his father had been found guilty and had been beheaded. Charles gathered together loyal followers and tried to attack England from the north, assuming many would rally to his cause once they saw him on English soil. Instead, Englishmen greeted him with indifference. When he finally met Parliamentary troops in Worcester, his followers were massacred and he had to flee, again, to the continent. He was twenty-one years old, with no crown, little following, and very little future he could see. Soon, his money dwindled, and so did his welcome at the French court. A more enterprising young man might have found a way to turn his military experience into profit. Instead, Charles used sexual escapades to cope with his losses. Driven from place to place by his poverty, he grew increasingly despondent, disillusioned, and cynical.¹²

In 1660, with Oliver Cromwell dead and his son failing as a leader, Charles II negotiated his way back onto the throne of England, promising greater religious tolerance than his father had allowed, but granting favor primarily to those who exhibited clear loyalty to him. Unfortunately, an initial burst of enthusiastic activity on Charles's part soon degenerated into the pattern of behavior that he had known for almost half his life and had become an ingrained habit. His years of seeing the coarser side of human

nature had scarred him deeply, leaving him an outwardly affable, but inwardly bitter, man who anesthetized himself with wine, women (many, many women), and song. His court, as so often happens, followed his lead and degenerated into a place of “swearing, drinking, and whoring,” where his aristocrats faced the ever-increasing risk of contracting syphilis. When someone dared to confront him about his behavior, Charles II responded, “All appetites are free, and God will never damn a man for allowing himself a little pleasure.”¹³

During his reign, the Baroque style of art (which had first been introduced in England during his father’s years on the throne), flourished, relegating the older Elizabethan style to the sidelines in aristocratic circles as the seventeenth century came to a close. This art, which reflected the values Charles II was making popular, was far more sensuous than the stoic Renaissance style. More relaxed and yet more opulent and grand, it emphasized lush texture, vibrant color, stylized draped silks and satins, and a more realistic depiction of the sitter’s face. It contrasted strongly with the neo-medieval style which court society increasingly interpreted as a mode for those who emphasized “the small things of religion” over “civility and fashion.”¹⁴

While Elizabeth’s reign saw the start of the English exploration of what would become British Colonial America, it was Charles II who was on the throne when our two merchants commissioned their portraits.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Delving into the biographical histories of these two merchants, it becomes clear that John Freake and Samuel Shrimpton were both products of their time, their culture, and their circumstances. John Freake was born in Dorset, England, in 1631, the third son of landed gentry, whose grandfather had been knighted by Elizabeth I and had served in Parliament under James I. Freake was raised and educated in England, becoming a lawyer and merchant before moving to New England when he was in his twenties. He arrived in Boston with all of the elements that would guarantee his acceptance and success in his new home: a deep devotion to Puritanism, a landed-gentry family, an advanced education and knowledge of the law, and business contacts in England. Soon, he was in the midst of the Puritan elite, receiving government commissions and church appointments, handling their legal business, and providing their supplies.¹⁵

Samuel Shrimpton, however, had a more difficult start. His father, Henry, had arrived in Boston in 1639, and was approved to stay in the colony because of his skill as a brass smith. As a craftsman with little education and few contacts, Henry Shrimpton struggled to gain the attention and approval of Puritan authorities. But he did have one important connection: his brother, Edward, a London merchant. Together, they forged a business that made Henry one of the wealthiest men of the colony. Yet, no matter how much wealth he accumulated, he was still an outsider among the Puritan elites, not only because of his limited education and lack of family ties to key church or civil leadership, but also because of his propensity to embrace the newest fashions in England, a preoccupation that *early* (not later) colonial Puritans associated with an ungodly vanity. As a result, Henry was never able to insinuate himself into the social or political inner circles of Boston. Samuel, therefore, was born into a family whose fortune was steadily growing, but who, no matter how hard they tried, remained on the outskirts of polite society.¹⁶

Initially, Samuel Shrimpton, too, attempted to gain admission into this inner circle. Like his father, however, he was repeatedly thwarted, given only the smallest assignments and appointments. Eventually, Shrimpton began to search elsewhere for the acceptance he craved. Yet Shrimpton was not the only man to find himself in this predicament. Others who had humble beginnings but had improved their circumstances were also cut off from the upper echelons of colonial power. Growing tired of the limitations imposed on them by those who viewed themselves as superior, this group of merchants began to seek other avenues to gain influence and recognition. They found it in embracing the Restoration of the English monarchy.¹⁷

Once Charles II came to the throne, expressing loyalty to the distant crown over the local authorities was a way to “rebel” – with the protection of the King behind them. Those New England merchants who had been frozen out of local power found a common ally among the English royalists, to the consternation of prominent Puritan Bostonians, many of whom recalled that it was Charles’s father’s persecution of Puritanism which had driven so many of them to Massachusetts in the first place.

Shrimpton threw his support to the royalists. He befriended the King’s newly-appointed Governor Andros, became a part of Andros’s Council, and was selected to be a councilor of the province of Massachusetts Bay. In fact, in 1685, when James II succeeded his brother to the throne, notice was sent to colony officials ordering them to formally recognize James’s kingship. Only a handful of individual citizens were also personally

informed, including Samuel Shrimpton. Samuel Sewall, prominent Bostonian judge, noted in his diary that he “supposed this was done lest the [Massachusetts] Government should have neglected to do it.” By embracing this new royalist stance, Shrimpton could not only gain the political power he craved, but he could also strike an emotional blow at the ones who had consistently rejected him.¹⁸

Freake, on the other hand, had mixed feelings on the subject of local and national politics. While on the one hand, he supported (and sometimes was) a member of New England government, when he felt they were wrong, Freake was willing to stand up to them. When the royal commissioners arrived in Boston to wrest control from local authorities, Puritan leaders were shocked to find that Freake supported the royalists, not the local elite. Many of his political stands were related to social and business advantages for himself (as were Samuel’s). Others may have been due to a pragmatic interpretation of the circumstances, based on his training as a lawyer. Perhaps Freake also kept in mind, though, that his family had risen to prominence because of their service to Queen Elizabeth. As a result, Puritanism, loyalty to the crown, and personal advancement were not conflicting concepts for him.¹⁹

Freake and Shrimpton had another major difference. Freake was a true Puritan, a member of the Second Church of Boston, and even a trustee in that church. While he might stand up against the governmental authorities if he thought they were wrong, his religious and personal values appear to have been solidly Puritan. Puritans were not against prosperity, but they were against ostentatious displays of wealth. Freake’s portrait is a careful balance of understated pride in his achievements, a success that could be interpreted as God’s approval of Freake’s life. Puritans believed in hard work – the Puritan or Protestant work ethic – as a way of gaining God’s favor. Yet prosperity in itself was never to be the goal – being found worthy was the goal.²⁰

Shrimpton had no such compunctions. Choosing to become an Anglican, or at least an Anglican sympathizer (in fact, the first Anglican wedding in Massachusetts was performed at his home), in addition to his new royalist political views, his philosophy was markedly different from the Puritans. Along with others of the excluded merchant elites, he did not think that worthiness made him prosperous, but that being prosperous made him worthy, worthy of the power and control over government and society that he came to believe was his due. He also deemed that an ostentatious display of his wealth, presented in a modified version of

aristocratic expression, and echoed in his Baroque-style portrait, had become his right.²¹

Furthermore, rather than attempting to live what Puritans would consider a pure life, Shrimpton's activities increasingly became a modest version of Charles II's debauched aristocracy. Again, Samuel Sewall specifically mentioned Shrimpton in his diary one night in 1686:

Mr. Shrimpton, Capt. Lidget and others come in a coach from Roxbury about 9aclock or past, singing as they come, being inflamed with Drink: At Justice Morgan's they stop and drink healths, curse, swear, talk profanely and bauldily to the great disturbance of the town and grief of good people. Such high-handed wickedness has hardly been heard of before in Boston.²²

It is interesting to note that this revelry took place on the same day that colony leaders learned Sir Edmund Andros, representing the Crown, was on his way to Massachusetts.

CONCLUSION

Boston in the 1670s was a community in transition. These two portraits viewed together capture a moment, like a snapshot, when values were shifting and colonial New England was preparing to enter the eighteenth century. After years of alienation by Puritan church and government officials, merchant elites like Samuel Shrimpton searched for alternative ways to gain the power and respect that they increasingly agreed they rightfully deserved. Fortunately for Shrimpton, a small opening had developed within the circles of royalty and aristocracy for those willing to throw their lot with the new king, spurred on by Charles II's willingness to receive anyone who exhibited loyalty to him. So long as Shrimpton remembered his place and did not seek to usurp the *aristocracy's* rights and privileges, or see himself as equal with the upper echelons of aristocratic society, Shrimpton would be welcomed within the periphery of this new power, united by a common dislike of the Puritans who had "judged them."

This idea of being judged, of suffering hardship at the hands of the Puritans, was a concept that Charles II and Shrimpton shared in common (albeit at different levels of severity), an underlying thread that fed their bitterness, drove their ambitions, and even impacted their chosen leisure

activities. Grasping this opportunity to snub the Puritan elite whom he felt had belittled him, held him back, and had tried to control him, Shrimpton and the merchant elite like him, established a new power base and changed New England society.

For a man such as Shrimpton, this was a rare and welcome opportunity. His timing was right, his ambitions were high, his loyalties were flexible, and he used this opening to link himself closely to the new royal authorities that ruled not only in England but increasingly in the American colonies. Through ingratiating himself with Charles II's Governor Andros, Shrimpton not only increasingly obtained the political clout he had previously been denied, he also began to see himself as a member of a new and elegant society of gentlemen not hampered by Puritan scruples, prejudices, or ethics.

Accordingly, Shrimpton chose a portrait style made popular by a morally dubious king who embraced loyal non-aristocrats. In the eyes of the new royalist government officials, Shrimpton's own "bawdy" behavior, combined with his financial success, were evidence of both his disloyalty to the Puritan leadership and his worthiness to be singled out for royal favor. The Baroque style, with its emphasis on luxury, "lascivious" leisure, but also legal power, and its acceptance within aristocratic circles, suited his values, his lifestyle, and his ambitions in ways that Renaissance art never could.

When he chose his portrait style, he did not want to look back at a history that denied him and left him an outcast and the son of an outcast. While Freake might have commissioned his work to communicate the worthy stock from which he and his children had come, Samuel's message to his son would seem to be "Never mind where we came from; see what we have become."

Matters were not so clear-cut for John Freake. Lacking the years of alienation that prepared Shrimpton to be a part of this societal shift, and living within the security of growing up in a family of successful gentry, Freake seemed to have straddled both worlds. Although he was not ashamed of his family of origin, he was equally proud of what he, a third son, had accomplished and accumulated on his own. Not bearing the burden of rejection that had plagued Shrimpton, he was content to embrace his position as an affluent upper middle-class merchant with gentry-blood coursing through his veins.

Even though he did not slavishly follow Puritan leadership, he did agree with many of their basic tenets. Increase Mather characterized Freake as a "valuable and devout member of the congregation and the

Commonwealth.”²³ On the other hand, he was a merchant. He was willing to make decisions that would benefit his business as long as they did not imperil his soul, no matter what the leadership said. He attended church regularly and faithfully performed his duties as a trustee, doing so while dressed in the current fashions of England, but careful to maintain the understated elegance that pointed to his prosperity in ways that would be tolerated by the clergy and government officials. Because his faith, his family, and his gentry heritage were important to him, when Freake decided to be portrayed for his posterity, he chose a style that looked back to the golden days of Elizabeth, when his family had risen to prominence and had been granted its title, a time when England stood for purity, Protestantism, and prosperity.

Ultimately, both of these men wrestled within themselves, not just with outward societal values but with their response to those ideals and their place in the world around them. Their personal morals and experiences defined them, determining how they would be portrayed and what message they wanted to send through their portraits. Freake’s vision and values, reflected in the Elizabethan Renaissance style he chose, were the ones that had helped establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony and led it through the seventeenth century. However, it would increasingly be Shrimpton’s vision and values—those of the emerging royalist merchant elite which were reflected in the Baroque art that expressed them—that would carry the colony into the eighteenth century.



Notes

¹ Wayne Craven, *American Art: History and Culture* (NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1994), 42; Wayne Craven, *Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), xv; Peter Benes, *Painting and Portrait Making in the American Northeast* (Boston, MA: Boston University Press, 1995), 13.

² R. Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Costume* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1954), 185; Wayne Craven, *American Art: History and Culture* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1994), 43; Worcester Art Museum, “Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake.”

³ Andrew Oliver, Ann Millspaugh, Edward Huff, W. Hanson, *Portraits in the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press,

1988), 93; R. Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Costume* (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 186; Wendy Katz, "Portraits and the Production of the Civil Self in Seventeenth-Century Boston," *Winterthur Portfolio* 39, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 2004), 111.

⁴ Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent, *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century* (Boston, MA: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982), 455; Lillian Miller, *The Puritan Portrait: Its Function in Old and New England* (Boston, MA: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1985), 160.

⁵ Richard Saunders and Ellen G. Miles, *American Colonial Portraits: 1700-1776* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), xiii.

⁶ Worcester Art Museum, "Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake."

⁷ "Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake.", Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Robert F. Trent, *New England Begins: The Seventeenth Century*, 5; Louisa Dresser, "Portraits in Boston, 1630-1720," *Archives of American Art Journal* 6, no. 3-4 (July-October, 1966): 2; Wendy Katz, 102.

⁸ Carolly Erickson, *Royal Panoply: Brief Lives of the English Monarchs* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 195, 217.

⁹ Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1963), 8; Andrew Wilton, *Five Centuries of British Painting: From Holbein to Hodgkins* (NY: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, World of Art, 2001), 14.

¹⁰ Miller, 154; Nicholas Hilliard, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, quoted in Mary E. Hazard, *Elizabethan Silent Language* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 30; Joshua C. Taylor, *the Fine Arts in America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 13.

¹¹ Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1963), 16; Mary E. Hazard, *Elizabethan Silent Language* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 2-3; Alice T. Friedman, "Did England Have a Renaissance? Classical and Anticlassical Themes in Elizabethan Culture," in *Cultural Differentiation and Cultural Identity in the Visual Arts*, ed. Susan J. Barnes and Walter S. Melion (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989), 96.

¹² Carolly Erickson, *Royal Panoply: Brief Lives of the English Monarchs* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 217-18.

¹³ Erickson, 222, 217.

¹⁴ Worcester Art Museum, "Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake"; Andrew Wilton, *Five Centuries of British Painting: From Holbein to Hodgkins* (NY: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, World of Art, 2001), 39, 45-47; Martin Myrone, *Representing Britain 1500-2000: 100 Works from the Tate Collection* (London: Tate Publishing, 2000), 13; Katz, 125.

¹⁵ Worcester Art Museum, "Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake"

¹⁶ Phyllis Whitney Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World:*

Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 28-29; Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 35.

¹⁷ Bailyn, 138.

¹⁸ Bailyn, 192-194; Craven, *Colonial American Portraiture*, 4; Oliver et al., 93; Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, 2 volumes, edited by Thomas Halsey (NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973), Vol. 1: 60.

¹⁹ Worcester Art Museum, "Early American Paintings, Unknown Artist: John Freake".

²⁰ Miller, 162.

²¹ Miller, 175; Katz, 111; Samuel Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, Vol. 1: 114.

²² Sewall, *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, Vol. 1:121.

²³ Katz, 124.

