

Fall 1995

Bodies of life: Shaker literacies and literature

Etta Maureen Madden

University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation>

Recommended Citation

Madden, Etta Maureen, "Bodies of life: Shaker literacies and literature" (1995). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 1862.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation/1862>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

BODIES OF LIFE: SHAKER LITERACIES AND LITERATURE

BY

ETTA M. MADDEN
BA Harding University, 1984
MA University of Virginia, 1986

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

September, 1995

UMI Number: 9604128

UMI Microform 9604128
Copyright 1995, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI

300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

David H. Watters

David H. Watters, Professor of English

Sarah Way Sherman

Sarah Way Sherman, Associate Professor
of English

Thomas R. Newkirk

Thomas R. Newkirk, Professor of English

John R. Ernest

John R. Ernest, Assistant Professor of
English

Jean MacMahon Humez

Jean MacMahon Humez, Associate Professor
of Women's Studies

June 20, 1975

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
Notes	15
I. VARIETIES OF LITERARY EXPERIENCES: AN OVERVIEW OF SHAKER READING AND WRITING	19
The Primacy of Orality: Shaker Writing and Reading Prior to 1790	27
External Forces and Educating for the Progress of the Sect: 1790-1827	31
Ritualized Literacies and Internal Revival: 1827-1850	37
Reading and Writing the World's Genres after 1850: Private Acts and Possible Worlds	45
Notes	52
II. LETTERS, SPIRITS, AND BODIES: THE SHAKERS SPIRITUAL LITERACIES	60
Ann Lee's Reading	61
Shaker Spirituality and Letters	84
Shaker Spirituality and Bodies	89
Spiritual Literacies: Some Conclusions	95
Notes	99
III. HANDBOOKS TO SPIRITUAL LITERACIES: MCNEMAR'S <u>KENTUCKY REVIVAL</u> AND DUNLAVY'S <u>MANIFESTO</u>	108
Notes	132
IV. WRITINGS AND READINGS OF THE 1816 <u>TESTIMONIES</u>	136
Revising Spiritual and Sentimental Narratives	138

	(ad)Dressing Naked Bodies with Pious Suffering: The Shaker Spectacle149
	Writing and Reading the Final Images of Ann Lee: A Summary	169
	Notes	173
V.	READING, WRITING, RACE AND MOTHER-IMAGERY: THE LITERACIES OF REBECCA JACKSON AND ALONZO HOLLISTER	177
	Rebecca Cox Jackson: Reading and Writing Herself as Mother	183
	Alonzo Giles Hollister: Longing for Literacies of the Past	219
	Notes	236
VI.	PRESERVING THE BODY IN POETRY: THE CANTERBURY <u>OBITUARY JOURNAL</u>	243
	Shaker Funerary Rituals	248
	The Canterbury Context	260
	The Poetry: The Elegiac Tradition and the Shaker Context	270
	Notes	304
VII.	PRIVATE ACTS AND POSSIBLE WORLDS: SHAKER LITERACIES AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY	312
	Notes	327
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	329
	Primary Sources	330
	Secondary Sources	335

ABSTRACT

BODIES OF LIFE: SHAKER LITERACIES AND LITERATURE

by

Etta M. Madden

University of New Hampshire, September 1995

I examine the roles of literacy and literature among the Shakers from the opening of "Mother" Ann Lee's testimony in 1780 through the early twentieth century to propose that the sect persistently resisted and revised "the world's" literacies. I assert that multiple kinds of reading and writing acts reinforce the beliefs of individuals and the church as a whole, and I argue that the increase in literary acts which appear to contribute to individualism and fragmentation of the institution actually allows Believers to revise their theology so that they see their sect as continuing to grow rather than declining.

In Chapter I, "Varieties of Literary Experiences," I chronologically survey shifts in the sect's literary endeavors. In Chapter II, "Letters, Spirits and Bodies," I define the Shakers' "spiritual literacies" by exploring relationships between bodily behaviors such as celibacy, theology of an embodied spirit, and literary acts, beginning with examples of Lee recorded in the biographical 1816 Testimonies.

Chapters III-VII are case studies of doctrinal treatises, histories, biographies, autobiographies and

elegies. In "Handbooks to Spiritual Literacies," I analyze Richard McNemar's Kentucky Revival and John Dunlavy's Manifesto to argue that Lee emerges as an "absent presence" which shapes the writers' faith-strengthening polemical works. In Chapter IV I argue that editors' construction of the 1816 Testimonies and Believers' interpretations of Lee imagery within it depend upon their knowledge of popular texts such as John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple.

Lee imagery and racial concerns inform the literacies of African-American Rebecca Jackson and her editor Alonzo Hollister, whose autobiographical writings are the focus of Chapter V. In Chapter VI I argue that the Canterbury, New Hampshire, Obituary Journal and elegies within it reflect an increasing sense of individualism and loss as they preserve Shaker literacies. Finally, I demonstrate how Anna White and Leila Taylor, in Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message (1904), revise the stories of Lee's literacy and Shaker educational practices to sketch the sect as progressive. Yet like many prior Believers, they underscore the presence of a spirit which breathes life into their literacies and literature.

INTRODUCTION

In this study I examine the roles of literacy and literature among the Shakers, from the opening of "Mother" Ann Lee's testimony in 1780 through the compilation of the first bibliography of Shaker literature in the early twentieth century. I propose that during this period the sect also known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, or "Believers," persistently resisted and revised what Harvey Graff calls the "literacy myth." As Graff describes the belief, literacy is a major contributing factor to societal and individual "progress"-- "a basic human right and a tool for productive citizenship and fulfilling lives" (3). The Shakers elicit questions about measuring "progress" and "success" in relationship to literary practices because their numerical growth and decline parallels increasing literacy and literary practices. They emerged as a persecuted band of seven in Revolutionary America, grew to some 4000 members in 16 communities in the 1820s, peaked numerically near 6000 at mid-century, and then steadily declined in number after mid-century.¹ During this same period, the religious group's literary practices shifted from Bible reading in a culture dominated by oral modes of communication to reading and writing in a variety of genres. The Shakers' doctrinal works, testimonies, letters, journals, poetry, hymns,

recipes, scrapbooks and the like comprise today several collections which contain more than 12,000 imprints and manuscripts.² Thus, the Shakers' increasing literacy and literary practices may appear to have contributed to their numerical decline.

Underlying my study of the sect's literacy and literature is a transhistorical question: what are the relationships between reading, writing and religious life? "Deprivation" theories which have asserted that people turn to religious beliefs to fulfill some type of need or lack--psychological, economic, physical, educational, and so forth--suggest that less educated or less literate individuals tend to be more religious or more spiritually inclined. At least, these educationally deprived people choose less "reasonable" religious practices than those who are more educated or more literate.³ Yet hasty assertions such as these contribute to what Graff calls "the literacy myth" by failing "to discern the meaning of literacy" and by "preempt[ing] criticism and investigation" with assumptions (3). Only detailed and qualitative rather than quantitative analysis of any social group--and in particular of individuals within it--in a given historical period may dispel these myths. As Graff writes, "to consider any of the ways in which literacy intersects with social, political, economic, cultural, or psychological life . . . requires excursions into . . . records" other than ones easily

quantified (16-17).

Wanting to follow Graff's suggestion, but trained as a textual analyst rather than a social historian, I forged an understanding of the relationship between literacy and texts, drawing from examples and definitions such as that offered by Cathy Davidson in Revolution and the Word. She defines literature as "not simply words upon a page but a complex social, political, and material process of cultural production" (viii). Thus, she emphasizes readers and writers and the acts of writing and reading as critical parts of analyses of inscribed texts.

I moved from studies of literature and literacy, such as Davidson's and Graff's, to an historically-grounded analysis of Shaker reading and writing practices and Shaker texts.⁴ As a result of absorbing Shaker theology, shifts in Shaker lifestyles from the late-eighteenth through the early twentieth century, and details about individual writers and Shaker genres, my initial question of the role of writing and reading in religious life splintered into numerous sharper ones. I came to ask, for example, how do gendered ways of writing, reading and knowing influence spiritual life? How do particular genres function in religious communities? What impact does a religious leader's literacy have upon her followers? And what role does Shaker theology of the spirit and its relationship to the body play in writing and reading?⁵

The answers I propose to these questions in the chapters which follow emerge from analyses of the lives of Shakers such as Ann Lee, John Dunlavy, Rebecca Jackson, Richard McNemar and Emeline Kimball and the inscribed texts which reflect these lives: doctrinal works, histories, testimonies, and poetry. I assert first that multiple kinds of reading and writing acts reinforce the beliefs of these individual Shakers and the church as a whole. Second, I argue that the increase in literary acts, especially after 1850, which appears to contribute to an emphasis on individualism and the fragmentation of the Shaker church, actually allows them to revise their theology so that they see Shakerism as continuing to grow rather than as in numerical decline.

The Shakers' multiple kinds of writing and reading practices problematize dichotomies often associated with reading and writing acts. Among works on reading, for example, Davidson refers to reading as an act of "production" as opposed to "consumption"; Roland Barthes uses the term "writerly" to describe the kind of text in which a reader actively creates or produces meaning; Graff explains that critics of literacy distinguish between "critical" reading and "functional" reading, the former being the more "productive" type. Such binaries may also be used to describe Shaker acts of reading and writing. Transcriptions of Seth Wells's piece On Learning and the Use

of Books and the memorial poetry included in the Canterbury Obituary Journal, for example, appear to represent acts of purely mechanical copying. At the opposite end of the spectrum from this mechanized writing and reading lies inscription which appears to be individualized self-expression (a letter, a personal testimony, or a memorial poem) or which appears to draw from what Walter J. Ong calls "higher order thinking skills" (a doctrinal treatise). Contemporary literary criticism often labels this latter type of writing "productive," especially if the products are insightful, reflect creative genius, or "deconstruct" or rewrite the authoritative discourse within the culture.⁶ Such "productive" writing and reading acts occur within Shakerism, but equally empowering "passive" and "mechanical" writing and reading acts accompany them. The Shakers' literacies--what I call their "spiritual literacies"--ask us to view these apparently oppositional realms as codependent or symbiotic and to see the boundaries between them as permeable.

The sect-specific theology of the embodied Spirit, which Kathleen Deignan and Robley Whitson refer to as the belief in the paraousia, or the "being present" of the deity and the divine spirit, contributes to the Shakers' acceptance of many kinds of reading and writing.⁷ Their spiritual literacies consist of interpretive and expressive acts which involve writers' and readers' bodies as well as

minds. And their spiritual literacies allow shifts in reading and writing practices.

The varied pictures of spiritual literacies I sketch in the chapters which follow emerge from the statements Shakers made about their writing and reading practices, the genres or kinds of texts they wrote and read at particular historical moments, and the ways in which their writing and reading practices occurred (the social and physical settings as well as the manners and methods of interpretation, vocalization, and inscription they use). Like the number and kinds of texts, the sheer number of individuals who came to Shakerism between the late-eighteenth and early-twentieth centuries complicates any generalization about the role of literacies in Believers' faiths. Yet in the first two chapters I discuss not only the varieties of Shaker literature and literacies but also their consistent elements. In the first chapter I foreground changes in literary practices through a chronological survey of the historical span I have considered. In the second chapter, arranged topically, I give a more atemporal or transhistorical approach. Together these chapters provide historical, theological and epistemological perspectives of Shaker reading and writing which inform the case studies of Chapters III through VII.

In the first chapter, "Varieties of Literary Experiences: An Overview of Shaker Writing and Reading," I

with Ann Lee's biblically-based but orally-conveyed teachings. With the 1790 publication of Joseph Meacham's Concise Statement, Shaker leaders initiated a phase of writing and reading practices dominated by the inscription and interpretation of doctrinal works and personal testimonies--genres meant to further the cause of the millennial church. From 1827 on, the varieties of texts written and read within Shaker communities increased to include the reading and writing of "spirit messages" recorded during the revival known as the Era of Manifestations, sentimental or Victorian occasional verse, newspapers and periodicals, and even fiction from "the world."

As a result of controlling the kinds of texts Believers have written and read and the situations in which the writing and reading acts have occurred, I explain, Shakers have also controlled, to a degree, the ways in which Believers have written and read. Although some left the sect because the leadership did not assuage their desires to read and write freely, some remained, content with practices which drove others away. Shakers who have been interested in writing and reading have viewed their activities not as repressive but as essential to their personal spirituality and to the Shaker way.

Although Shaker ways of reading and writing have shifted over the years, two consistent elements have

reinforced the faith of Believers. The first is a willingness to submit to communal control, however indirectly exerted or subtly experienced, because of a belief in the idea of the community--of idealized images of the institution and individuals within it. The second, in a symbiotic relationship with the first, is the belief in the presence of an embodied spirit. This belief, I suggest at the end of Chapter I, gives the Shakers' hermeneutic and its impact a unique shape--what I define in Chapter II as the Shakers' spiritual literacies.

In "Letters, Spirits and Bodies: The Shakers' Spiritual Literacies" I explore the relationships between bodily behaviors such as celibacy, theology of an embodied spirit, and literary acts. I begin with examples of Ann Lee's interpretive and expressive acts as recorded in her biography, the 1816 Testimonies. Lee "reads" uninscribed texts such as people and visions and "publishes" mini-sermons which exhibit a blend of "reason" and "emotion." Following Lee's examples, I turn to Believers' frequent citation of the Pauline scripture, "the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive" (2 Corinthians 3:6) to illustrate the Shakers' association of the spirit with neither side of the oppositional mind/body dichotomy but as a unifying third term. Associating spirits and spirituality with both minds and bodies influences their "spiritual literacies." I conclude the chapter with a discussion of ritualized reading

conclude the chapter with a discussion of ritualized reading and writing and the three types of memory Paul Connerton describes as contributing to cultural discourses.

Shaker literacies and literature depend not only upon a belief in the presence of the Christ Spirit as initially exemplified in Lee but also upon the religious imagination as it draws from memories--memories of idealized images of individuals and of the institution. These images become communal constructs as Believers hand them down orally, in writing, and through bodily performance. The spiritual power of the literature and literacies of the present, I argue, comes from remembering and reinscribing the past.

Thus, in the case studies in chapters which follow the two introductory ones, I analyze the writing and reading of texts which explicitly reconstruct (aspects of) the lives of particular Shakers and the collective body of Believers: doctrinal treatises, histories, biographies, autobiographies and elegies. My selection of these "non-fictional" genres was influenced partially by the fact that the Shakers wrote no "fiction," but also because they assisted me more aptly in exploring the role of writing and reading in individuals' spiritual lives. These genres bring to the fore notions of subjectivity by highlighting a speaking or writing subject without an explicit "veil of fiction" between writer and perceived or invoked audience to complicate an already difficult analysis. The "authors" of writing and reading

subjects I consider were faithful for lengthy periods, in spite of what many outsiders and apostates saw as repressive literary practices within the communities. Their textual production helps us to understand how the writing and reading of idealized images of individuals and the institution empowered them in their Shaker travel.

In Chapter III, "Handbooks to Spiritual Literacies: McNemar's Kentucky Revival and Dunlavy's Manifesto," I analyze the writings of male leaders Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy during the Shakers' formative years. McNemar's narrative history and Dunlavy's dense and lengthy theological treatise present the sect's sanctioned hermeneutic as "reasoned" from Scripture, but they also implicitly reveal the significance of personal experience for each writer. Although Ann Lee does not appear explicitly within the texts, the controversial female figure emerges as the "absent presence" which controls and shapes McNemar's and Dunlavy's faith-strengthening defenses of the Shaker church. They strengthen themselves and the church from within by delineating their doctrinal differences from those without. Shaker literacies, exemplified initially by Lee, contribute to those differences.

Shaker leaders' reasoning and their control of Ann Lee imagery instigate the analysis of Chapter IV as well. In "Writings and Readings of the 1816 Testimonies" I suggest that Shaker editors selected and arranged images of female

piety, such as physical suffering, to counter accusations of sexual sin and unfeminine behavior outsiders levied against Lee and the Shakers. The editors omit references to these accusations because of their awareness of the ability of even verbal depictions of sexuality to disrupt the narrative. Their construction of the narrative depends upon their awareness of the Believers' knowledge of spiritual and sentimental narratives such as John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Mary Rowlandson's Narrative of Captivity and Restauration, and Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple. I argue that Believers absorbed and synthesized images of Ann Lee in relationship to the commonplaces of these narratives. Lee transgresses the sacred and secular boundaries of woman's sphere by claiming she embodies the spirit and by teaching celibacy. Her lack of biological children, lack of a husband, and lack of a single domestic space or "home," contribute to the bodily behavior which marks Lee as a woman of difference.

These images of Lee--inscribed textually or "canonized" after 1816 but continually handed down orally--inform the spiritual literacies of Shakers such as Rebecca Cox Jackson and Alonzo Giles Hollister. In Chapter V, "Reading, Writing, Race and Mother-Imagery," I discuss the significance of Ann Lee imagery to the literacies of both African-American Jackson and her white editor Hollister, whose physical experiences differed radically. Their experiences differed

not only because of their genders and races but also because of the time periods in which they were involved with the Shakers. Jackson's personal testimony exemplifies the genre used at mid-century primarily for internal strengthening; Hollister's writing, more heavily saturated than Jackson's with "the world's" literary discourses, reflects the Shakers' employment of the "the world's" devices to preserve spiritual literacies around the turn of the century. He continues the "masculine" tradition of apologetic writing leaders such as McNemar and Dunlavy established, but he self-consciously creates an archive for researchers rather than an evangelical library for possible converts. Yet Jackson and Hollister and their narratives demonstrate the spiritual literacy instituted by Ann Lee provide Believers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century spiritual sustenance and freedom even while they work within the constraints of Shakerism.

Like the writings of Hollister and Jackson, the compilation and the poetry of the *Canterbury, New Hampshire, Obituary Journal* drew from the spiritual literacy Lee established. In Chapter VI, "Preserving the Body in Poetry," I argue that the three-volume manuscript record which contains more than 400 elegies to deceased Shakers reflects the increasing sense of individualism, fragmentation and loss within Shaker communities after the mid-nineteenth century. The poets who wrote these poems demonstrate the

Shakers' paradoxical attitudes toward the physical body and its role in spiritual life, as they use images of physical bodies and the physicality of pen and paper to embody the spirits of deceased Shakers. And they demonstrate their awareness of "the world's" literacies and funerary literature as they mimic popular nineteenth century elegies. By binding these poems into volumes, the composers of the Obituary Journal demonstrate the Shakers' strategy and ability to unify and strengthen individuals within the community through reading and writing rituals. Like Alonzo Hollister, the Journal's primary compositor, Emeline Kimball, created a repository of Shaker literacies at Canterbury and exhibited a literacy which blurred gender boundaries. Known as physician and nurse at Canterbury, Kimball blended the scientific and sentimental elements of spirituality through her keeping of the Journal.

I conclude my analysis of the relationship between spirituality and literacy in Chapter VII, "Private Acts and Possible Worlds: Shaker Literacies at the Turn of the Century." I briefly draw from Anna White's and Leila Taylor's Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message to argue that they retell the stories of Ann Lee's literacy, Shaker reading and writing practices, and Shaker spirituality in a way which sketches the sect as progressive, rational and scientific. Yet their belief in an active, living spirit grounds and energizes the evangelical text which is prophecy

prior to them, point to the importance of ecstatic gifts and uninscribed "reading" and "publishing" while they illustrate the importance of reason, education, and alphabetic literacy.

Through consideration of such individuals as Ann Lee, Richard McNemar, Rebecca Jackson, Alonzo Hollister, Emeline Kimball, and Leila Taylor and the narratives which reflect their spiritual lives, I argue for the complexity of individuals' literacies. These Believers demonstrate their acceptance of a revised "literacy myth" which upholds knowledge gathered from reasoning through a text. Yet they also demonstrate that one-time bodily events such as the loss of a parent, child or spouse, ongoing bodily experiences as male or female or as African-American or Anglo-American, and recurring bodily rituals empower writing and reading subjects in Shaker communities. The spirit's presence in Believers' minds and bodies gives their literacies and literature the breath of life.

My emphasis on the spirit's role in this study of Shaker literacies and literature contributes to the growing field of Shaker scholarship in two areas. With its focus on spirituality in addition to the material artifacts of textual production, my work joins those studies which have emphasized the Shakers' theology and lived experiences as at least equal in importance to the physical manifestations such as furniture and architecture which "the world" has

admired since the early twentieth century. And, by examining Shaker texts, I contribute to the analysis of Shaker literature begun by Jean Humez, Diane Sasson and others.⁶

My study demonstrates that Shaker writing, like the Puritan texts which for so long have undergirded studies of American literature, not only reflects the thinking of individuals but also provides information about the culture in which they live. By being both separate from and a part of discourses of American culture, Shaker literature and literacies remind us of the ongoing dialectic between individual writers and readers and their supportive communities, and the continual conversations between their communities and the larger culture.

Notes

1. These numbers are based on the reports by Shakers Calvin Green and Seth Y. Wells in A Summary View of the Millennial Church (1823). In addition there are two demographic studies of the sect by non-Shakers William Sims Bainbridge and Priscilla Brewer (Shaker Communities). For comments on the discrepancies between the figures of these three works see Stephen Stein (Shaker Experience, 87-90).

2. The most comprehensive bibliography of these Shaker texts is Mary Richmond's Shaker Literature. See also John P. MacLean's Bibliography of Shaker Literature. Often a particular collection has a published or unpublished bibliography of works within it, such as Richard McKinstry's The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection.

3. Stephen Stein and Stephen Marini have also argued against "deprivation theory" as an infallible explanation for why individuals became or remained Shakers. Stein writes, "According to deprivation theory, the Shakers and other enthusiastic religious groups on the frontier offered refuge and solace to individuals experiencing difficulty in times of social dislocation and cultural transition" (Letters, 5). Citing Marini's Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England, he argues that "Believers came from all classes" (Letters,

5).

4. The numerous studies of literacy and literature which have influenced my thinking are almost impossible to list here. Among literacy studies, Andrea Fishman's ethnographic study, Amish Literacy, provided an example of analyzing a religious community as well as thought-provoking insights to the community's performative readings at home, at church and in the schoolroom. James Gee's Social Linguistics and Literacies also emphasized the performative elements of reading in the classroom. Michael Cole's and Sylvia Scribner's The Psychology of Literacy provided me examples of framing questions and categorizing types of literacy. Walter J. Ong's Orality and Literacy first caused me to consider the differences between orally-dominated cultures and those ruled by inscribed texts.

Among the historical studies of reading and writing in particular communities, those which emphasize the interplay between literacy and orality have been particularly helpful: Richard Bauman's study of seventeenth-century Quakers, Let Your Words Be Few; David Hall's World's of Wonder, Days of Judgment, on Puritan writing and reading; Robert St. George's "'Heated Speech' and Literacy in Seventeenth-Century New England"; Richard Brodhead's Cultures of Letters; and Robert Darnton's The Great Cat Massacre.

My analysis has also been influenced by numerous studies of Puritan and Protestant hermeneutics, such as Perry Miller's The New England Mind, Mason Lowance's The Language of Canaan, and Chapter One of Larzer Ziff's Writing in the New Nation, and by studies specific to New England communities, such as Lawrence Buell's New England Literary Culture and William J. Gilmore's Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life.

5. The earliest and perhaps most significant Shaker theological works are Joseph Meacham's Concise Statement of the Principles of the Only True Church, Benjamin Seth Young's Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing and John Dunlavy's Manifesto. The most helpful secondary works which draw from these to explain Shaker theology are Kathleen Deignan's Christ Spirit, Robley Whitson's Two Centuries of Spiritual Reflection, and Marini's Radical Sects. The most recent comprehensive history of the Shakers is Stein's Shaker Experience in America. In addition to details about the sect's theology and their reading, writing and publishing, Stein's work provides information about individual writers I analyze in this study. Other histories include Edward Deming Edwards's The People Called Shakers and Henri Desroche's The American Shakers. The foremost works on the Shakers' doctrine of celibacy are Louis Kern's An Ordered Love, Lawrence Foster's Religion and Sexuality, and Sally Kitch's Chaste Liberation. Studies of women's roles in

Shakerism, in addition to these three works on celibacy, include Marjorie Proctor-Smith's Women in Shaker Community and Worship, Priscilla Brewer's "'Tho of the Weaker Sex,'" and Jean Humez's Mother's First-Born Daughters.

These questions have also been instigated by several works on women's epistemology, literacy and spirituality, such as Mary Belenky's Women's Ways of Knowing, Elaine Pagels's Gnostic Gospels, and Nellie McKay's "Nineteenth Century Black Women's Spiritual Autobiographies."

6. Barthes explains the terms "writerly" and "readerly" in the opening of S/Z (4). Graff describes the categorizing work of critics of literacy as an admirable beginning to the oversimplification of early literacy studies (4). Ong argues that literacy contributes to such higher order thinking skills in Orality and Literacy (36-57).

In addition to Davidson's study of the literature of the early Republic, in which she argues reading contributed to women's empowerment, Jane Tompkins's Sensational Designs and Nina Baym's Woman's Fiction argue that previously underrated literature by women rewrites the authoritative discourse of mid-nineteenth century American culture. Tompkin's and Baym's works illustrate that even if a writer believes she freely expresses herself, the "product" may appear to be a stereotype of other pieces of the same genre. And with texts which appear to be individualized acts of self-expression, analysts have a difficult time determining the degree to which a writer freely expresses herself. This ideal to which apostates and other "outsiders" aspired held little attraction for those within Shakerism. I argue in Chapter IV, for example, that Rebecca Jackson's spiritual literacy allows her to write and read innovatively both the symbol of Ann Lee and the genre called "spiritual narrative," thus giving herself agency even within the confines of the institution. Yet under the influence of what she already knew, she in many ways was "already written" by the discourse communities in which she lived. And she did not necessarily desire to create unique, personalized, self-expression. Thus, it is difficult to measure the "progress" of her literacy and her personal development.

7. Deignan and Whitson describe the Shakers' theological perspectives as millennialists concerned with pneumatology. Marini also describes Shaker theology within the context of millennialism in revolutionary New England (Radical Sects).

8. Sally Promey's Spiritual Spectacles, on the gift-drawings of the mid-nineteenth century, and Daniel Patterson's study of hymns, Shaker Spiritual, are two examples of recent works which bring together the sect's spiritual impetus with their material manifestations. Diane Sasson's The Shaker Spiritual Narrative, which also emphasizes spirituality, was the first

study of Shaker literature. More recently she has analyzed Shaker writings of the Era of Manifestations ("Individual Experience, Community Control"). Jean Humez initially added to Sasson's pattern of literary study with her edition and analysis of Rebecca Cox Jackson's autobiographical writings (Gifts of Power). Since then she has analyzed the 1816 Testimonies ("Ye Are My Epistles"), the writings of early Shaker women (Mother's First-Born Daughters), and the publications of apostate Mary Marshal Dyer ("A Woman Mighty"). Deignan's theological study is also a literary one, providing an analysis of several theological works.

CHAPTER I

VARIETIES OF LITERARY EXPERIENCES: AN OVERVIEW OF SHAKER WRITING AND READING

Not many years back "God hates grammar" was a common expression . . .

Nicholas Briggs, in "Forty Years a Shaker"
(1920)

The Shakers' literary experiences from the late-eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries coincide in many ways with their middle-class evangelical counterparts. The Shakers' writing and reading practices parallel the shifts in "the world's" reading and writing as described by literary historians such as Cathy Davidson, William Gilmore, Nancy Cott, Ann Douglas, Jane Tompkins and Lawrence Buell. Initially the Shakers read only the Bible and religious literature, and reading and writing were put to the purposes of spiritual development. They retained a belief in the connections between imaginative literature and sexual license in the years of the early Republic when, as Cathy Davidson argues, women began to turn fiction to uses of social and pietistic improvement. When evangelical and popular authors, as Tompkins argues, built sentimental fiction on popular religious narratives in the 1830s and

1840s, the Shakers continued to be resistant to "fiction," but employed similar narrative strategies in their testimonial writing. Thus, the Shakers moved from a skepticism of writing and reading other than the Bible (including fiction) to appropriation of techniques of fiction within "religious" or evangelical genres they were writing.¹

The Shakers both echoed and revised what Harvey Graff calls the "literacy myth," based upon their own understandings of literacy. In Graff's view, many people since the nineteenth century have believed reading and writing allows individuals to think independently and reasonably. As a result the literate individuals will make choices about matters such as religion which will contribute to their success either in this world or in the next and to the "progress" of the society in which they live.² The Shakers revise this "literacy myth" slightly to construct their own, which centers upon their beliefs as millennial eschatologists. The embodied presence of the Christ Spirit allowed a variety of literary practices among Believers from the sects earliest days.

In revolutionary New England, for example, Believers in Christ's second appearing exhibited varied literary skills. According to Shaker records, the exemplary female leader Ann Lee was "illiterate" and "unlettered." However, her male counterparts, Joseph Meacham and James Whitaker, read the

Bible and exhibited a knowledge of ecclesiastical histories and religious tracts.³ By the mid-nineteenth century, when the Shakers had published numerous theological works such as John Dunlavy's Manifesto, some adult Believers and children exhibited only minimal literary skills or interest in literary endeavors. The extensiveness of Rebecca Jackson's testimonial writings, for example, demonstrates her interest in reading and writing, but the works simultaneously reflect her lack of knowledge of grammatical correctness.⁴ Shaker community schools, first supported by taxes in Connecticut in 1792, enrolled as many as 200 young people by 1811 in Union Village, Ohio, and were well established by 1830 (Stein, Shaker Experience, 100-101). By 1856 the New Lebanon, New York, community awarded books as incentives for learning. However, not all students were excited by the potential of additional literary endeavors.⁵

These variations among individual Shakers at particular moments within the late-eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries reflect in part the "varieties of literary experiences" to which this chapter's title points. In addition to varieties among Believers, due to their historical moments, interests, educational levels, geographical locales, and the like, I also underscore varieties of reading and writing practices within particular individuals, whose habits and skills shift from moment to moment as occasions demand.⁶ And I discuss varieties in

writing and reading practices of the sect as a whole, spanning the historical period from the "opening" of Ann Lee's "testimony against the flesh" in 1780 to the early twentieth century, when Anna White's and Leila Taylor's Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message (1904) appeared. The latter of these is the primary concern of this chapter. Individual Shakers, whose reading and writing skills and practices varied (as I will illustrate in chapters which follow), saw themselves as part of a whole; their individuality only comes to light when considered against the backdrop of beliefs and practices they share with others in the sect.

Other scholars of Shakerism have traced or mentioned the sect's literary endeavors and educational practices, noting for example, the sect's move from orally-conveyed teachings to inscribed theology, the educational and literary differences among Shakers of the east and the west, and the influences of "the world's" genres, such as spiritual autobiography and polemical pamphlets, upon Shaker writers.⁷ Yet in their discussions of the relationship between "the world's" reading and writing practices and those within the sect, none has considered in any detail the relationship between Shaker beliefs about the spirit and reading and writing acts. These two forces--"the world's" attitudes toward literacies and literature and the Shakers' pneumatology--shape the shifts in Shaker writing and reading

practices I sketch in this chapter.

My understanding of shifts in Shaker writing and reading practices depends not only upon the works by other Shaker scholars I mention above but also upon the historical divisions Kathleen Deignan and Stephen Stein provide.⁹ In her analysis of the Shakers' systematic theology and their pneumatic eschatology, Deignan explores the sect's shifting conceptions of the eschaton, or the "being present" of the spirit during three periods. She argues that from the opening of Ann Lee's testimony up through Meacham's publication in 1790, Lee herself was viewed as the eschaton; in a second period, from 1790 up through 1850, doctrinal writers began to refer to the millennial church or body of Believers, each containing the spirit, as the eschaton; and from 1850 to the present, Shakers have viewed the eschaton as the universal Christ Spirit, immanent outside as well as within Shaker communities. I modify Deignan's lengthy second period by drawing from Stein's overview of Shaker history. I break the sixty year span of emphasis on the millennial church (1790-1850) at 1827, the year of the publication of the second edition of the Testimonies.

The period from 1790 to 1827 is, as Stein labels it, a period of "Gathering and Building," partially through writing and publication by the leaders and by the establishment of Shaker schools. In the years prior to 1827, when leaders limited Believers' alphabetic literacies to the

basest competencies, "progress" by "the world's" standards was not one of the goals they sought. Because they sought spiritual progression, they used alphabetic literacy only to assist Believers in their "travels" down the roads of progressive spiritual perfection. In the early years spiritual achievement did not necessitate much interpretation or inscription of texts but only the competence needed for the communities' functions. Thus, they began writing and publishing theological works, used letters for communication, and instructed children in writing and reading.

In the period from 1827-1850 (what Stein calls "Maturation and Revitalization") communal publications continued to be important but the leadership encouraged individual manuscript writing. During this period the Shakers' numerous "spirit" writings and writers embodied the characteristics Ann Lee had manifested 50 years prior. As a result, the leadership clamped down (as they had in the 1790s) and formed new laws about literary practices. The acceptable writings reinforced the belief in the eschaton as the millennial church, as Deignan argues.

Shaker leaders' shifting attitudes toward writing and reading and the communal results of these shifts echo Davidson's assertions about private, individualized readings in the early Republic. Davidson argues that the private reading of fiction, which provides readers with personal

authority and agency, led to anti-fiction campaigns by Noah Webster and others concerned with unifying the new nation, culminating in the patriotic, rhetorical readings of the common school movement. Private acts of interpreting non-fictional genres could have similar effects, threatening those in positions of communal or cultural authority. Thus, Shaker leaders validated public, oral readings over private ones, in a sense "feminizing" Shaker readers and writers by providing the kind of internal discipline which Richard Brodhead describes as having replaced corporal discipline by the mid-nineteenth century.

By 1850, when the Shakers had increased their involvement in "the world's" industries, "progress" by "the world's" standards was more accepted; consequently, alphabetic literacy and the reading and writing of the world's genres increased as well. When the Shakers began reading some fiction and allowing more private reading, they contributed unwittingly to the increasing fragmentation of the communities and concern for the loss of a Shaker identity. The leaders' belief in the spiritual reception and production of texts allowed them to make these shifts. And this reading and writing also allowed them to see Shakerism and the Christ Spirit as reaching beyond the confines of physical communities; reading and writing provided them visions of larger and continuing worlds of Shakerism. The reading and writing of "the world's" genres and texts

allowed Shaker readers and writers to discover the universal Christ Spirit.

These shifts in writing and reading practices demonstrate the leaders' willingness and their need to listen and respond to pressures of the larger culture brought into the sect by new converts and by "the world's" literature and discourses. "Shaker communitarianism has," as Jean Humez has recently written, "held a mirror up to developing U.S. Anglo-American culture, from a position at once 'outside' and 'inside' that culture" ("A Woman Mighty," 90). The sect's reading and writing practices cannot be analyzed accurately without attention to these forces of the larger American culture shaping them.

In this chapter I consider these sources inside and outside Shaker communities which, in composite, provide glimmers of the heated elements which burned some Believers' faiths and kept others fermenting. Accounts by apostates and other outsiders reiterate the shifts insider accounts do, but they voice a few consistent complaints in the process, ranging from the lack of education the institution provided (compared to that offered in "the world") to the inability of Believers to read fiction. Mary Marshall Dyer expresses in her Portraiture of Shakerism (1822) the "folk" attitude common in the years of the early Republic--that the Shakers, vessels of Satan, used writing as a tool to deceive and control others. Later accounts, such as David Lamson's Two

Years Experience (1848), complain about the unreasonableness of the Shaker belief in "inspired" writings, the censorship of popular periodicals and fiction, and the limited physical settings of writing and reading acts. The most frequently and consistently voiced complaints are about the lack of freedom--freedom to reason from and about inscribed texts and to express opinions--either orally or in writing--as a result of using this reason. Although some left the sect because the leadership did not assuage their desires to write and read "freely," many remained, content with or willing to endure practices they saw as essential to their personal spirituality and to the Shaker way.⁹

The Primacy of Orality: Shaker Writing and Reading Prior to 1790

Stein explains that "the early hostility of the society toward written creeds, statements of belief, and even written testimonies" emerged "in part from Ann Lee's illiteracy, a limitation that fueled her rejection of all writing" (9). Yet according to the most lengthy biography of Ann Lee, the Testimonies (1816), she quotes Scripture readily, even directing her colleague to read a specific passage from the book of James when the occasion demands. I discuss at length the type of reading Lee practices in the next chapter. For now, though, I will emphasize that the Scripture supports the orally-conveyed message she preaches.

As Stein recognizes

the Shakers' early prohibition against writing was an affirmation of the value they perceived in verbal [oral] testimonies offered by 'eye and ear witnesses' and a reflection of their view of revelation as dynamic and changing. For Ann Lee and her followers, the written word paled in veracity as well as efficacy when compared with the spoken word. (9)

With the presence of the Christ Spirit embodied in the physically living "Mother" Ann Lee, written texts such as the Bible, when used, were in subordination to the primacy of orally-conveyed teachings. Because texts, like the bread and the wine of Protestant communion, serve in the absence of God and the Christ as signs pointing the way to divine truth, they are not necessary when the Christ Spirit is present, embodied in Ann Lee. Clarke Garrett writes, "when a religious community incorporates spirit possession into its ritual, the potential extent of innovation is limited only by the capacity of the believers to accept the revelations as authentically divine" (195). For the Shakers the embodied spirit during Ann Lee's life established their belief in and acceptance of innovation and innovative reading and writing and the body's influences upon writing and reading throughout their history.

Even after Lee's physical death in 1784, as the Church began to be "gathered into order" by Joseph Meacham and James Whitaker, when written texts which had been subordinated to Lee's physical and spiritual presence began to be used in her absence, they defended and explained her

foundational testimony. Meacham's Concise Statement of the Principles of the Only True Church According to the Gospel of the Present Appearance of Christ, which appeared as the first Shaker publication in 1790, illustrates the leadership's attempt to continually emphasize the body. As Deignan has argued, the body is an organizing image for Meacham's theological tract (79-82); he uses it to refer to the church as a whole as well as to the literal house of the spirit for individual believers. Additionally, Meacham's tract contains traces of the oral culture in which he taught; it reads as though it were meant to be heard. The first paragraph contains only four lengthy sentences consisting of numerous phrases linked by semi-colons and colons rather than the logical conjunctions a rigorous editor would require. Rather, Meacham attempts to sweep his audience along by a powerful current of Biblical allusions:

And altho' they could not receive regeneration or the fulness of salvation, from the fleshly or fallen nature in this life; because the fulness of time was not yet come, that they should receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire; for the destruction of the body of sin, and purification of the soul; but Abram being called, and chosen of God as the father of the faithful; was received into covenant relation with God by promise; that in him (and his seed which was Christ) all the families of the earth should be blessed, and these earthly blessings, which were promised to Abram, were a shadow of gospel or spiritual blessings to come: and circumcision, though it was a seal of Abram's faith, yet it was but a sign of the mortification and destruction of the flesh by the gospel in a future day. (in Whitson, 62)¹⁰

In this passage (from the tract's first paragraph) Meacham

refers to the bodily act of circumcision in Abraham's day as "a sign of the mortification and destruction of the flesh . . . in a future day." He goes on to explain outward acts of the body as signs of the inner state--the presence of the indwelling spirit, "which does indeed destroy the body of sin, or fleshly nature, and purify the man from all sin both soul and body" (Whitson, 62). This indwelling spirit is "manifested in divers operations and gifts" (Whitson, 62).

Shaker theologians such as Meacham emphasized the innovative gifts of the indwelling spirit and the body's role in spirituality, yet they used Scripture (especially Joel, Daniel, and Revelation) and employed the polemical writing styles of their enemies to explain God's dispensations of history, ending in the present "last days" of the millennial church, to gather, strengthen and sustain the sect. They attempted to maintain the immediate power of oral culture, yet they recognized the importance of print. Stein describes this move into more literate practices as a pragmatic response:

when the Shakers began to feel the sting of repeated attacks, they changed their practice and began to write in their own defense. Similarly they used the printed page for instructing members about principles and practices. (Shaker Experience, 9)

Thus, after 1790 writing and reading of texts began to take on added significance. Leaders wrote letters on behalf of the Society, kept communal journals and records, composed tracts for the world and read enough popular periodical

literature to be familiar with the world's events.¹¹

External Forces and Educating for the Progress of the Sect:
1790-1827

Among the early outsider accounts which "stung" the Shakers with accusations of limited education and reading and writing activities, Mary Marshall Dyer's Portraiture of Shakerism, which appeared near the end of this historical period in 1822, provides glimpses of the arguments of earlier accounts. In the 446-page work she compiles testimonies against the Shakers, including arguments printed for the first time and excerpts from previously published apostate accounts. According to Dyer's account, her husband Joseph "went to the Shakers" at Enfield, New Hampshire, with a promise to leave her set up with a house. He renegs because he and his property, including his children, are under the order of the Elders. Initially provoked by the loss of child custody and her own financial support, she develops an extensive argument including accusations about Shaker writing and reading practices.¹² These testimonies--in sum an excellent example of literacy's entanglement in cultural politics--argue in part that the Shakers use the Bible and other written documents deceitfully to accomplish their tasks, and that they deny children education and thus repress their use of reasoning, which would allow them to make the right choices about religion.

Before voicing her own complaints, Dyer lets others speak of their knowledge of the Shakers, building a case against them with a community of voices and setting the stage for her own testimony. For example, Clement Beck, who lived with the Shakers in New Hampshire as a child, testifies:

My education is poor; when I was a child and a youth, the Shakers did not allow their subjects to have learning--what I have, I obtained by stealth, contrary to orders--since then the authority [of the State] has compelled them to give their children some learning. . . . I have known them when people were coming to inspect their schools, make some write (sic) composition--then another copy it off better, and show the copy, saying it was the former ones' writing. I have known others make a mark on paper, then another write (sic) composition on the same paper, and call it the persons (sic) writing which made the mark. (186-87)

Beck's testimony centers on relationships between truth and the written word in two ways. First, the Shakers' practices force him to become immoral and dishonest, since he must acquire learning by "stealth." Second, the Shakers themselves exhibit dishonesty by using writing to deceive.

Ebenezer Kimball's testimony against the Shakers also exhibits the literacy myth of the early nineteenth century, linking education with the early Republic's goals of freedom, including the freedom to discover "true" religion. He raises several rhetorical questions:

I wish to know why Shaker children should be deprived of useful knowledge and intelligence, more than other children? I call on the public mind. Is it not undermining the foundation of society and good government, civil and religious

liberty, to permit their being thus enslaved?
(203)

Kimball then provides, by hearsay evidence, his understanding of the literary and educational deprivations of New Hampshire Shakers:

I am informed that there are in Canterbury and Enfield, about 200 children, and some adults nearly 40 years old, who never heard a christian (sic) sermon: there is no liberty for them to attend any other denomination, but they must be in subjection to their elder, and he approves of no information in religion but their own. (203)¹³

Dyer reinforces these accusations that the Shakers use writing to repress freedom and to deceive by quoting extensively from other apostate and outsider accounts. A Colonel Smith of Kentucky, for example, has written that the Latin and Greek within the voluminous Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing (1808) indicate that it could not have been written by David Darrow, John Meacham, and Benjamin Youngs; the volume must have been "dressed up" by someone else in an attempt to make the Shakers appear learned (115-116). And Dyer includes an excerpt from Daniel Rathbun's Letter (printed initially in 1785) in which Rathbun accuses the Shakers of using the Bible as a prop to entice prospective converts:

You say it is a new dispensation, where God, Christ, nor Bible are of any use, only what is in the Mother. Then leave the Bible, and not impose on people with it. You make use of it, to persuade people into a belief with you; then they must renounce it or be chastised. (53)

Dyer's accusations about the Shakers' use of writing

and reading to deceive culminate in her own testimony of her treatment while living in the community. In the description Dyer cleverly draws from sentimental and popular discourse of the period to present herself as a victim incapable of decoding the legal document the elders extend to her and her husband.¹⁴ She writes that she learns only after the fact the power of her signature upon this incomprehensible text she refers to as "a writing":

This writing did not oblige the Shakers to educate our children, nor to provide for them in sickness, or to give them any thing when of age; in case of inability they were liable to become paupers. The writing bound us to give them up entirely to the disposal of the Elders--and in no case however cruel, we should be treated to interfere. My husband said he was willing to put this confidence in the elders, he signed the writing and compelled me to also. I had no relief only to weep. (347-48)

In contrast to these accusations, the accounts by Shakers during this early period present positively what the apostates describe as repression and deceit, echoing "the world's" emphasis on "use" and "improvement" as the goals of literacy and education. According to Calvin Green's Biographical Account of Joseph Meacham (1827), Meacham emphasized necessity, usefulness, and personal capacity as determining factors in a child's education:

Father established it as a rule for believers, that children brot up among them should have suitable education for all necessary purposes, according to the proper order & calling of the true church of Christ, but not be taught unnecessary arts & sciences which naturally draw back to the world.

He expressly said in meeting that, if any had obtained more than common learning, if they thot they

were the better for it, in a gospel or virtuous sense, it was a loss to them. Of these words I was an ear witness, & they made a lasting impression on my mind.
(65)

Although Green's testimony in writing upholds a "useful" education for children within Shaker communities, it also underscores the continued importance of orality--Meacham's thoughts were orally conveyed ("said in meeting") and Green testifies he "was an ear witness."¹⁵ By 1802, in the West family of Canterbury, New Hampshire, the teachers Hannah Bronson and Hannah Beedee used Webster's Spelling Book, the New Testament, and secular primers to teach their two subjects--reading and spelling (Taylor, F., 146).

By the time of Green's writing in the 1827, leaders such as he had been compelled (due to the accusations from without) to articulate and explain prior educational practices. Also during this period "Mother" Lucy Wright, who had gained prominence as a female leader after Ann Lee's death, "tried to bring the Believers' behavior up-to-date, particularly in the area of language" (Brewer, Shaker Communities, 36). A member of the mercantile class prior to conversion (Stein, Shaker Experience, 53), and in many ways an exemplar of Republican motherhood, "Mother" Lucy was partially responsible for the publication of the sect's theological works and for continued "progression" in literary practices (Stein, Shaker Experience, 66-76).¹⁶ (In spite of her concern with education of children and other Believers, Wright wanted to maintain Lee's emphasis on

orality; she resisted the initial codification in writing of the Millennial Laws.) One result of Wright's efforts was an educational system that was, according to one critic, "beyond those of the world" up through the Civil War (Taylor, F., 4).¹⁷

In 1821 Wright appointed Seth Young Wells "General Superintendent of Believers' Literature, Schools, etc. in the First Bishopric," which consisted of Watervliet, Hancock and Mount Lebanon communities. His writings have provided many outsiders with their images of Shaker educational practices. Wells had been a teacher in the Albany, New York, public schools and the Academy in Hudson prior to becoming a Shaker. "Uniting with the Shakers at the age of thirty, his special ability in legal and literary matters was soon recognized" (White and Taylor, 132). He edited, "after careful revision, the early publications of the societies" (White and Taylor, 132-33).

By 1823, when Wells visited Canterbury to examine the school, in addition to Webster's Spelling Book and the New Testament, the texts included: Jackson's Arithmetic, Seavill's Small Arithmetic, Gould's Penmanship and Arithmetic Tables, and Ingersoll's Grammar, Easy Lessons, and The New York Reader.¹⁸ Shaker teachers also used one of the most accessible doctrinal works, A Summary View of the Millennial Church (Taylor, F., 153). Although the incomplete records available, the sheer numbers of texts

involved, and the variations from community to community prevent the creation of a comprehensive list of the "useful" texts Shakers wrote and read at particular historical moments, the list of the books used at the Canterbury school suggest that the sect was little different from "the world" in the subjects taught at the end of this second period in 1827. In spite of what Frank Taylor sees as the Shakers' "advanced" Lancastrian methods of education, the leadership still controlled writing and reading practices. And the general attitude expressed by the leadership about education had not changed much from Meacham's voiced remarks before the turn of the century.

Ritualized Literacies and Internal Revival: 1828-1850

In his 1836 manuscript Remarks on Learning and the Use of Books, Seth Young Wells describes "classical learning as purposelessness or specifically 'mere lumber of the brain.'" He writes, "'This life is short at the longest, and ought not to be spent in acquiring any kind of knowledge which cannot be put to a good use'" (in Taylor, F., 161). In his "Letter to the Elders, Deacons, Brethren & Sisters of the Society in Watervliet" (1832) and his "Circular Address to the Society at Watervliet Concerning the Education of Children," he reiterates the same two points: that reading materials should be selected for their "usefulness" in a reader's "improvement" and that "undirected knowledge" or

"self-government" could be "detrimental to society" (in Taylor, F., 161-162). In sum, these works show that Shaker literary practices at the beginning of the third period still emphasized usefulness and "directed and undirected knowledge" (Taylor, F., 142).¹⁹

Yet the literary practices of this period changed in at least three ways: an increase in writing as a means of private and public expression by Believers other than leaders; the appearance of writings inspired by spirits and inscribed by mediums; and an increase in the ritualization of writing and reading practices. These changes both reflect and emerge from practices of "the world" and the internal revival referred to as the "Era of Manifestations" or the period of "Mother's Work."

Records of Wells second visit to Canterbury, in 1832, suggest these changes. The community gave Wells "2 Parkers Rhetorical Readers" (Blinn, Journal, 243). The Readers, which addressed patriotism and contemporary politics as well as fostering sentiment, reveal that during this period the Shakers continued to read some of "the world's" literature. They also continued to write and publish for "the world." In 1834, for example, Richard McNemar initiated a periodical, "The Western Review," and the Union Village, Ohio, community published the semi-monthly "Day-Star" from 1846-49, which circulated within and outside of Shaker communities.²⁰

The Readers also provide a sense of the polis of the

community. They demonstrate that the teaching of reading had moved beyond using primers to teach a mere interpretation of alphabetic symbols to an emphasis on audience awareness and oral interpretation--to performative reading which unifies in ritualized fashion. These practices echo Ann Lee's spiritually-embodied performances, except in their ritualization.

In echoing Ann Lee's teachings, the revival period demonstrates both a conservative backlash or remembering of the past among those few that had known Lee during her physical life and an innovative thrust among younger Believers who never experienced her physical presence. Several kinds of ecstatic behavior, instigated by spirit possession, were manifested during the period. Some Believers spun like tops during meetings, others received prophetic utterances in English or in "tongues" which were shared orally or in writing with other Believers. Additionally numerous spirits visited the Shakers during this period. Among them, Shakers no longer living in the flesh, national political heroes such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, and ethnic minorities such as Indians, Arabs, Africans and Asians made appearances in living Shaker mediums or "instruments." Famous and "exotic" spirits alike usually described their conversions to Shakerism while in the spirit world.²¹

During these years Shaker leaders encouraged writing as

a means of spiritual expression among Believers, who recorded "testimonies" and spiritual autobiographies and jotted hymns, poems and, at times, messages instigated by the spirits of departed Believers. Alonzo Hollister refers to this type of writing in his "Reminiscenses" of his childhood at Mount Lebanon in the 1830s (163-4). And accounts by apostates Nicholas Briggs and Hervey Elkins attest to the institution's support of manuscript records prior to 1850. Elkins records, "the elders once requested that all the youth should write their faith" (66). Similarly Briggs recalls, "The Trustees always remembered us on Christmas in their own way. Every one received a diary for the New Year. Those for the little folks were of course very small, but sufficient to teach them the importance of keeping a record of their daily doings" (23).

The significance of this "keeping a record" we may extrapolate from another comment Briggs makes about year-end reviews, which had "the intent of correcting all errors and to be ready to begin the new year with clean hands and pure heart" (23). The diary was a key instrument in maintaining spirituality through this review of the past year. Thus, these little books may also be seen as a means of control, since they were to contribute to each Believer's spiritual progression and life as an ideal Shaker.²³

Even though writing and reading had taken on added significance and increased in quantity, and the embodiment

of the spirit in physically deceased and living Believers continued to be a crucial complement to inscribed texts, ways of writing and reading continued to be highly controlled. David Lamson's Two Years' Experience among the Shakers (1848), exemplary of the apostate accusations of these years, continues earlier arguments against the repression of freedoms. But in Lamson's work the connections between writing, reading, and deceitfulness have disappeared; he highlights the control of individualized writing and reading and complains about Shaker attitudes toward the use of reason and the nature of divine revelation.²³

As early as his Preface, Lamson skeptically remarks,

Doubtless the "Lead" will do as they have done in regard to other works on this subject: vis. use the means in their power to prevent their subjects from reading it. Such is the policy of their government, and is necessary for their continuance as a people.

"The arts and sciences," he later explains, "are considered as entirely unworthy the notice of a Shaker" (46).²⁴ He also complains that common members are not allowed to read newspapers, nor to read anything on Saturday and Sunday except the Bible (42). With regard to writing, Lamson explains that "it is forbidden to write any thing (sic) without the knowledge and approval of the elders. Every letter sent, or received, must be read to the elders" (44). Lamson further describes the control exerted through communal reading of the written "regulations" which appear

in two books he refers to as the "holy Laws" (given by "inspiration" in 1840) and the "Order Book." Of these he writes:

Every family has a written copy of them; and they are read to the members of the family by the elders, once or twice in every year. . . . It is a divine order that these and other inspired writings should be kept by the elders under lock and key; and by them they are read to the family at stated seasons. None others are permitted to peruse them. (31-32)

Two of the reading days, he later explains, are Ann Lee's birthday and Christmas. Particularly bothered that leaders omit some of the chapters of these texts during the ritualized public readings, Lamson guesses that the omissions contain more "regulations"--on education, books, newspapers, and the arts and sciences. The regularity of these occasions and the oral reading mark the situations as rituals, which contribute to the institutional control of the material and its reception.²⁵

Skeptical of the supposedly inspired writings of Philemon Stewart and others, Lamson writes, "the instrument through whom it is pretended they are revealed, is most plainly the author. The revelation is the production of his own mind" (74). The Shakers draw too heavily from "feel[ings]" rather than reasoned "discussion" when determining "inspiration," he explains:

But ask them why they believe in these things, and their only answer is, 'I feel that it is a reality.' But what evidence is there that there is any reality in these things. 'I feel that it is a reality. I know it is true.' This is the beginning

and ending of the discussion with them. (96)

He admits he believes, like the Shakers, "in modern as well as ancient revelation," but his approach to revelation is more similar to Emersonian transcendentalism than to Shaker teachings of the period. He explained to Shaker leaders before he seceded from the sect: "everyone who strove aright for communion with God, was more or less inspired. But it is to be considered, that a revelation to me, is not necessarily a revelation to others" (82).

Lamson's complaints, especially the discrepancies over inspired writings, were not uncommon during the period. Although many left or lost their inspiration after the leadership began exerting control over medium-channeled messages, many others remained, sustained by the spirit. Hervey Elkins, for example, thrived on the spiritualism but seceded for other reasons related to literary practices.²⁶ In Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of Shakers: A Narration of Facts, Concerning that Singular People (1853), which appeared only five years after Lamson's work, Elkins describes the limited texts and conversations about literature as among the flaws of Shakerism. He writes of union meetings, which Shakers held three nights a week during this period to allow members of both sexes within a particular "family" to converse, "to talk of literary matters, would be termed bombastic pedantry, and small display, and would serve to exhibit accomplishments which

might be enticingly dangerous" (26). Of reading, he writes that each dwelling room might contain "two or three bibles and all the religious works edited by the Society, a concordance, grammar, dictionary, etc. These are all the books they tolerate in the mansion where they retire from labor and worldly pursuits" (25-26).

Elkins complaints about control of reading suggest why he left the sect, but do so only partially. He explains his apostasy emerged from the teachings that Believers were not to develop strong friendship bonds with individuals nor to express emotions of love in this regard. Elkins was influenced, as he states, by what he read--largely romances. He includes a list of texts which contributed to his self-education and explains they also lead first to the "fall" of his dear friend, who seceded, and then to his own apostasy.

Nicholas Briggs's apostate account, not published until 1920, echoes Elkins's and Lamson's accounts of the years of revival and the limited reading:

My school life closed when I was fifteen. I was greatly disappointed at not being permitted one more term as the boys usually were, but they seemed to think my education was sufficient for a Shaker. As a little condescension I was allowed to study morning and evening through the winter, instead of making leather mittens as otherwise I should have done. Even at this late date in the Society's history, erudition was not strongly favored. Not many years back "God hates grammar" was a common expression, and their reading was pretty much limited to the Bible and Almanacs and the Society publications, which were quite voluminous. The only newspaper taken to serve this body of 160 people was the Boston Weekly Journal, and very few enjoyed the separate personal reading

of this. If I recall it correctly, this arrived Friday noon. Until supper time it was retained by the Elders, and then given to a brother who read it to the brethren in the evening assembled in one of the shops. Next morning it was given to the Eldress who read it in the afternoon to the sisters convened in the dining hall. (59)

The ritualized writing and reading of the Era of Manifestations illustrates the problems of categorizing varieties of writing and reading within Shaker communities according to dichotomies such as active/passive and production/consumption. The messages spirit "mediums" delivered to Believers, who inscribed them in what some might consider acts of "mechanical" writing, appears akin to romantic or mid-nineteenth century notions of poetic inspiration. Is this writing "active" or "passive"? Is it an act of "production" or one of "consumption?" Even when such a writing act appears to be "functional" or "passive," a product still results. An inscribed text which may be handled, saved, reread, and/or passed on to someone else contains as much "power" within a community as a piece of writing "produced" by "critical" or "innovative" work. The power for Believers of what appears to apostates and outsiders to be "passive" and "functional" reading and writing depends upon the Shakers' attitudes toward the embodied spirit and its contribution to the progress of individuals and the society.

Reading and Writing the World's Genres after 1850: Private

Acts and Possible Worlds²⁷

Shaker attitudes about usefulness of literary activities in their contribution to spiritual progression continued to hold through the early twentieth century. Though the attitudes remained the same, the kinds of texts considered "useful" to write and read had changed from earlier years. Records of the New Lebanon, New York, community reveal that by 1856 students there were given books as awards. These included: Norton's Agriculture Improved, An American Reader, Travels in the North of Europe, The Life of Washington, and Paradise Lost (Taylor, F., 219). This list, representing generically science, literature, travel narratives, biography and epic, also demonstrates that the Shakers were not too much unlike their neighbors in the world. In light of this list, it may not be surprising, then, to learn that the Shakers in at least one community later in the century enjoyed the works of Mark Twain and Brett Harte.²⁸

Nicholas Briggs, noting a change in the reading practices at Canterbury after 1850, associates the shift with changes in leadership in the village, which had become the publishing headquarters for the Society during the revival.

About this time Elder Henry C. Blinn and Eldress Dorothy A. Durgin became the Elders of the Family. Both of them had been teachers of the school, were highly progressive in their ideas, and they stimulated reading and study, and we now began to have The Scientific American, Phrenological

Journal and Life Illustrated. A small library had been formed a little while before, of all books belonging to the members, and this library was enlarged gradually until we had, as nearly as I can remember, about 3000 volumes. There was little or no fiction. I do not recall a single book of this kind; it was and always had been banished absolutely from the Society. Yet naughtily we boys and young men now and then allowed ourselves to read the stories in the magazines to which we occasionally had access. (59)

The lack of fiction, a major concern of Briggs, contributes to his dishonesty as the lack of education had contributed to Clement Beck's "stealth" in earlier years. It becomes a point of his later judgement of Blinn and Durgin. Of Blinn he writes:

He was a beautiful penman and general good teacher, and would have attained high proficiency in a theological school, as that seemed to be his literary preference. He did hold Bible School at the Village, and he delved in Mosheim and other ecclesiastical scholars. A familiarity with the classics and best fiction would have rounded out his character and made him more able as a leader. (60)²⁹

Familiar with "classics" and the "best fiction," Dorothy Durgin receives more adulation from Briggs than Blinn does:

Very different from Elder Henry, she imposed no restriction upon herself in reading. She managed to get most of the leading novels of the times. She had quite a library of fiction, and sometimes loaned the books to those with whom in her opinion it was safe. (61)

Although this loaning of books probably included Briggs, since he knew of it and received extra study time, he believes the Shakers restricted reading and alphabetic texts even after mid-century.

Briggs's comments about Durgin, as well as the award

of books to individuals in 1856, demonstrate a move toward privatization of the reading act. Although oral, performative readings continued to be an important part of Shaker spiritual and communal life (readings of the Twain and Harte works, for example, were not individualized, private ones but orally conveyed ones in public settings), there were more opportunities for individualized, private readings and writings.

Although the Shakers were reading fiction after 1850, their writing of the period did not include fiction. As White and Taylor expressed in 1904, because of "the religious sense of separation from the world and worldly interests, Shaker literary genius has not revealed itself in the world's markets." That is, they were not writing the sentimental "fiction" which had provided women such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Susan Warner with economic sustenance, probably because (as I discuss in Chapter IV) the plots of sentimental novels were not in conjunction with the spiritual direction the celibate Shakers advocated.

Though not writing the type of marketable literature they were sometimes reading, Shaker women and men were writing other popular genres. In 1871 the sect reinstated publication of a religious periodical with The Shaker, which circulated within and outside of their communities. The periodical served as a means of expression for individuals who submitted letters, articles, poems, and the like. The

publication continued through 1899 under several titles (Shaker and Shakeress; The Shaker Manifesto; and The Manifesto). The Shakers had written verse to be used as hymns and as memorials to deceased Shakers since before mid-century (a topic I consider in Chapter VI), but these pieces of "art" had remained in manuscript form or were published in hymnals to be used within the sect. In 1895 one of the sect's first forays into publishing popular "artistic" genres for a wider audience appeared--a collection of occasional, sentimental verse, Mount Lebanon Cedar Boughs. They also published several tracts dedicated to deceased Shakers in the latter part of the century; these served as both memorials and evangelical tools. Accompanying these officially published works, Shakers continued to write and "publish" numerous manuscripts within the communities.

Reading the world's genres and about the world's events and writing for the world became more prominent after 1850.³⁰ In this period of numerical decline and theological shifts, inscribed texts achieved primacy as they replaced physical bodies. They (the acts of private reading and the multiplicity of texts and genres) contributed to the increasingly felt individualization and fragmentation which, ironically, contributed to the need to nostalgically preserve the past. Reading and writing continued to be used to preserve and revise the past, unifying and strengthening the sect in the process, and to evangelize. However, reading

and writing took on a new characteristic--discovery. Lee remained an important figure in Shaker writing, but she became auxiliary to new understandings of the "presence" of the spirit. Reading inscribed texts took on added significance as a means of discovering the Christ Spirit at large, contributing to the belief in the universal spirit. Reading about Buddhism, for example, allowed Shakers to construct an understanding of the universal spirit of the deity, seen as existing in spaces apart from the physical communities of the Church (in Russia and in England, for example). Much Shaker writing after 1850 attempted to spread this understanding elsewhere.

White's and Taylor's comments in Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message (1904) summarize the attitudes which had influenced the sect's writing and reading practices for the previous century:

In seeking the highest possible spiritual development, Shakers have left behind much in art and literature commonly regarded as of value, yet, in this very renunciation, in attaining purity of life and thought, they have developed a pure, refined, spiritual taste, eminently fitting them for the appreciation of the highest in art and literature. (319)

The texts they had "left behind" had been omitted conscientiously, in hopes of "attaining purity of life and thought" and "in seeking the highest possible spiritual development."

These writing and reading practices which reinforced the faiths of many sometimes frustrated them nonetheless.

Some Shakers complained about the same problems which apostates did. For example, the letters of the young William Byrd of Kentucky, who corresponded with his family during the years he lived in the Pleasant Hill community, indicate that his writing was overseen.³¹ Isaac Newton Youngs, for example, to achieve some freedom of expression in his journal writing, created a coded language (Matarese & Salmon). Alonzo Hollister, when expressing his struggles with his Shaker brothers and sisters and what appear to be struggles with "the flesh," lapses into the vague language ("Reminiscences," 175-77). Although these Shaker documents correspond with apostate accounts which refer to a lack of privacy and freedom of self-expression, many Believers were either not bothered by the lack of privacy, found ways of achieving privacy anyway, or endured personal repression due to their belief in the spirit.

During all these periods, all Shaker reading and writing was in subjection to the greater purpose of spiritual achievement. The Shakers' belief in the spiritual reception and production of texts allowed them to write and read "the world's" genres and to believe that, in spite of numerical decline, a new form of Shakerism would emerge. As I will discuss in the next chapter, the possession of the spirit allowed readers to perceive and apply texts appropriately. And, in a kind of circularity, this spiritual reading reinforced the life of the spirit within them.

Understanding Shaker writing and reading as informed by the interplay of body and spirit depends upon first understanding Shaker attitudes toward spirits and spirituality and about physical bodies. The symbiotic relationship between spirit and body is not a new concept in Christianity introduced by the Shakers. Yet the sect's daily emphasis on the interplay between body and spirit informed their reading and writing practices, influencing their views of literacies in ways that distinguished them from "the world." For the group which interacted verbally and visually with visitors from the "spirit world," what is the spirit and how does it manifest itself? For the celibate sect often viewed as ascetic in their attempts to achieve a "simple" life of "spiritual perfection," what roles do bodies play? And what are the relationships between spirituality, literacies and bodily behavior? I posit the answers to these questions in the following chapter, beginning with an analysis of Ann Lee's exemplary and spiritually-informed reading and writing acts.

Notes

1. One of the earliest American teachings on the spiritual and civil purposes of reading, which foreshadows the Shakers' teachings, appears in Cotton Mather's Bonifacius, or To Do Good (1710). In his advice on achieving a "better kingdom, spiritual or temporal," he includes these words on teaching children:

I will then assign them such Books to Read, as I may judge most agreeable and profitable; obliging them to give me some Account of what they Read; but keep a strict eye upon them, that they don't stumble on the Devils Library and poison themselves with foolish Romances, or Novels, or

Playes, or Songs, or Jests that are not convenient. I will set them also, to Write out such things, as may be of the greatest Benefit unto them; (58)

Davidson discusses Benjamin Franklin's and Noah Webster's slight revisions of this attitude in the early Republic (63-64). In "Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life," Gilmore argues that between 1780 and 1835 in rural New England, print culture began to infiltrate all areas of daily life, even among common farm folk. During this period the Shakers' also realized that reading was a necessity for their continuance. Cott describes reading the "right" kinds of literature as an element of female piety, one of the characteristics of "true womanhood." On the interplay of "secular" fictional and "sacred" non-fictional narrative strategies, see Tompkins (149-153). Douglas was among the first literary critics to describe, in her Feminization of American Culture, the similar work of protestant ministers and female writers in the nineteenth century. Buell's argument for the image of the New England town as a nineteenth-century social construct representing the American ideals "smallness, isolation, cohesiveness, innocence, and unchangingness," ("The Village as Icon," 304-318) also describes the way in which, by the mid-nineteenth century, Shakers' viewed themselves. Their images of their villages and their "church" were microcosms of these ideals, and their literature and literacies sustained these images.

2. Graff explains this myth in his introduction (1-19).

3. For Whitaker's and Lee's literacies, which I discuss in Chapter II, see the 1816 Testimonies (XXX, 26-27). Meacham's reliance on Scripture and religious texts is evident in his Concise Statement.

4. John and Lucy Holmes record with very rough verbal skills only minimal sketches of their daily tasks in their journals. I discuss Jackson's literacy in Chapter V.

5. Paradise Lost and The Life of Washington were among awards which were intended to provide incentives for learning. Of the books, however, the record states, "'The prizes were eagerly received, although sometimes there was reported grumblings of disappointment'" (in Taylor, F., 219).

6. I want to underscore not only the multiple ways individuals read but also the individuality of Shakers who, by outsiders, are sometimes viewed as a group of cardboard characters with no unique personalities or interests. David Lamson writes, for example, "There is almost perfect uniformity among them, of dress, language, manners, forms of worship, government, etc" (18). This emphasis should also

qualify and temper my generalizations about the shifts in Shaker writing and reading practices over time.

7. Stephen Stein and Frank Taylor, respectively, describe the Shakers in the western communities of Ohio and Kentucky in the early nineteenth century as more intellectual and as more advanced in their educational practices than their counterparts in the East (Stein, Shaker Experience, 75-76; Taylor, 147). For a thorough discussion of the move from orally-conveyed teachings to inscribed theology, see Clarke Garrett's Spirit Possession and Popular Religion (195-213). Diane Sasson, analyzing Shaker spiritual narratives and their relationships to those of "the world," describes Eastern communities as more grounded in literature than those in the west (Shaker Spiritual, xii). Linda Mercadante analyzes the testimonies of the mid-nineteenth century in Gender, Doctrine and God. Jean Humez analyzes Shaker letters, autobiographies and biographies with attention to "the world's" genres and Shaker influences in Gifts of Power, "'Ye are my Epistles,'" and "'A Woman Mighty.'"

8. Stein divides the sect's history into five periods: 1747-87, "The Age of the Founders"; 1787-1826, "The Gathering and Building"; 1827-75, "The Maturation and Revitalization"; 1876-1947, "The Transformation"; and 1948-Present, "The Rebirth". Both Stein and Deignan recognize the move into publication as an important date. After that, their divisions do not correspond.

9. Complaints about writing and reading practices, rarely the single complaint being voiced, emerge from other problems with the sect. With a keen sense of audience, the writer usually turns from the initial problem and gropes for additional reasons to complain about the Shakers and their lifestyle. Nonetheless, I use these apostates' complaints about writing and reading in juxtaposition with those of Believers because the combination highlights varying perspectives of the same topic and the same practices. A fruitful approach to considering these apostates' comments is to remember that the writers' attitudes are generally colored by other factors which have contributed to the apostasies. These varied responses are a result of diverse experiences influenced by gender, race, literacy and family life prior to meeting the Shakers, by the historical moments within which each lived, and by the influences of Shakerism within particular moments and particular communities. I note influencing factors such as these when they illuminate the complaints particular apostates issue.

10. Although Meacham's name does not appear on the title page of the Concise Statement, he generally is acknowledged as author of this work. See Richmond (I, 145). The first 17

pages of the tract appear in Whitson's Two Centuries, 61-66.

11. Stein summarizes: "The Believers also, ironically, inaugurated a program of systematic record keeping that eventually covered all aspects of the society's activities. As a result, the problem of scarce documentary resources is confined to the Age of Founders" (Shaker Experience, 9).

12. Garrett refers to several apostate accounts and accusations, such as those by Daniel and Valentine Rathbun, in some detail (195-213). He is "persuaded that" their story "is the truer one" (197). Lawrence Foster also sees the merits of these accounts (Religion and Sexuality, 51-54).

Mary was engaged in a pamphlet war with her husband, Joseph, and the Shakers. The wife's first pamphlet appeared in 1818, the husband's response the same year. Joseph countered with A Compendious Narrative, elucidating the Character, Disposition, and conduct of Mary Dyer, from the Time of her Marriage, in 1799, Till She Left the Society Called Shakers, in 1815 (1818). Next, Mary produced her lengthy book, A Portraiture of Shakerism (1822). Joseph's "Compendious Narrative" saw 2 editions (Richmond, I, 74). All these texts had overt political and juridical purposes, as Joseph's subtitle acknowledges. For example, the second edition of his book (1826) includes "a remonstrance Against the Testimony and application of the said Mary, for Legislative Interference." For an analysis of the Dyers' writings within the historical context, see Humez, "'A Woman Mighty.'"

Another apostate who complains during this period about the lack of freedom to read is Thomas Brown. In his History of the People Called Shakers, which I discuss further in Chapter IV, Brown asserts that he was told by Elder Ebenezer, "'Ah, Thomas must put away his books, if he intends to become a good believer;" (227). The books he was allowed to read, since he responded that he needed to read, were "Almanacks and spellingbooks" (227). He was also told, "We have no objection against geographical, and some historical books; but respecting our salvation, nothing is necessary, but to keep in the gift, and in obedience to what we are taught" (236). "Keep[ing] in the gift" here refers to abiding in the spirit, a Shaker belief which had appealed to Brown. Of Quaker heritage, Brown has a strong belief in the significance of personal divine revelation as a means of knowing God and receiving the light of his truth. The Shaker's teachings about personal divine revelation are similar to what he has been taught; however, his ideas about the value of other books conflicts with that of Shaker leaders.

Brown's primary complaints about the Shakers are the apparent contradictions between what they claim and what they practice--a failure to see the inconsistencies and

flaws in their reasoning. For example, "the gift" of the spirit arrives not merely through individual, personal experience as they claim, but also by way of the Elders. The church's control over reading material is but one example. Another example of lack of reason is their dependence upon Ann Lee as the cornerstone of their faith. Brown believes, based upon personal investigation of accurate sources, Lee was a fraud. Drunkenness, prostitution, and deceitfulness--characteristics of which she was accused--cannot be of a woman of God, he explains. The Shakers' fail to see the unreasonableness of their claims because they have been too personally involved with the woman.

13. Another passage which links literacy and the freedom of the individual to find "true" religion is "children are kept as ignorant as possible of literary knowledge, or the true doctrines of the gospel" (279).

14. Blythe Forcey, for example, accurately ascribes Charlotte's victimization in Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple to her poor reading skills. Humez also calls attention to Dyer's depiction of herself as a "suffering victim" ("A Woman Mighty," 92).

15. See Meacham's Notes, copied by Rufus Bishop in 1850, for the earliest written philosophy of learning and teaching within the sect.

16. For a description of "Republican motherhood," see Nancy F. Cott's The Bonds of Womanhood.

17. Wright's reputation for giving guidelines for education appears to have been well known and sustained even after her death in 1821. In 1841 an unnamed Shaker "instrument" received from Wright instructions she had been given by Mother Ann. The published work is The Gospel Monitor. A Little Book of Mother Ann's Word to Those Who are Placed as Instructors & Care-takers of Children; Written by Mother Lucy Wright, and Brought by Her to the Elders of the First Order, on the Holy Mount, March 1, 1841.

18. The Shakers published excerpts of Webster's spelling book at Canterbury.

19. The circulation of these pieces within the sect may be extrapolated not only from the title "Circular Address" but also from evidence of the Shaker practice of circulating letters within communities and from a copy of "Remarks on Learning" in the Copy Book (ca. 1833) of John Coffin, a teacher at the Sabbathday Lake community.

20. John MacLean traces the Shakers' publishing history, including these periodicals (19), in the opening of his Bibliography of Shaker Literature (3-20). The Shakers bought their first press in 1823, for the Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, community. The Watervliet, Ohio, community had a press by 1832, and the North Union, Ohio, community had one by 1834.

21. For descriptions and analyses of the Era of Manifestations, see Stein (Shaker Experience, 165-200), Andrews (People, 152-176) and Sally Promey's Spiritual Spectacles.

22. Hollister's record of his childhood at Mount Lebanon, New York, corresponds with Briggs's account of receipt of the book, but he recalls that he was to use the book to jot hymns and the like. The diary of John Holmes at Sabbathday Lake, Maine is probably an extant example of one of these diaries. Rather than a book of hymns and poems or a record which would allow the writer, during the last week of December, to reflect on the past year, Holmes's book is sketchy, practically blank. The few entries are so short and spotty that we gain insights to his low alphabetic literacy and must wonder how many Shakers' diaries were of this quality. The degree of self-expression these little books allowed is difficult to know, as Holmes's example, in juxtaposition with Hollister's and Briggs's, illustrates the variety of responses to the same institutional task.

23. His statement about the sect's uniformity due to the controlled reading is in keeping with one he makes later about the representativeness of his story of his experience in one particular community (Hancock, Massachusetts) for all of Shakerism. Recent studies of Shakerism have attempted to counter this myth of Shaker uniformity with explanations of Shaker self-expression. For example, Promey analyzes the expressive role of the drawings of the Era of Manifestations; Tim Reiman and Charles Muller argue for the significance of Shaker furniture; Linda Mercadante discusses the self-expression of written testimonies. Some critics, such as Diane Sasson, acknowledge both self-expression and its limitations (Shaker Spiritual and "Individual Experience").

We might wonder, since Lamson seems to despise the Shakers' uniformity so much, what drew him to the sect. As he explains, he saw "orthodox" Christian churches as anti-reform; as a Christian, he thought moral and social reform necessary. Specifically, the abolitionism, pacifism, and temperance, were social movements he thought necessary and he saw Shakers involved in. Lamson's experience, then, dovetails with what Deignan sees as the thrust of the 1848 edition of Calvin Green's Summary View of the Millennial Church--their "exemplaristic features" (Deignan, 159).

24. Lamson also comments negatively on education in the communities. Children go to school but three months of the year until they are 15 (girls) or 16 (boys), only to receive instruction in writing, reading, a little arithmetic, grammar and geography, and this from teachers whose "qualifications would not be approved by a town committee." Taylor's study of Shaker education argues that by this time in the century, Shaker education was "progressive" and that residents of towns in which Shaker communities were located sent their children to the Shaker schools. That is, the Shaker school had displaced the public school. And Nicholas Briggs comments on the excellence of the Shaker teachers. These apparent contradictions are one more example of individuals holding different views of similar situations.

25. The Preface to Philemon Stewart's Holy, Sacred Divine Roll and Book, published during this period, describes in some detail his reading and writing practices, as well as his injunctions for the publications, distribution, and reading of them. See also Blinn's Historical Record (II, 287-291).

26. Elkins uses his writing while a Shaker as an example of the sect's approval of reason and education and to counter the stereotype that the community allows no individualized expression. He makes no negative comments about literary self-expression; instead he includes several letters he wrote during a period of convalescence, claiming they were his first compositions and reveal the increases in his education (60-70). Praising the Shakers for the "rationalism" of their religion, Elkins gives as an example their belief in a spiritual rather than physical afterlife, a teaching which set them apart from most nineteenth century Christians. Explaining the Era of Manifestations, for example, he quotes from a secular "scientist" who wrote on the phenomenon of "spiritualism." From these examples and others he argues that all Shaker teachings run parallel to or in keeping with the "natural" laws of science (36-37).

27. My title has been influenced by the title and contents of Jerome Bruner's Actual Minds, Possible Worlds, a reader response study which emphasizes both reasonable and emotional thought as constitutive of readers' imaginative constructing.

28. William Dean Howells writes in 1876 that the Shirley, Massachusetts, Shakers enjoyed the oral readings of Twain and Harte, Three Villages (108-109).

29. The attention to Blinn's penmanship in addition to the comments about classics and fiction seem to indicate that Briggs has an aesthetic sense typical to "the world's"--the

art or form of the manuscript is important, as is a well-rounded familiarity with the literary arts. Also, the description of Blinn as a "general good teacher" counters Lamson's criticism of Shaker schools.

30. Otis Sawyer, Elder at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, from 1872-1884, had so many books that he had printed stickers for labelling, numbering and organizing works in his library.

31. See the letter dated January 25, 1827 (Stein, Letters).

CHAPTER II
LETTERS, SPIRITS, AND BODIES:
THE SHAKERS' SPIRITUAL LITERACIES

"The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive."

2 Corinthians 3:6

Ann Lee has been described by Shaker scholars as "illiterate" and "unlettered."¹ The labels are understandable, since she left no written records and since the first Shaker publication to present an extensive picture of her life describes her as such. The first chapter of the Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee, and the Elders with Her (1816) includes a sketch of Lee's childhood which explains that she "was very illiterate; so that she could neither read, nor write" (I, 3). Nevertheless, the Testimonies also include images which ask us to view Lee as "reading," for she interprets several kinds of uninscribed signs: she mystically and prophetically reads visions and bodies, and she quite reasonably and innovatively reads orally-conveyed passages of Scripture. Lee "writes" or "publishes" these readings in public settings, in the form of orally conveyed mini-sermons to a crowd or one-on-one lessons. Lee's reading, writing and publishing provided her agency and autonomy in a culture and climate which relegated

women to a private and emotional realm. Her literacy differs, however, from that of her female predecessors and contemporaries such as Anne Hutchinson, Ann Hibbens and Jemimah Wilkinson in that it becomes inscribed in a volume edited by male leaders and, as I assert throughout this project, foundational to the sect.²

Dependent upon the indwelling or embodied spirit, Lee's "reading" and "writing," as delineated in the Testimonies, illustrates the interplay of spoken and written language and realms gendered "masculine" and "feminine," establishing in print the parameters of the Shakers' "spiritual literacies." In this chapter I first present these images of Lee's reasonable and ecstatic reading and writing in the Testimonies as manifestations of the Shakers' androgynous spiritual literacy, not unlike the androgynous symbolic work of other Christians since the first century. Next I turn from images of Lee in the Testimonies to other texts representative of several Shaker readers and writers. These works reiterate the relationship between spirit and letter which Lee established. Then, in the chapter's final section, I continue to draw from Lee's example as I bring together the Shakers' written teachings about the body with contemporary analyses of reading and writing as performative and ritualized acts in which the body is an integral part.

Ann Lee's Reading

Robert St. George calls attention to "the interdependency of speaking, reading, and writing" (276) as he questions the given distinction that "unlike written or material artifacts, speech is by definition ephemeral. Once uttered, the word totally disappears" (277). In cultures only partially "literate" or beginning to accept and embrace literacy, such as the Puritan culture of seventeenth-century New England, traces of the spoken exist in the written records. "Even in literate societies," he writes, "speech continues to be a fundamental component in the routine shaping of social reality" (276).³ His assertion illuminates late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Shakerism. In the Testimonies Shaker editors capture the power of the spoken words of Ann Lee but recognize the necessity of writing and print to do so. In contrast to the Puritan claim of the primacy of the written over the spoken (which St. George demonstrates they ironically inverted), the Testimonies reinforce the interplay of the spoken and the written. Rather than saying "once uttered, the [spoken] word disappears," I assert that once written, Ann Lee's spoken words permanently attest to the power of uninscribed signs and the role of the body as integral parts of Shaker literacies. As a result of Lee's example, Shakers viewed reading as a performative act and material circumstances of readers and writers as critical to their interpretive and discursive acts.

Recent interest in Lee's biography emerges from its value as an index of the Society's status and concerns in 1816, as a record of reflective inscription by male leaders rather than as an accurate record of the female leader's life.⁴ Although I recognize the limitations of our knowledge of "facts" about Lee, I believe Ann Lee's physical actions within her life influenced her actions as they are recorded in the text to some degree. Studies of the Revolutionary New England, the era and locale in which Lee evangelized, document events similar to those in the Testimonies, such as the storming of buildings housing Lee and her followers as well as other brutal assaults upon their bodies during the 1780s in what are now western Massachusetts and the Albany, New York, area.⁵ Nevertheless, my purpose here is not to validate the Shaker's veracity or accuracy but to give attention to the way the narrative records and preserves scenes of Lee's interpretive and expressive acts, reflecting images previously conveyed orally and preserved in memory.

Drawn from oral testimonies of "eye and ear" witnesses of the events included, the edited accounts bear marks of orality and the emotional exuberance of personal narrative while also demonstrating the "reasoned" rhetoric typical to early nineteenth century legal literature and belles lettres. Much of the Testimonies' power within the Society arises from this generic amphibiousness, a topic I will discuss in Chapter IV; equally valuable within it is the

mutability of its heroine. Jean Humez and Marjorie Proctor-Smith, for example, have pointed to the maternal images of Lee "laboring" and feeding juxtaposed with images of Lee as a strong, independent, and somewhat masculine figure.⁶ In the most rigorous analysis of this text to date, Humez concludes, "all of these possible versions of Ann Lee became part of the ambiguous heritage of later Shakerism" and suggests that "Perhaps it was an advantage to Shakerism, as it responded to internal instabilities and adapted to changes in the outside culture over time, to have a sacred text that could supply so readily multiple understandings of a founder" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 103).⁷ Images of Lee's literacy--meant to instruct other Shakers--similarly allow multiple visions; they demonstrate both "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics which inform Shaker attitudes toward reading and writing throughout the nineteenth century.

Two passages early in the volume foreground Lee's "illiteracy" in the traditional sense and two characteristics of Shaker literacies. In the first of these, a sketch of Lee's childhood, the editors contrast her illiteracy with her "acquired . . . habit of industry," gained as a result of working as a child rather than "being sent to school" (I, 3). The passage emphasizes Lee's bodily activity rather than book work as reflecting and contributing to spirituality. The second reference also

reinforces the contrast between traditional notions of literacy and religious learning and the spiritual power Lee possesses; yet it introduces the complex interplay between the authority of a female's personal inspiration and the need for institutional validation by "lettered" males. The passage reports Lee to have said,

"Before I came from England, there was a great lord came to see me. He had been acquainted with me from my childhood, and knew that I was poor and had no letter learning. He watched me in every movement, for I had the power of God upon me, and spoke with other tongues; and being a learned man, he understood what I said, and was thereby convicted that I had the power of God."
(IX, 11)

Lee manifests spirituality through her speech, which appears to be a foreign language such as Latin or Greek, rather than ecstatic gibberish, since "a learned man" understands it. Ironically, Lee's spiritual power, triumphant in spite of her lack of knowledge of "letters," must be validated by this "learned man." This juxtaposition subtly reinforces the Shakers' dependence on traditional notions of literacy even while revamping them with their emphasis upon reading and publishing uninscribed signs. Men of "learning," as this passage and Shaker doctrinal works demonstrate, inscribe and interpret texts which reinforce Shaker faith. These two passages together suggest the interdependent elements of Ann Lee's and subsequent Shaker literacies: in addition to mental or intellectual work with inscribed texts, bodies are texts to be interpreted. And bodies are influential to the interpretation of other texts. Thus spirituality emerges and

thrives upon bodily and intellectual endeavors.

As I ask readers to view Lee's literacies and spirituality which unify and emerge from both minds and bodies, I follow two avenues others have travelled as they have asked us to revise what appear to be firmly opposed hierarchized gendered categories. First, they have pointed to the realm of the body (inherently female) as integral to spirituality; second, they have noted how some writers define "the spirit" or the spiritual realm as an androgynous one. In sum, these scholars ask us to consider how women subvert the hierarchized dichotomies and to rethink the dualities as unified rather than in opposition to one another. Caroline Walker Bynum asserts, for example, that "medieval asceticism should not be understood as rooted in dualism, in a radical sense of spirit opposed to or entrapped by body" (Holy Feast, 294). Male and female ascetics attempted

to plumb and to realize all the possibilities of the flesh. It was a profound expression of the doctrine of the Incarnation . . . They were not revelling against or torturing their flesh out of guilt over its capabilities so much as using the possibilities of its full sensual and affective range to soar ever closer to God. (Holy Feast, 294-95)

Bynum's argument asks readers to see asceticism and discipline as a celebration of the body and highlights differences in men's and women's symbolic work.

Men, who were dominant, used symbols to renounce their dominance. Reversals and oppositions were at the heart of how symbols worked for men. . . . To

women, however, male/female contrasts were apparently of little interest; . . . Women saw themselves not as flesh opposed to spirit, female opposed to male, nurture opposed to authority; they saw themselves as human beings--fully spirit and fully flesh. And they saw all humanity as created in God's image, as capable of imitatio Christi, through body as well as soul. (Holy Feast, 296).

Men recognize and transgress traditional gender boundaries, while women become more deeply embedded in their own "feminine" space. In the Testimonies Ann Lee, like medieval ascetic women, celebrates the body and the "feminine" realm, but she also transgresses traditional gender boundaries.⁶ Ann Lee imagery causes Shakers to continually redefine the spiritual realm in ways similar to gnostic writers of the first three centuries.

In Adam, Eve and the Serpent Elaine Pagels explains that gnostics revised the orthodox dichotomy between mind (nous) and sensation (aisthesis) or the "nobler, masculine and rational element" associated with Adam and the "lower, feminine element, source of all passion," associated with Eve and the body (64-65). Instead, they emphasized a pairing of "soul and spirit--that is, between the psyche (ordinary consciousness, understood to include both mind and sensation) and the spirit [pneuma], the potential for a higher, spiritual consciousness" (66). Some gnostic writers associated the soul--"the emotional and mental impulses" (68)--with the female and the spirit with the male, but "many other gnostic texts reverse[d] the symbolism" (66). In

all these gnostic works, however, the writers emphasized an individual's wholeness depended upon a blend of the two.

Bynum's and Pagels' works inform my analysis of Lee's bodily activities and their impact on later Shakerism because they underscore celebrations of the body among people generally considered to ignore it through their denials. They also demonstrate that gendered terms were irrelevant to many people's spirituality, except to help them argue for a union of the dichotomies in whole and holy individuals. Sally Kitch has written about these dichotomies within Shakerism and among other American religious communities of the nineteenth century.⁹ She argues that celibacy empowers women such as the Shakers because it subverts the culture/nature hierarchy which Sherry Ortner has described as the structural symbol system functioning in many societies. Based on the assumption that "heterosexual intercourse as a symbolic system depended upon gender theories in which males and females represented opposed and even warring subcultures that could be mediated by, but not truly blended in, sexual union," she claims that "celibacy . . . alters woman's relationship to reproduction, thereby associating her with production and leadership rather than with consumption and submission" (23;8).¹⁰

Kitch appears to argue that through celibacy women become like men, thus gaining the higher notch of the dualistic hierarchy, but her argument implicitly follows

Pagels's pattern by emphasizing the Shakers' redefinition of the spirit. She explains that Shakers saw both elements of the nature/culture opposition "to be human creations that stood in opposition to true or divine nature. They classified reproductive humanity in the realm of human culture that is necessarily opposed to divine nature" (50). According to her argument, the Shakers see a "warring dichotomy," but between "divine nature" and "human culture" or between "spirit" and "flesh" (50). The spirit is neither male nor female; both men and women operate freely within the spiritual realm.

Shaker theology, like the gnostic writings Pagels analyzes, encourages the use of gendered terms but unifies them through "the anointing spirit." Gendered dichotomies first appear in print in 1808 as "the structural principle" in Youngs's Testimony (Deignan, 96).¹¹ Yet as Deignan explains, "we must not mistake [the Shakers] to be . . . theological dualist[s]" (120), for

the polarities which undergird the created world are themselves utterances of the constitutive terms of God's power and wisdom. . . . the term which will translate the eternal, transcendent, and bivalent Word of power and wisdom into the historical, economic, still bivalent revelation of Father and Mother. . . . is . . . the anointing Spirit who will bridge the gap. (120-21)¹²

Oliver C. Hampton rearticulates Shaker androgyny in his 1880 article "Relation of Intellect and Emotion," which appeared on the front page of the Shaker Manifesto. Hampton illustrates how Shaker thinking diverges from that of "the

world" by underscoring the belief in the union of these dichotomies--the necessity of both terms within a single person. He equates "wisdom and love," as he says "mankind" does, with "positive and negative, active and passive," "intellect and emotion" and "reason and religion." He explains aspects of this "male" category are "necessary to develop, define, explain, [and] to illustrate" the administrative details of church life, those "necessary to the existence of a self-perpetuating community," such as theology and "regulations." The "female" terms are "necessary to the development of the religious sentiment together with all the Pentecostal gifts, inspirations, ministrations from the spiritual world, prophecies, tongues, healing of disease, together with all sympathy for human suffering, going out of one's self to do good to others." The categories and functions Hampton describes reinforce the stereotypes of male and female spheres typical of the nineteenth century. Yet he concludes, "unless these principles of wisdom and love are equally and normally developed in the individual, his or her efforts to attain spiritual perfection must necessarily be abortive."¹³

Hampton's neglect of the body reflects the Shaker duality Kitch sketches between material and spiritual. The masculine and feminine elements he describes comprise the spiritual realm. Similarly, Kitch's argument elevates the spiritual but, with the focus on celibacy, depends upon

bodies and control over or mastery of them through the celebration Bynum describes. Ann Lee's example in the Testimonies leads me to agree with Kitch's and Deignan's emphases on the union of dichotomies within Shakerism. However, rather than emphasizing celibacy (like Kitch) as a cause of the unification, I follow Deignan's example of emphasizing the embodied spirit. The embodied spirit, exemplified initially in Ann Lee, causes Believers to practice celibacy.

Lee's animated physical body, according to Shaker teaching, inflamed spite in some but commanded respect from others. The Testimonies emphasize this bodily and spiritual "presence." For example, one chapter opens:

In reprovng and condemning sin and all manner of evil, in feelings, words, and actions, Mother's power was beyond description. Though she would often bear with lost, dark souls, who were blinded and corrupted with sin, till her life seemed almost spent through sufferings; yet at times, when she felt a gift of God to reprove their wickedness, the power of her spirit seemed like flames of fire, and the words of her mouth more dreadful than peals of thunder; so that the most stubborn and stouthearted would shake and tremble in her presence, like a leaf shaken with a mighty wind. (XXXII, 1)

The passage focuses on Lee's actions "reproving and condemning sin," her "bear[ing] with lost, dark souls," "the power of her spirit . . . and the words of her mouth,"--summed up as "her presence." Other passages in the Testimonies and in apostate accounts depict this "presence" and Lee's performances.¹⁴ For example, when Shaker editors

describe Lee's physical appearance, offering a portrait to Believers who never knew her in the flesh, they move quickly from the concrete physical aspects of Lee's body to more changing, abstract aspects of her physicality such as her deportment. This movement recurs in the paragraphs which follow in the chapter, leaving out the purely physical but meandering among her words, her mental abilities, and her works.¹⁵

Mother Ann Lee was a woman, in nature, of a strong constitution, rather exceeding the ordinary size of women; very strait and well proportioned in form, or rather thick; of a light complexion, and blue eyes; her hair of a light chesnut brown. In appearance, she was very majestic, and her countenance was such as inspired confidence and respect; and, by many of the world, who saw her without prejudice, she was called beautiful. To her faithful children (spoken of spiritually), she appeared to possess a degree of dignified beauty and heavenly love transcending that of mortals. (XXXIX,1)

Lee's "constitution," "form," "complexion," "eyes" and "hair," appearing only near the volume's end, indicate this static physical icon is less important to Believers than the animation conveyed by moving pictures of her bodily actions.

In his History of the People Called Shakers, Thomas Brown similarly describes Lee's presence, though with negative connotations because, in his opinion, she transgresses gender boundaries: "Ann Lee was a woman rather short and corpulent. Her countenance was fair and pleasant, but often assumed a commanding, severe look;" (330). Yet even he cannot resist turning from Lee's stature to her performance:

she sang sweetly, with a pleasant voice, but would frequently use the most harsh, satirical language, with a masculine, sovereign address. Her natural genius was resplendent, with a quick and ready turn of wit, but entirely destitute of school education. (330)

Lee's bodily appearance and actions exude her spiritual presence, whether she enters a room singing, leads a group in dancing, speaks to individuals, or addresses a crowd. She displays in these instances what Humez refers to as an ability to "improvise" "as occasion demanded in order to remove or circumvent any roadblocks her gender placed in her path" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 86). The improvisation intersects with what I describe as Lee's spiritual literacy. The text presents Lee "reading" these social situations and responding in an effective manner.

Humez summarizes Lee's effectiveness as an improvisational and charismatic leader in terms some might consider "feminine":

Lee probably relied primarily upon the emotional impact of her presence, the dramatic appeal of her message about celibacy, and an ecstatic mode of worship to convince her followers experientially of her authority and the rightness of her leadership. ("Ye are My Epistles," 86, emphasis mine)

But Lee's performative readings of and responses to given social situations--sometimes "emotional," "ecstatic," and "experiential,"--demonstrate her knowing when to let reason predominate and when to allow emotional excess. Examples of Lee's bodily performances--her "reading," "writing" and "publishing,"--draw from and reflect both "masculine" and

"feminine" modes and inform Shaker attitudes toward letters, bodies, spirits and spirituality in later years of Shakerism.

Lee's ability and willingness to read her own visions while in England first set her apart as a leader. They revealed to her, for example, that the second coming of Christ had occurred and that the small group of Shaking Quakers of which she was a part were to go to America. They provide her the doctrine of celibacy. And they show her the conversions, punishments and rewards of those in the spirit world. She says on one occasion: "'I see multitudes of the dead, that were slain in battle, arise and come into the first resurrection;--I see Christ put crowns on their heads, of bright, glorious, and changeable colors!'" (XXIII, 9). She spoke on another occasion of the embodied forms of the spirit world:

If you commit sin with beasts, your spirits will be transformed into the shape of beasts in hell. I now see some in hell, whose souls are in the shape of dogs, horses and swine. They appear in the shape of such beasts as they committed sin with. (XXXIV, 2)¹⁶

The examples of Lee's visions about celibacy and the spirit world together encompass Shaker theology of the resurrection. Leaders such as John Dunlavy, Benjamin Seth Youngs and Calvin Green consistently reaffirmed in their writings the significance of the body to spirituality through its "crucifixion" and "resurrection." They explained that, contrary to beliefs of many other sects, the Society

believed in only one resurrection. This spiritual resurrection occurred not at the moment of physical death or at a future day of judgment when Jesus would return from the Heavens, but when any individual "died" to the old, fleshly self and began the "regenerate" life. It began with "crucifixion" of the flesh.¹⁷ Thus, ongoing judgment and resurrection--the "second coming" of the Christ--occurred at moments varying from individual to individual. For the Shakers physical death marked only one small step in the middle of the progressive resurrection life of the spirit--what one writer referred to as a mere "translation" in which the spiritual being sloughs off the fleshy casing. Because the Shakers' resurrection bodies were not yet-to-be-obtained, winged beings but the regenerate spirit housed within physical bodies (initially exemplified through Ann Lee), physical bodies were not easily cast aside. The physical body was both the house of the spirit and the vehicle in which the spirit progressed toward its perfection. As Kathleen Deignan explains, "the 'body' is problematic for Shakers, since it is at once the ground of both sin and salvation" (79). And Stephen Marini, also drawing from Shaker theology, aptly describes the union of body and spirit in Ann Lee, a restoration of "the wedding of earthly and spiritual natures" which had been manifest in Adam and Eve before the fall:

By rooting out sin as a human being 'conceived in sin, and lost in the fullness of man's fall,' she

established spiritual dominion over an imperfect body. Jesus had restored spiritual perfection, Mother Ann physical perfection to human nature, thereby completing the reunion of humanity with God. (Radical Sects, 152)

For the Shakers following Ann Lee's example, the body's experiences were critical to spirituality. They informed reading of uninscribed texts, and they could be read to strengthen others' spirituality.

In the Testimonies Lee explains to Nathan Farrington, for example, the uninscribed "texts" of visions and physical bodies, sustain Believers "when all things else [e.g. inscribed texts] fail" (XXIII, 12).¹⁸ Lee's language on several other occasions demonstrates that, like visions, people deserve to be read as texts. The spirit gave this type of skill to such other eighteenth century religious leaders in New England as Jonathan Edwards and Isaac Backus, but Lee places the ability to read people's hearts and minds above reading of Scripture.¹⁹ She implies the importance of placing people above inscribed texts when she quotes from the New Testament (II Corinthians 3:2), "Ye are my epistles, read and known of all men" (XXXIV, 22).²⁰

On two occasions, recorded consecutively, Lee reads peoples' sexual sins.²¹ In one instance Lee "reads" a young woman, whom others "thought to be very honest and chaste," as "'liv[ing] in whoredom with married men, young men, black men and boys.'"²² Although "this declaration almost staggered" one Believer's "confidence in Mother," "the girl

soon after, came forward and confessed the very things which Mother had laid to her charge." The incident strengthened the Believer's faith, showing her "beyond a doubt, that Mother had the revelation of God, and was able to see what creatures had in them" (XXV, 11-12). On the second occasion Lee speaks directly to Tryphena Perkins, a professing Christian: "'You are a filthy whore.'" Enemies

began to flatter themselves, that they were able to prove Mother a false prophetess, and determined to prosecute her for defamation. They said they could prove, to a certainty, that Tryphena was not formed like other women; and therefore could not possibly be guilty of the charge of whoredom.

But Lee's reading proves accurate; Perkins "was soon found to be with child, by a married man! . . . and Mother's enemies were greatly abashed and confounded" (XXV, 4). On another occasion, "Mother said, to [Believer] Mary [Tiffany], 'I see the travel of your soul written upon you in great capital letters, and I can read them as fast as I can speak'" (XXVI, 7).

Lee's miraculous insights, her ability "to see what creatures had in them," strengthened the faith of her followers and provided an example of bodies' roles in spiritual literacies. But Lee's remark to Tiffany about "capital letters" indicates her partial knowledge of inscribed texts and print culture, including the Bible.²³ One scene illustrates particularly well the traditional and innovative reading of people and Scripture which comprise Lee's literacy. According to the volume, when widow Mercy

Bishop prepared to depart from a gathering of believers at Watervliet in 1784 to return home "with a number of her small children," Lee began to speak. Apparently moved by the woman's spirituality and physical situation,

Mother in a farewell address, commended the widow for the zeal which she had manifested in bringing her family to the Church; and then directing her discourse to those who were heads of families, and people of property, . . . she spoke much to them of their duty in giving alms, and being kind and charitable to the poor, particularly to such widows and fatherless children who were among them. After speaking considerable lengthy, and very feelingly on this subject, she requested Elder James to read a passage of Scripture in the Epistle of James, first chapter, beginning at the 22d verse. (XXX, 26-27)

The account continues, explaining that "Elder James took the Bible" and read the scripture, which the volume's editors reprint. The scripture, on being "doers" rather than "hearers" of the Word and on visiting the "fatherless and widows," is remarkably appropriate to the situation at hand. Next, they describe the scene's aura: "The solemn gift of God which accompanied Mother's preceding discourse, together with the impressive feeling with which Elder James read this passage, had a powerful effect on the minds of the hearers" (XXX, 32). Here the editors emphasize God's work (the "gift of God" assisting Ann Lee) and emotion (the "impressive feeling" Elder James gave to his reading) as key to effecting "the minds of the hearers." The passage reveals that Lee disrupts traditional notions of literacy and of religious discourse--the "masculine" model of reading and publishing which supposedly elevates the mind over the body

and reason over emotion--and offers instead a method of teaching which draws from mind and reason but recognizes the value of personal and emotional interaction.

Rhetorical handbooks of the period advising ministers in sermon preparation and published sermons which appear to adhere to these guidelines suggest that typically the minister would begin with a scripture and "divide" it through "reasoned" exegesis so that it could be absorbed by the minds of its readers or hearers. The divided scripture would be developed into a practical application at the sermon's close. Better understanding of Scripture--the written text--was often a prominent goal of the sermon. Of course, many ministers probably let the needs of their parishoners direct them as they chose sermon topics and the scripture to be divided; and sermon style by the late eighteenth century had shifted from the "plain style" of previous generations to more emotional methods such as those used by itinerant Methodists George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley whom Lee might have heard in England.²⁴ However, the established pattern these "masculine" sermons follow is to appeal to reason through exegesis of the scripture prior to providing a practical application that is affiliated with salvation or with bodily activities.²⁵

Lee's style represents an overt reversal of this "masculine" method of sermon development. Her extemporaneous speech emerges from the "texts" of physical bodies. Only

after her bodily-based lesson was delivered did she turn to Scripture for supporting evidence. In this instance we see her recall the passage from the Epistle of James after seeing the widow Mercy Bishop with her children preparing to depart. She recalls the situation's "antitype" within Scripture as a prooftext, as readily as her "literate" male counterparts. And her message emphasizes bodily action among human beings rather than greater intellectual understanding of the Scripture. However, she does not chaotically disrupt a man who is in the midst of a "reasoned" sermon with a moment of uncontrolled, ecstatic gibberish. Rather, already in control of the gathering, she instigates a coherent mini-sermon which emerges from the bodily needs she sees around her. Lee draws from both reason and emotion to convince her audience. She conserves basic elements of Christianity (charity and respect for the truths of the New Testament) while revamping orthodox practices associated with reading, writing and publishing. This blend of tradition and innovation, drawing from both reason and emotion, comprises images of Lee's literacy within the Testimonies.

Several other passages present Lee reading Scripture in a way that silences, befuddles and often angers people who hear her, not because of the supernatural, emotional or irrational elements of the readings, but rather due to the cleverness--the reasoning skills--she exhibits. To borrow the words Jane Kamensky has used to describe Anne

Hutchinson, Lee "was beating them [men] at their own game," a "game of verbal thrust-and-parry [which] was arguably more damning than her female/prophetic mode" (193). For example, during "an assembly" in 1781, the Testimonies record, Mother "came forth with a very powerful gift of God, and reproved the people for their hardness of heart, and unbelief in the Second Appearance of Christ." Her "reproof" was directed specifically to the men of the audience:

"Especially, (said she) ye men and brethren! I upbraid you of your unbelief and hardness of heart."

She spake of the unbelieving Jews, in his first appearance. "Even his own disciples, (added she) after he arose from the dead, though he had often told them that he should rise the third day, believed it not. They would not believe that he had risen, because he appeared first to a woman! So great was their unbelief that the words of Mary seemed to them like idle tales!" (XXIII, 2-3)

Here Lee closes the message with an innovative but "reasoned" interpretation of the scripture: "His appearing first to a woman, showed that his Second appearing would be in a woman!" Through "syllogistical" reasoning, not unlike what Kamensky demonstrates Anne Hutchinson and Ann Hibbens used in the seventeenth century (192), Lee argues convincingly that the Scripture's fulfillment is within herself. Lee's speech is not only "masculine" as Thomas Brown describes it (in its tone and words) but also in its cleverness and reasoning.

In the precedent-setting example of Lee's innovative interpretation of Scripture, she gives an extended explanation of who she is. Joseph Meacham and Calvin Harlow-

-eventual leaders--have questioned her about Pauline teachings on women being silent in the churches; in response she explains her spiritual position in Jesus's absence:

"The order of man, in the natural creation, is a figure of the order of God in the spiritual creation. As the order of nature requires a man and a woman to produce offspring; so, where they both stand in their proper order, the man is first, and the woman the second in the government of the family. He is the father and she the Mother; and all the children, both male and female, must be subject to their parents; and the woman, being second, must be second to her husband, who is the first; but when the man is gone, the right of government belongs to the woman: So is the family of Christ." (IV, 3)

The passage shows Lee reinforcing the traditional values for women in relation to men within the family and the church, but it also drastically revamps them with what Humez calls "an ingenious argument" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 86), which influences Meacham's thinking: it "opened a vast field of contemplation to Joseph, and filled his mind with great light and understanding concerning the spiritual work of God" (IV, 3).

Meacham was willing to accept Lee's argument for her leadership role in the absence of the male Christ; he was willing to recognize and accept the spiritual presence she embodied. The passage continues with a gloss that describes his understanding of the female Lee in relation to the male Jesus:

He saw Jesus Christ to be the Father of the spiritual creation, who was now absent; and he [Meacham] saw Ann Lee to be the Mother of all who were now begotten in the regeneration; and she being present in the body, the power and authority of Christ on earth, was

committed to her; and to her appertained the right of leading, directing governing all her spiritual children. (IV, 5)

Not all who came peacefully were converted like Meacham and Harlow. Not all the crowds or mobs of people who came to see Mother Ann came with skeptical or violent intents.²⁶ The type of authority Lee commands--an ability to read and write which depends upon a spiritual presence drawing from both reason and emotion--surprises some readers into silence and spurs others to violence. Thus Ann Lee's silencing of men occurs neither by specific requests for silence, submission, or obedience nor by vocal command but by her unusual content and style. Although sometimes Lee's (and the Elders') voices bestow miraculous spiritual power, for the most part the responses of men to Lee are matters of choice rather than matters of miracle.²⁷

With this emphasis on how men respond to Ann Lee, I introduce her as a "text" and those who encountered her during her testimony in New England as "readers." The Testimonies allow us to see not only Ann Lee's reading but how others "read" Ann Lee, a topic I will discuss in more detail in Chapter IV. Briefly put, however, borrowing from contemporary theories of reading, Lee's followers appear in the Testimonies as readers willing to submit to the text--her bodily and spiritual presence. Lee's persecutors, unwilling to submit, literally do violence to the text. These violent readings occur because the men have

preconceived ideas about two "semes"--the "eschaton" and "woman."²⁸ Ann Lee's presence spills over the categories within which the persecutors attempt to contain her. They have thought about Christ's second coming, but never imagined the eschaton to be in female form. As "woman" she was expected to be mother of a biological family and contained within domestic space. The "resisting readers"--those unwilling to submit to the "text" of Ann Lee (what she teaches and what she represents), resist but do not read "against the grain." They do not read with hopes of making societal change (helping to build the "kingdom of heaven") but with desires to solidify existing social categories.²⁹ On the other hand, Lee reads against the grain of masculine religious discourse and offers an example they choose not to follow. Lee's followers, content with the reasonable and ecstatic spiritual fullness she conveys, willingly submit to this novel "text." These instances of Lee being read by her followers, in combination with examples of her reading and publishing, establish the literacies predominant within Shaker communities throughout the nineteenth century. They celebrate the body's role in spiritual reading and writing, and they promise dynamism and fluidity of theology in the years to come.

Shaker Spirituality and Letters

As the examples of the Testimonies demonstrate, from

the Shakers' earliest days of Lee's leadership they espoused a belief in an active and living spirit and whose embodied presence informed writing and reading acts. Its existence and significance constituted what Mary Douglas refers to as "implicit knowledge"--truths "too true to warrant discussion." In periods of turmoil, such as the years of communal formation through printed theology (1790-1827) and in the ecstatic revival of the mid-nineteenth century (1828-1850), leaders such as John Dunlavy provided written explanations of the spirit and its manifestations.³⁰ These written explanations "obliquely [re]affirmed" this "implicit knowledge" while they revealed the writers' struggles with contrary "truths" asserted by others within and outside of Shaker communities.³¹

For example, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy attempt to define the spirit and its manifestations in the Kentucky Revival (1807) and the Manifesto (1818), respectively, as Jonathan Edwards and others had during the Great Awakening. In spite of attempts such as these to codify in writing the spirit and its work, diverse understandings of the spirit, spirituality, spiritual manifestations and their relationship to reading and writing emerge in Shaker texts as a result of Lee's example.

This diversified usage emerges in the Shakers' frequent citation of the verse, "the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive" (II Corinthians 3:6), which invites readers to

understand "the spirit" rather simply in relationship to "the letter," representing concepts such as the mosaical law of the Old Testament and Christianity of the New Testament. The verse's context and the Shakers' use of it complicate any oversimplification by multiplying the significations of "the spirit" and "the letter" and underscoring the integral relationships among letters, bodies, and spirituality.

Our understanding of these relationships emerges from a brief analysis of Shaker writers' use of the verse as a proof-text. (Rather than explicate the verse, they cite it to prove other points). Benjamin Seth Youngs, the primary editor of the Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing (1808), employs the scripture as a rationale for the most weighty evidence of the second appearing of Christ and the establishment of the true millennial church. He acknowledges three sources people may draw from to arrive at knowledge of God and "the true Church of Christ"--ecclesiastical history, Scripture, and the testimonies of "living witnesses." Among these, "the testimony of living witnesses is considered of the highest authority and superior to any written record whatever." He continues:

As far as the builder is superior to the thing which he builds, so far the living subjects of the work of God, stand forever superior to any thing that they can possibly comprise in letters. The living testimony of God is not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.(12)

This passage could be read simply as Youngs's employment of

the humility topos, since it follows a disclaimer about the Testimony's quality and status: "We are far from expecting or even wishing any of our writings to supercede the necessity of giving testimony, or in any wise prevent a further increase of light and understanding in the things of God" (12). Yet the disclaimer and the passage which follows present in unison Youngs's emphasis on the primacy of personal testimonies and bodily manifestations to fostering spirituality.

More than half a century later later Rebecca Cox Jackson uses the scripture in her autobiographical writings to explain her ability to understand three difficult books which appear to her within a dream:

I should have the spiritual meaning of the letter revealed in my soul by the manifestation of God. This revelation, then being in Heaven, was the true book which must come to give us the true meaning of the letter--as 'the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive'. (Humez, Gifts of Power, 290)

Jackson uses the verse to validate not only the spirit's assistance in the reading of inscribed texts but also the revelation of God through "mystical" and personal experiences such as dreams. Thus, the passages by Jackson and Youngs reflect the diverse work and embodiment of the spirit. In this case the "more literary" male emphasizes the spirit's embodiment in people while the less literary female emphasizes the spirit's assistance in the interpretation of the letters within books. The writers invoke understandings

of the spirit they need to assist them in the historical and material moments in which they live. This openness to the spirit's work contributes to writers' abilities to draw upon the spirit as needed, informing and complementing the literacies which have empowered them as they live within the Society. Readers and writers of the word "spirit," as the examples of Jackson and Youngs reveal, read and write their own understandings of "spirit" into texts as needed.

The verse's context, which Ann Lee supposedly knew, encouraged such diverse readings. Prior to the summary statement, "the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive," the Pauline writer explains to his audience, Christians at Corinth, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone but in tables of the hearts" (II Corinthians 3:2-3). The writer complicates the letter/spirit dichotomy of verse 6 by referring not only to "letter" as gramma (anything written or inscribed) but also to "letter" as epistle (a body of writing). And human beings, human hearts, and the spirit replace stone, paper, and ink as media, tools and agents of the writing act. Thus, when the Testimonies (1816) record Lee saying to her followers, "ye are my epistles," they underscore her use of the verse to emphasize (as Youngs does in the Testimony) a spirituality embodied in

humans and reading which includes interpreting bodies. Yet her citation also indicates, as Jackson's use of the passage does, her reliance on the inscribed letters of Scripture. The passages from Jackson and Youngs attest to the major implication of Lee's teaching--"the letter" by itself is death. Whether a human body or an inscribed document--"the letter" receives life from the spirit. In a kind of circularity, however, Shaker spirituality depends upon both inscribed texts and bodily experiences.

Shaker Bodies and Letters

Kathleen Deignan notes the image of the body--both corporate and individual--functions as the primary controlling symbol of the Shakers' first published document, Joseph Meacham's Concise Statement of the Only True Church (1790). The image of the Church as unified body--perhaps drawing from the Pauline image (I Corinthians 12)--provided individual members a sense of family and, with it, spiritual strength and support. The Shakers recognized the fluidity of the Society and the distinct personalities within it from their early years throughout the nineteenth century, but uniformity of beliefs (even beliefs in diversity and the progressive nature of revelation) contributed to images of an ideal Shaker body.

Although individual Shaker bodies manifest diverse spiritual gifts such as dancing, shaking, speaking in

tongues, drawing, and writing, after Lee's death the sect as a whole manifested a unified spirituality through their productivity and regulation. By the mid-nineteenth century products such as furniture, baskets, boxes, and inscribed texts were their fruits of the spirit, replacing biological children and converts; regulation of bodily behaviors as diverse as sexuality and reading and writing contributed to the productivity. With the codification of theology in print after 1790, the connections between bodily regulation and spirituality became more explicit. Though some leaders, such as Lucy Wright, resisted this inscribed codification, the "Order and Rules of the Church" at New Lebanon circulated in a letter just after her death in 1821. Regulations known as the "Millennial Laws of 1821" soon followed.³² The behaviors regulated by these "laws" changed over the years, but at times they included prevention of Brothers and Sisters passing each other on the stairs, kneeling before and after eating, kneeling with the right knee first, restriction from playing with cats and dogs, placing right thumbs and fingers above the left when hands are clasped, not placing feet "on the rounds of . . . chairs" when sitting, and the like. Each of the laws has a purpose. Lifting feet when ascending and descending stairs, for example, prevented "wear[ing] out the carpets unnecessarily." Laws regulating diet and hygiene reflected new "scientific" beliefs of the nineteenth century.

The overall purpose of these laws over the years, according to the introductions to several versions, was maintaining unity of spirit and love among Brothers and Sisters and for God. Theologians and other "outsiders" interpret the "Laws," their functions and their origins differently. The 1845 version, according to Theodore Johnson, contained "detailed proscriptions for every aspect of the Believer's daily round" and "bear the mark of the era of spirit manifestation" (40), whose ecstatic "charism" produced some institutional control. During the mid-nineteenth century the "Laws" caused apostates such as David Lamson to complain that the sect was one of "total uniformity" with no freedom for personal expression (18).³³ And Edward Deming Andrews's reprint of the 1845 version in 1953 has contributed to the popular images many outsiders have visualized during the past half century. Stein accurately suggests that the "Laws" strengthened the Shaker body at large by further differentiating individual bodies within it from the world; they "defined the boundaries between Shakerism and the world, establishing clear lines of demarcation between the sect and the larger American culture, both in a literal and in a symbolic fashion" (Shaker Experience, 67).

The "Millennial Laws" show that bodily experiences in Shaker communities came to be more uniform--more ritualized--after 1821. Believers maintained unique personalities and

underwent unique bodily experiences, but widespread communal practices regulated by the daily rituals created a distinct body known as the United Society of Believers and began to blur the boundaries between individual and communal bodies. The "Millennial Laws" represent a means of maintaining the spiritual life of individual Believers by encouraging bodily habits which reinforce individuals' relationships to the body at large. Knowing these bodily codes--manifestations as well as agents of spirituality--Shakers were able to "read" other Believers' behaviors in any Shaker community.

The Shakers' "Millennial Laws" suggest the importance of what Paul Connerton calls "habit memory"--"the capacity to reproduce a certain performance" such as typing, riding a bicycle or playing the piano without thinking. Such "bodily automatisms" associated with societal rituals, Connerton argues, provide an important matrix from and in which individuals and societies often decide how to act. For the Shakers bodily habits--exercises such as the dances which led to their popular name, behavior coded in the "Millennial Laws," and reading and writing practices--inform social memory and spiritual fulfillment.

Bodily habits reinforce what Connerton classifies as two other types of social memory: "cognitive" and "personal." People use "personal" or experiential memory to remember and convey events, generally presented in narrative style. Within Shakerism the numerous testimonies and

biographical and autobiographical writings, such as those of Ann Lee, Rebecca Cox Jackson and Alonzo Hollister, rely predominately on this aspect of memory. Cognitive memory draws from learned "facts," such as the alphabet, multiplication table, or names of national capitals. Shakers use "cognitive" memory in Scriptural interpretation and its conveyance in doctrinal works such as Dunlavy's Manifesto. And they use cognitive memory to convey orally and in writing details such as Ann Lee's birthday and items of the "Millennial Laws."

As Connerton argues and I will illustrate, particular genres foreground particular types of memory; yet all three types of memory inform writing and reading acts to a certain degree. The elegies written at Canterbury which I discuss in Chapter VI, for example, draw from cognitive and personal memory as well as from habit memory. To write an elegy to Emmeline Kimball, with whom she worked in the Infirmary for several years, Marica Hastings drew from personal memories of the deceased. And the Journal which preserves these transcribed poems includes details such as dates of birth and death which draw from cognitive memory. Yet the performances of the elegies (both the writing acts in private and the public readings during funeral services) draw from habit memory. The Shakers' spiritual literacies validate cognitive and personal memory as well as the habit memories which inform ritualized reading and writing acts.

All reading and writing acts which draw from a symbol system ingrained in the memories of most readers should be thought of as rituals--events, actions or behaviors which are "not fully rational and controlled" (Shaw, 9).

Ritualized reading and writing can occur with genres such as autobiographies, biographies, histories and elegies comprised of images of heroes and heroines but also with individual scriptures. I use "can occur" rather than "occurs" to emphasize this type of literary act first as one that is only sometimes employed and second as one that is learned (unconsciously) through repetition. By writing or reading a genre or a Bible verse such as "the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive" again and again and again, the writer or reader who may initially think critically about the language and symbol system being used may eventually begin ritualized textual work.

I use "ritualized" as Peter Shaw has used it to describe linguistic behavior, to signify "any incantatory, partly unconscious use of language" (9). Although Shaw uses the words "not fully rational" and "partly unconscious" to leave room for the roles reason and consciousness play in ritual, the emphasis on unconscious behavior and the irrational in definitions of ritual has led many to see rituals as thoughtless, empty and stifling processes, used by leaders of a community to control followers' minds and bodies. Apostate Nicholas Briggs, for example, wrote that

the Shakers' ritualized dancing had an hypnotic effect (474). I view rituals in this study as acts of "fulness," fostering the faiths of those practicing them, for several reasons: First, observers or outsiders have a difficult time assessing or knowing a particular ritual is "empty." Second, the visions ritual participants have of particular symbols vary from person to person and from moment to moment. Rebecca Jackson and Alonzo Hollister, for example, whom I discuss in Chapter V, read and write the symbol of Ann Lee differently from each other and from moment to moment within their narratives. A person reading cognitively or rationally at one moment may read the same text non-cognitively or emotionally at another. And finally, both cognitive and non-cognitive readings can be empowering acts for the participants.³⁴ Throughout their history the Shakers recognize the value of and accept these multiple kinds of reading acts, which contribute to their spiritual literacies.

Spiritual Literacies: Some Conclusions

Stein correctly assesses the Shakers' move from Lee's orally conveyed teachings to the codification of theology and morality through written works such as the "Millennial Laws." He explains that the Laws "evolved out of the practical needs of the growing society"; they regulated an otherwise unwieldy number of Believers (Shaker Experience,

67). Drawing from Max Weber's notion of the "fundamental tension between 'charism' and 'institutions,'" Stein writes that theology follows bodily experience:

By contrast with religious experience or the direct encounter with the divine, theology represents "an intellectual rationalization of the possession of sacred values." Theology follows religious experience in both temporal and logical sequence in the evolution of sectarian societies. (Shaker Experience, 66-67)

He concludes his remarks about the "temporal and logical sequence," however, with a significant qualification: "Experience and reflection, nonetheless, are not mutually exclusive and often stand in creative relation to one another" (Shaker Experience, 67). Linda Mercadante, who also considers the relationship between "experience" and "doctrine" in Shakerism, writes "doctrine and experience were intentionally yoked" (122, emphasis mine) and "the Shakers valued experience over doctrine" (5): "Experience, rather than scripture, Christian history, or any definitive theological corpus, was always the primary source and norm" (51). She sees the "religious imagination" as the link "between experience and theological idea": "Experience can be translated into new images and concepts only when the religious imagination is allowed to operate freely" (51). She privileges the "testimony" as the key genre for empowering individuals and sustaining religious groups because it allows the religious imagination to work freely; it allows innovation in personal expression and,

subsequently, in doctrine. She writes:

a testimony is a hermeneutical act, a 'collision' of perspectives, where an individual's life story and encounter with the divine is interpreted within the framework of a given belief structure. Here the personal and the communal meet; experience and doctrine are fused together. In addition, the movement is dynamic, as individual believers, through these acts of interpretation, sometimes also affect or change the understanding of the communal faith story. Writers are active in this process, shaping the narrative in the same way as the belief structure does. (128)

However, other Shaker genres included in this study-- doctrinal treatise, history, biography, and elegy--function in this way as well. Readers of these genres can be active; yet they also can be passive. And writers of Shaker testimonies are always influenced by constraints of genre. What Stein refers to briefly as the "creative relationship" and Mercadante refers to as "religious imagination," the Shakers classify as a work of the spirit. Through a belief in a spirit which operates through bodily experiences and mental reflection, they allow room for innovation in personal expression and, subsequently, in doctrine and bodily codes.

When the spirit is more closely associated with the senses and the emotions than with the mind, spiritual literacies allow Shakers to submit to "the pleasure of the text"--to emotional, experiential readings where readers' life experiences cause them to read themselves into texts, to quite easily displace the images of people within it for images of themselves. This type of literary work occurs with

narratives such as the Testimonies (1816), the official biography of Ann Lee, and the personal narratives of other Shakers. A form of typological reading, not unlike readings of the Bible or of Pilgrim's Progress, this kind of interpretive act depends upon a symbol system working within and shaping the culture.

The Shakers' spiritual literacies, like all cultural literacies, have parameters and rules which the communities established and taught in various ways. Lee's emphasis on reading people's bodies, coupled with the leadership's codification of bodily rituals through the "Millennial Laws," allowed Believers to read individual Shakers' bodies and bodily behavior as well as communities as a whole. When Believers' readings weren't innovative, the spirit informed the reading nonetheless so that Shaker publications and even secular works were understood correctly. The Shakers' ritualized reading and writing, non-cognitive as it was at times, gave individuals within particular communities a framework to rely upon when a need, such as whether to leave Shakerism or not, arose. And ritualized reading grounded innovative and creative ways of reading and writing.

Although Believers learned the codes of Shaker literacies within institutionalized communities, the codes themselves allow for innovation. The Shakers' literacies depended upon the notion of an embodied spirit, exemplified initially in Ann Lee. Lee's interpretation of people's

bodies and minds, of mystical visions she saw, and of mystical voices she heard established the reading of uninscribed texts as a significant part of spiritually-informed reading. The uninscribed texts of visions and voices, written in the mind, the heart, and the memory, encouraged private acts of reading; they allowed some independence and autonomy, some "charism" within the "institution." The belief that the spirit operated apart from inscribed texts allowed Shakers to receive new revelations and to instigate new religious practices for the community as a whole. Thus, the Shakers changed their worship practices during the Era of Manifestations and continually revised the "Millennial Laws" throughout the nineteenth century. Spiritual literacies also allowed innovative readings of inscribed texts. The spirit assisted Shaker leaders such as Joseph Meacham, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy in reading the Bible in a new way. As I will discuss in the next chapter, McNemar and Dunlavy drew from their personal memories of reading people, their habit memories of reading doctrinal works and scriptural, and their training as "reasonable" interpreters of Scripture to write inscribed texts which serve as handbooks to the Shakers' spiritual literacies.

Notes

1. Sally Kitch refers to Lee as "the illiterate daughter of working class parents" (8). Jean Humez begins a piece on Ann Lee imagery, "Illiterate herself, Ann Lee is reported to have called her followers 'my epistles, read and known by

all men'" (Mother's, 1) and describes her on another occasion as "an illiterate working-class Englishwoman" and an "unlettered female prophet" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 83). Stephen Stein writes that "Ann Lee's illiteracy [was] a limitation that fueled her rejection of all writing" (Shaker Experience, 9).

2. Hutchinson and Hibbens were accused, like Lee, of heresy and witchcraft. Jane Kamensky has analyzed their speech as it is recorded in court documents in "Governing the Tongue: Speech and Society in Early New England." For more on Hutchinson's speech, see also Patricia Caldwell's "The Antinomian Language Controversy." Susan Juster discusses the oral teachings of Jemimah Wilkinson, the "universal friend" who roamed revolutionary New England, with a brief comparison to Ann Lee in "To Slay the Beast: Visionary Women in the Early Republic."

3. On the "oral residue" among early New England literates, see David Hall's Worlds of Wonder. Other discussions of the relationships between orality and literacy include Robert Darnton's The Great Cat Massacre, M. M. Bakhtin's Rabelais and his World, and Margaret Spufford's Small Books and Pleasant Histories.

4. The Shaker Testimonies have been seen by some as containing the truths about Lee's life; others have acknowledged the gap between the "actual" Ann Lee and the Ann Lee of narrative. Stein has written, for example, "the resulting story--no less valuable for the process of collection and editing--has historical relevance more for the time of its collection and composition than for the earlier ages that it purports to describe" (Shaker Experience, 9). Humez's analysis, "Ye Are My Epistles," follows this approach and is the most rigorous to date.

5. See, for example, Peter Shaw, Patriotic Rhetoric and The Rituals of Revolution. Additionally, the Testimonies include references to Lee, accused of witchcraft and of being a man in woman's clothing, having her clothes ripped from her by members of the mobs. As Carol Karlsen has documented in The Devil in the Shape of a Woman, such accusations and treatment of women who transgressed societal norms were prominent in the mid- and late-seventeenth century. She also suggests that these actions and attitudes among common people did not die away as soon as the church and state officially relinquished such beliefs and practices. Though Lee lived much later than the period of New England witchcraft trials Karlsen discusses, it is quite probable that she endured such physical and emotional brutality.

6. Proctor-Smith writes, "In naming Ann Lee as Mother, the Believers not only acknowledged her role in giving birth to and nurturing the Society, but they also recognized in her the revelation of the Mother-aspect of God." And she "is portrayed as an individual of authority and power, with a decisive role to play in the work of redemption" (Women, 146-48). Linda Mercadante summarizes, "the range of attributes for both Mother Ann and Jesus were broad. And Mother Ann, more than Jesus, was portrayed as not only stern and judgmental, but also as nurturant, motherly, and empowering" (138). Humez explains that although Lee appears at times as "a poor, weak woman," at others she "emerges as a towering, awe-inspiring, and even frightening figure: a strict, even harsh, mother, whose reproofs are remembered clearly for thirty years; or a terrifying seer and prophet, who reported flying with visionary wings through the heavens and the prisons of hell" (Mother's First-Born Daughters, 6). Humez explains the mixture of styles as reflective of the leaderships dual reasons for composing the piece: "to defend itself from external enemies and internal political problems" (5). She also writes that "contradictions" in Ann Lee imagery "derive in part from real tensions within Shakerism at this time over the meaning of her ministry and over the authority of female religious leaders in general" (5).

7. Humez explains,

male leaders in particular needed to create a myth of the founder that would explain their extraordinary decision to join a church headed by an unknown working woman and to remain faithful after her death. They needed to build permanent institutions over the shifting sand of her ecstatic experience and their own. They needed to educate and impress would-be converts; to repel, rebut and chastise enemies of the faith; and to comfort and inspire old and new Believers. All of their early publications wrestle with the problem of creating a coherent understanding of 'this extraordinary female whom God had chosen, and in whom Christ did visibly make his second appearance' (Testimonies, 2).

Of this volume in particular, directed internally rather than externally, she explains, it "was created in an effort to preserve as much accurate detail about the past as possible, for the instruction of future generations" (87). Nonetheless, Shaker leaders concerned with the external issues listed above influenced the shape of this internally directed document.

8. Garrett contrasts the bodily spiritual work of early Shaker male and female leaders in a similar manner. He

writes of Ann Lee's "ecstatic experiences," "the prevailing mood seems to have been one of celebration, of rejoicing in the presence of the divine." In contrast, "under Whitaker's leadership, the gifts of the Spirit were generally those of mortification, forcing believers to confront and overcome their own sins, especially those of sexuality" (212).

9. Kitch acknowledges and draws from the works of Amanda Porterfield, Nancy Cott, Barbara Welter, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Ann Douglas, which argue in sum that in nineteenth-century America, "religion . . . helped to modify both actual and symbolic female domestic confinement in general" (Kitch, 42). Mainstream Protestantism "valorized allegedly female traits such as intuition and spiritual and emotional sensitivity, which were routinely devalued in other public domains" (42). And "in less traditional sects such as Christian Science, Spiritualism, and Theosophy--which recognized the female qualities of God and opposed the hegemony of the male clergy--women fared even better" (42). Kitch argues that among these "less traditional sects," the Shakers and other celibate women she examines

took the religious opportunity one step further than most Protestant women did by interpreting their religious responsibilities as grounds for renouncing rather than embracing the sexual and reproductive aspects of female identity. They examined the symbolic premises of female confinement to the natural familial domain, and they rejected them as incompatible with the spiritual order. . . . [T]hey rejected sexual/reproductive foundations for female subordination in a separate, "natural" domain. The rejection of subordination and confinement did not necessarily mean the rejection of all traditional female activities, or of female gender identity, however. Rather, the incorporation of spiritual, transcendent symbolism into female gender identity by these groups sometimes promoted a kind of female superiority, particularly in spiritual affairs, that privileged female qualities. (43)

10. Ortner's article, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" which initially provided this argument, has received much critical attention. Kitch writes, for example, that Carol MacCormack "objects to Ortner's use of structuralism because it ignores data that disprove its models";

women can be seen as mediating between nature and culture rather than as languishing in the natural realm. Women also play active roles in marriage and agree to their own 'exchange.' Structural analysis also fails to account for female power in

a number of societies. (Kitch, 44, n.7). Kitch, however, agrees with Ortner that "such failures do not necessarily invalidate the endurance of a symbolic system" (44, n. 7).

Bynum, who also builds upon Ortner's argument, recognizes that Ortner's work has been criticized for its "universalist" bent; however, she explains, she does not want to imply the "abject truth" of these dichotomies nor that "medieval women espoused such a dichotomy," but "that this is the pattern symbols fell into in male writing and religious practice between 1200 and 1500." She also notes that Ortner has tried to revise her earlier theory in Sexual Meanings (Holy Feast, 414, n. 14 & 15).

11. Chief among "the polarities of all reality," Deignan writes, is "the fundamental pair of male and female. . . . which Youngs sets as his archetypal foundation" (96-7).

12. Deignan's thrust is probably a reaction to such critics as Louis Kern, who labels the Shakers dualists (76).

13. Hampton writes:

In looking around us and into the general structure of the universe, the most palpable and obvious departments we can discover therein are the dual ones of male and female. The origin of these may be traced to the no less palpable principles of wisdom and love, a duality observable in all the dispensations of Divine Providence and for aught we know to the contrary, a duality constituting the Infinite mind itself. This language echoes Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nineteenth Century." It is possible she drew from their theology to write her essay, or that Hampton drew from her work as he wrote.

14. Humez notes "the impressive nature of Ann Lee's own appearance"; "the power of her example and her words;" and her use of "personal experience storytelling as an important teaching tool" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 91, 102, 98).

15. James Fitch also uses the categories of "words" and "works" to create a verbal portrait of Puritan woman Anne Mason (Madden, 242). This appears to be a commonplace of verbal portraiture of spiritual women. See Laurel Ulrich ("Vertuous Women Found," 22).

16. For Lee's laboring with those in the spirit world, see XXVII. For comments on judgment of both righteous and wicked, see XLII, 1. See also V, 5.

17. See Dunlavy's Manifesto: on the resurrection (Part III); on the union of the spiritual with the material (38-39). Marini summarizes this Shaker theology, drawing especially from the works of Meacham, Youngs and Green (Radical Sects, 148-155). Youngs and Green write, for example, "'when he renounces the will of the flesh, and is subject to the will of the Spirit; then he is raised from a death of sin to a life of righteousness; and this is his resurrection'" (Marini, Radical Sects, 153). Kern also discusses the relationship between sexuality and theology (76-90).

18. Lee speaks to Farrington of a vision he had of "the Lord Jesus Christ, and Mother Ann by his side" (XXIII, 11). Perhaps she refers to the content of the vision--people embodying the Christ Spirit; however, she also implicitly emphasizes the power of unscripted texts. See Sasson ("Individual Experience," 31).

19. See William G. McLoughlin's Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition (1-22) on the "new light" tradition of "reading" these personal experiences. Edwards discusses his ability to read the manifestations of the spirit in "A Faithful Narrative" and "A Divine and Supernatural Light."

20. On another occasion Lee addresses the danger of misplacing the site of reading (and especially, of reading about the Second Coming) onto either "natural" signs or books. At Ashfield, the editors record, one Believer commented after seeing an "extraordinary" display of the Northern Lights, "It is the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, in the clouds of heaven" (XXV, 19). Alluding to the Hebrew writers' reference to "so great a cloud of witnesses" of faith which should motivate Christians to cast aside sin, endure hardship, and "run with patience the race set before" them (Hebrews 12:1), Lee instructs the Believer: "'Those signs which appear in the sky, are not the signs of his coming; but the second appearance of Christ is in his Church; and Christ is come to put away sin from his people; and this is the cloud [of witnesses] alluded to'" (XXV, 19).

21. Central metaphorically as well as literally, these two passages continue one of the textual strategies I discuss in Chapter IV. They recreate Lee as a purist, sexually speaking. In addition to her few explicit "testimonies against the flesh"--her standard teaching against sexual union even between husbands and wives--other passages within the text contribute subtly to this depiction of Ann Lee's bodily chastity.

22. This comment categorizes men in a way that echoes the compartmentalizing within Shaker villages when communities were "brought into order" after Lee's death. It also

reflects the racial stereotyping recorded in many Shaker documents. On another occasion within the Testimonies, Lee is recorded to have had a vision of a man "as black as a negro," described as such because of his sinful condition (XVII, 2). I discuss the attitudes of white Shakers toward African Americans, for example, in Chapter V and briefly refer to treatment of children in Chapter VI.

23. Lee's Scriptural knowledge, as specifically as it is depicted here, may have been sharpened by the editors of the Testimonies. Yet it is quite probable that she knew Scripture well from absorbing it aurally over the years. Thomas Swain explains that in the 1816 version Lee is recorded to give paraphrases of biblical passages but in the 1888 edition Lee says "the complete Biblical verse[s] verbatim" (57).

24. Marini writes, "the relationship of the sects [of revolutionary New England, such as the Shakers] to Whitefield was particularly intimate and substantive" (153-54). Ann Lee was a "convert" or "adherent" to him at one time (Testimonies [1816], IX, 3-4). Marini emphasizes the predominance of orality and experientialism in their thought:

Sectarian thought was rooted not in the sophisticated philosophic disquisitions of Evangelical Calvinism and Arminianism, but in the oral tradition of the history of redemption preached by Anglo-American itinerants since the 1730s. . . . They and their followers seized on the lineaments of the history of redemption to provide a schema for their new revelations and spiritual exegesis of scripture. After a generation of intense oral development, these salvation narratives emerged as a family of indigenous theologies distinctive in their spiritualism and perfectionism. (153-4)

25. For a recent discussion of New England sermon style, see Teresa Toulouse's The Art of Prophesying. I provide two examples of "rational" Puritan sermons structured to meet audience members needs for consolation in "Resurrecting Life." Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres reflect the shifting style of sermons of the late eighteenth century.

26. Another example is that of Phineas Farnsworth, "captain of militia." Although not moved to convert as Meacham was, he responds with noticeable silence to Ann Lee's innovative and convincing reading of Scripture. The Testimonies record: in "the latter part of January, 1782" Farnsworth appeared at the Square House in Harvard "with a large company of men, to

drive them [the Believers] off, unless they would promise to be gone by such a time." After some negotiations outside the house, "the Captain obtained admittance into the chamber where Mother was, and stated his business, requiring her to leave the town." Lee once again draws her response from Scripture (James 4:13-15): "ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. . . . For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." The Testimonies record Lee replied:

"I expect to go tomorrow, if it is God's will."
 "Very well," (said the Captain,) "if you are going so soon I shall let you alone." After some conversation, he took his leave of Mother, promising not to molest her, seeing she was going away tomorrow. "Yea," (said Mother,) "I expect to go tomorrow, if it is God's will; but I will return again the next day if it is God's will, for all you." The Captain, feeling himself bound, said no more, but went down stairs. (XIII, 5-6)

27. In a section of the Manifesto where he delineates the spirit's work, Dunlavy describes the Shakers' belief that "man" is a "free, moral agent" with a "rational spirit" which is "the representative of God" and which leads him to act based on judgment of empirical evidence (38-40). On one occasion in the Testimonies, however, the responses to Lee appear a bit miraculous. When a group of "unruly men" appeared on horseback during a meeting, Lee's request that they "draw back" eventually effects the horses and the men: the men refusing to obey, she raised her hand, and with great power and authority, cried aloud, "Draw back, I say, or I'll smite the horse and his rider."

On uttering these words, all the power of resistance seemed instantly to be taken from the men, and their horses immediately ran backwards, from the house. (XIX, 29-30)

28. This behavior echoes the violence against women in Puritan culture which Ann Kibbey demonstrates was an extension of Protestant iconoclasm in The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism: A Study of Rhetoric, Prejudice, and Violence.

29. I draw here from Judith Fetterly's contention in The Resisting Reader that women who read "against the grain" by resisting images of masculine heroism contribute to social change.

30. Dunlavy delineates the spirits' work in the Manifesto, 38-62. On the leaderships' work during the Era of Manifestations, see Sasson, "Individual Experience."

31. According to Douglas, a society's "implicit knowledge" appears in its symbols, rituals and myths. When people challenge these truths with apparently "explicit knowledge"--that is, when cultural conflicts arise between the "real" and the ideal--the "implicit knowledge" is at least "obliquely [re]affirmed" as the society attempts resolution and compromise (3-4).

32. I draw this information from Theodore Johnson's historical introduction to the 1967 reprint of the 1821 version.

33. I discuss Lamson's complaints in Chapter I. The "Millennial Laws" of 1821 do include regulations for reading and writing (Ch. II, 10, 17).

34. As I discuss Rebecca Jackson's literacy in Chapter V, I refer to critical responses to the ritualized readings of Puritan Mary Rowlandson and Susan Warner's fictional heroine Ellen Montgomery, who may appear to be personally limited by their literacies.

CHAPTER III

HANDBOOKS TO SPIRITUAL LITERACIES:

MCNEMAR'S KENTUCKY REVIVAL AND DUNLAVY'S MANIFESTO

The writing of the first Shaker theological works, which Stephen Stein and Linda Mercadante describe as following the experiences of Believers, occurred in the Shaker communities of the west beginning in the early part of the nineteenth century. Villages in what are now Kentucky and Ohio have been recognized for contributing to Shakerism the intellectual grounding which drew some converts throughout the nineteenth century and which made it more respectable to "the world."¹ Among the western Shaker writers of theology, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy inscribed two texts which serve as the focus of this chapter. Dunlavy's Manifesto (1818) and McNemar's The Kentucky Revival (1807) illustrate what Stein calls the "creative relation" of "reflection" or "experience" to "theology" or "doctrine" and the intertwining of what Connerton labels "cognitive," "personal" and "habit" memories. Both volumes articulate and illustrate Shaker literacies in similar but complementary ways. The writers implicitly present the possibility of someone being converted to Shakerism by reading a Shaker book; their literacies imply readers who would recognize the conversions

they experience. But their conversions (like their literacies) are dependent upon a belief in the progressive nature of truth and revelation, in reason as a key factor in conversion, and in the indwelling spirit, exemplified initially in Ann Lee.

Lee is remarkably almost absent from these and several other works male Shaker leaders composed during this formative period, although the 1816 Testimonies and works about the Shakers by apostates published before 1827 focus on her. The first published doctrinal work, Joseph Meacham's Concise Statement of the Principles of the Only True Church (1790), for example, omits any reference to Lee by name. Meacham devotes twenty-four pages to a typological reading of Daniel and Revelation to set forth the four "dispensations of God's Grace to Fallen Man." The final dispensation began in 1747 with the Second Appearing of Christ, "'revealed by one to others,'" an oblique reference to Lee (Deignan, 87).² And Dunlavy includes only one reference to the controversial woman in his lengthy Manifesto, "only to answer the accusation that the Shakers have put Ann in the place of Jesus as the Christ" (Deignan, 126). Lee's absence from these early works has been attributed, and accurately so, to the writers' concerns with rationalizing their faiths.³ Although Lee appears to be absent from these works, she is, in fact, the absent presence informing and supporting them. Without Ann Lee's

claim to embody fulfillment of prophecy, and without the power of her physical and spiritual presence before men such as Meacham and Dunlavy, they would not have read her into Scripture as they did, nor would they have written their works. Thus, in the process of omitting Lee to explain rationally the Shaker faith in the sect's formative years, these authors articulated, illustrated and helped to codify the literacies she established. They reinforced the paradoxical dependency of spiritual literacies upon both inscribed and unscribed texts as they wrote theology and history to unify the Shaker church, a church founded upon the presence of the indwelling spirit.

As Kathleen Deignan points out, Dunlavy and Meacham emphasized the spirit's presence within all members of the millennial church rather than the presence of the Christ Spirit solely in Ann Lee. This emphasis infiltrates Shaker literacies, as these men inscribe them, in two ways. First, Lee's spiritual life causes them to revise ecclesiastical history, describing themselves as living in the millennial kingdom of heaven on earth. To accomplish this revision, these writers depended as acutely on a knowledge of and reading of Scripture as leaders of other Christian sects. They were, like their archenemies, systematic theologians who depended upon Scripture; the differences between them emerged from differences in the foundations of their systems. For the Shakers the foundation was the belief in

the presence of the Spirit in Ann Lee. Second and consequently, these writers explained, the Spirit's presence in Believers closed the gaps between "shadowy type" and "reality." Spirit-filled Believers lived in a world of "presence," where signs were not marks of "absence" but infused with meaning. The meaningful "signs" they read were not only inscribed texts but, as Lee had established, unscripted signs such as bodies and oral testimonies of other Believers.

The works of Dunlavy and McNemar illustrate their need to graft their newly received testimony of Ann Lee and the millennial church onto what they already knew about Christian eschatology. In many ways they were "already written" by the discourses of Protestant sects which had worked through Scripture to explain reasonably their particular understandings of the "last days," the spirit's manifestations, and the correct hermeneutic. Unable to leave this type of reading and reasoning behind, they brought it to the convincing oral testimonies of Shaker missionaries from New England, binding the two together in their theology and history.

A dense and lengthy theological treatise organized by topic, Dunlavy's 520-page work came to be known as a key reference work rather than a text to be meditated upon, for it exhibits patterns of tedious Calvinistic exegesis with a Shaker spin. Dunlavy overtly provides an "institutionalized"

and "rational" reading of Scripture, heavily sprinkled with Greek and Hebrew renderings of the verses he cites as proof texts, to argue for his understanding of topics such as "On the Being of God," "Of the Truth of Revelation," and "Of the Resurrection." As Deignan explains, "Dunlavy is preoccupied with presenting Shakerism in the categories of strict evangelical faith, refashioning these to illumine his Shaker gospel. . . . [He] is influenced by the stock themes and controversies of evangelical Calvinism more than anything else" (126).⁴ McNemar exhibits in his work intellectual qualities similar to those of his brother-in-law Dunlavy--he frequently quotes Scripture and occasionally uses Greek or Hebrew. But in contrast to Dunlavy he adopts a rather easily absorbed chronological and narrative style for his 119-page history, the Shaker's first bound volume. McNemar's work reflects the importance of his experiences during the years of revival in Northern Kentucky and Southern Ohio; his reading of people and events serves as the basis for his narrative and his argument for the role of the spirit in reading its bodily manifestations.⁵

Each work, however, depends upon other types of interpretive acts as well. Although Dunlavy does not mention it, his writing also draws from his experience in the Kentucky Revival, and McNemar draws from his understanding of the Shaker doctrine he has learned, though he mentions it only periodically and supposedly tangentially within his

narrative. For example, McNemar's narrative begins as an intellectual history, describing the schism between "orthodox" Presbyterians and the "New Lights" as a result of the charismatic revival in Kentucky and Ohio which had begun in 1799. To describe the schism, however, he delves into theology, which is obviously colored by his Shaker bias.

Both McNemar and Dunlavy converted to Shakerism during this revival, when missionary Believers from "the east" appeared with the story of Christ's Second Appearing. The revival had begun among congregations of Presbyterians at Paint Lick and Cane Ridge, Kentucky and Turtle Creek, Ohio. Seven leaders of the "New Light" Presbyterians or "Schismatics," including McNemar and Barton W. Stone, officially broke away from their more conservative counterparts in 1803. Stein describes the leaders of the movement and its thrust:

These factious liberals gave voice to a theological Arminianism based on the principle of biblical authority . . . [and] combined a commitment to democracy with a fervent anti-institutionalism and a radical congregationalism. They believed the indwelling spirit of Christ was the bond of religious unity. With the first-century Christian church as a model, they maintained a heightened eschatological expectation, a concern for sharing goods, and an acceptance of visions, prophecies, and bodily manifestations of the spirit. Above all, however, they rejected the notion of divine election, affirming that each individual was an actor in the work of regeneration and must press for additional spiritual light, even perfection. (Shaker Experience, 58-59)

The radical "bodily manifestations" of the indwelling spirit

during these years, according to McNemar's History, included "praying, shouting, jerking, barking, or rolling" (69)-- actions not too much unlike the early manifestations among Believers in Christ's Second Appearing in New England. Thus, when John Meacham, Benjamin Seth Youngs and Issachar Bates appeared in the West in 1805 to explain that the millennium of spiritual presence and perfection had begun, ushered in by Ann Lee, many such as Dunlavy and McNemar soon attached themselves to this new sect and helped establish communities of Believers.⁶ McNemar and Dunlavy write their works "for 'the world'" in this "atmosphere of controversy" (Deignan, 126).⁷

McNemar's and Dunlavy's works' prefatory remarks and title pages, the styles they exhibit, and references to imagined readers by name point to the multiple stratifications of discourse these writers employ. They write to "outsiders," consisting of both seekers and enemies, other Believers who needed or wanted "reasoned" theology and history, and themselves. As M. M. Bahktin has written, "language--like the living concrete environment in which the consciousness of the verbal artist lives--is never unitary. . . . Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds" (Dialogic, 288). These "worlds," which he also refers to as "stratifications," are sometimes intentionally "expropriated" by writers such as

McNemar and Dunlavy. Analysis of what appears to be their "abstract linguistic discourse," when "cut off from the fundamentally social modes in which discourse lives, inevitably comes across as flat and abstract" (Bahktin, Dialogic, 259). Rather, when we consider the "multitude of concrete worlds" in which these men live and write, the fulness of their Shaker literacies emerges.

Defending the faith they had accepted and convincing themselves in the process of writing to others, McNemar and Dunlavy rationalized and reinforced the spiritual conversions they had recently undergone.⁸ Geoffrey Harpham describes conversion as "a constant, ceaseless process," as "the unchanging condition of our existence" (48). He refers to a secondary conversion experience, which follows and reinforces the initial conversion brought about by a mentor, a teacher, or reading of a text, occurring through inscription of a spiritual autobiography.⁹ But this type of second conversion occurs not only through writing spiritual autobiography but also with the writing of any religious genre, such as McNemar's and Dunlavy's polemical works. As Walter Ong has argued, a writer's audience is to a certain degree "always a fiction;" a writer's "self" is the primary invoked reader ("The Writer's Audience"). Thus, Dunlavy and McNemar write in the styles and genres each needs to convince and reconvert himself.

The proclaimed audience for each, however, is the

seeker of religious truth. In the opening paragraph of his Preface, for example, Dunlavy asks, "How shall the inquirer know with whom to cast his lot" (I). He implies his book will help the inquirer find the "true" Church. McNemar's title page includes the phrases, "With a Brief Account of the Entrance and Progress of What the World call Shakerism . . . Presented to the True Zion-traveller, as a Memorial of the Wilderness Journey." As a "memorial," the history implies the "Wilderness Journey" is over--the Millennial Kingdom of Zion has been reached.¹⁰ Yet the presentation of the memorial to "the True Zion-traveller" implies there are those still travelling--either within Zion (those who have already converted) or on their way to the Millennial Kingdom (those seeking the "true" Church). These imagined readers, the writing styles and genres of McNemar and Dunlavy imply, were men of Christian traditions not too much different from themselves.

These "men" similar to themselves included Dunlavy's and McNemar's enemies as well as seekers. McNemar's History, for example, includes a section directed pointedly to Barton W. Stone. According to McNemar, Stone had seceded from the Springfield (Ohio) Presbytery as a result of a desire "to examine the scriptures separate and judge of them according to their internal evidence"; "to take them according to their own proper sense, and prove that they no where countenanced those evils that abounded in the churches, but

the contrary" (11). This notion of a (singular) "proper sense"--a divinely "well-wrought urn"--had been a part of Protestant hermeneutics for centuries.¹¹ It had contributed for decades to the sectarian spirit upon which the nation was founded and which continued to ferment in the nineteenth century, influencing not only Stone but also Shaker theologians.

Stone distinguished between his own followers as those of "the true gospel" and the Shakers as those of "wild enthusiasm." The Shaker apostate Thomas Brown quotes Stone as having written:

You have heard no doubt before this time of the lamentable departure of two of our preachers, and few of their hearers, from the true gospel into wild enthusiasm, or Shakerism. They have made shipwreck of faith, and turned aside to an old woman's fables, who broached them in New England about twenty-five years ago. These wolves in sheep's clothing have smelt us from afar, and have come to tear, rend, and devour. (352)

Stone seems almost embarrassed that something as "enthusiastic" as "an old woman's fables" could have drawn away two of his colleagues and "brothers" from "the true gospel"--the faith based upon and drawn from the "proper sense" of the Scripture. McNemar and Dunlavy, who claimed understanding of the truth of Scripture was "progressive," also argued for "right" readings.

Dunlavy, like McNemar, rails against Stone, addressing the entire final part (IV) of the Manifesto to him in the form of a letter. Section I of Part IV begins, "Barton:--I

have inscribed this letter to you as being the most proper person to whom I could direct it, to answer the proposed ends" (411). In other areas of the text, he refers to other "enemies" which shape his argument: he refers to works by Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and by William C. Davis, a premillennialist in Carolina. Dwight has been described as "a mediator between Old Calvinism and New Divinity" and "inclined toward Scottish epistemology" (Dictionary of American Religious Biography). He possessed a strong belief in the revelation of Scripture and led a campus revival at Yale in 1802 (coinciding historically, and not insignificantly, with the revival in western Kentucky of which Stone was a part).¹² And Davis, a premillennialist, depended upon a close reading of scripture for his belief that the second coming of Christ would occur in 1847.

Knowledge of these references within the Shaker treatises and the men's attitudes toward biblical interpretation enriches our understanding of the Shaker theologians' sense of audience and purpose. McNemar and Dunlavy, concerned with maintaining the appearance of reason and intellect they had evinced in their earlier faiths, continue to do so through their argumentative styles, which draw heavily from Scripture and from ecclesiastical histories (written by theologians of "the world"). In an attempt to counter Stone and others like him who considered Shakers full of "wild enthusiasm"--followers of an

uneducated, allegedly illiterate female, these men used their theology and history as a means of illustrating their higher order reasoning skills and their literacies through scriptural exegesis and citation.

Dunlavy uses Scripture more explicitly and frequently than McNemar. Probably an attempt to illustrate the Shakers' similarity to other sects in their rationalism and their belief in the Bible, the use of Scripture in every case explains Shaker differences. In this regard Dunlavy's text complements McNemar's, which emphasizes spiritually-infused people as the primary ones to be read. McNemar quotes from the Bible and delineates Shaker doctrine, but his explicit and implicit emphasis is on knowledge drawn from divine revelation apart from Scripture. Although Dunlavy's text appeared 11 years after McNemar's, I refer to it first here because it articulates more explicitly than McNemar's the hermeneutics of spiritual literacies.

Among the "themes and controversies" Dunlavy rationalizes in the Manifesto are the work and presence of the spirit, discussed, for example, in his lengthy third section on the resurrection. Dunlavy's explanation of the nature of Jesus's resurrection fulfills several purposes other than the more explicit ones. Primarily Dunlavy explains the spiritual rather than physical nature of Jesus's resurrection body through scriptural exegesis. Secondly he elaborates on the necessity of figurative

language (i.e. typology) and a speaker's or writer's accommodation of language to his or her audience. In addition to these more explicit tasks, he implicitly argues for the value of Scripture, an implied concern of his invoked audience, because many outsiders such as Daniel Rathbun had accused the Shakers of not using the Bible or, at least, not using it properly. And finally, the passage validates the human body as a sign or symbol which, when infused with the spirit, deserves to be properly read.

In this section of his work, Dunlavy provides an exegesis of biblical passages where the apostles fail to recognize Jesus when he first appears to them in bodily form after his crucifixion. Dunlavy differentiates among the disciples' reading of Jesus's resurrection body described in the gospels, later apostolic writings about resurrection bodies after Jesus's ascension, and his own reading of both sets of these scriptures. Reworking a classical Christian argument about the nature of Jesus's body during this period, Dunlavy focuses not only on the nature of the body but also on the necessity of this bodily representation of a spiritual being. That is, he distinguishes between representation and reality or, in contemporary linguistic terms, between signifier and signified. The deity's use of a representative body in the case of Jesus, Dunlavy explains, demonstrated not a divine will to deceive the early disciples but a mark of wisdom, an understanding of the gap

between signifier and signified for most readers.

They received [from the Deity] such evidences of the truth as their weaknesses required, and their infancy in spiritual things admitted; for they were yet unacquainted with the distinction between the natural and spiritual creation--between old man and the new. And there could be no deception in his [Jesus's] appearing to them in the old creation, or body, or an assumed body in the appearance of the old, until they were convinced of his resurrection, his being alive and his really appearing to them, and until they obtained more correct knowledge of his true character in the new creation. (332)

Following this line of thought--these disciples had not yet received the spirit and thus did not have the ability to read spiritually--Dunlavy proceeds to the second part of the classical argument, the discrepancy between Jesus's references to a physical life after death in the gospels (as in the story of the rich man and Lazarus) and the apostles' references in the epistles to resurrection bodies (I Corinthians 15). Dunlavy argues that Jesus used a different kind of language to talk about life after death than later writers did because his audiences--mostly Jews--had no concept of resurrection; on the other hand, the primary audience the apostolic writers addressed--Greek converts to Christianity--did. Thus he justifies Jesus's and the gospel writers' uses of figurative language and, simultaneously, expresses his own understanding of typological readings:

Figures and shadowy representations are not the substance; yet they are not false or fraudulent, when they subserve the purpose of conveying evidence to the understanding and of establishing truth. The disciples were yet in nature, the Holy Spirit being not yet given, and needed natural and

perceptible representations, to confirm them in the faith of that substance which is spiritual. (333)

The illustrations and language used to discuss the resurrection effectively, therefore, varied. Yet because they had not yet fully received the spirit, all of the first century followers (and, by implication, all those who lived prior to Ann Lee) understood nothing other than figurative language. Their conditions as part of "natural creation" necessitated their being addressed "in such language as they could understand." Dunlavy summarizes, "they were obliged to dwell greatly in the letter, and leave the true spiritual substance to be learned by future experience" (337).

Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, Dunlavy's contemporary "brothers" and "sisters," however, dwell in the spirit and read accordingly. Dunlavy refers to this spiritually-infused reading while explaining why the Shakers did not participate in the Christian ritual he refers to here as "the Lord's supper." The crux of Dunlavy's argument reflects Shaker literacies which come to light in comparison to their neighbors in New England--those who followed the Calvinist tradition as well as those who did not. Dunlavy summarizes, "Eating the Lord's Supper . . . proves the absence of Christ." He reminds readers that Scripture (I Corinthians 11:26) asserts to those participating in the ritual, "Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." Since the Shakers believe in Christ's presence in their

millennial kingdom, they do not practice the ritual. To further delineate the difference between themselves and members of sects which do, he writes: "Neither can it avail any thing from them [other sects] to plead that he is with them in Spirit; for Christ is the Spirit, and where he dwells in Spirit, there he dwells in reality" (246).

The debate which he enters, over the Lord's Supper and the presence or absence of Christ within it, harkens back to debates of the Reformation and of Puritan New England which continued among theologians throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. The debates, essentially about the gap between finite humanity and the infinitude of the deity, centered upon the question: did the elements of the Lord's Supper embody the corporeal Christ (and his spirit) or were they merely signs pointing to his presence in a transcendent realm, which covenanted believers in the faith could perceive and experience? As early as the 1520s Martin Luther had argued that they contained the "real bodily presence of Christ," while Ulrich Zwingli argued that they contained his spiritual rather than corporeal presence (Holifield, 8). Zwingli argued that humans could not possibly engest and embody an infinite God, while Luther argued that because God had become incarnate as Christ, humans could follow this example and did so in part through partaking of the bread and wine. Calvin followed Zwingli's argument, insisting that Christ's presence was too great to

be contained in these finite items, "signs" of God's covenant with humans. To see them as more than signs was to limit the freedom and infinitude of God and the Spirit (Holifield, 18). However, because he did not want to demystify the sacrament (as he believed Zwingli had done), Calvin redefined the Holy Spirit and its manifestations and emended Zwingli's argument by saying Christ did not need to be engested to be spiritually present at the Supper.

New England Puritan leaders for the most part followed the pattern Calvin established. Concerned with not following "popish" traditions but also not wanting to lose the relevance of the sacramental designs of God's covenant, they sought to articulate the spiritual presence of the infinite God within the earthly realm of his finite creatures. Others in New England, as what has come to be known as the Antinomian Controversy reveals, did not see this unbridgable gap between creator and created. In 1637 the Boston mid-wife Anne Hutchinson claimed to receive immediate revelations from God, without the aid of the audible or visible Word" (Holifield, 142). In general, her followers claimed

that only the immediate witness of the Spirit could enduce the presence of justifying faith, and that salvation resulted solely from the Spirit's direct activity, entirely apart from the instrumentalities of the material creation, whether ordinances of the visible Church or creaturely faculties of men. (Holifield, 141)

Although John Cotton of Boston's First Church initially sided with the Hutchinsonians, he eventually saw their

claims as dangerously heretical because they implied that "the believer somehow transcended creaturely finitude" (Holifield, 141).¹³

The orthodox within American Protestantism, up through the time of the Shakers, followed Cotton's tradition. The elements or "emblems" of the Lord's Supper pointed to a transcendent reality rather than being corporeal or spiritual reality themselves. Attempting to maintain the mystery of the sacrament, some ministers tried to emphasize the spirit's presence during the Supper, though they articulated that neither spirit, body, nor blood was engested when bread and wine were. Dunlavy directs his comment, "Neither can it avail any thing for them to plead that he is with them in Spirit," to those who adhere to the belief that Christ's spirit is present, though his body and blood are not. He differentiates Shaker christology and pneumatology from such beliefs by concluding, "Where he dwells in Spirit, there he dwells in reality." As Dunlavy's Manifesto records their theology, the Shakers' "reality" existed within the pneumenal realm. In thus unifying spirit and reality, Dunlavy appears to overlook and deny the corporeal. However, this world of spirituality, since the time of Christ's second appearing, could be merged with the world of the flesh. I use the word "could" to emphasize that the worlds of spirit and flesh were not always one, or at least, were not always seen as one. Those people who were

able to merge flesh and spirit, or to be filled with the spirit which allowed them to do so, constituted the "true" Church of Christ. These Believers in Christ's Second Appearing lived the Shaker "resurrection" life of the spirit marked by celibacy and charismatic gifts. Their vision of signs, because of the presence of the embodied spirit, differed from those without.

The Shakers' position was similar to "radical" groups such as the Quakers, who met with derision, physical abuse and exile in New England because of their belief in an indwelling spirit. Though the relationship between the early Shakers and the Quakers of mid-eighteenth century England and America is difficult to establish, due to the lack of records kept by Shakers during Ann Lee's life, the similarities between the theology of the two merit a brief excursion into Quaker linguistics.¹⁴ The Quakers had eradicated the Reformed sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and their understanding of the "inner light" afforded by God's spirit living within believers also affected their attitude toward and use of language. For example, because speech was a carnal element necessary to "natural man," they held up silence as both a means of achieving and a sign reflecting spiritual perfection. Silence allowed them to hear God's voice speak within them. For orthodox Christian groups the Scripture was the Word of God, but for the Quakers, "the Scriptures were rather the

tangible reports of the Word of God that was in those who spoke and recorded them" (Bauman, 25-26, emphasis mine). The written word was one step removed from the immediacy of the divine in the spoken word.

Richard Bauman sees Quaker thought and practice as "the logical extreme" of "the Protestant tendency," as described by Walter Ong, to strip away symbols and rituals due to "a progressive interiorization of the word" (29). However, "by making the voice of God within man the core religious experience of their movement, the Quakers elevated speaking and silence to an especially high degree of symbolic centrality and importance" (31). That is, they replaced traditional icons and rituals with new ones, which centered on language in oral form. One of these was the act of being silent, another the form of speech which was uttered. In addition,

speaking became a metaphor for all human action .
 . . which was thereby encompassed by the same
 moral rules that governed verbal activity, that is
 the stripping away of superfluity and carnal
 indulgence and the maintenance of a 'silence' of
 the flesh in all things. (Bauman, 30-31)

In a sense the Quakers were attempting, like Christ, to be the Word. Thus, even their bodily actions, including speech, became symbolic; they asked outsiders to read their bodily practices and abstinences as texts.

McNemar's Kentucky Revival underscores Shaker bodies as texts more than Dunlavy's Manifesto does, perhaps because, like the 1816 Testimonies, his selected genre is more

overtly grounded in personal experience than Dunlavy's. But, like Dunlavy's theological work, McNemar's history also refers to this world as one of "reality." McNemar writes, "the believer travels out of the use of shadows and signs, ceremonies and forms of worship, to which he might have been strongly bigoted while in bondage under the law. . . . a blessed reality, an enduring antitype, is wrought in the believer (83, emphasis mine). As difficult as it may be for literary critics to imagine a world free from shadows and signs, McNemar's emphasis on the Believer--rather than on the type, sign, or text--reiterates and further explains how Shakers access the realm of reality to which he and Dunlavy refer.¹⁵ The spirit within an individual validated personalized readings--of Scripture, other written texts, people, visions, or any other sign.¹⁶

McNemar also highlights the spirit which gives life to "the letter" (in this case, the objects perceived) in a section of his history describing and explaining his understanding of the "supernatural," spiritual gifts of the Revival: "We must first believe the report concerning the invisible, before we can see the object face to face, and actually possess it. And the firm belief of a thing will produce great effects, both on the mind and the body" (37). The temporal and causal relationship between belief in and possession of the spirit parallels Dunlavy's teaching on the spirit. Belief (for Dunlavy, a reasoned belief) precedes

receipt of the spirit (52; 59). Yet, ironically, possession of the spirit assists people in reading people who testify to the second appearing of Christ. Those in Kentucky who did not believe, according to McNemar, failed to do so because they failed to submit both to the spirit and to the texts at hand--the spiritual and bodily manifestations in other people.

McNemar provides throughout his history several specific examples of people with appropriate and inappropriate literacies. He nostalgically glorifies the early Believers in New England for their ideal literacy: "it was not immediately to the Scriptures they applied for light, but to that transporting spirit, which opened clearly to the mind, those mysterious things, recorded in Scripture" (65). He refers to the Shawnee, among whom Shaker missionaries have worked, as exemplary because they claim people can know their "great spirit" without going to school or learning to read. He writes this method "is the best kind of knowledge" (113). He closes this section by comparing the exemplary Shawnee to Stone and his cohorts, who refuse to see the "great spirit" revealed and working apart from Scripture. He writes elsewhere of the spirit's work, "the believer has to make a final settlement with an old systematic idea, that the spirit of God speaketh invariably in the scriptures" (81); in contrast, "the greatest evidence, the true believer receives, . . . is the divine

light" (82). Distinguishing himself on another occasion from systematic theologians who have made an icon of the Bible, he writes, "I dare not worship a book, and my soul recoils at the idea of worshipping that Spirit which originally suggested these words" (106).

These passages underscore McNemar's personal involvement in the text he writes and the stance he takes. In perhaps the strongest statement of his attitude toward Shaker literacies, he explains his own conversion to the sect: "I have had the documents open before me, without covering or disguise, i.e. the people who had set out to be righteous, and follow Christ, in deed and in truth" (106). His statement that the people are the documents and his claim that the documents are "without covering or disguise" issue the message that Shakers read not only written texts such as Scripture with immediacy but also people--living, embodied texts--who surround them.

This primacy of "the Word within" rather than the Scripture, along with their doctrines of celibacy and confession, their church hierarchy and, in later years, their communal lifestyle, led enemies of the Shakers to compare them to Deists and Roman Catholics.¹⁷ The works of Dunlavy and McNemar, however, depend upon attitudes toward reading, science and reason similar to those of Deists and toward biblical interpretation similar to those of systematic theologians such as Stone, Dwight and Davis.

Shaker leaders, well-schooled in Scripture and previously leaders in other Christian sects, set themselves apart by their understanding of the first cause, by the foundation of their system--the events surrounding Ann Lee's life. Because of their reading of her embodied spirit, they read Scripture and especially prophecy about the second coming of the Christ differently.

McNemar's and Dunlavy's works demonstrate that in these formative years of Shaker theology the readings of two types of texts--the inscribed texts of Scripture and the embodied texts of people--dialectically contributed to personal knowledge and to the sect's inscribed theology. Memories of personal experiences, cognitively recalled "facts," and "habits" of reading Scripture intertwine to inform Dunlavy's and McNemar's reading and writing acts. Their literacies and literary acts illustrate and articulate that for the Shakers both people and inscribed texts were living when filled with the Spirit, and the fullness came quite often from the eyes of the spirit-filled reader. There were no "gaps" between the signifiers or symbols of these texts and the "reality" they represented, for signifier and signified were fused in one indivisible sign.

As a fusion of body and spirit, of the divine and the corporeal, Ann Lee was the primary example of what others could be as well. Images of Lee, remembered and memorialized (both explicitly and implicitly) in Shaker literature,

reinforced the faith of early converts after her death and of the Believers of succeeding generations who knew her only through "reading" these memorial images. In the next chapter I turn to a second analysis of the less polemical Shaker narrative which contains images of Lee, the 1816 Testimonies. In the former chapter I suggested images of Lee's reading and writing established an example used by Believers such as McNemar and Dunlavy; in the following I will argue that most Believers read other images of Lee in relationship to images of ideal women they already knew; drawing from a menu of sentimental commonplaces, Shaker readers or hearers of the Testimonies used personal experience rather than scriptural exegesis to reinforce their beliefs in Ann Lee's spirituality.

Notes

1. Stein (Shaker Experience, 57-87); Andrews (People, 70-93).

2. Several works discuss Shaker theologians in the context of other American millennialists. See Whitson (6-14), Marini (Radical Sects), Stein (Shaker Experience, 57-87), and Henri Desroche's The American Shakers. For a discussion of typological readings by post-millennialists other than the Shakers, see James W. Davidson's The Logic of Millennial Thought.

3. Kathleen Deignan writes that "Meacham consistently diverts attention from the controversial Mother of Christ's Second Appearing" (87), explaining that

given his [Meacham's] personal relationship to Lee, and her tremendous spiritual influence on him and all the early Believers, his omission of her in connection with the fourth dispensation has very clear and deliberate theological significance. As the earliest written document of Shaker faith in the Second Appearing, the Statement radically underscores the Believers'

faith that Christ had come, not in a person but in a people. The Second Appearing is neither the return of Jesus nor the advent of Ann, but the gathering of a Church for the final redemptive work of gathering all men and women into the eschatological community of the resurrection. (84)

Of Dunlavy's omission of Lee, Deignan writes, "This is particularly significant since Dunlavy was, after all, a convert of Youngs, and it was Youngs who had raised Ann Lee to an exalted christological status" (126). As she writes of Meacham, she also writes of Dunlavy: "Dunlavy takes up the delicate task of reexpressing Shaker christology in terms more acceptable to the orthodox ears of his Calvinist critics who accused the Shakers of supplanting Jesus with Ann" (138).

4. Deignan's is the most lengthy and in-depth analysis of Dunlavy's work. Like Deignan, Stein discusses the Manifesto in relationship to other theological works, but he focuses more on the social and historical setting within which it was constructed than on the volume's content. He describes the work as "less accessible to Believers and outsiders alike" than other Shaker theological works and histories," and he writes that Dunlavy "constructed his volume as a negative critique of classic Reformed dogma." The work "recasts Shaker beliefs and practices in the mode of contemporary nineteenth-century Protestant apologetics" (Shaker Experience, 75).

5. McNemar explains that his narrative depends upon the moving personal testimonies of Shaker missionaries Meacham, Youngs, and Bates, who described their life of perfection. He writes: "If a historian cannot be disinterested and unbiased, it is necessary that he be honest;--and therefore I acknowledge, that nothing ever presented itself to me, that so powerfully interested my feelings as the above testimony" (77).

6. For another version of the conversions, see "Sketch of the Life and Experience of Issachar Bates."

7. Of the print wars the Shaker missionaries to the west caused, Stein writes that the conversions of Dunlavy, McNemar and other New Light ministers legitimized the claims of the missionaries and thus fueled the hostility of the sect's opponents, especially those belonging to the Christian part. Barton W. Stone, splitting with his former colleagues, became an ardent enemy of the sect; he denounced the Shaker apostles as the 'vortex of ruin.' (Shaker Experience, 60)

8. Deignan implies Dunlavy's need to convince himself when she writes of his similarity to his enemies: "It is not clear whether Dunlavy himself shared their suspicions, but he succeeds in developing a Shaker christology alternative to Young's bisexual one [which refers specifically to Lee], by avoiding all mention of Ann Lee's name (138). In other words, Dunlavy may not have believed Lee's claims.

9. Harpham distinguishes between imitation, which might be seen as surface, or perverted conversion and remaking. Neither is without value; the two are complimentary processes, conveniently labelled "conversion₁" and "conversion₂". In the first, the self recognizes an ideal and commits to strive for it. The second step, which he asserts occurs through autobiographical writing, "translates the self out of selfhood and into discourse."

10. The act of establishing a memorial for travellers has a biblical precedent (Joshua 4:6-9).

11. See Perry Miller's The New England Mind.

12. Dwight wrote in his Travels in New-England and New-York (III: 149-169): "that Shaker 'doctrines are so gross that they can never spread far; while the industry, manual skill, fair dealing and orderly behavior of the Brotherhood, render them useful members of society'" (in Richmond, II, 39).

13. See also David Hall's The Antinomian Controversy.

14. Early Shaker records and numerous histories by outsiders describe the young Ann Lee as participating in a group of Shaking Quakers led by John and Jane Wardley in England. Recently, Garrett has challenged this connection, but he does point to similarities of doctrine (142). Stein also challenges this assumption by pointing to the Quakers' quietness and inwardness during this period. He believes the French Camisards had more influence on the Shakers than the Quakers did (Shaker Experience, 3-4).

15. At least one Shaker writer recognizes ever-present gaps. The Preface to Youngs's Testimony acknowledges the inadequacy of writing and rhetoric for both the learned and the unlearned (xii-xiii).

16. Literary theorists may recognize this emphasis on the Believer as similar to the personalized readings validated by reader response theory, and they may recognize the difficulties of breaking away from claims to a "right" or "privileged" reading in realms where institutional authority exists. As one might imagine, Shaker literacies provoked conflict within the Society on several occasions. I discuss

the conflict between personalized and institutionalized readings in more detail in Chapter V, on Rebecca Jackson's literacy. On conflicts in the Harvard community during the Era of Manifestations, see Diane Sasson's "Individual Experience."

17. See, for example, Brown (226-30) and Lamson (27-30).

CHAPTER IV

WRITING AND READINGS OF THE 1816 TESTIMONIES

In 1816 the Shakers published the Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee, and the Elders with Her. A limited edition of twenty copies, the Testimonies purpose, as indicated in the "preface," was "to preserve 'A Faithful Record' of those precepts and examples [of Ann Lee] for the instruction of the next generation of Shakers" (Swain, 10). John MacLean's bibliography of Shaker works asserts that "This book was used solely by the elders, and was sometimes called the 'Secret Book of the Elders'" (32).¹ The limited number of copies and MacLean's reference to the elders' hold on them not only indicate the texts' internal circulation but also the probability of material within the Testimonies being read aloud to the Believers. In this chapter I argue that the power of these orally-conveyed images emerges in part from their receptors' knowledge of fictional and non-fictional narratives of female piety and from the evocation of sentiments through sensational and graphic images of bodily suffering. These images may have been intended to counter the accusations of naked dancing and other acts of "sexual immorality" and bodily promiscuity apostates and other outsiders levied against the Shakers generally and Ann

Lee in particular.² I suggest that the Testimonies' editors intentionally omitted any references to the accusations they hoped to counter because of their awareness of the ability of even verbal depictions of naked bodies to disrupt the narrative; instead they selected and arranged images of female piety and suffering common to fictional and non-fictional narratives women read and wrote.³

I place these images of Lee in three categories which I discuss in this chapter. First, as other Shaker scholars have noted, Lee appears as a nurturing and supportive wife and mother.⁴ Second, in perhaps the most emotive passages in the text, Lee suffers both physically and emotionally for herself and for others' sakes; readers visualize or read her body as it undergoes such trials. And finally, Shaker editors also counter the topic of inappropriate nakedness, sexuality, and sensuality by presenting Lee, even though an unattached or "loose" woman, as above board in her sexual behavior.

In many ways these images of Lee adhere to images of female piety and counter the accusations of sexual sin and unfeminine behavior; however, the images also break away from traditional images in ways which free Shaker men and women from constraints imposed by gender. They propose an androgynous spirituality instituted by celibacy, as Sally Kitch has argued. And through their inscription and their implied readers, they suggest a Shaker literacy which reads

bodies and their spiritual manifestations and responds emotionally to such inscribed signs.

Revising Spiritual and Sentimental Narratives

My argument about the narrative's structure and its appeal to the sentiments necessitates a description of the text as a whole. Critics Jean Humez and Thomas Swain have provided structural overviews of the 405-page, forty-three chapter Testimonies.⁵ Swain dissects the first part of the work's longer title, Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee, and the Elders with Her, to underscore the four topics, "Life," "Character," "Revelations," and "Doctrines" as organizing principles. He describes the first twenty-two chapters as a narrative biography:

present[ing] the life [and character] of Mother Ann, . . . beginning with her birth and life in England and ending with her life and death in America, and including such events as her arrests, incidents with the mobs at Harvard and Shirley [Massachusetts], and her travels from one community to another.

In contrast to these chapters, "which are related in a historical sequence, chronologically," chapters XXIII-XXVI inscribe "the revelations that Mother Ann manifested at various times" without attention to chronological sequence. This second section of mystical prophecy is followed by ten chapters (through Chapter XXXVII) which present "the doctrines Mother Ann stressed in her ministry." Then,

according to the order suggested by the title, "the concluding chapters, XXXVIII-XLIII, were further sketches of the life and character of Mother Ann, Father William Lee, and Father James Whittaker" (10-12).

Although he does not analyze explicitly the narrative structure, Swain implicitly presents the work as reasonably planned by the editors and introduced to readers by the title which accurately forecasts the chapters which follow. The initial biographical sketches which include depictions of Lee's persecutions would immediately appeal to readers' sentiments. The sensational first section of the narrative, if it won readers' respect for Lee, would prep them for the section of mystical prophecy, or her miraculous "revelations," and for the presentation of her difficult doctrinal teachings, such as crucifixion of the flesh through celibacy.

This argument for the significance of the text's "reasonable" order presumes that Shaker readers need to be convinced through reason and that they would read the entire text in order. One could argue that the readers--previously covenanted Shakers--need not be convinced of Lee's authority; they already believe. However, because conversion is a continual process, this reasonable order would have served as a faith-strengthening and instructive text to those who had not had the opportunity to be "eye and ear" witnesses to Lee's testimony and were perhaps learning of

the numerous accusations being levied against her and the sect during the first part of the nineteenth century. Members of the "rising generation," familiar with Shakers' legal struggles within "the world," would need countertexts to strengthen their faiths as much as outsiders would need them to alter their attitudes toward the sect.

One also could argue against a structural reading by asserting the unlikelihood of Shakers reading the text in its entirety, from cover to cover. Although some Shakers may have considered the complex structural overview, most Shakers--especially those who received the text aurally--would not. In fact, the sections are not so neatly divided as Swain would have us believe. Appeals to readers' sensibilities run throughout, as do doctrinal teachings and accounts of Lee's mystical abilities. Location of these images is significant for those who want to analyze the text's structure, but most readers influenced by the text would not consider consciously their locales.

So what purpose does a structural analysis serve? It suggests the social and historical circumstances shaping the text and the editors' (Shaker leaders') attitudes toward countering them through literature. For example, almost as an aside to his readers, Swain describes the last two chapters of the Testimonies as the "suffering and punishment which apostates endured after they had left the Truth and no longer were Shakers" (12). Following his pattern of

narrative description, Swain gives no comments about how or why these last chapters break away from the topics the title suggests. These chapters of judgment mark a dramatic shift from the text's earlier topics, where Ann Lee and her followers receive earthly punishments. They give the Shakers the upper hand and the last words; they present the Shaker church as the one being rewarded and to be rewarded in the future. These two chapters serve as Lee's verbal cous de gras, countering the detrimental effect of apostate accounts upon Believers' spirituality. And they mark the oral residue within the text and Shakerism by echoing the New England folk tradition of administering curses.⁶

Jean Humez divides the text according to the narrative voices and types of Ann Lee imagery they convey, fully acknowledging pressures from both inside and outside the sect (such as apostate accounts) which shaped the Testimonies' structure. She describes three narrative styles which contribute to the work's "patchwork or multilayered nature": personal experience stories, told by Lee's first American converts, of their contacts with the awe-inspiring woman; a history or travel narrative of Lee's two years of evangelistic missions in New England, where she is described as a "female victim," often from an omniscient point of view; and Lee's first-person narrative of her life in England, recalled by Believers who heard her tell these stories. These three types of narratives and the ambiguous

images of Ann Lee which they convey were "an advantage" to Shakerism, Humez argues, "as it responded to internal instabilities and adapted to changes in the outside culture over time" ("Ye Are My Epistles," 103). Two important points emerge from Humez's analysis: in addition to underscoring the Shaker editors' response to accusations from the world as they shaped this powerful and influential narrative for those within the sect, she asserts these ambiguous images allow readers to draw from them as they needed at particular moments in their spiritual lives.

My argument employs both these elements of Humez's analysis--one centered on writers and the other on readers. The volume, consciously compiled by the editors, counters several forces working against Shaker faith by representing the traditions of Shaker theology and literacies. The text exhibits the writers' reasoning skills as well as their belief in the value of emotions and sentiment. Shaker editors and Believers reading or hearing the Testimonies or other versions of Ann Lee's story brought to the text their knowledge of other literary genres and figures. The work follows the tradition of the "masculine" genres of history and biography in its use of an omniscient, authoritative voice and in its inclusion of dates and names of people and places for verification. But perhaps more important to the majority of Believers, the Testimonies appeals to readers' sentiments in much the same way as do late-eighteenth and

nineteenth-century fictional works.

What makes the sentimental narrative so much more appealing and, therefore, more successful and powerful than the overtly "reasoned" texts? Literary critics have offered various reasons. Cathy Davidson explains the appeal of fiction over reasoned non-fiction as due to the readers' imaginations, the narrative voice, and the types of characters involved:

in the changing world of the turn of the eighteenth century many new readers wanted to read about characters like themselves, characters with whom they could identify and about whom they could fantasize. The Bible offered little opportunity for fantasies of earthly rewards or social empowerment and Dwight on the Bible offered even less. (52)

Drawing from a quote by Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography which praises novel writers over historians and biographers, Davidson underscores the conversational element of fictional narrative obtained partially through dialogue:

While biography and history might be 'true,' they posit a wide gulf between the subject and the reader ('the great man' or the 'great event' versus the ordinary reader and his or her uneventful life) and also between the author and the reader (the author proclaiming, the reader receiving wisdom and moral edification). The novel, in contrast, creates its own truth by involving the reader in the process of that creation. The distance between text and reader, author and reader is effaced: The reader is 'present at the conversation' and becomes imaginatively part of the company. (52, emphasis mine)

Like the novels of the period, as Davidson describes them, the Testimonies include dialogue which softens and humanizes the authoritative voice and allows readers to "sit in on the conversation." Its heroine, Ann Lee, is neither Jesus nor

General Washington but a somewhat common female, indicating to readers (especially female ones) her model is not beyond their grasp.

In addition to the plurality of voices that give sentimental fiction its power, what Karen Sanchez-Eppler refers to as the "bodily" nature of the genre, involves readers. Sentimental fiction brings together emotion and physical sensation

as the eyes of readers take in the printed word and blur it with tears. Reading sentimental fiction is thus a bodily act This physicality of the reading experience radically contracts the distance between narrated events and the moment of their reading, as the feelings in the story are made tangibly present in the flesh of the reader. . . . In sentimental fiction bodily signs are adamantly and repeatedly presented as the preferred and most potent mechanisms both for communicating meaning and for marking the fact of its transmission. (100)

Ann Jessie Van Sant, who traces the emergence of the genre in the eighteenth century, also underscores the body's involvement as both object of observation in the text and subject provoked to response by perception. In the second section of this chapter I illustrate the body's involvement in Shaker literacies as I examine the presentation of Ann Lee's body and Believer's bodily involvement in reading it.

For now, though, I turn to other appealing elements of popular late-eighteenth and nineteenth century narratives. Jane Tompkins argues that the appeal arises through a narrative's "embrace of the conventional": stereotypical characters and plots which emphasize pietistic traits such

as self-abnegation and suffering along the "way" to an eventual reward--a palatial home and reunion with family and friends in heaven or the earthly reward of marriage to a Christian spouse. As she explains,

a novel's impact on the culture at large depends not on its escape from the formulaic and derivative, but on its tapping into a storehouse of commonly held assumptions, reproducing what is already there in a typical and familiar form.
(xvi)

Nina Baym refers to this typical storyline--where quite often a heroine is justly rewarded with physical and/or spiritual union with an ideal mate in earthly or heavenly marriage--as the "overplot" of woman's fiction and Joseph Allen Boone labels it the plot of "romantic wedlock."

These characteristics carry as much or more weight among most of the Testimonies' readers than the highly reasoned arguments and structure of doctrinal works. The text's format demonstrates the Shakers editors' belief that personally conveyed stories of peoples' lives--especially with sensational elements--would reach more people than doctrinal works, such as Dunlavy's Manifesto. The editors draw from women's and men's supposed ways of reading and knowing (emotionally and reasonably, respectively) as they compile the medley of images of Ann Lee. Yet the Testimonies' editors also make the text sound "true" and "reasonable," perhaps illustrating the blurred boundaries between fiction and non-fiction not only in contemporary literary criticism but also among readers of the early

Republic.⁷

When Shaker Believers and editors began sharing and compiling stories of Ann Lee's life, they may have struggled with how to tell her story. They may, however, have turned quite easily and subconsciously to the models of spiritual narratives about women that many Americans knew and which served as precursors to sentimental fiction. One such narrative is Part II of John Bunyan's allegorical Pilgrim's Progress, widely-read in America from the time of its publication in 1678 (Part II in 1684) up through the nineteenth century.⁸ References to its plot and feminine imagery here help to outline the basic linear trajectory of spiritual and sentimental narratives and the ways in which Ann Lee's journey in the Testimonies adheres to and veers from it. In addition to the well-known pilgrim Christian, the man who leaves his wife to journey toward God, Bunyan created Christiana, Christian's wife, whose spiritual journey is the focus of the work's Part II. Ann Lee's behavior while travelling bears a marked resemblance to Christiana's. Many readers and hearers of the Testimonies would have known the commonplace images of Bunyan's text, perhaps leading them to subconsciously "read" Ann Lee in relation to these images of Christiana.

Provoked by a dream-vision, Christiana sets off on her journey--with a female companion, her children, and male protectors. Lee also travels with companions and protectors.

Referred to more than once as a "poor" and "weak" woman, Christiana escapes victimization by rape early in her travel. Lee, also described as a poor, weak woman, is victim of physical assaults shameful to women. In addition to her dreams and visions, Christiana "reads" other nonverbal signs along the way and learns from them. She, like Lee, speaks truisms or proverbs to her travelling companions, and she catechizes her children. These linguistic acts mark her as an evangelist, concerned about the souls of friends and family. She sings hymns and dances as she journeys, both to make her way lighter (because her suffering, like Lee's, is immense) and to celebrate God's guidance.

In spite of the numerous similarities between the two women on their journeys, the Testimonies present images of Lee which differ from those of Christiana and show her transgressing traditional boundaries of the "female sphere." For example, both women travel somewhat independently, without their husbands. Christiana follows her husband's path to the Celestial City. On the other hand, with the spirit as her guide, Lee initially leads her husband, until he falls by the way. Likewise, while Christiana learns by the guidance of "men" to read the signs around her as she travels, Lee's reading is depicted as a gift born of the spirit. Lee's male travelling "companions" are depicted as her equals rather than as her protectors. The "children" Lee guides and teaches are symbolic rather than biological,

and her catechizing of them is less formal (i.e. not as "reasoned" and "doctrinal") than that of Christiana. Christiana celebrates her children's marriages to pious spouses, but Lee celebrates celibacy within marriage and as an alternative to it. In fact, a major part of Christiana's goal in reaching the Celestial City is reunion with her husband Christian, who has previously arrived there. Lee's "travel," however, aims at a higher kind of marriage--spiritual union between Believers and the deity. And Lee's "travail" results in spiritual childbearing.

The Ann Lee of narrative is concerned with traditional "feminine" domestic duties--with feeding her people, with their having a place to live, and with teaching or catechizing her children. She appears as a mother who teaches and nurtures her children, although they are spiritual rather than biological offspring. Although she eventually lives without her husband, her practice of celibacy within marriage foreshadows the images of the passionless Victorian "angel in the house" which was prominent by the 1830s.⁹ At the close of the Testimonies Ann Lee neither finds herself happily married to the proper man nor rejoining her husband in the palatial halls of heaven. Instead, on her deathbed she proclaims her marriage to another female, her successor "Mother" Lucy Wright. Thus, the Shaker narrative both parallels and breaks from the tradition, partially in its fragmented "plot" and most

significantly in its approaches to sexuality and to marriage.¹⁰

(ad) Dressing Naked Bodies with Pious Suffering: The Shaker Spectacle

In the final chapter of the Testimonies, following even the deathbed scene of Ann Lee, the editors record:

At Watervliet, in the presence of Cornelius Thayer, William Scales and others, Mother said, "I saw William Scales in vision, writing that which was not according to the simplicity of the gospel; and the evil spirits hovered around him, and administered evil to him. They looked like crows." And Mother reproved William sharply. (XXVI,8)

William Scales' name in this passage may be easily read over or judged as insignificant; however, Scales' name also appears in Thomas Brown's Account of the People Called Shakers (1812). The reference to Scales in the texts published only four years apart, one of many parallel attempts by Shakers and apostates to give their respective works authenticity and validity by referring to people by name, is neither incidental nor accidental. The Shaker editors include prophecies such as this one (perhaps remembered only after Scales's apostasy actually came to pass and parallel to Peter's denial of Jesus as the Christ in this regard) to counter accounts such as Brown's.

In addition to the judgment's placement in the volume, which I refer to in my structural overview above, the reference to Scales near the close of the Shaker text is

also significant in its brevity. Brown's reference provides much more information about Scales, describing him as one who "had been liberally educated and had read much; had belonged to the society several years, and for awhile had been zealous in the cause." The thrust of Brown's comments about Scales, however, centers upon his bodily activity as a Shaker. Brown explains that Scales on one occasion "stripped himself naked and testified his faith":

'naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out; and naked must my soul stand before God, as naked as my body now stands before you. It is my faith that sin has been the cause of shame, and my soul must become divested of shame, and as completely stripped of sin as my body is now stripped, or I can never stand before you in the world of spirits.' (327-28)

Brown's reference to Scales's actions as illustrative of his righteousness may appear outlandish to contemporary readers. However, as Richard Bauman has documented, such acts of "going naked" were quite common among seventeenth century Quakers. Quite possibly, then, Brown accurately describes Scales's testimony. Why then, do the Testimonies omit any references to such practices among late eighteenth century Shakers? And why do Brown and other apostates such as Daniel Rathbun and Amos Taylor not only refer to the Shakers' "going naked" within their works but make the act into a

spectacle?¹¹

Understanding the phenomenon as Bauman describes it illuminates the impact of the accusations in Brown's apostate account and the imagery and structure of the Testimonies as a response to his work. Bauman describes the Quaker act of "going naked as a sign" as integral to Quaker hermeneutics, which sought to "'break down the boundary between literalness and metaphor, between conceptions and things'"(86).¹² As he explains, "the physical acting out of the metaphors . . . the intersemiotic translation from the verbal to the physical codes enabled the act of communication to seize the attention of onlookers especially effectively, by making visible the semantic anomaly" by which metaphors work. Metaphors work because of the inherent anomaly between the "literal truth values" of the two terms involved; they depend upon the readers noting the discrepancy, which is only arresting in its verbal form if the readers have sensitive receptive and imaginative skills (86). That is, for example, William Scales saying he stands naked before God--the purely verbal metaphor--is not as arresting as the physical sign--his standing naked before other humans as a metaphor of his spiritual nakedness before God.

This sort of "performative metaphor," however, is most "intelligible and effective" within its ritual framework. "Acting out certain metaphors in other settings may make

them more strongly noticeable, but relatively less intelligible as metaphors" (Bauman, 87). A problem for the Quakers, Bauman summarizes, was that actions they intended others to read as metaphors conveying spiritual messages "shocked and alienated most others and prompted accusations of shamelessness and immorality against the Quaker movement" (93). The reason outsiders to the sect misread the metaphors was that the sign of "going naked" was

saturated with literal truth value. The act of displaying one's naked body in public . . . was so striking and shocking in its own right that it tended to engage the onlookers' attention so wholly at that level that they were prevented from looking beyond the arresting literal fact for a metaphorical meaning. (92)

If the discrepancy between the "literal truth values" of the two terms of a metaphor is not noted, as was the case with going naked, the sign does not work as its creators intend.

The Quaker incidents Bauman describes illuminate the case of William Scales using his naked body to testify about his Shaker spirituality. The Shakers' hermeneutic, as the works of Dunlavy and McNemar explain in Chapter III, parallels the Quakers' in its attempt to "break down the boundary" between signifier and signified, between shadow and reality. They use their bodies as signs embodying and pointing to a spiritual reality. Within the Testimonies, in fact, an illustration of the Shakers' awareness of such performative values occurs when William Lee presents his body to be read by the mob at Petersham. But this belief

leads to problems. Scales's use of his physical nakedness as a metaphor for his spiritual condition was so "saturated with literal truth value" that it was misinterpreted (or rather, uninterpreted) by outsiders such as Brown as inappropriate, unchristian behavior.

Brown reinforces the inappropriateness of the Shaker practice of "going naked" by including at least two other references to it. These sketches connect the act to promiscuity and lewdness rather than to metaphorical, ritual action, although they are described as recurring elements (i.e. rituals) of Shaker religious life. Although Brown carefully distinguishes between "going naked" and the "lewdness" of sexual intercourse, he associates the former with what he sees as other socially unacceptable bodily behaviors the Shakers practice, such as the excessive use of "spiritous liquors."

Those reports that have been the most circulated are, that they not only stripped and danced naked in their night meetings, but sometimes put out the candles and went into promiscuous intercourse; and that the Elders had connexion (sic) when they pleased, with such women as they chose; and that they concealed the fruits of it by the horrid crime of murder! It was also reported, that many of the Shakers, by order of the Elders, were castrated. (336)

The "connexion," the "murder" and the "castration," he goes on to say, cannot be confirmed. However, the stripping and dancing naked, are acts to which he can "confidently" attest.

The ritual of stripping and dancing naked is so

important in Brown's eyes that he gives several references to its occurrence. Of the dancing naked as a purification rite, he writes:

In order to mortify the carnal mind, their dances were excessive; and the various methods they practiced to mortify and try that which they called the root of all evil [sexual intercourse], were truly astonishing. Several things which took place, for the sake of modesty, are here omitted. But I may observe thus far, that they stopped every avenue of their houses, so the world's people, as they called them, could not see them, and had one or two of the brethren out to watch; they then stripped themselves and danced naked, when the gift or order came from Mother Ann so to do; Several were whipped, and some were ordered to whip themselves, as a mortification to the flesh. A young woman by the name of Elizabeth Cook, was stripped and whipped naked, by Noah Wheaton, for having desires towards a young man.--Abiel Cook, her father, hearing of it, prosecuted Noah Wheaton for whipping his daughter naked. (322-323)

He appears to draw the first part of this description from apostate Daniel Rathbun. Brown records that Rathbun tells him:

"One day," said he, "in the afternoon, William Lee, having drank very freely, fell asleep; when he awoke, he ordered the brethren (in number about twenty) to be assembled, I being one with them. William Lee then informed us, that he had a gift to rejoice--and ordered us to strip ourselves naked; and as we stood ready to dance, Mother Ann Lee came to the door of the room with one of the sisters. William Lee requested her to stay out, as he had a gift to rejoice with the brethren. Still she persisted. He said to her again, Mother, do go out--I have got a gift to rejoice with the brethren; and why can't you let us rejoice? you know if any of the sisters are with us, we shall have war, that is, have to fight against the rising of nature. But as she would not retire, he pushed her out, and shut the door against her. Then she went round the corner of the house, and attempted to get in at a window. Lee prevented her. She came to the door again, with a stick of wood, and stove it open. Lee met her at the door. She struck him with her fists in the face. He said, the smiting of the righteous is like precious ointment. She

then gave him several blows in quick succession. At each of which he made the same reply. At last, the blood beginning to run, he lost all patience, and exclaimed, before God you abuse me; and presented his fists and struck her, and knocked her almost down. I immediately stepped in between them, and cried out, for God's sake, Father William, don't strike Mother! I had rather you would strike me. The brethren, who had stood waiting [sic] the event, then gathered round and prevented further blows. There was hard threatening on both sides. Thus ended the gift of rejoicing. (290)

Brown acknowledges the act of "going naked" as a "gift" which had "entirely run out" at the time of his interaction with the Shakers. If Brown's record is accurate, the Shaker practice of "going naked" was relatively short lived, perhaps because like the Quaker practice which preceded it by a century, it caused persecution.

Shaker records, including the Testimonies, do not refer to the practice at all, probably because writers and editors recognized the failure of outsiders to read the metaphorical performance appropriately. Omitting references to nakedness, rather than acknowledging them, seems to be a more effective tactic for countering the accusations. Nakedness, verbally inscribed within a text, much as the uninscribed, physical behavior of "going naked," prevents readers from using reason to understand the whole of what is being said. In fact, Brown's text demonstrates the phenomenon. His "reasonable" historical narrative, when interrupted by these incidents, becomes extremely emotive and irrational.

Part of the "irrational" reading of the naked body involves placing it within a known narrative. Joy Kasson has

written of Hiram Powers's frequently viewed nineteenth-century statue of the naked Greek Slave, for example, "Powers insisted on the importance of the narrative framework, which provided what he called the circumstances that could justify depiction of a nude subject" (178).¹³ This kind of placement is also what writers of sentimental fiction depended upon to justify their seduction plots. In Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple and Hannah Foster's Coquette, for example, the female characters' seductions and sexual intimacy are not totally explicit, yet their authors depend upon readers filling in the gaps with their knowledge of such narratives and "promiscuous" acts. Quite often readers are asked to interpret the woman's body as another character reads it. For example, when her virtuous ministerial suitor Ernest Boyer unexpectedly catches Eliza Wharton in the garden in "clandestine intercourse" with the rake Peter Sanford, Boyer reads the scene as a sign of Eliza's "coquetting artifice" and accuses her "of having an intrigue with Major Sanford" (133-35). In spite of Eliza's tears and her pleas that he hear her explanation of her innocence, Boyer reads the scene in the only way possible. A virtuous woman who had proclaimed her relation to one man would not be found in such a position with another. A similar reading occurs in Charlotte Temple when one rake, Belcour, attempts to win Charlotte from another, Montraville, the father of her illegitimate and unborn

child. Montraville appears at Charlotte's cottage one afternoon, "and without calling the servant he walked up stairs, thinking to find her [Charlotte] in her bed room. He opened the door, and the first object that met his eyes was Charlotte asleep on the bed, and Belcour by her side" (84). Montraville reads the scene in the only way he knows how--as a sign of Charlotte's infidelity.

In Charlotte Temple, however, unlike the scene in the Coquette, readers discover what Montraville is unable to learn--that Belcour "conceived the diabolical scheme of ruining the unhappy Charlotte in his opinion for ever" by "laying himself by her side," without her knowledge, so that Montraville would find them thus. In this scene Charlotte appears, more than Eliza in the Coquette, as the victim of impious men. Both Foster and Rowson present their female characters as victims, but these scenes also demonstrate that once women allow themselves to be placed in compromising positions, their bodies will be read in ways they have no control over.

Shaker editors seem to be aware of the problems of appearances of impropriety. They, like Brown, are reasonable about how they will appeal to readers' emotions. They omit references to nakedness, replacing images of disruptive naked bodies with images of pious and virtuous bodies of the Believers and of the woman they emulate, Ann Lee. Sexuality and sensuality appears within the Testimonies, but only in

scenes where Lee reads and judges others' behavior. She appears as the wise mother--a Mrs. Temple or Mrs. Wharton--rather than the wayward daughters Eliza or Charlotte.

One passage which shows readers Lee's sexual purity and her ability to read others' sexual intentions occurs when a man to tries "to put his head to her bosom":

While Mother was at Shirley, there came a man to see her, who made a great profession of christian love, and wished to have his love acknowledged by Mother, and, in a fondling manner, attempted to put his head to her bosom. Instantly the power of God came upon her, and she arose and led him into another room to Elder James, "Here (said she) is a man full of religious devils." (XXXVII, 10).

Lee's actions as a wife and mother and her "suffering" at other textual sites complement this picture of sexual purity and reveal the editors' attempts to involve readers' emotions in the Ann Lee story. As in the world's narratives of female piety, Lee's appearance as the suffering victim perhaps arouses more emotions than any other images.

Images of Lee in the text's first chapter establish the precedent of suffering and female piety for the remaining narrative. When Lee, as a child, "admonished" her parents about their "fleshly cohabitation," her father "threatened and actually attempted to whip her; upon which she threw herself into her mother's arms and clung round her to escape his strokes" (I, 5). According to the editors' authoritative, narrative voice, this event was "an early and significant manifestation of the testimony she was destined to bear, and the sufferings she was destined to pass through

in consequence of her testimony." However, the scene also reiterates the period's understanding of gender roles. A few paragraphs earlier the editors record, "her father, though poor, was respectable in character, moral in principle, honest and punctual in his dealings, and industrious in business. Her mother was counted a strictly religious, and very pious woman" (I,2). In ruling his household, Lee's father rules over and against women's sexual "looseness"-- seen in his daughter's mere reference to 'cohabitation.' Lee's mother's arms provide a haven from brutality. In addition to seeing Ann Lee's near suffering, readers also see the Lees fulfill domestic roles typical of the age.

Passages describing Lee as a wife, like this initial 'family' scene, demonstrate that her actions adhere to eighteenth and nineteenth century notions of female piety. After Lee and her followers arrived in New York from England, the narrative records, her husband Abraham "was visited with severe sickness: to nurse and take care of him in this sickness, required her whole time and labor. This duty Mother performed with the utmost care and attention." Both Abraham and Ann had been employed, but "their earnings now ceased, and they were reduced to extreme poverty" (II, 2). Ann filled woman's proper role by leaving her employment to care for her first priority, her husband and his bodily needs. On another occasion, she sends a believing wife and her children home to the husband and father who "fell away

and became very bitter" (XVI, 12). She explained her actions: "she is his wife, and I will not keep her here so" (XVI, 13).

In the Testimonies Lee appears as an ideal mother as well as an ideal wife. Several references to Lee's concern with "lay[ing] up stores of provisions" so that her "family" of Believers and her guests will have nourishment demonstrate her desire to nurture, her hospitality, her wisdom and her industry. The editors explain she "felt . . . that it was the duty of Believers to provide for their temporal support, and not always be idle dependents on the bountiful and miraculous hand of Providence" (XI, 30). Passages depicting Lee taking children into her arms reveal her understanding of the nurturing maternal body.

On one occasion the motherly image saves her, emblematic of the work of these images in the narrative as a whole. "Persecutors" have appeared on the scene, "demand[ing] to see the old woman." The description which follows shows not an abusive old woman but a nurturing mother:

Mother was, at this time, standing in the midst of the assembly, with a young child of Nathan Farrington's in her arms; but feeling a gift to go into another room, which she could not do, without passing through the mob in the hall; she, therefore, with the child in her arms, took hold of young Mehetabel Farrington, and bid her go forward, and stop for nobody; and thus they passed through the mob, into a more retired room. (XX, 24)

Her appearance as a mother to the Farrington children, with

one child in her arms and another at her feet, led her to safety. On another occasion she takes Nathan Farrington's youngest daughter, Esther, "into her arms," kisses her, blesses her and remarks "This child is a Believer; she is my child;" (XXXI, 17). Immediately following this passage, the Testimonies depict "Mother Ann" instructing children how to pray, which included kneeling, asking for grace, asking to be good, and thanking God for "victuals" (XXXI, 18).

In addition to presenting Lee as a righteous, moral and pure Christian woman, a wife dedicated to her husband's physical and spiritual needs (rather than his sexual desires), and a mother dedicated to providing for her children, the Testimonies include numerous images of Lee's physical suffering, a characteristic expected of women of spiritual fervor. The text begins with Mother Ann's "suffering" as a child in the first chapter and the images abound throughout, ending with her death, probably brought about by physical persecution. These images accrue emotive power for readers as they progress through the narrative. However, they could influence readers individually, as they read or hear a single account. These examples of Lee's suffering (and that of other Believers as well) effect readers because of their physicality.

Ann Lee's suffering appears in two forms. In the first type Lee "suffers," "labours," or "travails" for lost souls--some deceased, some living. In the second type, outsiders

physically persecute Lee because of her claims, her behavior, and her teachings. This self-imposed suffering and suffering at the literal hands of others convey much of the text's overall force and mimic the images of suffering females in popular American captivity narratives." Both types of suffering appear within the first chapter. As they reappear throughout, they continually remind readers of the bodily reality of Ann Lee and the role of the body in spirituality. Even for those readers who do not read cover to cover, the frequency and, in some cases, length, of these kinds of passages suggest that readers cannot come away from the text without sensing Lee's bodily suffering.

In the passages where Lee "suffers" for lost souls, the narrative actually presents little of her body. The somewhat vague descriptions of her "labour" refer to her pacing the floor, lying in bed, or uttering moans or cries (perhaps not unlike acceptable depictions of women in childbirth). The narrative describes her, for example, as "walking the floor and labouring under the power of God," prior to prophesying to her followers in New England (XXIV, 12). And she labored "with the dead," during all hours of the night, singing so loudly that she woke those around her (XXVII, 25). This laboring for others was perhaps more exhausting to readers than it appears--out of context and with its lack of vivid depictions of her body--for the term "laboring" begins to accrue meaning earlier in the text. It appears in several

well-known and oft-cited passages where Lee "labors" for herself. Of the day she referred to as her spiritual "birthday," Lee vividly recounts her body's movements:

'I cried to God three days and nights, without intermission, that he would give me true desires.

I was, sometimes, under such sufferings and tribulation, that I could not rest in my bed anights; but had to get up and walk the floor. I feared to go to sleep, lest I should wake up and find myself in hell. When I felt my eyes closing with sleep, I used to pull them open with my fingers, and say within myself, I had better open my eyes here, than to open them in hell.'

(VI, 2-3)

Another passage encourages readers to visualize the bodily activity associated with Lee's laboring during the nights in New England. She recalls: "I often rose from my bed, in the night, and walked the floor in my stocking feet, for fear of waking up the people" (VII, 4). And another vividly presents the effects of this "laboring" upon her body: "I travailed in such tribulation, wringing my hands and crying to God, that the blood gushed out from under my nails, and with tears flowing down my cheeks, until the skin cleaved off" (VII, 19).

In the first of these depictions, the precedent setting account of Lee giving birth to herself, the "laboring" necessary "to prepare her for a far greater work" results in physical changes in her body:

In watchings, fastings, tears and incessant cries to God, she labored, day & night, for deliverance from the very nature of sin. And under the most severe tribulation of mind, and the most violent temptations and buffetings of the enemy, she was often in such extreme agony of soul as caused the blood to perspire through the pores of her skin. . . . Sometimes, for

whole nights together, her cries, screeches and groans were such as to fill every soul around her with fear and trembling, and could be compared to nothing but the horrors and agonies of the damned in hell, whose awful states were laid upon her, and whose various agonies she was, by turns, made to feel.

By such deep mortification and sufferings, her flesh wasted away till she became like a mere skeleton. . . . her earthly tabernacle was so reduced that she was as weak as an infant; and was fed and supported by others, being utterly incapable of helping herself; though naturally of a sound and strong constitution, and invincible fortitude of mind." (I, 9,11-12)

Though the editors write that "her cries, screeches and groans . . . could be compared to nothing but the horrors and agonies of souls under sufferings for the violation of the laws of God," the metaphoric language of the passage evokes images of childbirth. Lee, the "laborer," is also "as weak as an infant"; she has given birth to herself.

Two other narrative sites refer to this incident. One account repeats her becoming "like a skeleton," (VII, 15); the other refers again to the "bloody sweat [that] pressed through the pores" (VII, 18). Both accounts also use infant imagery. In the first, Lee says "a kind of down came upon my skin, until my soul broke forth to God . . . and my flesh came upon me, like the flesh of an infant" (VII, 15). In the second, the account reads, "I became as helpless as an infant. And when I was brought through, and born into the spiritual Kingdom, I was like an infant just born into the world" (VII, 18). This incident of Lee cleansing herself from sin through labor--recorded three times in the narrative--serves as a preparatory act to the laboring for

the sake of others, which follows. Readers or hearers of the repeated brief references to Lee's "laboring," especially any who had experienced the pains of childbirth, would react sympathetically to her suffering.

If readers or hearers of the earlier suffering passages were not able to imagine Lee's "laboring" for others--its metaphorical message and its physical manifestations--they could probably imagine the widespread physical persecution of all Believers, including Lee's primary example. Depictions of Lee's suffering due to physical persecutions by skeptics and unbelievers, similar to the passion week scenes of the biblical Gospels in effect, had the power to evoke sympathy and arouse other emotions. The Testimonies begins with images of Lee's childhood persecution. After her father threatens to beat her for "admonishing" him for "cohabitation," her brother actually does. Angered by her "singing by the power of God" and refusing to answer his questions, she explains,

He then beat me over my face and nose, with his staff, till one end of it was very much splintered. . . . He continued beating till he was so far spent, that he had to stop and call for drink. . . . He then turned the other end of his staff, and began to beat me again. (VIII, 15-16)

Numerous brief incidents which occur in England, as vivid as this initial beating, appear next in the narrative: Lee is kept fourteen days in stone prison where, she said, "I could not straiten myself" and "had nothing to eat nor drink, except what I sucked through a pipe-stem, that was

put through the key-hole of the door once in twenty-four hours" by one of her supporters (XIII, 3). Ordered "to advance" along a road, where she "was soon knocked down with clubs; and after [she] got up, and began to walk, [she] was kicked every few steps, nearly two miles." She "then felt as if [she] should faint with thirst, and was almost ready to give up the ghost, by reason of the cruel abuses" (VIII, 18). On another occasion, she explains, "a mob . . . dragged me out of the house by my feet, till they tore the skin off my face" (VIII, 34). On yet another occasion, a mob put her in a cart and drove it through the streets, where "people . . . threw mud, horse-dung, and all manner of filthy stuff, which they could get, into my face" (VIII, 37).

This vivid physical suffering involves Lee's followers as well as herself. In England Elder William Hocknell, for example, is "thrown into a bulge-place"--"a deep vault of human excrements," a note explains. After getting out and changing his clothes, the mob "beat and abused" him, rolling him "in a mud slough" and leaving him "wounded," with his "head in a gore of blood" (VIII, 22-23). In New England, the suffering differs only in its extensiveness--the passages lengthen and the number of victims increases. The editors devote the majority of almost six chapters to this persecution, the most violent of which occurs in Petersham and Harvard, Massachusetts and New Lebanon, New York.¹⁵ In one example from these chapters, "a violent-spirited stout

man" thrusts one Believer through a door with such force that "instantly the blood gushed forth, and ran down [the Believer's] face and bosom." On another occasion Valentine Rathbun, an elder in the Baptist Church, came to persecute Believers, including his son. As the Testimonies describe: "the old man mounted some steps, and taking an advantageous position, with a large hickory staff, he levelled several strokes at his son's head, with such violence, that his skull was laid bare nearly three inches in length" (XIX, 7).

These kinds of descriptions incrementally build a case for the Believers and for Ann Lee. Always a desired object, Lee sometimes escapes the persecution, when the mobs either fail to identify or locate her. A scene at New Lebanon typifies the others in the sentiments it arouses through bodily violence:

They [the mob] seized the brethren, one after another, and dragged them out with the most savage violence. Richard Spier was three times thrown out a back door, which was very high from the ground. Some were drawn out by the hair of their heads; some were taken by four or five men, one at each arm and leg, and pitched, headforemost, with great violence, into a mud puddle new the door; some had their clothes badly torn.

. . . Mother was, at this time, in a back bedroom, separated from the rest of the people by a ceiled partition. The ruffians strove to enter the room where she was; but were kept back by the brethren who guarded the door: After a considerable struggle, they succeeded in tearing down the ceiling of the room, seized Mother by her feet, and dragged her, in a shameful manner, through the parlour and kitchen, to the door. (XXI, 6-7)

A carriage chase ensues, with Lee in the getaway vehicle her followers had prepared. The mob cuts the horses' reins, they

beat a Believer who attempts to lead the horses anyway, and they then try to upset the carriage at a small bridge, where one of them falls down the "precipice." The mobster soon regains his place riding alongside the carriage and "violently seize[s] hold" of Elder James in an attempt "to precipitate him headforemost upon a rock" (13). Another Believer intervenes, and Elder James escapes with only broken ribs.

The destination of the chase is the home of Judge Grant, who was to hear Lee's indictment. Upon their arrival, "Mother was dragged into Grant's in such a rough manner, that her cap and apron were torn off" (18). A note explains that "John Noyes--the constable, had greatly abused Mother, and struck her, several times, with his staff, before Grant's face; particularly one severe stroke across her breast, the mark of which she carried for sometime afterward." After some verbal wrangling between Lee and Grant, Grant orders her "put . . . under keepers":

The constable, and two other ruffians . . . took her, and in a very abusive manner, dragged her out of the house, and along the street, about fifteen or twenty rods, to the new house.

Mother felt extreme anguish, from the cruel abuses of these men, who vented their enmity by beating, griping, and pinching her as they dragged her along. She cried out, and said, "Must I give up my life in your hands?" But regardless of her cries, they dragged her along into the house, and up stairs, as though she had been a dead beast, and then thrust her into a room, where she sat down and cried like a child. (XXI, 21-22)

The physical abuse and violence of these occasions leaves

Lee with signs her followers, and recipients of the Testimonies, read. In an authorized exposure of her body, reminiscent of Mary Rowlandson's references to her wounded side, or Elizabeth Ashbridge's references to her abuses by her husband, Lee

showed them the bruises she had received from the cruel persecutors. Her stomach and arms were beat and bruised black and blue; and she, and the sisters with her, affirmed that she was black and blue all over her body; and indeed, it was not to be wondered at, considering how much she had been beaten and dragged about: She wept, and said, "So it has been with me almost continually, ever since I left Neskeyuana; day and night--day and night, I have been like a dying creature." (XXII, 3)¹⁶

These incidents of physical suffering by Lee and her followers affect the emotions and cause readers to sympathize with them. Because Lee's suffering parallels the trials pious Christian women were expected to bear as they journeyed toward Heaven, Shaker readers could view Lee as a Christian heroine. However, the suffering of these scenes goes beyond the bounds of the suffering of pious women depicted in sentimental fictional and non-fictional narratives of the nineteenth century because it emerges from her claims to an embodied spirit, her teachings of celibacy, and her subversion of gender roles. Joined with her lack of natural children, lack of a husband, and lack of a single domestic space or "home," Lee's bodily behavior marks her as a woman of difference.

Writing and Reading the Final Images of Ann Lee: A Summary

Depictions of Lee's final illness and death--her ultimate physical suffering--provide a final example of Lee as a woman within and outside of the social constraints of her time. Like the ideal virtuous woman of eighteenth and nineteenth century literature, Lee is prepared for death; she doesn't fear it and doesn't struggle in her dying. On her deathbed she expresses a desire to go "home," and she visualizes people and objects ready to greet her in the spirit world she will enter. The Testimonies record:

Soon after Father William expired, Mother said, "Br. William is gone, and it will soon be said of me, that I am gone too." She was, afterwards, often heard to say, "Well, I am coming soon." She would then say to those who were present, "Brother William is calling me." Sometimes she would say, "Yea, Brother William, I shall come soon."

. . . she breathed her last, without a struggle or a groan. Before her departure, she repeatedly said to those around her, that she was going home. A little before she expired, she said, "I see Brother William coming in a golden chariot, to take me home." (XXXIX, 30-31)

Prior to this deathbed scene, in her final illnesses, Lee reveals her nontraditional attitudes toward church leadership, marriage and gender relationships, and Shaker spiritual and bodily interactions:

Immediately Mother Lucy, who took care of her, in her last sufferings, came and took hold of her hand, and asked her to go in [to her room]. Mother answered, 'I will; I will be obedient to you Lucy; for I am married to you, and I will go with you.' And they went in together. (XXXVII, 24)

Here Lee passes the torch of leadership to another female. In addition, her statement "I am married to you" shows her maintaining the "feminine" passive role she assumed earlier

as the "bride" of Jesus. Here she bestows the "masculine" role of husband and leader upon another female. In addition, her "marriage" to Wright here symbolizes the unique union between women in Shakerism and Lee's revising of the "marriage" narrative.¹⁷

Lee's profession of marriage to Wright, which uses the present tense verb "am," also places Lee in the land of the living. Even in the midst of her physical death, she refuses to relinquish her connections to living Believers. Because Lee continues to live spiritually, through the images inscribed in the Testimonies and shared orally, Shakers such as Rebecca Cox Jackson, whom I discuss in the next chapter, are able to live spiritually as well. Jackson and other Shakers received images of Lee's deathbed marriage along with others in the text which served as a key for them to read their own spiritual journeys. These images and their sequences work by adhering to the traditions of fictional and non-fictional sentimental and spiritual narratives as well as by breaking away from them.

Cathy Davidson's argument that the sentimental novel (as opposed to non-fictional works such as biography and history) carried political power by creating new roles for women and/or new perceptions of their traditional roles suggests that if we attempt to view the Testimonies by the same pattern, we must consider the impact the text had on institutional authorities and the authority of its readers.

One problem, however, is that the Testimonies was probably read publically rather than privately. Davidson argues especially that the multivocality of the novel allowed readers to imagine themselves in other roles, not merely as the passive receptor of the didactic and omniscient voice and that private reading allowed women to exercise independence in thinking (43). Because the reading is "private and personal," or encourages personal interpretation, the increase in novel reading in the early Republic posed a threat to the "elite minority to retain a self-proclaimed role as the primary interpreters of American culture," which initially, following the "Puritan religious paradigm" consisted of ministers, who provided the interpretations of God's word.

Davidson argues that the power the novels offer emerges from the private spaces in which they are read and from the education (and literacy) they offered to women who would otherwise not aspire to read. Similarly, the Testimonies offers readers an image of a new kind of literacy to which they may aspire. However, the private spaces Davidson writes about were not available to such an extent for Shaker readers. By the mere nature of symbols and their interpretation, though, the reading of any text allows some private interpretation. Thus, the Testimonies' imagery allowed Shaker readers such as Rebecca Jackson space for innovative readings. It certainly threatened ministerial

authority of the "mainstream" by showing a woman who followed the spirit within her. Within Shakerism, the text allowed for some of that same personal authority. As we will see in the next chapter, Rebecca Jackson latched on to images of Lee--especially of Lee's literacy--as she needed to strengthen her sense of autonomy and agency.

Notes

1. This information apparently emerges from a note Alonzo Hollister wrote in one copy and in a letter to William Ward Wight: "Only 20 copies of this edition printed under Mother Lucy's ministration" (Richmond, I, 15-16).
2. For the most concise overview of these accusations in apostate accounts, see Clarke Garrett (195-213). See also Stein (Shaker Experience, 15-18), Andrews (People, 40-47) and Foster (Religion and Sexuality, 30-35).
3. Humez provides a history of the text's composition and suggests reasons for it. She describes leaders' interviewing of "'old Believers'" and arranging the material "into chapters organized around certain themes" ("'Ye Are My Epistles,'" 88).
4. The best historically-grounded discussion of this maternal imagery appears in the works of Proctor-Smith (Women in Shaker Community) and Humez ("'Ye Are My Epistles'"). See also Proctor-Smith's "'Who do you say that I am?': Mother Ann as Christ."
5. Several critics analyze the Testimonies with attention to other concerns. Proctor-Smith considers the images in relationship to those of woman's "sphere" and the "cult of true womanhood" (Women in Shaker Community, 204-5). Sasson writes about the volume as a precursor to later Shaker autobiographies or testimonies (Spiritual Narrative, Chapter I). Deignan analyzes maternal imagery in relationship to the Shakers' systematic theology (50-58).
6. As the editors summarize, "It has most generally happened, that reprobates and persecutors have either been fugitives and vagabonds upon the earth, or have died some untimely and extraordinary death. They have not died the common death of man, nor been visited with the visitation of other men"

(XLII, 5). Scales is one of these vagabonds (XLII, 16-25). As Hall points out using the well-known account of Francis Spira, these tales of judgment were oral commonplaces in New England culture (Worlds of Wonder, 132-135).

7. For a rigorously documented discussion of the blurred boundaries between "fiction" and "non-fiction" from the years of the early Republic up through the antebellum period, see Cathy Davidson (40). She explains, for example, by the turn of the century, a whole range of nonfictional reading materials, including sketches, captivity narratives, and travel pieces, were advertised as novels. Publishers, booksellers, and lending libraries could all promote their business by indiscriminately applying the label novel to the commodity they dispensed. Yet the censure of the form, emanating from the pulpit and the press, remained potent enough so that, until well into the nineteenth century, virtually every American novel somewhere in its preface or its plot defended itself against the charge that it was a novel, either, by defining itself differently . . . or by redefining the genre tautologically as all those things it was presumed not to be--moral, truthful, educational, and so forth.

Jane Tompkins has written, Antebellum critics and readers did not distinguish sharply between fiction and what we would now call religious propaganda. [Susan] Warner, for instance, never referred to her books as 'novels,' but called them stories, because, in her eyes, they functioned in the same way as Biblical parables, or the pamphlets published by the American Tract Society; that is, they were written for edification's sake and not for the sake of art, as we understand it." (149).

Of minister's adaptations of sentimental narrative style, Tompkins writes:

As David Reynolds has recently demonstrated, the entire practice of pulpit oratory in this period shifted from an expository and abstract mode of explicating religious doctrine, to a mode in which sensational narratives carried the burden of theological precept. (153)

And Davidson summarizes:

As Nina Baym has shown in her exhaustive study of the reception of the novel from 1840 to 1860, social authorities had to establish a new relationship to the novel and to the novel-reading public. Instead of serving as the form's opponents and--much later and more hopelessly than the first

critics--attempting to stem the tide, they chose, for the most part, to assent to the new cultural order. Ministers, as both Rhys Isaacs and David Reynolds have shown, increasingly borrowed from the novel genre that their predecessors had castigated. Many ministers even restructured the classic Puritan sermon into a quasi-novelistic story that presumed an audience familiar with fictional plots, characters, and technical devices. (53-54)

8. The characters in Louisa May Alcott's Little Women (1868), for example, perform Bunyan's work. My approach here differs from Sasson's, who writes that although Pilgrim's Progress reached the height of its popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, few Shakers would have read it (Shaker Spiritual, 18). I underscore the interplay of orality and literacy in conveying commonplaces of Bunyan's narrative.

9. See Stephen Nissenbaum and Nancy Cott, "Passionlessness."

10. The Testimonies are similar to the works Boone discusses which foreground communities of single women. As he writes, The forms of all these works are governed by the logic of incremental repetition, in which seemingly disconnected or random events circle around unchanging truths and settings, rather than by the causality of linear plotting intrinsic to the love-plot. . . . the apparently negative constriction of static lives becomes a magical opening into a hidden realm of communal freedom for these self-reliant women. (21)

The Testimonies fit this counter-traditional format. However, it is difficult to place the work entirely in the realm

he describes as circular rather than linear. Lee, like the male characters of Melville, Twain and London, whom Boone describes, faces physical and psychological challenges in her travels away from home. The unifying element of the "quest" narratives (which offer "a profound exploration of the politics of 'masculinity' and male bonding coexisting with a refutation of the trajectory and themes of typical love fiction" [20]) and the "static," female narratives is their presentation of being single, free and empowered as a viable option. Shakerism, as presented through the Testimonies, offers that freedom.

11. The most thorough discussion of these early apostate accounts is in Garrett (195-213).

12. Bauman draws this information from several other studies of Quakerism, which he rigorously surveys.

13. Kasson also writes, "Powers presented a woman in a chaste and tranquil pose, but the narrative suggested by the sculpture implied violence and sensuality" (175); he "attempted to present an attractive female subject encased in a narrative that would simultaneously invite and repel erotic associations" (176); the subject of the harem was "a forbidden realm in which viewers confronted their own erotic desires" (175).

14. Humez also notes ("'A Woman Mighty,'" 95-96) the similarity between apostate Mary Marhsall Dyer's anti-Shaker narratives (published around the same time as the Testimonies) and female "victims" of "Indian" captivity. Mary Rowlandson, whose captivity narrative first appeared in 1682, was reprinted throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Harris, 340-342). The commonplaces of physical suffering these women and Lee undergo include, for example, starvation, walking great distances, sleep deprivation and sleeping on the hard, cold ground. See the reprints of the first person narratives of Susanna Johnson and Jemima Howe in Colin G. Calloway's North Country Captives (45-85; 89-99). Calloway also reprints the captivity tale of Mary Fowler (13-16), who eventually came (with her oral narrative) to the Shaker community at Canterbury, New Hampshire. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich discusses the power of the images within captivity narratives and American culture in Good Wives (202-235).

15. Garrett historicizes these persecutions and suggests reasons for their intensity (195-213).

16. Rowlandson's frequent references to the wound in her side (344, 346, 347) provides a stark contrast to the attention the "sexually loose" female natives call to their bodies through physical adornment (356). The Quaker Ashbridge presents herself as an emotionally and physically abused wife. The physicality of her abuse appears, for example, in a scene where her husband forces her to dance "till Tears affected [her] Eyes, at Sight whereof the Musician[, reading her abused body,] Stopt and said, 'I'll play no more'" (600).

17. Rosemary Gooden discusses female relationships in "The Language of Devotion: Gospel Affection and Gospel Union in the Writings of Shakers Sisters."

CHAPTER V

READING, WRITING, RACE AND MOTHER-IMAGERY: THE LITERACIES OF REBECCA JACKSON AND ALONZO HOLLISTER

Rebecca Cox Jackson (1795-1871) and Alonzo Giles Hollister (1830-1911) lived in different Shaker communities and probably never met "in the flesh." Nevertheless, scholars Jean Humez and Diane Sasson link these two figures and their writing because Hollister edited and preserved Jackson's autobiographical manuscript, a text and a task he described as "a treasure."¹ He wrote in his "Reminiscences," "I greatly enjoyed the copying, evenings and mornings and sabbath days" (189). Provoked by Sasson's and Humez's suggestive comments about the relationship between the two, I link the authors and their spiritual narratives in this chapter because they offer interesting insights into the impact of their radically different physical experiences upon their literacies. Their experiences differ because of their genders, their races, and the time periods in which they were involved with the sect.² Their literacies differ from each other in their origins and in the number of inscribed texts read and written, yet Jackson and Hollister both celebrated and drew life from Ann Lee's examples. Considered together, the writers and their narratives illuminate ways in which the Shakers' spiritual literacies, instituted by Ann Lee, provide individual Believers

spiritual sustenance and freedom even while they work within the constraints of Shakerism and the genre called spiritual narrative. And they demonstrate, because Jackson's writing predates Hollister's by half a century, shifts in the types of literacies predominant within the sect. Jackson's personal testimony exemplifies the genre used at mid-century by leaders for internal strengthening and possible modes of evangelism. Hollister's writing, more heavily saturated than Jackson's with "the world's" literary discourses, reflects the Shakers' employment of "the world's" devices to preserve spiritual literacies around the turn of the century.³ He continues the "masculine" tradition of writing leaders such as McNemar and Dunlavy established, but he creates a Shaker archive for researchers rather than an active, working library for possible converts.

In the chapter which follows, as in my analysis of Ann Lee's reading and writing, I work with the interplay of "narrative selves"--the subjects Jackson and Hollister constructed in their spiritual narratives--and "historical selves." I attempt to reconstruct the historical, reading subjects (Jackson and Hollister) from what we know of them as writing subjects. Numerous works other than Hollister's "Reminiscences," written by him and by other Shakers, contribute to the contours of his "historical" self and my reading of his narrative; in the case of Jackson, little other than her spiritual narrative exists. As I reconstruct

their spiritual lives and literacies, I consider first each writer's references to inscribed texts and alphabetic literacies. Second, I examine their uses of mother-imagery often associated with Ann Lee to determine the impact of her spirituality and reading upon each of them, with attention to their gender. I also consider how each writer employs discourses of race within Shakerism and nineteenth century American culture. Finally, I propose through my analyses of these uses of race and gender that the examples Ann Lee provides allow first Jackson and then Hollister to sustain themselves by reading and writing imaginatively to visualize possible worlds for themselves and future Shakers, and to act in the present because of the visions they have of the future.

Robert Orsi's and Carolyn Walker Bynum's positions on the polysemic nature of religious symbols illuminate Jackson's and Hollister's uses of mother-imagery, of race and of the genre. According to Orsi and Bynum, symbols provide creative spaces in which the imaginations of participants in religious rituals operate. As Orsi writes in his analysis of female devotion to St. Jude:

Religious traditions must be understood as zones of improvisation and conflict. The idea of "tradition" itself is the site of struggle, and historically situated men and women build the traditions and counter-traditions they need or want as they live. Finding meaning in a tradition is a dialectical process: women worked with the form and structures available to them, and their imaginings were inevitably constrained by the materials they were working with. Still, through the power of their desire and need, and

within the flexible perimeters of devotional practice, they were able to do much with what they inherited. (160)⁴

Participants' imaginative work with symbols of religious rituals such as writing spiritual narratives is shaped by their physical experiences, which include behavior influenced by gendered and racial realms both within and outside Shaker communities.

My analysis of Jackson's and Hollister's literacies not only draws from Orsi's and Bynum's emphasis on the polysemic nature of symbols but also responds in part to Linda Mercadante's recent examination of female god imagery in Shakerism. She had hoped to discover that having a female aspect to the deity greatly empowered female Believers. However, having considered numerous personal written testimonies, she concluded that "Shaker believers' actual use of female imagery for God in their personal expressions of faith was uneven and sporadic. Many believers' religious experience does not seem to have been deeply affected by these images" (16). Additionally, she learned that among those Believers affected by the imagery, "men were equally as likely as women to use female Christ imagery in describing their religious experience" (150-51). Inviting further study of the topic, she asked:

Why were some believers more likely to be positively affected by female imagery than others? It would be interesting--possibly more from a psychological than a theological point of view--to find correlations between members' gender, background, time in the community, and their choice of imagery. (143)

My analysis suggests that both Jackson and Hollister were positively affected by female imagery. However, due to "gender, background, [and] time in community," the ways in which their "selves" were empowered by memories of Ann Lee differ. Jackson, who came to Shakerism as an adult, inscribes herself following Ann Lee's patterns. As Jean Humez has written, "Jackson's career as a female religious leader presents some striking parallels with that of Ann Lee, as Jackson herself was aware" (Gifts, 39). Several implicit allusions to Lee within her life story demonstrate that Jackson saw herself or "read" and "wrote" her life according to the topoi of Mother Ann's biography. In general, her ecstatic visionary experiences and explications of them, her challenges to male-dominated religious institutions, her decisions to practice and preach celibacy (which eventually led to separation from her husband), and her persecution by unbelievers mark areas where the black woman inscribes her life within the parameters of the Ann Lee story. Jackson differs from Lee in her desire for increased alphabetic literacy, a desire not only influenced by the historical period in which she lives but also because of her race. She aspires to power in part by adhering to the patterns of the dominant culture; yet as she follows Lee's example, she continually joins the realm of reason and inscribed texts with the realm of orality and bodily presence through an emphasis on an active and embodied

spirit.

For Hollister, Jackson is an African-American mother-figure exhibiting the literacies established by Ann Lee, who provides spiritual and emotional sustenance and wholeness during the years he was editing her text and writing about it in his "Reminiscences," years of several institutional shifts within Shakerism. He reads the "Jackson" depicted in her spiritual narrative as a racial and gendered "other," yet he rewrites her into his own narrative as an ideal representing the past and forecasting a possible future for Shakerism.⁵ Hollister's fascination with Jackson and mother-imagery emerges, I believe, from his becoming more tightly enmeshed in the realm of inscribed texts, which coincides with the increasing communal and institutional leadership among women within Shakerism and the numerical decline of Shakers. Also, he appears to recall nostalgically the mystical fervor of his youth as he ages and approaches physical death. Hollister may have found that writing the narrative could heal his general feeling of loss (and perhaps altered views of his masculinity) and sense of powerlessness. In addition to mother-imagery, two other topics within Hollister's narrative--his literacy and his relation to his "home"--manifest and confirm his increasing isolation, his anxieties over communal losses, and his attempt to maintain traditional Shaker values in the face of these changes.

Both Hollister and Jackson use images of Ann Lee in their narratives to validate their pasts; both also use them to imagine possible futures for themselves. However, they differ in that Hollister situates himself through his writing and reading more in the past, while Jackson situates herself more in the present. Their actions, corresponding with their reading and writing, also differ. As a result of her racial and gendered experiences, Jackson carries within herself a sense of home she can create anywhere. Therefore, her reading of the imagery propels her to leave the community at Watervliet to establish her own community in Philadelphia. Hollister's reading of mother-imagery comforts him as he stays within the communal home he has known for almost his entire life. He imagines others will be drawn to Shakerism by reading inscribed doctrinal texts or reading un-inscribed mystical signs.

Rebecca Cox Jackson: Reading and Writing Herself as Mother

"I Am Only a Pen in His Hand."

When Rebecca Jackson describes herself as a pen in God's hand (107), she uses an image which is not surprising for a religious writer. In this case, however, Jackson refers not to her submissive role as God's scribe, mechanically or mystically writing in ink with her hand the divine messages He inspires, but to her ability to be the

pen with her entire mind, body and spirit. Jackson's image of herself as pen refers not to her writing inscribed texts in private but to her "reading" people and "writing" in response to them as a public minister. On this occasion she asks God to give her "a discerning eye" to see through people, "understanding" that would allow her to distinguish "truth" when they spoke it, and "suitable answers" to give them in response to their questions and comments. The ironic twist brought about by the pen metaphor in this context--an image of writing used to vivify acts of aurality and orality--emphasizes the recurrent interplay between inscribed and uninscribed reading and writing in Shakerism, important to Jackson both as she acts prior to inscribing her story and as she records her life. The reading and writing Ann Lee exemplified sustains Jackson as she struggles with her life as an African-American woman within the predominantly white religious sect.

In short, the situations in which Jackson finds herself because of race and gender lead her to read and, subsequently, to reject and to revise the codes of the symbol systems within which she operates--first among the "free" blacks affiliated with the male-dominated African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church in the Philadelphia area and second, among the Shakers at Watervliet. Jackson's attraction to the Shaker codes and her ability to revise them depend upon the spiritual literacies their theology

allows. But in spite of what Mercadante calls the sect's "gender inclusive god-imagery" (15), Jackson experienced conflict with Shaker leaders because of her race. However, Shaker literacies honoring inscribed and unscribed texts and innovative readings of symbols offer her agency in otherwise repressive and limiting situations as she reads her visions to lead and create her own group of Believers in Philadelphia.

One of the few African Americans known to live the Shaker lifestyle, Jackson is known as much now for her racial difference as for her mystical powers.⁶ Unlike many other writers considered in this study, Jackson and her writings have been analyzed by several critics such as Jean Humez, Diane Sasson, Priscilla Brewer, Richard Williams, Nellie McKay, Joanne Braxton, William Andrews and Alice Walker, who have discussed Jackson's writings in the context of personal narratives by black women and in relation to other Shaker narratives, highlighting the impact of her race as she associated with the Shakers. They have commented on the spiritual visions which structure Jackson's writings, the interpretations Jackson gave them, and her decisions to live according to the guidance they provided.⁷ These decisions in the 1830s tore her away from her involvement with the AME church in Philadelphia, caused her to practice celibacy and eventually leave her husband, and directed her to preach as an itinerant in Pennsylvania, New York,

Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. In the 1840s they brought her to live with the Shakers at Watervliet, New York, and in the 1850s they guided her to leave that community to lead her own band of Believers in Philadelphia, where she died in 1871. In comparison to comments about her visions and race, little has been written about how Shaker attitudes toward reading and writing contributed to Jackson's empowerment.⁶ In the analysis which follows I draw from and build upon these other studies as I discuss the interplay among Jackson's race, gender, visionary skills, and her literacy.

Evidence of Jackson's reading and writing even prior to joining the Shakers exists in several somewhat fragmented manuscripts, which she began to write only after arriving at Watervliet during the 1840s. Only two are in Jackson's hand, one of which is an "incomplete autobiography, 146-pages long, unparagraphed and unpunctuated" (Humez, Gifts, 65).⁹ Another manuscript version of Jackson's autobiography exists in Hollister's handwriting. Moved by Jackson's story, he copied "an incomplete narrative autobiography and . . . 'several small books' in Jackson's handwriting, arranged by him according to date" (Humez, Gifts, 65). The works had been given to Shaker leaders at Watervliet by Jackson's close friend and spiritual sister, Rebecca Perot, and eventually found their way into Hollister's hands. Humez's careful historical and textual analysis of these manuscripts

resulted in her recent critical edition of Jackson's writings, the first published version. Drawing primarily from the pieces in Jackson's hand, Humez notes significant variations that occur in Hollister's and another later manuscript version. Humez's edition basically follows chronological order, according to dates in which the pieces were written (not necessarily the date of the recorded event or vision).

Even in Humez's edition, Jackson's writing often reflects a loose association of thoughts which some readers may see as fragmentary and hard to follow. Nonetheless, her self-editing comments on many of these occasions reveal her awareness of stylistic and organizational concerns. Humez suggests these notations indicate Jackson may have planned to revise her work at a later date. The chronologically-organized writings of Humez's edition together with Jackson's comments about reading and writing reveal her ever-increasing interaction with inscribed texts. This change parallels shifts in writing and reading practices within Shakerism as it also reflects shifts in Jackson's abilities, habits and desires. From her early years Jackson exhibits a desire for increased alphabetic literacy--a belief in Graff's "literacy myth." Jackson's drive may appear to be a desire to be like the dominant race; however, her stated goal always is for spiritual improvement. She recognizes that in her religious circles people in positions

of power and authority are those who read and write inscribed texts. She may sub-consciously want such power and authority, but she sees alphabetic literacy as a tool for spiritual growth--for herself and for others.¹⁰ In her narrative she continually reminds herself and other readers that only spirit-informed literacies are worthwhile.

Throughout her writing she shows that books validate her lived experience and, additionally, that her understanding of the texts--assisted by the spirit--is progressive.¹¹ The spirit directs Jackson not only in her reading and understanding but also in her writing. She records, for example, "I was told at the beginning to write the things which I seen and heard, and write them as I seen and heard" (170). She echoes the opening of the book of Revelation, which she probably knew, as well as the spiritually-inscribed volumes by Shakers Paulina Bates and Philemon Stewart, which were prominent during the Era of Manifestations when Jackson came to Watervliet and which she records having read. Their influence, more than John's Apocalypse, emerges in Jackson's record of literacy.

Jackson's description of her literacy during her early life and ministry in Philadelphia establishes the literacy which she manifests later, during the years she interacts with the Shakers. She describes her ability to read and write inscribed texts as "a remarkable providence of God's love," explaining that after she "received the blessing of

God" in her conversion and sanctification experiences, she "had a great desire to read the Bible" (107). Greatly "griev[d] by her brother's promises to teach her to read and his lack of commitment to them because of his own physical constraints, and "hurt" by his unsolicited editing of letters he inscribed for her as she dictated, Jackson records she heard these words spoken to her: "Be faithful, and the time shall come when you can write" (107). She records the remarkable day:

One day I was sitting finishing a dress in haste and in prayer. This word was spoken in my mind, "Who learned the first man on earth?" "Why, God." "He is unchangeable, and if He learned the first man to read, He can learn you." I laid down my dress, picked up my Bible, ran upstairs, opened it, and kneeled down with it pressed to my breast, prayed earnestly to Almighty God if it was consisting to His holy will, to learn me to read His holy word. And when I found I was reading, I was frightened--then I could not read one word. I closed my eyes again in prayer and then opened my eyes, began to read. So I done, until I read the chapter. . . . When my brother came to dinner I told him, "I can read the Bible! I have read a whole chapter!" "One thee has heard the children read, till thee has got it by heart." What a wound that was to me to think he would make so light of a gift of God! (108)

Jackson's account emphasizes twice the mystical element of her interpretive acts: first, when she becomes "frightened" by the fact that she is reading, prayer enables her to continue; second, when her brother doubts her ability to do more than quote from memory, she underscores her reading as "a gift of God." Jackson's reliance on the spirit for help with reading appears in several other recorded occasions in

her pre-Shaker years. For example, she describes a prayer meeting she led at her house where her innovative "reading" and "opening" of Scripture is due not to her own power but to the power of God working through her:

I read nearly a whole chapter in Isaiah. (I was impressed to open the Bible and read wheresoever my eye lit. So it was in Isaiah.) Then I began to open the Scriptures in a way I never heard nor never thought nor never saw before, and the power of God truly filled the room. (104-5)

Although the spontaneity of the passage selection and reading mimics that of "mainstream" Christian women such as Mary Rowlandson, whose Narrative of Captivity and Restauration was read and republished well into the nineteenth century, or Susan Warner's heroine, Ellen Montgomery, of The Wide, Wide World (1850), it differs in that the reading revises rather than reinforces widely accepted interpretations of the Scripture.¹² For example, Jackson writes soon after of another meeting: "I opened the meeting in reading, then gave my views on the spiritual meaning of 'the letter,' showing how the letter killeth and how the spirit of God would make us alive through Jesus Christ our Lord, if we was willing" (105).

Jackson's spiritual reading also includes, like Lee's, the ability to read the unscribed texts of people, dreams and visions. As the epigraph to this section notes, she refers to herself as a pen in God's hand as she prays for insights into people, and she writes as well as demonstrates she has received the gift. Her ability to read visions

recurs throughout the narrative. In "The Dream of the Cakes," for example, she sees a room full of white people eating three huge cakes she made from only small spoonfuls of batter. During a later occasion of public "opening" of Scripture, she suddenly interprets the earlier dream:

[W]hen I got there the house was full, and all around the door, and they were nearly all white people. And when I saw the table, book, and candle, I like to fall, my knees smote together. I cried out aloud, "Lord Jesus, if Thou has sent me here to preach, clothe me with Thy power! And if Thou has not, make me a public example before this people!" And in a moment, as it were, I was wrapped up in a mantle and clothed with power. And while I was speaking, I saw that this was the people that ate my cakes off of the griddle and out of the fire and out of the ashes in 1831.
(126)

In addition to revealing Jackson's ability to read visions, the passage demonstrates Jackson associates literacy with authority--an authority she holds in high regard and even fears. The "table, book, and candle," signs of ministerial authority (in this case, in front of a white audience) send her to prayer. Rather than eschewing the power, however, she rises to her spiritual call.

Jackson's reading of visions, Scripture and people eventually leads her to break from AME and other "orthodox" affiliations. As she explains,

My eyes and my understanding were greatly opened and enlightened--my eyes opened to see into the way, into the very heart and thought of the people. And I saw the state of the churches and their destructions, that they would all come down. Many passages of Scripture were spiritually unfolded to my mind and I testified against the churches. (137)

Jackson's testimony against the churches, like Lee's teachings, emerges partially from an inscribed text, but she relies upon a spiritually driven, innovative re-reading of it. The results, like Lee's, are persecutions and conversions: "And while I was speaking, the people looked as though I ought not to be suffered to live. But when I had opened the subject and then proved it by the Old and New Testaments, then some of their countenances were changed" (137).

In sum, Jackson's spiritual literacy during her early years in Philadelphia brought about her alphabetic literacy, assisted her in her public and itinerant ministry during and after her break from the AME congregations, and led to her discovery of and union with the Shakers. In spite of the Shakers' openness toward uninscribed texts, their female elements of the godhead, and their ecstatic or "feminine" elements of worship which, as I discuss below, attract, sustain and empower Jackson, she adheres to "masculine" models as well, looking to the Bible and other inscribed texts for authority and validation. In fact, Jackson's conversion to Shakerism partially depends upon one of their inscribed texts. And she frequently dreams or has visions of books and their interpretations.

Jackson reveals the authority of inscribed texts in a lengthy passage describing her receipt of a Shaker text in the fall of 1836. A man who had been living with the Shakers

came to her after he heard her speaking and, according to her record, said, "The Spirit told me to give thee this book to read. And if thee understands, thee must keep it. And if thee don't, thee can give it to me again" (140). Jackson takes the book but, rather than reading it herself, hands it to her companion Martha, who reads a section justifying dancing as a form of worship before handing it back to Jackson. Because at this point in her life she "read[s] no books but the Bible," Jackson does not open it until seven years later, when she "was told, 'Open the book and look into it.'" The reading which follows, as Jackson describes it, is experiential and divinely directed rather than rational: "I opened on a part of my own experience. I opened at a passage that condemned the works of the flesh in the regeneration, as it was shown to me from heaven, and which no mortal had ever told me" (141). She describes this reading from the book as validating her knowledge about celibacy arrived at previously by personal experience and divine revelation. At the time of recording the events in her narrative, Jackson explains,

I can now understand why it was that I was not to read. It was because the time had not yet come for me to read anything else. . . He intended that I should believe what I saw and heard, without the help of man. . . . If I had read those writings which are so common among men, they would have darkened my understanding, so that when the time came for me to read the truth, I would not have been able to have received it. (141-43)

She explains that "if the spirit and substance of which the

book treated had not been revealed" in her, she "might have read it [the book] all the days of" her life without understanding it. She summarizes, "for the letter killeth but the spirit makes alive" (144-5). Nonetheless, "this book [the "letter"] was an earthly companion" for her during a period in which she "had none to converse with that had seen these wonderful things" (144).

In addition to receiving this and other physical books which validate her experiences and provide her companionship, Jackson frequently receives books symbolically and in dreams and visions, signs of the value she bestows upon inscribed texts. For example, in 1843 a Shaker sister "under spirit influence" gave her an immaterial "Book of Orders" [probably "the Holy Orders of the Church," (Humez, Gifts, 170, n.31)] and a pair of spectacles" (170). In a dream of 1843, angels give her "a little book." Jackson writes that "When they were given to me, it was made known to me" that the book "was to give me knowledge" (174). When she awakens from the dream, she records, her "knowledge of spiritual things increased" (174).

The incident of Jackson's first Shaker text and her reading of these dreams exhibit that her understanding often comes after her initial reading--knowledge, acquired by the spirit's aid--arrives progressively apart from mere "functional" decoding of alphabetic symbols. For example, of

Philemon Stewart's Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book,

she writes,

I received this blessed book into my hand in August 1846, and I read it. And March 4, 1847, I began to understand it, for which I am truly thankful to the God of the Heaven, who gave me understanding, through our Blessed Lord and Mother. (209)

Of reading "Holy Mother Wisdom's Book," Paulina Bates's anthology of gift messages, Jackson writes she "received counsel in the most feeling and tender manner, from Holy, Ever-blessed Mother Wisdom" after she "laid the Holy Book away" (263). She records in 1863 that while spending the day "in prayer, and watching, and reading, and fasting from all evil, I was greatly blessed and instructed in the spiritual meaning of the written word of God, and my soul was strengthened and enlightened in the true work of God" (283).

Thus, even while justifying inscribed texts and looking to them to validate her understanding, she continually ascribes authority to the unscribed workings of the spirit. Her "Dream of the Three Books and a Holy One" underscores the significance of unscribed and inscribed texts, the spirit's assistance and, because she reinterprets the dream four times, the progressive nature of her understanding. In January of 1836, prior to breaking away from AME traditions or discovering the Shakers, Jackson sees her brother Samuel hand her over to a white man who leads her consecutively to three tables. A book lies open on each. The white man tells her,

"Thou shall be instructed in this book, from Genesis to Revelations"; "Yea, thou shall be instructed from the beginning of creation to the end of time," and "I will instruct thee--yea, thou shall be instructed from the beginning of all things. Yea, thou shall be well instructed. I will instruct." (146)

The man, who seems to be in Shaker garb and has "a father and a brother's countenance," also appears after the dream during her "waking" hours. She writes,

And after that he taught me daily. And when I would be reading and come to a hard word, I would see him standing by my side and he would teach me the word right. And often, when I would be in meditation and looking into things which was hard to understand, I would find him by me teaching and giving me understanding. (147)

Although she does not identify the teacher and the books when she first records the dream, they represent Jackson's belief in the authorities of inscribed texts and white men. In the first reference she describes the three books as identical, representing her inability to read inscribed texts without assistance, but in the second reference Jackson describes the three books as distinct sources of knowledge. Eight years after the vision she writes:

I received some light concerning the three books which I saw in 1836. The first was the book which the Spirit taught me. The next was the book which Jesus, who is Christ the Lord, the Father of the new creation, taught me. The third is the Book which the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is now teaching me daily, and out of which the last trumpet is sounding. (204)

The books represent steps in her progress of spiritual understanding: direct revelation from the spirit about celibacy; better understanding of the Scripture in relation

to her AME background; and knowledge of Shaker teachings about the Deity and the millennial church, taken from published doctrinal works as well as from oral teachings. Among these, however, Jackson grants the spirit priority, for as the passage continues it dwells on the "first" book rather than the other two:

The Spirit first taught me that I must be separated from all earthly ties before I could become a pilgrim, and then I would have power over the world, the flesh, and the Devil, for these are united all in the earth and through the earth.
(204)

Jackson would have gained this new understanding of the spirit's prominence over the Bible and Shaker doctrinal texts in 1844 as she had been under the influence of Shaker theology.

Jackson rereads the vision again in 1858 in a way that validates her life experiences and sustains her spiritually. Soon after she received a blessing from Paulina Bates and others to lead the "family" of Believers in Philadelphia, as she reads Bates's "Holy Mother Wisdom's Book," the spirit gives Jackson the new interpretation: "it was made clear to my mind, the cause why God in His mercy showed me in 1836 the three books that were then to be revealed--that I was the one chosen to make it known in this city" (278).

Jackson records a fourth instance of reading the vision, prompted by meditation upon uninscribed memories rather than by reading an inscribed text. In 1864, the final entry in Humez's edition, Jackson writes:

And while I was looking in my mind at the three books which I saw in a vision of God in 1836 . . . it was made known to me the meaning of the three books, and why they were opened in the middle. And also the meaning of the word that was spoken to me at the time I saw them. (289)

After briefly rewriting the dream, Jackson explains that she has believed that the first book was the Bible, since she was to be instructed "Genesis to Revelations," but she has been troubled by the interpretation because she was told "it was to be revealed" and she knew that "we had the Bible already" (289). Her new understanding in 1864, however, is that the first book is the Bible. She explains the future imperative "to be revealed":

Being told that I should be instructed in it, from Genesis to Revelation, meant that I should have the spiritual meaning of the letter revealed in my soul by the manifestation of God. This revelation, then being in Heaven, was the true book which must come to give us the true meaning of the letter--as 'the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive.'
(290)

Thus, Jackson's new understanding underscores such "new understandings" as an inevitable result of spiritual readings. Her new understanding of the other two books, Bates's Divine Book of Holy Wisdom and Stewart's Sacred Roll, also emphasizes the uninscribed work of the spirit in illuminating inscribed letters. She emphasizes that she had this vision in 1836, before these volumes were "written by mortal hands" between 1840-43. Although these two texts had fallen out of favor with many leaders by 1864, Jackson continued to view them as "contain[ing] the mystery of God

to the children of men, in time and in eternity." These two works reflect Jackson's continued interest in the mystical manifestations which had been at the heart of the revival, the period in which Jackson came to the Shakers at Watervliet.

In light of Jackson's ever-increasing interaction with inscribed texts, from her miraculous receipt of "the gift of reading" in the 1830s through the time of her leadership in Philadelphia in the 1850s and 60s, it is possible to say Jackson is becoming more involved in the "masculine" world of texts and religious leadership. However, her reading may also be seen as an act of female piety and discipline, quite common and highly encouraged in the era, both within Shakerism and in "the world." Like the reading Ellen Montgomery exhibits in Susan Warner's The Wide, Wide World, Jackson's work with inscribed texts demonstrates her view of them as validating and authorizing her experience, of giving her life meaning to a certain degree. Yet Jackson's writing and reading, like the textual work Harriet Jacobs exhibits in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, resists and revises the codes of the dominant culture.¹³ Jackson's literacy allows her to move between "masculine" and "feminine" and racial realms as needs demand.

"And was I not glad when I found that I had a Mother!"

Much mother-imagery appears in Rebecca Jackson's

spiritual narrative. Shaker women in general, Shaker leader Mother Lucy Wright, Holy Mother Wisdom and Mother Ann Lee all seem to have influenced Jackson spiritually as mother-figures. Additionally, references to her "natural" mother and grandmother indicate Jackson's interaction with her biological relatives and her own activities as a "mother" and "woman" prior to becoming a Shaker influenced her understanding of the sect's gender-inclusive theology. Jackson's writing depicts, as Nellie McKay has described, that she learned the culture of free African-American women of the nineteenth century. The mother-figures in her early life in Philadelphia worked, earned money, and gained leadership roles in prayer circles. She learned from them the importance of spiritual community and relationship, even as she learned a kind of independence.¹⁴

Jackson was raised by her grandmother until "between three and four," when she returned to live with her newly remarried "natural" mother. She maintained a close relationship with this early mother-figure, writing of her, for example, "I loved my grandmother very much" (120). The depictions of two dreams in which the grandmother appears also demonstrate their mutual affection. One of these accounts also provides glimpses of Jackson's relationship with her biological mother. Although the mother had threatened to whip the daughter for telling a foreboding dream predicting the step-father's death, Jackson wrote,

"she was one of the best of mothers, and I bless the memory of her" (240). Jackson's mother believed in the visionary gift her daughter displayed, probably contributing to the daughter's respect.

These two mother-figures and Jackson's loss of them at a fairly young age (the grandmother died when Jackson was seven, the mother when Jackson was 14) demonstrate her ability to relate to more than one female authority figure and suggest why she so easily moved into a "mothering" role. She had learned that one of woman's responsibilities was to serve as a mother to any children that had the need. Jackson writes that even as a child, she had assumed domestic responsibilities: "I always was faithful in work from my childhood, never inclined to play like the rest of my mother's children" (85). The domestic work most likely included caring for children.¹⁵ This sense of responsibility as a "mother" appears again as Jackson describes her burden of work as an adult female in the 1830s and her desire to "get learning": "having the charge of my brother and his six children to see to, and my husband, and taking in sewing for a living, I saw no way that I could now get learning without my brother would give me one hour's lesson at night after supper or before he went to bed"(107).¹⁶

Jackson displays her relationship with her biological mother in a vision she received in 1849, after converting to Shakerism. In response to a prayer to her "Heavenly Parents"

(Father God and Holy Mother Wisdom), expressing concern for her deceased and spiritually "lost" mother, Jackson sees her sleeping peacefully in the midst of a garden of "sweet flowers in full bloom." She also learns that her mother has become "a caretaker of children," a Shaker position. Her mother had converted to Shakerism once she passed to the spirit world, an experience of the afterlife quite common during this period of Shakerism. Jackson's concern and relief shows her continued care for this second early mother-figure. We may see Jackson's physical separation from her mother as a young child, her mother's three marriages, and her mother's early death as contributing to some hostility or at least ambivalence toward the woman Jackson was supposed to love. Similarly, the daughter's description of her mother threatening to whip her may be read as a sign of Jackson's latent fear of or anger toward her mother. The dream of her mother's conversion to Shakerism and peaceful eternal sleep may be understood as a psychological resolution of any guilt Jackson may have experienced for those ambivalent feelings. But they may also emerge as validation for her decision to leave her family and her mothering role to become an independent "single" itinerant and Shaker.

Whatever the causes of these references to mothering in her life prior to Shakerism, in relation to their presence, the absence of comments about fathering in Jackson's text

becomes quite obvious. She refers once to her mother's second husband, a sailor who was probably often away. Jackson's only comments about him come in the description of the dream foretelling his death (which occurs soon after the dream) and his punishment in Hell. Her mother remarries, and we learn nothing of the new third "father." This dream and the absence of other paternal references in descriptions of her pre-Shaker life may be read as a manifestation of Jackson's desire to remain connected to her mother or to other women. However, Jackson does not seem to have a fear of or hatred for father-figures. She eventually married; and her writing reveals that she desired a relationship with a Father God. She also positively refers to the man in her "Dream of the Three Books" as having a "father's and brother's countenance" (147). What becomes clear through these passages is that her relationships with men were secondary to those with women. Even while desiring autonomy and separation, manifest in relationships with men and father-figures, Jackson maintained a sense of connection to mother-figures and to other women.¹⁷

From the women of the communities she experienced in her early life, she also learned that mystical, spiritual power was not to be overlooked, and even as a child began to develop her ability to interpret and live according to spiritual voices and visions. Jackson's affiliation with the Shakers appears to be directly related to their openness to

the "female" realm of mystical gifts and to the circles of female fellowship their communities supported.¹⁸

Additionally, their gender inclusive god-imagery appeals to her. Jackson refers specifically to the offer of a spiritual mother through Shakerism during one of her early visits to a Shaker community. When a female Believer asks her, "'Don't you wish you had a mother?'" (162), she smiles in response. After receiving her first vision of "a Mother in the the Deity," she comments, "And was I not glad when I found that I had a Mother! (154)" On another occasion Jackson describes that she was "filled with love" and felt "like one moving in the waves of the sea" when she received a "Mother's look" during a Shaker meeting (168). Jackson understood spiritual mothering in Shakerism in light of Ann Lee stories read through the lenses of her experiences in Philadelphia.

Whether Jackson learned of Lee by reading Shaker texts or by orally transmitted stories Shakers are known to have shared, several implicit allusions listed in this chapter's opening demonstrate Jackson's awareness of Lee's life. More specifically than the general similarities of ecstatic visionary experiences, celibacy, itinerant preaching without her husband, and persecution by unbelievers, Jackson describes her abilities to heal people by the laying on of hands, or touch, accompanied by prayer (132, 164), to see into a person's heart (150), and to inspire people to confess their sins (164, 186). Of suffering and persecution,

she describes herself being accused of being a witch (160) and at one point gives an explicit connection of her suffering to that of Mother Ann and Jesus (275-76). And Jackson's vision of her biological mother in the spirit world echoes Mother Ann's vision of her deceased mother (Testimonies [1816], 42).

In addition to these implicit allusions to Lee, other explicit references to mother-figures reveal the importance of the Shakers' gender inclusive god-imagery to Jackson. Describing one of her first Shaker meetings in 1842, for example, Jackson writes:

I saw the head and wings of their blessed Mother in the center of the ceiling over their heads. She appeared in glorious color. Her face was round like a full moon, with the glory of the sun reflecting from it in streams which formed a glorious crown. And her face in the midst. And she was beautiful to look upon. Her wings was gold. She being in the center, she extended her golden wings across the room over the children, with her face toward me and said, "These are all mine," though she spoke not a word. And what a Mother's look she gave me. And at that look, my soul was filled with love and a motion was in my body, like one moving in the waves of the sea.(168)

The mother-image in this case is Holy Mother Wisdom rather than "Mother Ann," but her gathering, sheltering wings mark the passage as analogous to several references to Lee in the Testimonies. (Of course, biblical passages regarding Jesus and Jehovah [Matt. 23:37; Mal. 4:2] are also possible sources for Jackson's creative imagination.)

Jackson's depiction of Holy Mother Wisdom demonstrates not only the importance of mother imagery and feminist

theology to her but also the physicality and specificity typical of her early visions. Diane Sasson has argued that the writings of female visionary Shaker Minerva Hill have "a specificity of image, a concreteness of detail" that make them "more akin to spiritual drawings than linear, written narratives. Shape and color predominate; the power of her visions is the power of dream images whose meanings cannot be fixed" ("Individual Experience," 31). She suggests that this characteristic is gender-based, since the writings of William Leonard are more "linear." In some ways supporting Sasson's theory, Jackson's depictions in her early writings are often visually dramatic and descriptive, although verbal instructions usually accompany the visions. In the passage above, for example, the physical, bodily image of Holy Mother Wisdom is so powerful for Jackson that it speaks without speaking: she "said, 'These are all mine,' though she spoke not a word." Though not a complete portrait, the depiction recreates her bodily presence. This body, though a spiritual one, appears tangible; Holy Mother Wisdom, to Jackson, is not merely a "felt sense" or a metaphor for interior, mental peace. Perhaps reminiscent of Jackson's physical connection to her mother's body, the images of sheltering wings and watery rocking exude a sense of comfort and physicality which goes beyond words.

Jackson later describes a vision of an unnamed woman, while "under the instruction of my heavenly Father and

Mother":

I looked out in the elements and saw a woman in the air. . . . She wore a white garment, and a crimson scarf which was brought over her right shoulder and loosely tied under her left arm, and the two ends hung down to near the bottom of her garment. She was bare headed, bare footed, and bare handed. Her hair was black, loosely falling over shoulders, and she was beautiful to look upon. She appeared pensive and looked upon this city like one bemoaning her only child. (203)

Two concepts predominate in the vision--the simile comparing the tangible, voiceless woman to a mother mourning her lost child (perhaps reflecting Jackson's unresolved emotions about her relationship with her biological mother), and the women's physical beauty. Both concepts depend upon the pictorial and emotional dimension of Jackson's narrative.

As her life progresses, however, Jackson's writing and the appearance of mother-figures becomes less physical and more abstract. The women continue to offer instruction, but it is often only verbal; Jackson hears the Mother's instructive voice rather than sees her authoritative presence and comforting body. For example, she wrote on her fifty-seventh birthday: "I have spent the day in prayer and thanksgiving to my Heavenly Parents for their kind dealings with me, and in reading Holy Mother Wisdom's Book, from which I received understanding in the work of God, and in reading The Sacred Roll" (232). And a year later, on her fifty-eighth:

A day wherein my Heavenly Parents have looked upon and instructed me in mercy, concerning the two continents, the eastern and the western, which are a representation of two in the spirit world--one for those who are in

the work of regeneration, and the other for souls that leave the body, wholly in a natural state. (232)

This passage continues, heavily saturated with the language of Shaker doctrinal texts and lacking the physical description of earlier visions.

The shift from visual to verbal instruction reflects Jackson's increased reading of inscribed texts. In this later section of her narrative she frequently notes her reading of Shaker texts, often accompanied by spiritual instruction. Jackson's new position of authority over the Philadelphia Shakers contributes to her increased interaction with inscribed texts. When she eventually receives a blessing from the leaders at Watervliet in 1858 to oversee the Philadelphia community, she requests two doctrinal works. The request implies that she did not have personal copies before (and thus her reading of them was limited) and that as an official leader she may sense a responsibility to more "book learning," since in general the Shaker leaders, including women, during this period were allowed more reading time. Jackson's reading of inscribed texts also increases, I believe, due to her aging and her failing health. The woman once extremely active physically, and now less capable of bodily activity, has more time for reading. One vision which occurs during an illness in 1858, when Jackson was 62 or 63, depicts Mother Ann comforting her by assuring her that in the spirit world she will be able to continue her physical and spiritual work of spreading

salvation; thus she should not feel guilty for relinquishing some of her bodily tasks in this world.¹⁹ Among the bodily tasks Jackson has borne since the 1830s is physical ministry among "her people" in the Philadelphia area, delivering orally to them the messages she receives from the spirit.

"But a voice above my head told me to sit still And this was the way I sat all the time he was amangling my body--"

These phrases appear in the midst of Jackson's "Dream of Slaughter," a chilling vision in which an imagined burglar flays her face and eviscerates her (95). The dream, as Humez has suggested, most likely reveals Jackson's subconscious concerns for her bodily vulnerability as an African-American woman in Philadelphia during the racial riots of the 1830s (Gifts, 14). In addition to its feminist theology, then, Shakerism probably attracted Jackson for two reasons associated with race. First, the Shakers' concern for the salvation of ethnic minorities flourished during the Era of Manifestations, the period in which Jackson came in contact with them. Second, the communal sect as an established institution offered a haven; life in a rural Shaker community would have been safer physically for her than the racial turmoil of Philadelphia.

The 1816 Testimonies record Lee visualizing the salvation of "negroes:" "She mentioned the names of some

that she had seen rise from the dead. . . . She further said, 'I have seen the poor negroes, who are so much despised, redeemed from their loss, with crowns on their heads'" (42-43). During the revival embodied spirits of ethnic minorities such as Indians, Arabs, Africans, and Asians appeared in living Shaker mediums or "instruments" and testified of their conversions to Shakerism while in the spirit world.²⁰ However, the conversions in the spirit world could not counterweigh the physical imbalance of racial representation in Shaker communities, where few ethnic minorities lived at the time of Jackson's initial contact with them. In spite of teachings and practices Jackson initially might have thought would allow her literacies and leadership to grow, a conflict which appears to be affiliated with race as well as with manifestations of spirituality and literacy emerged between Jackson and Shaker leaders. Many visions and passages in Jackson's writing demonstrate that her concerns with her racial self and her physical and spiritual persecution do not disappear when she leaves Philadelphia, even after she lives with the Shakers at Watervliet in the 1840s and 50s. Yet Jackson's spiritual literacy assists her in moving between separate racial spheres, just as it allows her to transgress gender boundaries.

The primary person with whom Jackson disagreed was Paulina Bates, author of the anthology of spiritually-

revealed writings, The Divine Book of Holy and Eternal Wisdom (1849), which Jackson eventually reads and upholds. Perhaps looking through the lenses of mainstream white culture, Bates may have viewed Jackson, in spite of her proclaimed celibacy, as a sexually aggressive or loose woman who could threaten the "union" of the family at Watervliet. Or Bates may have seen Jackson, as many whites viewed "free" blacks and slaves, as potentially savage and inherently rebellious.²¹ White Shakers exhibited, like many of their counterparts "in the world," an imperialistic attitude and belief in manifest destiny.²² They described the embodied spirits of ethnic minorities who appeared as "exotic" and "savage." Their hymnals of the revival period also demonstrate these stereotypes. Spirit "instruments" received "Indian" and "Negro" songs, which Believers sang in dialect during worship. For example, this "'Negro' song in an unknown tongue" was recorded at Enfield, New Hampshire, in 1838:

E ne me ne mo del e
 Sanc to luro lu ral lee
 Lu ral lan do me ne see
 Pa ri an dor hoo sa me.

(Andrews, Gift, 75)

In an "Indian song" recorded in the Church family at Shirley in 1845, the language and condescending racial stereotypes are clear:

Me love come meety learn to tand,
 Like whities trait & fold de hand,
 Me tink dat dey look so pretty
 Dat me like dem want be goody.

Me like learn toot toot on de trump
 Me seen dem try how high dey jump;
 Now me want learny singy too,
 Me like learn dant as shiney do.

(Andrews, Gift, 71)

Some critics have interpreted the Shakers' interest in minorities as a vicarious shared suffering with African Americans and Native Americans as oppressed, marginal groups within mainstream American society, but the discourse of the predominantly white Shakers also reveals their desire to civilize these "savages," to assimilate them into their "white man's" religion.²³ (I will discuss reasons for these attitudes as I analyze Alonzo Hollister's narrative in the second half of this chapter.) Jackson's writings--especially her readings of her dreams and visions--underscore racial difference and, quite often, racial tension or conflict not only outside of Shakerism but within the "haven" of the community at Watervliet.

In a vision of 1843, for example, Jackson sees a group of "colored people" rise from beds of "dirt" with "cover" of "dry sod," only to be teased by "an Irish girl about ten years old" in "a baiting house for the poor." As is typical in her descriptions of these dreams, Jackson bears the burden of comforting the people as prophet or spokesperson. She records:

I comforted them with the words that was given to

me for them. . . . and they heard me gladly. . . .
 Then I woke and found the burden of my people
 heavy upon me. I had borne a burden of my people
 for twelve years, but now it was double, and I
 cried unto the Lord . . . 'Oh, my Father and my
 God, make me faithful in this Thy work and give me
 wisdom that I may comply with Thy whole
 will.' (179-82)

As Humez suggests, the vision alludes to conflicts between black and recently immigrated Irish as W. E. B. DuBois describes them in Philadelphia Negro (Gifts, 179, n. 42); however, Jackson's description also illustrates her concern, even before officially joining the community at Watervliet, with lifting her people from the "dirt" and "dry sod."

Five years later while living in the Watervliet community (March 1848), Jackson receives a message from Ann Lee's brother, "Father William," in the spirit world: "the Lord has called thee for a great work to thy people, both on earth and in the world of Spirits" (212). He refers to her as a "chosen vessel" who must be "fit" for this great work "by honestly confessing thy sins to God, in the presence of the Elders that stand here in Zion" (212). She glosses the recorded message with its relevance to her at the time: "A word in season, for it was given when I underwent great temptation, and deep affliction on account of a change in our Elders" (212). As Humez explains, this passage refers not only to Jackson's belief she was to serve "her people," but also to her conflict with Bates, who was not in leadership when Jackson first committed to live with the Shakers (Gifts, 212, n. 15). Perhaps the sins she had not

confessed were negative feelings toward white Shakers who, isolated from the conflicts of urban areas, displaced concern for the physical oppression of blacks with concern for conversions in the spirit world. Thus they could appear to Jackson to reinforce to an extreme degree a distinction between spirit and flesh or spirit and body. These kinds of messages recur frequently from 1848 until Jackson leaves Watervliet in 1851.

With many of these recorded visions, Jackson provides no interpretation, perhaps because she, like Harriet Jacobs, hopes not to offend possible white readers, but the visions' concerns with racial difference are clear.²⁴ In July of 1848, for example, she dreams of a lion who attacks her as she "was going south to feed the people." When her prayers to God "weakened the lion's hold," her "prayer increased" until the lion "fell back" and left her. When she arises, she commands James Ostrander, her friend and spiritual brother, to shoot the lion. The responding dialogue suggests Jackson's frustration with the Shakers and her view of herself as separate from them: "He said, 'There is not a gun.' 'What?' said I, 'Have not the Shakers got a gun?' He said, 'Nay.' 'Well,' said I, 'He will return'"(213). The lion, like the burglar in the "Dream of Slaughter," represents a latent fear of physical harm. Whether the lion represents whites or not, the dream suggests the Shakers' lack of a gun, symbolic of their unwillingness to bear arms

in the face of serious physical dangers in the world or to acknowledge the reality of the physical abuse blacks face and endure, perturbs her. By referring to the Shakers by name rather than using the third person plural "we," Jackson here and elsewhere distinguishes herself from them, although she has lived with them for four years. She does not view herself as entirely within the circle of Shakerism, though she is empowered by its tenets.

A dream of an eagle which seems capable of destroying her in March 1849 echoes the fears of the dream of the lion. In this case, however, Jackson bravely faces her aggressor. She writes, "Yet I watched it, for I felt that if I took my eyes off from it, it would have power to hurt me" (215). As a result the eagle flies away. Once again her approach to the problem differs from the family of Shakers, who "made signs" to her to leave her work and enter the safety of the Dwellinghouse.

In another vision of 1849 Jackson sees "hundreds" of "East Indians," including a chief and a high priest, who gaze "steadfastly" at her before entering the Second House at Watervliet. Perhaps they look at her as a role model or for answers to questions about life within Shaker communities--how are ethnic minorities treated? Does the faith offer what it promises? Her failure to respond to the "Indians" reveals her ambivalence about racial issues during this period, but Jackson's stance becomes increasingly clear

when she writes that after two years of secret prayer, she witnesses the leaders advocate "the salvation of the souls of the children of men" (216). She records her happiness and sense of "union" with the Shaker family: "When I stood in the congregation and heard our beloved Elders tell us that we must all remember the world in our prayers, my heart leapt for joy, and I gave glory to God in the highest heaven" (216). In spite or because of what should provide a reprieve from her internal struggles with whether to act within or outside of the Shaker community at Watervliet, Jackson's racial visions soon return. In the winter of 1850, only a few months after her vision of East Indians and less than a year after the leadership's announcement of "labor" for "the world," Jackson dreams of herself in Philadelphia, mothering a young child and a "family of spiritual children" (218). Two days later, she records, "I received an encouraging word in confirmation to the word of God which He gave to me concerning my people, which work He has called me to do. And when the time arrives, no man can hinder me from doing it through the help of God" (219). (The "man" who wants to "hinder" her is Paulina Bates. In an entry which soon follows, about the Rochester "rappings" of 1848, Jackson asserts after-the-fact that she had accurately predicted the "knockings" would soon be heard at Watervliet, while Bates said they would not.) Less than a month later, Jackson enters a lengthy retrospective account, reflective

of her thoughts at the time as well as in the past:

After I came to Watervliet, in the year 1847, and saw how Believers seemed to be gathered to themselves, in praying for themselves and not for the world, which lay in midnight darkness, I wondered how the world was to be saved, if Shakers were the only people of God on the earth, and they seemed to be busy in their own concerns, which were mostly temporal. . . . Then seeing these at ease in Zion, I cried to God in the name of Christ and Mother that He in mercy would do something for the helpless world. At that time, it seemed as if the whole world rested upon me. I cried to the Lord both day and night, for many months, that God would make a way that the world might hear the Gospel--that God would send spirits and angels to administer to their understanding, that they might be saved in the present tense, for I knew by revelation, that it was God's will that they should be. (220-21)

Jackson's entries continue to exhibit this distinction between the Shakers ("them") and "her people" until she leaves for Philadelphia in 1851.

In a dream of March 1850, for example, Jackson sees herself and her spiritual sister and companion Rebecca Perot "in a garden." She writes,

In a moment I understood that the people designed to kill us. I wanted Rebecca to make haste, and we would fly to Philadelphia, but she hindered me a long time. At last we went. And as we went, we met the people. The men had killed all the women and children, and were dragging them like dogs through the street. (223)

This part of the vision suggests several interpretations. Humez sees explicit "female fear of male violence" but is uncertain "whether there is covert racial fear as well" (Gifts, 223, n. 39). She believes "the violence . . . may very well be associated with living among whites at a time

when the Fugitive Slave Law justified whites" in treating black women and children in such a manner. But the vision could also represent the spiritual death Jackson fears will result from her continuing to live a cloistered life at Watervliet. As the dream continues, Jackson and Perot escape to Philadelphia, but they are entrapped and escape three other times. In the last of these, a lion and a bulldog sit as "gatekeepers" by a door Jackson "was agoing to pass out into the street." In a miraculous act echoing Lee's movements among mobs in New England, Jackson writes she "prayed, and passed through, and they had not power to touch" her (223). The violence of the dream could represent Jackson's fears of racial abuse in the city. She could see herself in a "no win" situation: life in Watervliet may be physically safe but spiritually stifling; life in Philadelphia promises possibilities of physical abuse but also spiritual struggles and growth. Throughout the first part of 1851 Jackson continues to record dreams of herself and Perot in Philadelphia, probably working through the turmoil surrounding her decision to leave and minister to "her people" in July of that year.

Jackson's most powerful and creative reading of Ann Lee occurs when she interprets these visions to justify her decision to leave the predominantly white community without the blessing and authority of the leaders there. She probably draws from Mother Ann's itinerancy during the

"opening of the gospel" in New England; she was an aggressive missionary who did not confine herself within the (metaphorical) fences of a Shaker commune. Jackson also may have read a second time the image of Lee visualizing "negroes" receptivity to the gospel, creatively re-reading the passage with herself as the evangelist rather than as one of the converted. Jackson's spiritual literacy, like Lee's, directs her and gives her agency to move across boundaries associated with race and gender.

Because Jackson found her way to Shakerism as a result of her spiritual literacy--because uninscribed texts as well as inscribed ones instructed her in and validated the resurrection life that Lee similarly had received and taught--she represents for Paulina Bates, Alonzo Hollister and other white Shakers not only the possibility of the future of "the world" at large ("improvement" of uneducated ethnic minorities) but also the future of Shakerism: "conversion" of new members without physically aggressive missionary action. In the next section of this chapter I will illustrate this representation through my discussion of Alonzo Hollister's spiritual literacy and narrative.

Alonzo Hollister: Longing for Literacies of the Past

Alonzo Hollister's comments in his spiritual narrative, where he describes receiving Jackson's manuscript and a blank book for transcribing it in 1876 as "a treasure,"

reveals that Jackson was an important spiritual figure for him. For example, he wrote of "Mother Rebecca," as she was known to many Shakers at this time, "I regard her as a true Prophet of Jehovah--and as a second and independent Witness to the Second Appearing of Christ" (193). (The first witness, of course, had been Ann Lee). Images of Jackson, like images of Lee, provided Hollister spiritual sustenance during the years he was editing Jackson's text and writing about it in his "Reminiscences." Their examples of spiritual literacy sustained him in a period of personal and communal change.

Hollister lived almost his entire life (1830-1911) as a Believer and played a key role in publishing and preserving many of the Society's texts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to copying works by Shakers such as Rebecca Jackson, Hollister was responsible for assisting in the compilation of the first bibliography of Shaker literature and what has come to be the largest collection of documentary materials by and about the Shakers.²⁵ His narrative provides insights into the perceptions of a man steeped in both textual and non-textual Shaker traditions. Unlike Jackson's narrative, Hollister's narrative has received little attention from scholars.²⁶

Hollister writes that he arrived at the New Lebanon community with his family in 1838, just before his eighth birthday, and in the midst of the mystical activities of the

Era of Manifestations. Besides his entrance into Shakerism as a child and his near lifetime involvement with the sect, Hollister's narrative describes his physical labors within the community--working in the shoeshop, the garden, the herb industry, and the extract business. In addition, throughout the narrative Hollister continually refers to his work as a writer and editor, work he took upon himself "after hours" and initially without official sanction by Shaker leaders. Writing and reading both are important to him. He opens his narrative with a preface explaining why he writes; he mentions receiving a blank book as a Shaker child; he describes his offense at being inappropriately edited by Shakers responsible for publishing his work in their periodicals; he lists the numbers of works he has written and published; and he quotes from letters received as positive responses to his writing.

His narrative exudes the discourses he has absorbed from nineteenth century physical and social sciences as well as travel literature. In one instance he refers to Ralph Waldo Emerson's birthday, casually exhibiting his familiarity with the philosopher/theologian. In another he refers to visits to bookstores during his travels and instructions from Shaker leaders, much to his dismay, not to buy more books. Sasson has noted, and I echo, Hollister's role as a Shaker person-of-the-book. Examining his "redaction" of one Believer's autobiography, she notes

Hollister wanted to correct the time sequence, clarify the point of view, and find an organizing metaphor. And of this narrative as a whole, she explains that it is drawn "from written sources rather than personal experience" (Shaker Spiritual, 85). For Hollister, though, the personal experiences are largely the experiences of written sources. And the experiences apart from inscribed texts, expressed on paper late in his life, have been shaped significantly by his high level of alphabetic literacy.

In 1859 he lost the fingers of his left hand in an accident with a cutting machine (Sasson, "19th Century," 159), a physical blow (which some might say symbolically parallels his celibacy or "crucifixion of the flesh") which influenced his work within the community. Sasson proposes that the accident moved him from the herb shop into the extract business, and I suggest that it situated him more deeply in the realm of letters. As a man of letters and a man of the cloth in the nineteenth century, Hollister fits the description of "feminized" church leadership Ann Douglas has written about.²⁷

Hollister's increasing "feminization" by the world's standards coincides temporally with three changes within Shakerism other studies have noted: a declining membership, a shift from a male-dominated to a female-dominated sect, and a decline in the mysticism which had prevailed during the first generation of the church and was revived during

the Era of Manifestations.²⁸ In combination these aspects of Hollister's experience influence his reading and writing of mother-figures Ann Lee and Rebecca Jackson and the emphasis on spiritual literacy and home within his narrative.

Hollister's spiritual narrative, in relation to Jackson's, is almost without mother-imagery. Hollister implicitly alludes to Mother Ann's life as he briefly comments on his temptations, his suffering, and his longing to know God's will for his life (175-77). Less than a half-dozen explicit references to Lee appear in his 100-page narrative and none refer to Holy Mother Wisdom. Readings of these few references, enriched by an awareness of his numerous other writings and his experiences as a white male Shaker suggest first, that while Jackson most often reads herself in parallel relation to both black and white mother-figures, Hollister's readings of mother-figures are in stark contrasts to his own experiences; they are "others" he admires. Second, they reveal that the manifestation of this latent admiration increases as the proportion of female Believers increases, female leadership gains power, and progressive voices emerge in Shaker publications.

Shaker mother-imagery probably first appealed to Hollister as it came to replace his biological mother in a community where explicit devotion to a divine mother-figure--though not bodily relation--was acceptable and encouraged. (Visitations by Holy Mother Wisdom occurred frequently

during the early years he was separated from his biological mother and living in the "Children's Order" under the guidance of a male caretaker.) But in later years Mother Ann and, in her shadow, Mother Rebecca, contributed to his security, stability, and sense of home.

Hollister's two explicit references to Mother Ann in his "Reminiscences" (other than those where he associates her with Jackson) depict her as an authority figure rather than as a nurturing woman. First, in a recorded conversation with "Brother" Abram Whitney of the Shirley community, recipient of the Shaker's musical notation system which differed from "the world's" by using the first eight letters of the alphabet rather than round or shaped notes, Hollister notes that Whitney explained "that Mother Ann was the author of that system. He received it from her" (164-5). In the second passage he glosses a discussion regarding the value of sermons directed to outsiders at Shaker meetings. A Shaker "preacher" has explained that they help bridge the gap between Shakers and the world by increasing outsiders' understanding of Shakerism. Hollister assents, borrowing Lee's words for support:

As Mother [Ann] said on this subject, "I say it does good. If the living will not hear the word of God, the ded (sic) will. There is not a word of God lost, that ever was spoken." When the Gospel is preacht in this world, it is heard in both worlds at once. (179-80)

Again, the image here is not one of a nurturing woman, but of a wise instructor and authority figure.²⁶ It is possible

that he does not refer to nurturing aspects of "Mother" Ann because he had the comfort of male caregivers as a child, but he needs her authority now as leaders who knew her in the flesh have died and other living Shakers are suggesting changes in doctrine and practice.³⁰ As an authority figure Lee is an "other" for Hollister, for she possesses the acknowledged power within the community which he does not.

Hollister's other references to "Mother" Ann appear as he discusses "Mother" Rebecca, bringing the two together as significant figures for him. Why would Hollister make this connection? The passage above provides some initial insight. In addition to Mother Ann's authority, it demonstrates Hollister's belief in the spirit world. He believes, like Jackson and other Shakers, that the physically dead as well as the living may be converted. Given Hollister's strong belief in the spirit world, we should conclude, as Humez has noted, that when copying and editing Jackson's text, he "respected his author" and "believed absolutely in the authenticity of her visions" (67).

Among the characteristics embedded in Jackson's narrative, he reiterates two intertwined ones in his "Reminiscences"--her race and her spiritual literacy. In the midst of his hundred-page manuscript, he devotes nine pages to Jackson's writing. Hollister first describes his trip in 1878 to visit the Philadelphia Shakers where he reads his edition of Jackson's autobiography to them to have

its accuracy confirmed. Next he perfunctorily gives her dates of birth and death. Then Hollister turns to Jackson's literacy, noting that "she was taught by the spirit to read and write" (188). Though her writing and spelling are "of inferior grade," they are "intelligible," he explains. The two sections which follow are lengthy excerpts from her writing, describing her conversion and sanctification experiences, respectively. The first gives her description of being guided by two voices in the midst of a thunderstorm. She discerns the voice of God from the voice of Satan, and follows the former's instruction to pray for deliverance rather than run for safety as the other voice advises. She is delivered.

The "sanctification" excerpt marks Jackson's understanding--through a spiritual vision--of sexual relationships as "works of the flesh" which must be left behind when living a regenerate life. In both passages Hollister highlights Jackson's reliance on the directions of the spiritual voice. This process continues. For example, he next explains her being "constrain'd by the spirit to go abroad and preach the gospel that was taught her by the spirit" (192, emphasis mine); this itinerancy, of course, is what leads to her first contact with the Shakers and her receipt of a doctrinal book. Significant in these passages--for Jackson first and now for Hollister--is Jackson's preaching of Shaker doctrine before she read the book; the

doctrine came to be known extra-textually, apart from the written word, beyond the sacred page. She was accused, by some who heard her during her itinerancy, of preaching from the Shaker text; she did not. "At least," Hollister notes, "such is the impression I retain from a recent reading of her story" (193). In his eyes her spiritual literacy (like Lee's), rather than any formal, ecclesiastical Christian hermeneutic, informed her doctrine and empowered her to cross racial boundaries. The literacy also empowers Hollister as he reads her text.

Evidence of his desire to validate her spiritual literacy follows the passage, when he summarizes Jackson's fragmented physical interaction with the community at Watervliet in a somewhat incoherent manner to verify her life as a Shaker and the spiritual authority she possessed. He culminates the passage with the forthright statement: "I regard her as a true Prophet of Jehovah--and as a second and independent Witness to the Second Appearing of Christ" (193). He reinforces the statement with her first appearance at Watervliet "on the 100th anniversary of Mother Ann's natural birth," a numerological reading of events typical of millennialist groups' explanations or defenses of their faiths. He continues his association of Lee with Jackson, noting especially their alphabetic illiteracy and their keen spiritual literacy:

It is remarkable that both Mother Ann and Mother Rebecca, were destitute of book learning--& were

educated in the common duties of life by practice & the Spirit of God. They were Divinely illuminated, and commissioned proficient in all the duties of life, and became Leaders and Teachers of Men, examples of Righteousness blameless in action, and wise in things spiritual, beyond all others in their day and generation. (193-94)

Hollister's attitude toward the "uneducated negro" Jackson appears not unlike that he expresses toward native "spirits" as he recalls visitations of ethnic minorities during the Era of Manifestations in his "Reminiscences":

I was deeply interested in watching the strange acting of brethren and sisters under the influence of native Indian spirits, negroes and others, who came to us for a number of months in 1842. They exhibited some awkwardness and ignorance of the ways of white people, at first, but were soon and easily tamed and brot into a degree of order and conformity to our customs. . . . After they had learn'd their lesson, they exprest great thankfulness both in word and song for their privilege and the instruction that had been given them. . . . When one tribe had learn'd, it withdrew, and another came. (174)

His educational bias appears also in a passage describing the observation of a mystical experience at Watervliet, where an "Indian spirit" testifies that Hollister is capable of "thinking work." He glosses the spirit's message: "Part was spoken in broken English, and part in deep seriousness and good proper English as any of us do" (187, emphasis mine). His attitude toward these natives as "other" than himself and white Shakers ("us") appears also in his descriptions of Jackson. He twice refers to the Philadelphia community in which she lives not simply as Shaker sisters but as "the colord Sisters" (188-89). Later, he lists seven

members by name, followed by the gloss "all colord." (The community also, according to his record, included Hattie Walton, "a Jewess") (194).

Hollister's fascination with Jackson as an African American Shaker centers upon her literacy, which includes reading and learning rationally and mystically from both uninscribed and inscribed texts. His narrative reveals no similar literacy in his own life. Two descriptions of trips, which I discuss below, include Hollister's few references to gaining knowledge from uninscribed texts.

Hollister's fascination with Jackson's literacy and the spirit world may be read as a regressive fantasy, his desire for a part of the female realm, associated with the mother from whom he had been detached since childhood. His narrative contains only one reference to his biological mother, in a brief summary of his pre-Shaker life, although she continued to live at New Lebanon until her death in 1874 (two years before he began copying Jackson's work). However, Hollister writes with high regard for Philemon Stewart, who cared for him during his first summer at New Lebanon. Known as the inspired author of A Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book, which Jackson read and admired, Stewart may have served as a role model for Hollister in later years as he increased his writing, editing and interest in mystical activities of the past. Although the narrative suggests that Hollister was able to transfer his need for relationships

from his biological mother to male caretakers and to female god imagery, it also suggests latent unresolved anxieties about his loss.

Loss, for Hollister at this point in his life, included more than a biological mother. Shaker writings from the Era of Manifestations and afterward note a concern over the loss of members who knew Mother Ann in the flesh and a concern for the loss of "true Shakerism" of the earlier periods. Discussions or debates over theological changes exhibit Hollister as a more conservative Shaker, as Sasson has noted ("19th Century," 163-170). Several of the doctrinal tracts Hollister wrote, which concern themselves with women's roles in light of Shaker theology, appear "progressive" by title but are implicitly conservative. In addition to "Divine Womanhood" (1887), "Heaven Anointed Woman" (1887), "The Free Woman" (1904), and "Brief Sketch of Ann Lee, the First Anointed (sic), Emancipated, New Woman" (1905) discuss Ann Lee as founder and exemplar of Shaker faith.³¹ These tracts testify to Hollister's fascination with this Shaker mother-figure and his attempt to rekindle Shakerism of the past by focusing on Ann Lee while appealing to readers "in the world"--possible converts--who are concerned with the changing status of women. His "evangelism" is non-aggressive, "feminized" in that it is carried out by inscribed texts to be read privately rather than through face-to-face confrontation.

Although he hopes for the future of the sect, he also values its traditions of spiritual literacies, exemplified by Ann Lee and Rebecca Jackson. Hollister's concern for maintaining the traditions of Shakerism is manifest in his explicit references to the crumbling sense of "home" in the Shaker communities. Of the period when a New Dwelling House was being built within his community, he writes, "I felt the absence of a home feeling--that is, as if without home" (181). He continues a little later on the same page: "Reading the paragraf (sic) of the home feeling, reminds me that bringing hired men to board in our kitchen was a great detriment to the union of the family, and to the home feeling" (181). (Readers familiar with psychoanalysis may want to gloss these entries with Hollister's subconscious desire for the comfort and stability associated with the mother, the womb, and death.) The passage demonstrates that Hollister, unlike Jackson and Douglass who present themselves as both within and without the circles of their pasts, situates himself firmly within. He favors a "closed circle," except for potential converts, and vicariously recalls his momentary trips without.

Hollister's attitude toward home perhaps has not so much to do with being gendered masculine or feminine as it has to do with becoming accustomed to moving in his childhood. Although Hollister lived almost his entire life in one Shaker community, he writes in the opening of his

narrative that in his childhood his family "moved so often that I think it gave me a roving disposition, so that when we came [to the New Lebanon Shaker community] I was ready and glad to move. It opened to me a new field of discovery" (158). He claims that he liked to move, travel, explore, and read maps. Indeed, his narrative substantiates this love of travel.

References to trips punctuate Hollister's text. These travel descriptions, which are of two kinds--events he participates in at other Shaker communities and observations of the world outside Shakerism--follow the pattern of nineteenth-century travel narratives. Dennis Porter has written:

in their writings travelers put their fantasies on display often in spite of themselves. In one way or another, they are always writing about lives they want or do not want to live, the lost objects of their desire or the phobias that threaten to disable them.
(13)

Hollister depicts himself as a fragmented subject positing himself through his gaze over and upon the sites he observes, generally devoting energy to the different and the "other"--the topography, vegetation, terrain, soil, and architecture.³² In addition to describing his physical surroundings, Hollister records spiritual conversations both with people of the "world" and with fellow Shakers which reveal his desires for "home" and the familiar. He twice refers to his interactions in other Shaker communities as "ecstasies," apparently for the fresh spiritual

companionship and the intellectual discussion they provide.³³ These fresh though familiar interactions--not the contacts with people of "the world"--titillate him.

The interactions with outsiders most often cause anxiety and fear. The mystical accounts referred to earlier exhibit this tendency. Having reached the end of his initial train travel to Boston, where he is to catch a ferry to Portland, he finds himself amidst city chaos--a parade has resulted in extreme crowds, blocked streets, and "idle" cars. Hollister feels insecure and trapped. He writes, "Feeling some uncertain[ty] as to my future chances, I exclaim'd in that 'Thou O God can'st Deliver me out of this.'" The result, "soon after," is that "something seemd to say, 'Get out of here.'" He placed himself near a policeman, "of whom I might ask any question tending to relieve the the (sic) situation." He recalls, "All at once I felt as tho help might come from there" (200, emphasis mine). This event, which causes anxiety and fear, also leads to an increase in his reliance upon uninscribed texts for knowledge and guidance. Another recorded experience similar in its production of anxiety and Hollister's dependence upon uninscribed texts is a nightmare which precedes a sales trip to Connecticut with Skeen's Biblical Chart. After an encounter with some "ruffons" who feigned interest in the chart and drew him into a bar or club, Hollister remembers a dream of wolves wanting to devour him. He writes of the

humiliating and frightening situation away from home, "I believe it was a Divine Power that saved me" (243).

Both experiences, where the chaos of the city and the brutality of the bar overwhelm him, cause him to depend upon his reading of uninscribed texts in the ways Jackson and Lee frequently did. However, his phrasing about his assistance in both situations reveals his lack of certainty or conviction about the spirit's aid. In the first case, the phrasing "Something seemd to say" and "I felt as tho" does not indicate that the guidance comes from Mother Ann, Holy Mother Wisdom or the Almighty Father, but from "something." In the second passage, he refers to a "Divine Power" but does not use gendered terms to describe it.

Unlike Jackson and Lee who use dislocation to grow spiritually by reading uninscribed texts, Hollister draws from it a stronger yearning for home and the comfort of his inscribed texts. For Hollister these trips into the world of the "other," the world outside of Shaker villages, reinforce the stability, comfort, and correctness of the home on which he depends. In one passage, he writes of another trip, "I don't know that I ever felt a more contented, happy, satisfied home feeling, than during a few weeks previous to this journey and after" (215).

Hollister manifests his desire for a stable, continuing home in his travel accounts--his "ecstasy" when in the surroundings of his extended "home" (other Shaker

communities) and his fear when in the face of the "other"-- and in his explicit references to a "home feeling." His use of mother-imagery (his references to "Mother" Ann and "Mother" Rebecca, are intertwined in his sense of a Shaker "home." Their mysticism and action in the realm of bodily presence and orality mark them clearly as "others" different from himself. With the increasing bodily absence in the Shaker communities, he finds himself steeped more and more strongly in the isolated world of texts rather than in the world of bodily presence. Through his inscriptions, however, he creates the embodied Shaker spirits which fill the voids of his non-textual experiences.

Alonzo Hollister, like Rebecca Jackson, fulfills his spiritual needs by, among other venues, reading and writing creatively as a result of Lee's exemplary literacy. This creative reading and writing allows Hollister, like Jackson, to cross, however momentarily, gendered and racial boundaries. In many ways Hollister and his narrative clearly fall into the "masculine" realm. For example, the narrative focuses more on "externals," is more "linear and chronological," and is less expressive of humility than Jackson's, which is more internally focused and "cyclical and associational."³⁴ However, as a complex writing subject influenced by Shaker literacies, Hollister fails to remain consistently fixed in the "masculine" domain. Hollister and his narrative, together with Jackson and her narrative,

demonstrate that neither "masculine" nor "feminine" aspects of literacies encourage greater "spirituality" or "progress." Jackson and Hollister both suggest progress and change while working within the confines of Shakerism and its traditions. Hollister's literacy at the close of the nineteenth and opening of the twentieth century illustrates the shifting strategies Shakers employ to carry on their traditions of embodied spirituality. His reliance on the spiritual presence of inscribed texts to counter the physical losses of the Shaker family at New Lebanon parallels the literacies of Shakers at other communities. In the next chapter, I examine the manifestation of such spiritual literacy in the Canterbury, New Hampshire, community. Canterbury's Obituary Journal, much as Hollister's "Reminiscences," recollects and preserves the past as it looks into an uncertain future.

Notes

1. For their associations of Jackson and Hollister, see Humez (Gifts, 65-68) and Sasson (Shaker Spiritual, 84-89). Although their comments instigated this analysis, neither elaborates on the material which follows here. I have also been influenced by Robert Stepto's study of the editorial framing devices and publications of slave narratives, "Narration, Authentication, and Authorial Control in Frederick Douglass's Narrative of 1845."

2. I slip quite facilely here between the terms "autobiographical manuscript" and "spiritual narrative." Hollister's and Jackson's are spiritual narratives in that each reconstructs and re-members the lives of the respective writers, and the primary concerns of those lives have been spiritual. For distinctions between the Shaker genres "testimony," "autobiography," and "spiritual narrative," see

Sasson (Shaker Spiritual, 67-83) and Mercadante (128, 192, n.43).

3.Sasson describes "Shaker authors' modifications and innovations in response to the changing concerns of the community of Believers" (Shaker Spiritual, x). She notes that "testimonies" written prior to mid-century reflect little difference from each other, while the "autobiographies" written after mid-century exhibit more variety, though all describe the authors' lives.

4. See also Bynum's "Introduction," to Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols (1-20).

5. I draw concepts such as "wholeness" and "otherness" from Lacanian psychoanalytic and linguistic theory. See the introduction to Jacques Lacan's Feminine Sexuality.

6. Priscilla Brewer writes, "In 1840, e.g., census enumerators found only thirty-four blacks (some still slaves) living in Shaker villages, or less than 1 percent of the Society's total population" ("'Tho of the Weaker,'" 627, n. 92). She draws from Bainbridge (355-56).

7. The most indepth analysis of Jackson's life and writing as a mystic, an African-American, a female, and a Shaker is the introduction to Humez, Gifts of Power. All references to Jackson's writings refer to Humez's edition of her manuscripts. Diane Sasson analyzes the text in the context of other Shaker works, suggesting that AME pulpit rhetoric contributed to the lyrical and oral qualities of Jackson's prose (Shaker Spiritual, 158-188). Priscilla Brewer discusses Jackson's conflicts with Shaker authorities, noting her mystical power, her attempt to "exercise . . . executive authority," and her view of racial oppression within the predominantly white communities ("'Tho' of the Weaker Sex,'" 627-28). Richard Williams focuses on Rebecca Jackson's life and work with the Philadelphia community of Shakers.

William Andrews, Nellie McKay, and Joanne Braxton discuss Jackson's work in the light of other nineteenth century African-American spiritual autobiographies. McKay emphasizes the importance of female "supportive communities" for both Jackson and Jarena Lee and argues that each woman demonstrates her "connectedness" to "collective human experience" through the genre (140; 150). Braxton notes the fragmented form of Jackson's narrative and argues that Jackson distanced herself from her oppressive surroundings through her writing, thus carving a space in which she could "create" her "self" (51, 61). Andrews comments only briefly on Jackson's writing (3). Alice Walker comments on Jackson in a review of Humez's book (In Search of Our Mothers'

Gardens, 71-82).

8. Humez comments on the influence of Ann Lee's example and the Shakers' "feminist theology" upon Jackson (24; 37-39). She writes, for example, "Shakerism was to provide a feminist theology, useful when she came to the decision to create and lead her own, predominantly black, Shaker sisterhood in Philadelphia" (Gifts, 24). However, she does not elaborate on Jackson's response to Shaker attitudes toward literacy.

9. According to Humez, the second is "a short booklet containing several . . . accounts of [Rebecca Perot's] dreams, as dictated to Jackson, along with a few of Jackson's own." Hollister's "anthology" was later "edited and rearranged . . . by another Shaker hand" (Gifts, 65-66).

10. Jackson's desire for literacy and writing of her narrative is not unlike the patterns discussed by scholars of slave narratives, such as Henry L. Gates in The Signifying Monkey (Chapter 4) and Figures in Black (Chapter 1), William Andrews in To Tell a Free Story, and Robert Stepto in From Behind the Veil.

11. In January of 1855 Jackson refers to herself and her group of spiritualists as "only in our ABC's as it regards the true knowledge" (253), a sign of her belief in progression and improvement.

12. Jane Tompkins writes of Ellen Montgomery's reading, for example, that it helps her "stay put and submit" (161).

13. On Harriet Jacobs's reading and writing see Hazel Carby, Valerie Smith, Jean Fagan Yellin, Annette Niemtzw, and Frances Smith Foster.

14. Nellie McKay elaborates on the support of and empowerment by these women's groups. Jacqueline Jones, though dealing primarily with slaves and former slaves in the South, discusses the significance of work and family for black women.

15. If we assume that Jackson's dreams have their basis in lived events, one dream indicates that even as a young child she was given responsibility as a caretaker: "I dreamt that my mother was out, and I had to take care of my younger sister, and brother, who was but a few months old" (234).

16. This is the second complaint of this nature. See also (82).

17. My reading of Jackson's relationships to women and men has been influenced by psychoanalytic theory as articulated by Nancy Chodorow. Although her early work, The Reproduction of Mothering, has fallen in disregard for attempting to create a mythic structure which transcends temporal and cultural bounds, I believe it illuminates Jackson's relationship to nineteenth century Shakerism. Chodorow qualifies and revises her theories in her more recent work, where she discusses the influence of historical context, cultural specificity and individuals' gender identities upon their relationships to women and men (Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory, 4-6).

The central argument I draw from, her reworking of the Freudian oedipal complex: daughters, unlike sons, maintain a feeling of connection with their mothers throughout their lives. This connection between women emerges not necessarily because of bodily similarities but because of similarities due to becoming gendered as women by their mothers. As a result of this continued connection with their mothers, women also sometimes experience latent anger, hostility and frustration if they feel unable to create a sense of "self" separate from that of their mothers. Through a desire to separate themselves, daughters turn to heterosexual relationships. Experiences varying from "the norm" may be explained by deviations from the typical mother-daughter bonding during infancy. She explains, for example, that "girls from father-absent homes were uncomfortable and insecure with men and boys" and were "slightly more dependent on adult women"; however, both "father-absent" and "father-present" girls maintain a sense of connection to their mothers (and other women) even while desiring autonomy and separation, which is manifest in their relationships with men (Reproduction, 139).

18. Gooden draws from the letters and poetry of female Shakers to describe the fellowship and bonds among them.

19. Jackson writes, "I felt that I must be a wandering spirit in the spirit world, and have no place of rest, until I had suffered enough in the spirit world [to compensate for] the work that I had not done in time" (274). She visualizes not only herself in the spirit world but Mother Ann "waiting for" her. She concludes, "This brought a ray of hope to my fainting soul, that it would be better for me in the spirit world" (274).

20. Apparently Mother Ann established the pattern of conversions in the spirit world. She frequently refers to visions of conversions in the 1816 Testimonies. For descriptions of the deceased spirits who visited the Shakers during this period, see A Return of Departed Spirits of the Highest Characters of Distinctions, as well as the

Indiscriminate of all Nations, into the Bodies of the "Shakers", or "united Society of Believers in the Second Advent of the Messiah and A Revelation of the Extraordinary Visitation of Departed Spirits of Distinguished Men and Women of All Nations.

21. In the first chapter of Black Women Novelists (1-34), Barbara Christian delineates several images which appear in American literature: the "sexually aggressive" female who "sometimes mated with orangutan males" (6); the mammy (8); the sexually loose woman (14); and the rebellious and savage woman (24-25). See also George Frederickson's The Black Image in the White Mind and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's Within the Plantation Household for a discussion of these stereotypes.

22. At least one Shaker scholar, Lawrence Foster, has noted this tendency. He writes: "That the Shakers shared much of the cultural baggage of their contemporaries is suggested by the fact that the figures from whom the Shakers received revelations were strikingly similar to the heroes and heroines of the school textbooks of the period, as described in Ruth Miller Elson's Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century" (Women, 257, n.18).

23. Humez notes in reference to the frequent appearance of ethnic minorities during the Era of Manifestations, "Believers intensely identified with oppressed races and nationalities throughout history and across cultures. Viewing themselves as descendants of an oppressed religious minority, they saw much of Christian and European history as taking place in the 'reign of Antichrist.' Jackson's vision of East Indians may have been influenced by these enactments" (Gifts, 217-18, n.28).

24. On Jacobs not wanting to offend white readers, see the critics listed above, n. 13.

25. Sasson writes in her "19th Century Case Study" of Hollister: "He recorded hymns during the Era of Manifestations. He kept records of the extract business. He copied visions, narratives and poems of other Shakers. And he himself authored and published over 25 pamphlets and monographs in addition to innumerable periodical contributions" (155). She also writes of Hollister's correspondence with John Patterson MacLean, early historian and bibliographer of Shaker materials, responsible for the beginnings of the Western Reserve Historical Society Shaker Collection (170-72; 188-89).

26. The most extensive work with Hollister's narrative is Sasson's "A 19th Century Case Study," primarily a biographical essay.

27. See especially Chapter 3, "Ministers and Mothers: Changing and Exchanging Roles."

28. See Brewer ("'Tho' of the Weaker,'" 628-35) and Stein (Shaker Experience, 256-272).

29. Additionally, in neither of the two references does Hollister "see" Mother Ann. Her physicality seems to have been repressed; she has been translated into a bodiless "other," much more easily known and acceptably described by a celebrate male Shaker than the physically beautiful type of woman Jackson described. Shaker women would be recognized for what they said--words of wisdom they spoke--rather than their physical beauty. This lack of pictorial qualities also corresponds with the "masculine" nature of William Leonard's narrative which Sasson describes ("Individual Experience," 31).

Sasson implies in her analysis of Minerva Hill's and William Leonard's writings that Hill's is more empowering than Leonard's because of its visual imagery, because the images' "meanings cannot be fixed." The interpretation of visual imagery is perhaps more open to varied interpretation than verbal imagery, but all words are images whose meanings cannot be fixed. Sasson's point is valuable from a comparative point of view; however, while Hollister's writing is similar to Leonard's in its lack of pictorial qualities (a trait I do associate with gender), my point in this essay is to demonstrate how both Jackson and Hollister are empowered through their narratives.

30. For discussions of the "progressive" and "conservative" factions within Shakerism, see Sasson ("19th Century Case Study," 164-170); Stein (Shaker Experience, 205, 207, 213, 227-8, 236, 266, 304); Deignan (Chapter 4); and Brewer, (Shaker Communities, 190-195).

31. "Brief Sketch of Ann Lee" is one among several sub-titles for "Prophesy Unseal'd." "The Free Woman" is printed in the 26-page collection entitled "Calvin's Confession." The title-page blurb, "Dawn of Woman's Era" refers to the article "The Free Woman."

32. While highlighting the desire for alterity common to travel writings, Buzard argues that the tourist is looking for the "peculiar"; he asks, "who goes abroad to encounter what is near at hand?" (30-31). Urry similarly discusses the "difference" necessarily seen in the object of the tourist's gaze.

33. Describing a trip to Harvard, Shirley and Enfield in 1872, he writes, "Like the visit to Watervliet and Groveland, in 1857, it was one continued ecstasy. A feast of reason and flow of soul" (183). He also describes a trip to Watervliet as "an exstasy" (sic) but gives no explicit reason. One possible reason is that there were many young people to talk with about "interesting matters"; another is the day trip to a bridge, which he details in size and structure and explains that it was burned down and rebuilt.

34. With regard to Shaker narratives, Sasson notes that narratives of men tend to be concerned with externals, such as natural surroundings, and to be outwardly directed, while the writing of women tends to be more internally focused, personal and directed primarily to the self (Shaker Spiritual, xii). Mercadante explains that Shaker women are "more self-abnegating and servile" in descriptions of their inadequacies than Shaker men (136). See also Cheryl Glenn's "Author, Audience, and Autobiography."

CHAPTER VI

PRESERVING THE BODY IN POETRY:

THE CANTERBURY OBITUARY JOURNAL

Soon Mother the last of her first born will gather
Home, home to her mansion of peace;
Shall Zion then falter, the tender buds wither?
Or shall they still grow and increase?
Lavinia Clifford, ca. 1856

Lavinia Clifford raises these questions at the opening of her poetic memorial tribute to her spiritual "brother" James Daniels, who died at the Canterbury, New Hampshire, community in 1851. Clifford does not answer the questions directly within the poem, but the poem's preservation suggests a means Believers used to "grow and increase" rather than "falter" and "wither." The three-volume manuscript record known as the Canterbury Obituary Journal preserves Clifford's poem along with more than 400 other signed and unsigned entries, collectively embodying in written form the Canterbury Shaker community. The Journal's poems memorialize Shakers who died at Canterbury from the community's first "gathering" in 1792 up through 1977. In this chapter I discuss the Journal's composition as a writing, reading and funerary ritual codified in 1856. Its initial compositor, Emeline Kimball, and others who followed

her exemplify the Shakers' spiritual literacies as they work through progress and change within the sect at large as well as at Canterbury. The poems within the Journal and the poets who wrote them reflect the increasing sense of individualism, fragmentation and loss within Shaker communities after the mid-nineteenth century. The poets demonstrate the Shakers' paradoxical attitudes toward the physical body and its role in spiritual life, as they use images of physical bodies and the physicality of pen and paper to embody the spirits of deceased Shakers. And they demonstrate their awareness of the world's literacies and funerary literature as they mimic popular nineteenth century elegies. These volumes at once record what persists as a distinctive Shaker literacy even as they record the community's adoption of the world's literary practices. By binding these poems into volumes, the poets and composers of the Obituary Journal demonstrate the Shakers' strategy and ability to unify and strengthen individuals within the community through writing and reading rituals.

Emeline Kimball, the Journal's primary compositor, was more like Alonzo Hollister than Rebecca Jackson not only in that she lived within one Shaker community for most of her life but also in her spiritual literacy. Like Hollister she primarily manifested this literacy in and through inscribed texts. The reading and writing ritual she maintained through the Journal after mid-century served as a repository of

Shaker literacies at Canterbury much as Hollister's bibliographic work did for Shakerism at large; and it reflects the increasing individualism and imitation of "the world" in Shaker literary practices.

Kimball was born in 1810 in Canterbury and began to live with the Second Family as a child. She was "received into the Church" at the age of 17, served as caretaker of the little girls for a year or two in her early thirties, and then in 1846 began work in the Infirmary. When she began keeping the Journal in 1856 she was 45 or 46 years old and had lived as a Shaker for almost 30 years. She continued her efforts with the Journal (as she did the other tasks of the Infirmary), until near her death at age 65 in 1876. She appears to have been highly respected. Henry Blinn refers to her as "a most efficient nurse" in his reflective history of Canterbury (Vol. I, 256), but she was responsible for more than washing patients and changing bed linens.¹

Emeline Kimball's work with the Obituary Journal, refracted through the sect's theology and practice, challenges "the world's" patterns of sentimental verse and feminine nursing. The keeping of the Journal blended the scientific and the sentimental, or the reasonable and the emotional elements of spirituality. The poems within it also reflect the blurred communal and individual values and beliefs of Shakers in the face of personal and communal changes over a period of 120 years. The poems follow

Victorian America's elegies in purpose and format, yet veer from traditional patterns to embody Shaker theology and experience. At times, the poems ironically contradict overt Shaker teachings about personal relationships, individual identity and the immaterial afterlife in the spirit world. Like the gift drawings which Sally Promey has recently described as materializations of the immaterial spirit, these poems also simultaneously exhibit Shaker characteristics of the artist or poet as well as his or her unique signatures or style.² The writer verbally depicts the deceased as she or he views him or her. In some cases, the writer and the deceased were good friends; in others, they were acquaintances; in still others, especially those written by young poets about early Canterbury leaders, the writer knew the deceased only verbally and imaginatively, through orally transmitted stories about or documentary references to him or her.

For Shakers at Canterbury in 1856 and later, the poems mark not just the loss of an individual that the speaker confronts, but the shrinking of the church body as well.³ Thus in the readings of the poems which follow, I will point to Shaker revisions of nineteenth-century images of church and family, variations in the typical poetic movement of the elegy, ironic representations of bodies of the deceased, and shifts in poetic representations of those who died around and after mid-century.

The tradition Kimball initiated at Canterbury empowered her and the other male and female Shakers involved in that it gave them a means of personal expression. Ann Douglas has argued that nineteenth-century Protestant women and ministers gained power and "feminized" American culture by writing poems about death and biographical sketches.⁴ Similarly, the Journal reflects the increasing "feminization" of Shakerism after mid-century, a period during which historians Stephen Stein and Priscilla Brewer find a decrease in male membership and an increase of power for female leaders.⁵ In the sect's literary realm, the "feminization" includes an increase in the production of "feminine" genres (such as occasional verse) and an increase in the numbers of published and unpublished texts written by women. In contrast to much of the sentimental writing of non-Shaker women, the Obituary Journal relies upon intellect and contemporary "scientific" thought in conjunction with mysticism and emotion.

Kimball (and, by extension, other poets and composers) was empowered by the act of gathering the community of deceased Believers into the Obituary Journal in 1856. Mother Ann had gathered living Believers (and, she claimed, some spirits of the dead) to her in the late eighteenth century, but Kimball's believers are embodied in textual form. To explain the motivations of the Journal writers, the form and contents of the Shaker elegy, and the

ritual use of the Journal in the life of the community, I will present first the relationship between the Shaker elegy and the Shaker funeral. I will then turn to a discussion of the making of the Journal, and I will conclude with a discussion of the elegies as a significant genre of Shaker literacies.

Shaker Funerary Rituals

What shall we do with our bodies when we have done with our bodies?

Frederick Evans

Funeral Reform (1886)⁶

The Obituary Journal, like the other works considered in this study, mirrors its counterparts in the world. Historians of Victorian America have written about the apparent nineteenth-century obsession with death and dying manifest in the heavy, ornate, and extensive materialization of funerary rituals of the period: the appearance of suburban "rural" cemeteries serving cities, the enlargement of tombstones into monuments and sepulchers, the fashion industry's involvement in the development of mourning clothes and mores, and the fashioning of seemingly insignificant gewgaws such as bracelets of braided hair from

the deceased. Professional and amateur artists and photographers created portraits, and women of the period wrote and collected poems about death, organizing and preserving them in scrapbooks dedicated to the topic. When Mark Twain creates his maudlin Emmeline Grangerford in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, only coincidentally of the same name as the Shakers' Journal compositor, he parodies a well-established tradition.⁷

When Emeline Kimball began the Obituary Journal in 1856, she was following a tradition not only well-known in the world but also already established at Canterbury. The four-page Poetry and other writings at the time of Elder Job Bishop's Death, which "includes two poems, a copy of Bishop's obituary notice from the New Hampshire Patriot, and a description of communication between Bishop and Elder Elisha in the spirit world" (McKinstry, 232), is a bricolage of mortuary literature like the scrapbooks mid-nineteenth century women of "the world" compiled.⁶ It indicates that as early as Bishop's death in 1831 Shakers were writing poetry to memorialize the deceased who continued to live and communicate "in the spirit world" after leaving their bodily forms on the earth.

Even prior to 1831 the Shakers participated in funerary rituals and struggled with the theology supporting them as other Christian sects had and did. Barbara Rotundo describes Shaker funerary practices as following the patterns of other

Protestants in rural New England, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because the Shakers valued the spirit and did not believe in a physical resurrection, they believed elaborate gravesites and services were unnecessary. Ann Lee was buried in a grave with only a small marker in 1784. Yet records indicate the sect did hold services to commemorate their early leaders after their deaths and before their burials. After communities which owned their own land had been established, Shaker cemeteries with simple headstones soon followed. Ann Lee's body was exumed and reinterred in 1835, indicating shifting attitudes toward preservation of bodies of the deceased. In 1880 the Shakers followed the pattern of Victorian American cemeteries, though on a reduced scale, by replacing "small stones" with larger and more ornate "marble tablets" (37). Some communities used cast-iron "lollipop" markers, which were less expensive and more easily produced than marble markers (44). However, some Shakers at this time still resisted this material emphasis on the body after physical death. For example, the "progressive" Shaker Elder Frederick Evans asks "What shall we do with our bodies when we have done with our bodies?" He offers to the public the example of the Shakers' "rational funerals" to suggest that "it would be a great relief to the poor and middle classes to have Shaker funerals become as popular as Shaker brooms and garden-seeds" ("Rational Funerals," 130). Evans draws on

Dunlavy's theological description of the nature of resurrection in the Manifesto to explain Shaker mortuary ritual.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is the foundation of the honors paid to the body after the soul has left it. Spiritualism, which proves that the soul exists in spirit-life independent of the body, annihilates the doctrine of a physical resurrection. Shakers being Spiritualists repudiate the physical resurrection, and dispose of "remains" in accordance with the idea of "dust to dust;" hence their strictly Rational Funerals. (131)

In his first article on the subject ("Rational Funerals" is a summary reprint), Evans describes the spiritual (rather than physical) emphasis of the Shaker funeral service:

The Shakers do not, for a moment, think of being put into a grave, nor of putting their friends into the cold, cold ground. Once out of the body, they are gone whence no traveler ever returns into the gross elements of an earthly body. . . . As all present know the departed like a well-read book, there is place for neither detraction nor flattery. Time and again, disembodied spirits attend and officiate at their own obsequies, to the edification and comfort of the survivors--thus, settling anew the ever occurring question--"If a man die, shall he live again?"

This passage reveals fundamental Shaker spiritualism, but it also expresses the Shaker belief that spirits feel quite at home with their embodied counterparts in community. Such a belief validated a Shaker life, but it also reveals the tension in Shakerism between spiritualism and materialism. In spite of Evans's and Dunlavy's writings which, counter to many nineteenth-century mainstream Christian teachings of "golden streets" and "mansions above," denied a material

afterlife, the Shakers' attention to the body in the funerary ritual and in the memorial poems emerges nonetheless, an ironic manifestation of the inability to divorce spirit from body.

Two journals from Canterbury illustrate this ironic emphasis as they provide information about Shaker funerary rituals at the community during the period preceding the initiation of the Obituary Journal and surrounding Job Bishop's death. Francis Winkley's Journal (1784-1845) includes earlier examples of what become the poetic rituals of the 1856 Obituary Journal. Winkley's objective record of Shaker events resembles those kept by leaders at other communities, but he personalizes his communal journal with entries marking the deaths of Believers. He uses a verbal record to trace perfunctorily the facts of the death, and he highlights these entries with marginal signs--usually a sketch of a simple coffin, sometimes including a body. This marginalia permits readers to skim the record for Winkley's comments about the deaths and the deceased. Another element which distinguishes these entries from those in other communal journals is the memorial poetry Winkley records which mimics the verse of epitaphs. Thus, for the August 27, 1816 entry, marked in the margin by a black coffin, Winkley perfunctorially notes: "Elijah Wiles Came here and Bro,t word that Mother Hannah at Harvard Died on Sabath Evening the 18th Day of this Month." His more emotional and poetic

response follows immediately: "Oh! Good Mother Hannah, is in the Clod-/The riteous fill there day and go to God--" (CSV 25, 59). Less than a month later, for the September 12 entry, again marked by a marginal black coffin, Winkley writes:

Elder Emund Lougee Dies (10 Oc, Evening) of a
Comsumption being aged 57 years and Since the 25th
of May last

A fathfull Minister hes been
Hes gone where Natural eyes han,t seen
Hes gone to have his Bles,t reward
With Saint, and A,ngles in the Lord
(59)

Although these entries are a part of an official, communal record of the Society at Canterbury, the poems, in contrast to the statistics about death, appear to be Winkley's private responses.

John Whitcher's description of the events surrounding Job Bishop's death fifteen years later indicates that the composition of memorial lyrics was not unique to Winkley during the first half of the nineteenth century. The personal compositions were often shared in the ritual of Shaker mourning. Elder of the Church Family at Canterbury at the time of Job Bishop's death, John Whitcher describes in poetic detail in his "Journal" the death and the events following it. Whitcher writes that on the evening of December 5, 1831, "Father Job" having "just retired to rest and being greatly pressed for the want of breath, soon rose up again & expired within a few minutes" (151). He tells us that this event within the Church Family, "though long

anticipated, . . . was sudden & unexpected at the time"--some 15 minutes before 11 P.M. that chilly December evening. The journal implies that almost immediately the community responded to the loss. Messages were dispatched to the Ministry at Canterbury's sister community at Enfield, New Hampshire, some 65 miles away, so that "four of the elders vis. Elder Br. John Beck, Elder John Lyon, Achsa Huntington & Elder Sister Phebe Kidder" were able to arrive on the 7th, within 48 hours of the death, in time for the funeral service on the 8th.

If "Father" Job had not been in the Infirmary at the time of his death, his body would have been moved there soon after by his "brothers" in the faith. Thomas Corbett, the resident Shaker "physician," possibly accompanied by a physician from the world, determined the cause of death as "dropsy of the heart," perhaps hastened by Bishop's trip to Enfield the previous week, and by his "feeble" and aged body of 71 years. The deceased was "laid out" by his "sisters" who worked as "nurses" in the Infirmary. Those who had not heard the news of the death during the night would have learned of it the next morning. Canterbury's carpenters would have been instructed to build or have ready a simple pine or fir coffin for the burial.⁹ The announcement would have motivated Believers to take time within their labors to labor in love for Bishop and the community by composing prose addresses, personal testimonies and hymns to be shared

at the upcoming funeral service.

Whitcher's journal provides an overview of the service for Bishop on December 8 at 2 p.m. in the Shaker meeting house. His seven-paragraph record refers to the attendants and their bodily carriage, the addresses delivered, the hymns sung, the viewing of the corpse, and the burial. He indicates that "some of the world, among whom were two ministers" attended.¹⁰ He refers to those of the world twice later as "spectators," but he also indicates the participatory role in the service as he describes Elder John Lyon directs his address to all. However, the Believers participate more fully in the funerary ritual. His comment that the "brethren and sisters arose . . . and took their ranks" indicates that they took the positions usually used for the animated dances which gave the Shakers their name and drew spectators to their services. Instead of dancing they "arose with a cautious stiffness" to stand in their "ranks" for what appears to be the duration of the service. In the Shaker funeral service, linguistic action displaces bodily action in expressing emotion and bolstering spirituality.

Participants at Bishop's funeral heard five prose addresses, a combination of personal testimony about the deceased and exhortation to live likewise, from five elders. Micajah Tucker's own "tender feelings" and "sympathy," his attention to "the characteristic virtues" of the deceased,

and his attempt to elicit "a feeling sense" among his audience so that they might be prepared for "the accountability that awaited each," marks his address as similar to those in funeral services of "the world." In contrast to the "address," the "testimony" of Elder Benjamin Whitcher, Father Job's "immediate companion . . . in labor, for more than 20 years," reestablished, maintained and solidified Bishop's image within the community in a more spontaneous fashion. Elder Eliza Pote, who arrived from Alfred, Maine, after the meeting had been "closed," was allowed to make "some remarks concerning their former acquaintance & friendship," an event which suggests that almost anyone who wished to speak could have done so.¹² The meeting thus was a time of public but personal expression, emerging from years of intimate relationship and reflecting several private, verbal acts that had been prepared in the two days prior to the shared communal ritual.

Some of these synthesized personal and public verbal expressions are almost buried among Whitcher's references to the prose testimonies. Whitcher notes the singing of three hymns, one of which, "the funeral song," "closed the meeting."¹³ He also writes: "we sung a hymn composed for the occasion." The quick composition (here within three days) of a hymn for this specific occasion marks a unique element of the Shaker funeral service. Hymn writing--both lyrics and music--was an important ritual for Shakers throughout the

nineteenth century, allowing personal expression through the writing and communal unification through the voicing of shared images.¹³ The funeral hymn created by one Believer to memorialize another Believer, not unlike the memorial poem, exemplifies the solidarity of community that was strengthened through the mourning ritual.

The memorial poems mimic the hymns in their rhythm, their imagery, their authorship, and their use in worship. Rosemary Gooden, who has analyzed Shaker poetry memorializing women, asserts the unifying relationship between inscription of texts--the private, personal expression of writing--and their oral, communal performative readings during memorial services.¹⁴ As she notes, hymns and elegies had been a common part of funerals in rural America since Puritans circulated published elegies at burials in the late seventeenth century. The poetic funerary rituals of the world often included favorite hymns or poems selected by the deceased prior to death and, sometimes, the composition of a hymn for the occasion. Thus, the Shaker ritual is not unlike its counterparts in the world in its use of testimonies, addresses, hymns and poetry. In what ways is it unique? How does it contribute to our understanding of Shaker literacies?

One difference between Shaker memorials in verse and those in the world emerges from the relationships between poets and deceased Shakers. Even in the services "of the

world" where a friend or family member composed a poem, the relationship between deceased and what Peter Sacks calls the "cast of mourners" differed significantly.¹⁵

William Dean Howells's description of the Shaker ritual in an Atlantic Monthly article of 1876, which affirms the general funeral format Witcher describes, captures the difference. Based on his visit to the Shirley, Massachusetts, community, he describes the atmosphere of a funeral service for "Sister Julia":

There was no prayer, or any set discourse, but the elders and eldresses, and many others spoke in commemoration of Sister Julia's dutiful and faithful life, and in expression of their love for her. Their voices trembled, and the younger sisters, who had been most about her at the last, freely gave way to their tears. Each one who spoke had some special tribute to pay to her faithfulness, or some tender little testimony to bear to her goodness of heart; several read verses which they had written in memory of her, and amongst these was the leader of the Church Family, who conducted the ceremonies. What was most observable in it all was the familiar character; it was as if these were brothers and sisters by the ties of nature, who spoke of the dead. (702)

Howells's depiction emphasizes, perhaps more than Witcher's account of the 1831 service, the spontaneity and the numerous voices which reverberate through the meeting house.¹⁶ Yet the unique element he highlights is "the familiar character"; he underscores the Shakers' revision of the biological family central to Victorian American culture: "it was as if these were brothers and sisters by the ties of nature, who spoke of the dead."

In addition to the hymns, memorial poems and

testimonies which contribute to and reflect the Shakers' differences from the world, the ritual viewing of the corpse at the service's close reflects the paradoxical role the body plays in Shaker spirituality and literacy. The language of Whitcher's journal, for example, emphasizes his attempt to let go of the deceased person's body: before "both believers & spectators" was "the corpse," which he refers to also as "a personage." Whitcher adds parenthetically "(though lifeless)" as if to remind himself that Bishop's spirit was no longer housed there. Although Evans refers boldly to "the never-again-to-be-animated form and features" of deceased Shakers ("Shaker Burials," 60), Whitcher describes Bishop's corpse as "a personage . . . who seemed to exhibit a pleasant and expressive appearance of animation"--an indication that the outward signs of the body may be read as representations of the inner "animation," or spirit.

After the service and the viewing of Bishop's body, the closed coffin was carried up the hill to the Shaker cemetery, a distorted imitation of "the world's" family plots, which signified social bonds and affirmed the continuity of these kinship bonds in the resurrection. But for the Shakers, they serve to emphasize the already resurrected condition of the living Shaker family.

The body and coffin were interred in a previously designated and charted plot. A rigorously and meticulously

upheld responsibility of the nurses and the teachers, the cemetery charting and recording attests, like the headstones and the coffins, to the importance of bodies of the deceased to those still living physically.¹⁷ The Obituary Journal, also charted and plotted by the community's nurses and teachers, is an inscribed and bound graveyard; its poems serve as covert epitaphs, shifting the mourning and preservation away from the site of the physical body in the cemetery to the verbal and less material preservation of the spirit. It extends the funerary ritual from the bodily rites and performances of the meeting house and the cemetery to the private sites where the Journal was composed, shelved and retrieved over the years. Reading the poems at any time invoked the spirits of the deceased and continued the communication between the community of mourners and the spirit world.

The Canterbury Context

The compilation of the Obituary Journal more than sixty years after the first Canterbury Shakers began to leave their physical bodies behind demanded quite a task in 1856. Several Shakers worked along with Emeline Kimball to collect "factual" information from written and unwritten Canterbury history and to compose poems dedicated to Shakers who died prior to 1857. A comparison of the dates of the deceased who are memorialized with the dates of the physical

and spiritual births of the poets reveals the immense task Kimball and her colleagues set before themselves in 1856. The third poem within the Journal (the first signed piece), for example, memorializes a Shaker who died in 1784. The poet, Zillah Randlett, who did not come to Canterbury until 1808, would not have known the deceased other than through orally conveyed images, inscribed texts, or visions. Another example is the poem written by John Kaime and devoted to "Father" Job Bishop. Bishop died in 1831, and Kaime came to Canterbury in 1841. A few exceptions to this pattern demonstrate that poems written earlier and preserved apart from the official volume were merely transcribed around 1856. For example, records indicate that Lydia Kaime left the community in 1854, two years prior to Kimball's initiation of the Journal. However, the Journal preserves poems she wrote memorializing those who died in 1846, 1847, and 1848. Kaime's poems were respected and considered worthy of inclusion in this verbal gathering of community, although the author herself had apostatized.

The names of poets reflect a primarily female body of writers.¹⁶ Among the five Shaker brothers whose poems are included, James V. Chase, a teacher, was the major contributor. His poems mark themselves as different from those by women in that he only memorialized Shaker brothers, whereas the female writers portrayed with pen both male and female Believers. The other male writers, with the exception

of Henry Campbell (also a teacher, who contributed a handful of poems), James Kaime, John Kaime, and Abraham Perkins, contributed one each. These men held leadership positions, indicative of the extra time available to them for writing, and the higher level of textual literacy among those in these roles. Several of the female poets served in the Infirmary, and a large number of them were also teachers. It is not clear whether their work as teachers influenced their poetic abilities, or that their verbal prolixity, as demonstrated in the poems, contributed to their selection by the Ministry to serve in the Shaker school. At any rate, the survey of the Journal's poets indicates two realms within the village at Canterbury where "book knowledge" predominated--the Infirmary and the Schoolhouse. These two realms, the Journal suggests, were ruled quantitatively by women, reflecting the "feminization" of Shakerism and the role of female Believers in the sect's literary endeavors during this period.

This survey of the poets represented in the Obituary Journal and their respective gendered realms provides part of the framework in which we may consider Kimball's work. None of the poems bears her name. Several unsigned works within the volume could be attributed to her, but since she inscribed her name so clearly on the title pages, it seems unlikely that she would have hesitated (because of modesty, for example) to sign her name to a particular leaf. Two

poems bear the initials E. H. K. and E. K., respectively; however, because Kimball's middle initial was L., at most one of these could be attributed to her. Kimball's role, then, was primarily that of transcriber and compositor.

More compositor and transcriptionist than a poet, Kimball performed writing and reading acts that were more mechanical than mental and more ritualized than rationalized. Her work in the Infirmary as both "nurse" and "physician," as well as her work keeping the Obituary Journal, reflect Shakerism's somewhat fluid gender boundaries and support both rational and emotional reading and writing acts. Perhaps performed "after hours" in the Infirmary or between caring for patients, the Journal fulfilled both an emotional and a scientific need in accordance with the Shaker unity of the two in spirituality and literacy. Her recordkeeping, one example of the Shaker insistence on order, provided her a means of ordering and "composing" herself and her community as she spent her life among the dying.¹⁹

The union of science and sentiment becomes apparent on the Journal's title pages as well as in its structure. Each volume contains an index, organized alphabetically by the last name of the deceased, and entries are arranged chronologically by death date. The orderly format not only reveals the acceptance and appreciation of booklearning and recordkeeping by the Shakers at this point in their history;

it also balances the emotional or sentimental element of each entry--the poetry.

The title pages indicate the same balance. Volume I opens:

An Obituary Journal of Members connected with this society since the first opening of the gospel AD 1782; ten years before the gathering of the Church. Embracing the date of birth: the time of death, the age at that time; the disease; also a passing notice to each one.

The scientific import of the Journal lies in the fascination with the cause of death and in the statistical details which the nurses provided. The phrase "a passing notice to each one," becomes on the Volume II title page, "a memorial tribute to each one." This shift marks the ongoing emotional and spiritual bonds between the deceased and the community. The survivors communicate through emotional verse with the deceased in the spirit world, but the Shakers argue in their doctrinal works that this communication with spirits is rational and scientific.²⁰

This community, concerned with spirituality and science, is the one in which Emeline Kimball initiates the Obituary Journal in 1856, a key year for her as well as for the community as a whole. The year's recorded events reflect the aftermath of the revival years. Some Shaker historians imply that by 1856 the Era of Manifestations had passed; however, limits of the Era are not so easily delineated, and documents from Canterbury reveal that the interests and concerns of the revival had not "dissipated" completely.²¹

Correspondence of the period, for example, refers to Canterbury as "Holy Ground," the community's spiritual name adopted during the Era.

The turmoil at Canterbury during this period included continued tensions between those keenly interested in "spiritualist" activities and those concerned with maintaining Shaker traditions and the teachings of Mother Ann, as they had been known apart from and prior to recent revelations by "spiritualists." Several changes in communal leadership during this period reflect these conflicts.²² The leadership of Henry Blinn and Dorothy Durgin, who first took positions as Elder and Eldress in 1852, contributed to significant changes. According to Nicholas Briggs, they ushered in an increasing emphasis upon literacy and science:

Both of them [Blinn and Durgin] had been teachers of the school, were highly intelligent and progressive in their ideas, and they stimulated reading and study, and we now began to have The Scientific American, Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated. (59)

In addition to changes in leadership, turmoil of the period included numerous illnesses and deaths of older Believers. Phrases in the letters of the period indicate the concern over the loss of the last generation that had known "Mother" Ann and the first elders. Of the few known extant letters written by the Canterbury ministry during 1856, one dated March 17th to the ministry at "Lovely Vineyard" (Harvard) lists specifically the illnesses and debilities of four "brothers" and one "sister" before concluding:

others of the aged still keep about but the lamp of life in them evidently grows dim and will in all probability, before many years, be extinguished and those of us, of a later call be kept to keep the gospel and administer it to the rising generation as it has been administered to us or fall short of the blessing promised to the faithful.

Another example of this concern appears in a January 1858 four-page letter to the "Beloved Elders" at "Chosen Vale" (Enfield), which includes a two-page extract from a Dec. 29, 1857 letter from "Holy Mount" (New Lebanon). The letter deals with the death of "Mother" Asenath, who "has fled the shores of time, and gone to that far happy land to rest with her dearest companions, where peace and quietness reign." Not unlike memorial pieces Shakers published for "the world" and themselves later in the century, the letter goes on to give details of her illness, death, and funeral services, and of her life as "a Mother in Israel indeed." But the letter's closing editorial comments, directed only to Believers, overtly states the sense of loss within the communities:

So one after another of our parents drop away; not long, before it will be said, all of those saints that ever saw Mother Ann and the first Elders in the body will be gone, but we hope and earnestly pray that a large portion of their power and unflinching courage may rest upon us, and enable us to keep the way of God in its purity.²³

The Canterbury Church Record similarly records spiritual hardship as a result of physical disabilities in the year-end review of 1856:

The Year closes with seemingly unusual cares and

anxieties on account of the great amount of sickness prevailing in the church, consisting of measles, of which we have had over 30 cases, with heavy influenza's and cough, besides two cases of insanity and the increasing helplessness of several of the aged. (258-9)

In addition to these health problems, the Record also indicates that in 1856 the community had participated in several "missionary trips." Most had been to Providence, Rhode Island, and had succeeded in bringing back "converts" or seekers to the North Family, Canterbury's novitiate clan. The year-end review summarizes: "We have had some addition to the Society the past year. Several families of the Spiritualists gathered from Providence, bringing their own and other children with them" (258-9). Two references to the Canterbury-Providence pipeline and the "Spiritualists" appear among the notes recorded prior to the review. On October 26, a Sunday, "The church marched to the North Family door yard to hold a meeting with both families and some of the Providence spiritualists" (256). The November 6th entry records: "Sally Ceeley and Eldress Betsey Hastings return from Providence, accompanied by one man two women and six children. Spiritualists" (257). Described as "spiritualists"--a term which suggests their affinity for Shakerism--the seekers did not all remain and may have even contributed to communal conflict.²⁴

Information on the Providence "spiritualists" and the illnesses--the only two areas mentioned in the year's official review--indicate that the Canterbury Shakers

struggled in 1856 to maintain their spiritual fervor amidst communal changes, including losses of loved ones. Who would better know the struggles with illnesses than one such as Emeline Kimball who worked in the Infirmary? Certainly Kimball was not the only Shaker to maintain such meticulous records as the Obituary Journal, but during this period she would want to temper the excessive and destabilizing changes with the orderly and explanatory record of Shaker losses.²⁵ The Obituary Journal is the record initiated by a physical analyst and caregiver who has lost the mentor--professional and spiritual--she has worked with for several years.

Among the illnesses listed in one of the 1856 letters is that of "Brother" Thomas Corbett, primary physician and mentor to Emeline Kimball. According to the letter,

Corbett experienced a paralytic shock a few weeks since which has greatly impaired his mental and physical capacity. He is unable to perform any labor or even to dress himself without help, but can walk about some, yet requires constant attention.

Kimball's relationship to Corbett and her capacities and abilities as a writer emerge in a signed piece following the close of a letter from Corbett to "Brother" Cha[u]ncy at "Wisdom's Valley" (Watervliet). This document, one of the only records of Kimball's verbal work, other than the Obituary Journal, suggests that she was esteemed enough by leaders to have travelled away from Canterbury and was asked to write for Corbett during his illness. She begins:

As I copied the above for brother Thomas, and

seeing a blank left, I feel very earnest, (though I would not be burdensome,) to fill it up, so great is my love, attachment and gratitude for all in Wisdom's Valley, that I am pleased with every opportunity to speak with them.

Kimball's desire to fill the page may be ascribed to Shaker thrift (but using paper frugally was common in "the world" as well); it also marks her desire to write, which she fulfills in the act of keeping the Obituary Journal. Her use of the humility topos ("though I would not be burdensome") may be attributed to Shaker spirituality or to nineteenth-century "True Womanhood," but the mere writing is a self-assertive act necessary to express her love and gratitude for Believers in another community. In this instance she reaches out to "Brother David and the beloved physicianses (sic) sisters" to whom she sends her "love and blessing," an act which compensates for the dislocation she feels among the losses at Canterbury.

Kimball's extant letter and the Obituary Journal blur the boundaries between public and private; they are both communal and personal expressions. Especially in the Obituary Journal, we see glimpses of a Shaker "self" deeply embedded in the work of maintaining the communal identity of Shakerism during a period of change. Kimball's writing act grounded her position during years of transition and change at Canterbury. Her stance was one of ambivalence, of wanting to be scientific as well as spiritual, of being part of both male and female realms, and of being a part of the beauties

of the past, the demands of the present, and the dreams of and hopes for the future. Yet the mechanical copying--rather than the creative, expressive composition of memorial verses--grounded her physically and enabled her to soar spiritually.

The Poetry: The Elegiac Tradition and the Shaker Context

William Dean Howells wrote in an Atlantic Monthly article of 1876 that Shaker poetry is "hardly up to our literary standard," using "our" to refer to his audience of elite readers. As Howells's comment suggest, the Shaker poetry of the Obituary Journal differs little from popular poetry of the period. Its sentimental, hackneyed images and regular rhyme and rhythm may distract contemporary readers from the emotional impact of the imagery. For example, Lavinia Clifford's poem to James Daniels, whose opening serves as the epigraph to this chapter, follows the style of many poems written near mid-century about those who died in the same period. The poem reveals that Clifford sees Daniels, who died in 1851, as a unique Shaker with individual talents and personality, but she also sees him as a typical member of the Shaker family. In traditional elegiac fashion, the poem opens with questions, and the poet achieves consolation through direct address to the deceased in the final lines, sending him away to the spirit world. Clifford begins with general questions (perhaps instigated

by the loss of James Daniels) about the community and the future of Shakerism. With the direct address, "Such art thou, Dear Brother" (l. 9), she turns from the general to the specific, creating a personalized portrait with details such as Daniels's office ("Deacon") and his role as a builder ("To every building thou didst lay the foundation/ And framed them in order complete").

The direct address of the poem's close ("enjoy sweet communion/ With those who have gone on before") not only follows the convention of invoking the spirit of the deceased from the grave, but it also reinforces Shaker teachings about the afterlife. Communication between those of the spirit world and those still entrapped on earth in their physical bodies was not merely an imagined event of the poetic realm--a poetic convention--but a daily reality. The poem also includes the expressions of emotion that appear increasingly in the poems of the Journal as the dates of death approach the time of the poetic response. The poet has a consciousness of the withdrawal of the founding members who leave behind not only their own bodies, but also the body of the community--the infrastructure of the physical community they have helped to build (literally, in the case of Daniels) and support. The questions Clifford raises are very real ones about the ability of the physical community to live on earth if founding souls such as Daniels are gone. Rosemary Gooden argues that Shaker memorial

poems,

songs and tributes . . . gave Believers the opportunity to express, personally as well as communally, gospel affection for the deceased Believer while affirming union with one another and commitment to the Shaker Way through renewal of the Shaker covenant. The ritual of covenant renewal was necessary for maintaining or restoring gospel union among Believers" (133).²⁶

Gooden's analysis focuses primarily on published memorials, which tended to honor leaders and serve as evangelical tools to the outside world. The introductions to the published pieces overtly state that they hope to win converts by means of the exemplary lives of the deceased.²⁷ Gooden writes that the memorial poetry "reveal[s] something about the quality of Shaker spirituality during the late-nineteenth century and, also, the relationships between the ministry and the common members" (134). The unpublished poetry recorded in the Obituary Journal, I will demonstrate, even more than published pieces, reflects this spirituality and these relationships. Moreover, this genre embodies shifts in Shaker literacies.

Like Gooden's analysis of published Shaker memorial poetry, my reading of the Canterbury manuscript verses as rituals providing consolation and unity draws from studies of the elegiac tradition. Peter Sacks explains that elegies since the Classical period have tended to maintain a ceremonial (i.e., ritualized) structure which emphasizes performance and "draws attention to the mourners or cast of mourners," otherwise known as the "speaker" and the

"audience." Elegies demonstrate a movement on the part of the speaker from confusion, denial and grief to acceptance and consolation. In Christian elegies, the consolation often is marked by a vision of the deceased in heaven. The performative element and movement emerge from pre-Christian "rituals associated with the death and rebirth of vegetation gods," which mimic the natural cycle of death and rebirth. The speaker's descent into a figurative or literal dark and mysterious underworld is followed by an ascent from the crisis into light and revelation. The speaker moves from submission to natural forces to psychological or spiritual mastery of them. The mourning speaker achieves mastery through several poetic tropes, such as questions, repetition, and manipulation of images of vegetation, water, dark and light. Questions, for example, may express the speaker's ignorance or protest and, most importantly, channel the emotional energy of grief or rage outwardly. If directed away from the speaker or the deity to a community, they signify an attempted resocialization from the isolation often brought about by mourning. Repetition of a phrase, a name, or even a sound contributes to a poem's ritual effect, providing continuity and stability to counter the discontinuities and instabilities confronted in death. The repetition (or even the singular calling) of a name invokes the spirit of the deceased from the grave. Through stating the name and, on the larger level, voicing the poem, the

speaker asserts his or her power and ability to fill the void left by death with a materialization in verbal form. The elegy becomes a sign of the speaker's ability to continue life. In sum, through the poetic action of the speaker's voice, substituting language for the material body, the poem achieves its consolation. The poem re-presents the deceased immortalized in an idealized state which provides a point of inspiration and imitation to the living individual and the larger community of mourners who are unified and strengthened through this shared, idealized image.²⁸

Recent analyses of elegies written by women and other "marginalized" individuals have argued that these poets have "deconstructed" and revised the genre. According to Celeste Schenck and Margot Backus, for example, these elegies resist consolation through the "masculine" mode of transcendence, or an illusory attempt to rise above material reality. The speakers of these elegies deconstruct the patriarchal tradition and resist resolution of grief by refusing to relinquish the bodies of the deceased through displacement of the body into "heaven" by means of poetic language. Quite often these poems make overt political statements about the patriarchal forces which govern society, and the speakers fill the void created by the loss with openly and often hostilely unresolved anger.

In this critical tradition an elegy is either

"patriarchal" and "traditional" or "feminist" and "innovative"; it either reinforces the patriarchal mode of the genre, or it deconstructs it. This "overly rigid distinction," according to Jahan Ramazani, "obscures the relational work in men's elegies and the dissociative impulse in women's" (1143). He requests, through his reading of the "harsh ambivalence" of Sylvia Plath's elegies, both a resistance to essentializing two oppositional categories in the reading of any elegies and an embracing of an "enlargement of the elegy's affective parameters beyond the traditional pathos, love, reverence, and competitive camaraderie" (1143). My reading of Shaker elegies finds such ambivalence in their discourse of death, which echoes the unity of masculine and feminine categories in their theology and their literacies.

Shaker elegies of the Obituary Journal adhere to the patriarchal patterns in many ways; however, they also veer from the patterns. Rather than categorizing these elegies as "masculine" or "feminine," I will demonstrate ways in which they echo and revise patterns common to "the world" in the mid-nineteenth century. The Journal also presents chronological changes in the style of Shaker elegies. The elegies in the Journal dedicated to those who died a decade or so before Kimball initiated the project adhere to the patriarchal pattern of visualizing the deceased in a transcendent realm. However, they tend to lack expressions

of anger, questions and grief. These absences may be attributed to the belief in the continued life of the deceased in the spirit world. The Shaker understanding of the interaction between those living in the spirit world and those living physically on earth means that the deceased, who has simply been "translated" to join the "gospel family" there, continues to be present in the Canterbury community. Thus, grief, when it exists, does not last long.

The lack of emotional expression of anger or grief also results from the Shakers' deconstruction of the mainstream notions of family. For the Shakers the "community of mourners" provides a strong support system for the speaker, who is never so isolated in grief as her mainstream counterpart might be. The speaker quite often does not distinguish herself from the larger Shaker body. Thus, these Shaker elegies tend to emphasize collectivity rather than isolation.

The elegies of the Obituary Journal sometimes speak specifically of the deceased; they defy the anonymity and uniformity we often think inherent in Shakerism. And they occasionally voice unanswered questions, frustration and grief. These features appear increasingly in poems dedicated to those who died after 1856. The supportive Shaker family at Canterbury had begun to feel the effects of multiple losses by mid-century, when the Journal was initiated. The poets had lived, worked and worshipped with the deceased

rather than merely imagined them when hearing orally-conveyed remembrances or encountering them in the spirit world. Thus the poems become more specific in their depictions of the deceased and the speakers, and they also reflect more intimate relationships between the two. Quite often these poems express more grief as a result of experiencing the physical loss first-hand. These later poems suggest the value not only of particular poems for living Shakers, but also the significance of the multiple pieces collected and eventually bound in the Journal. In my readings of several of these poems, I will continue to underline Shaker discourse, but I will also note how the materializations in them indicate unique elements of the deceased and of the poet. These later poems exhibit more deconstructive tendencies and reflect the increasing feminization of the community. That is, in traditional or patriarchal elegies the idealized institution (i.e. the church or the state) provides support to the speaker as he reimmerses himself in it; in the elegies of marginalized figures, uncertainties about the support community cause the speaker to cling to the deceased. In these later elegies the Shakers who write them struggle not only with personal loss but also with uncertainties about their idealized institution.

A brief consideration of the implied audience of Lydia Sigourney's The Weeping Willow (1847), published just nine

years prior to the initiation of the Obituary Journal, provides a backdrop against which the dramatizations of Shaker memorial poems play before their community. In particular, the rather generic speakers, memorialized, and support communities of Sigourney's poems highlight the specificity of the Shaker poems' speakers and deceased which appear increasingly as the Journal progresses.

Sigourney's volume enjoyed immense popularity as a gift book, designed especially to be given to the grieving. Her preface to the collection notes that mourning is best done in solitude and silence, that sometimes "the voice of even the dearest, may inadvertently touch some chord, whose vibration is anguish" (v). In contrast, "the sigh of sacred poesy steals without startling" into the solitude, eventually wooing the mourner back into the light. Sigourney emphasizes the solitude and privacy in which these poems are to be read; they console by allowing readers to read themselves and their situations into the generic imagery of the poetry.

In The Weeping Willow, Sigourney generally erases the specificity associated with the particular deceased loved one, perhaps subconsciously dissolving the deceased into the idealized image as a part of her mourning process, or perhaps consciously considering how to make the poems most readable for (most easily consumed by) her imagined audience of mourners. Although the poems may appear generic

or disconnected from the deaths of particular individuals, Sigourney notes at several places within the volume the specific situation which gave rise to the poem. Below the title "Thou Art Not Him," for example, she explains the poem was "written on seeing in the garden of a departed friend, a stranger who at a distance, resembled him" (83); "Death of the Original Proprietor of Mount Auburn" was "derived from a description of Miss C. F. Orne, herself a descendant of this pious man" (80); and of "The Fated Barque," she notes, "The wreck of the steamer Swallow, on the Husdon river, Monday night, April 7th, 1845."

The poems titles help to illustrate the use of both specific and idealized, or real and ideal images in "the world's" elegies: "The Son of the Widow," "Student at College," "Death of a Young Maiden," "Our Oldest Man," "Death of a Lady," "The Young Missionary," "The Pastor," "The Only Daughter," "The Good Son," "Death of an Infant," and "Sister at the Brother's Grave." The indefinite articles "a" and "an" are generic, but the numerous uses of the definite article "the" indicates specificity. The implied distinction, however, doesn't appear in the poems. In poems with definite articles and those with indefinite one in the titles, there are no names and few other references to a specific deceased individual.

As these titles suggest, in these poems the speakers address two generic communities of mourners: the biological

family and the church family. The poems "The Young Missionary" and "The Pastor," for example, invoke no specific sect's creed--the missionary and the pastor could belong to almost any nineteenth-century Christian group. In keeping with Sacks' theory of the speaker's isolation and resocialization, in Sigourney's poetry the speaking subject--the "self" of an increasingly industrialized, specialized, isolating society--through the use of first person plural pronouns "we," "our," and "us" becomes a part of a social whole constructed and stabilized through the unifying images of idealized home and an idealized church. Perhaps originally written to mark the loss of specific individuals, Sigourney's poems address a generic larger audience--a broad "church" family and a typical "biological" family.

Where Sigourney's introductory remarks emphasize the comfort of reading the poetry in solitude, the Shakers perform the poem in a shared, public sphere. The right to speak and to mourn moves from the biological or the generic church family to a specific Shaker one which is physically present. Family and church for the Shakers are different from those in the world. Given these primary differences, the elegiac images of family, heaven, eternal life, and the like, mean something different to Shakers. Shakers hearing memorial poetry at funerals interpret the images differently than their mainstream counterparts would read similar images

in Sigourney's poetry.

In spite of differences in speakers and audiences and the ways in which they write and read images, the Shakers' poems are like those of Sigourney and mainstream Protestants. They unify the community through the presentation of idealized images, and they broaden the world in which the mourner lives to reincorporate her or him. However, in the poems appearing earlier in the Journal, the speaker refers to herself as part of the collective "we," buoyed by a stable, supportive community. As the Journal proceeds, the generic Shaker elements recede as specific characteristics of the deceased emerge. Likewise, the specific support community which Canterbury should provide begins to be replaced by generic images of the world.

The poem to Hannah Goodrich, who died in 1820, inscribes ideal and typical Shaker characteristics more than images specific to the deceased. The poet Zilpha Randlet could not have known the living Goodrich, but she knew the ideal characteristics of Shaker motherhood and drew from them as she wrote the memorial to "Mother" Hannah. Though the poem opens and closes traditionally with an invocation of the muses and a call to the community of mourners to imitate the deceased, the poem's language and imagery exhibit distinctly Shaker discourse. Ann Lee appears as early as l. 9 in a reference to Goodrich's early "call": "When young, by Mother's gospel called,/ to leave a vain and

wicked world,/ She freely did obey the call,/ and cheerfully resigned her all" (l. 9-12). Randlet explicitly designates Goodrich a "parent" and "Mother" to "her faithful [Shaker] children": "A parent kind, a Mother dear,/ to all her faithful children here./ The aching heart would often soothe/ with her parental tender love" ll. 17-20). In the lines which follow Randlet delineates Goodrich's "holy life and precepts," in adherence to the patterns established by Lee. In addition to becoming a spiritual parent, she "resigned her all," "Her countenance was mild, serene,/ altho' her word was sharp and keen/ To separate the soul from sin,/ that Christ might reign and dwell within" (ll. 25-28). Goodrich became a "minister" whose "soul was filled with truth divine" (l. 21); and, like Lee, both "her countenance" and "her word" influenced those around her, so that she was able to have others "follow [her] along the way" (l. 32).

In addition to creating an image of the deceased similar to that of the shared, communal imagery of Lee, the poem should create an image of the mourning speaker as well. However, other than her name at the poem's close, Randlet is practically absent from the poem. Her voice is dissolved in the collective voice of the Shaker community she knows so well. In the first line, for example, as she invokes the "heavenly muses" to "lend" their "aid," she displaces the expected object and preposition of the aid

from herself ("to me") to the deceased. She writes: "Ye heavenly muses, your aid here lend/ in honor of a worthy Friend" (ll. 1-2). And then, near the poem's close, Randlet chooses the plural "we" to indicate the community which will review collectively Goodrich's "life and precepts": "Her bright example we review,/ her holy life and precepts too;" (ll. 29-30). The elegiac speaker's turn to community or a collective voice is a traditional sign of consolation or emergence from isolation, yet in Randlet's poem the mourning "I" never appears. Other than the ineffability topos (often associated with expressions of mourning) expressed in ll. 5-6--"No pen of mortals e'er can paint/ the worth of this beloved Saint,"--the poem lacks any other verbal signs of mourning. Two reasons explain the lack of grief: first, the Shakers have no doubt, as the final lines indicate, that Goodrich is in "that abode . . . Where holy Saints and Angels sing." Second, Randlet wrote the poem 36 years after Goodrich's death. She represents only an ideal being; Randlet's attachment to the deceased is a distanced one.

Other elegies within the Journal written for those who died several years prior to 1856 similarly demonstrate a lack of anger, doubt, or grief. For example, B. J. Kaime's poem to Emma Leavitt, who died in 1822, opens with confident imperatives: "Open heaven's portals wide/ To receive a soul well tried/ Let her sit by Mother's side" (ll. 1-3). One might argue that these imperatives reflect the speaker's

need to speak through and over uncertainty or confusion. On the contrary, the poem demonstrates a clear inversion of the elegiac convention of movement from questions to answers and an imperative envoi. Another inversion occurs in references to the deceased's body, which usually appear near an elegy's opening. Here they appear in the final stanza: "Tho' the body see decay/ Death be written on thy clay;" and "As we bear the dust along,/ To its bed so lowly" (ll. 17-18;23-24). But in this final stanza the poet also refers openly to "grief" and "mourn[ing]," only to reason that these emotional expressions should not exist because, as the first two stanzas illustrate, Emma Leavitt lives eternally in Heaven.

A similar inversion appears in the second stanza where "natural" images of vegetation do not indicate loss (falling leaves, a blown rose, a broken branch) but appear as signs of the deceased's and the mourner's power and control. This stanza also interestingly intertwines elegiac conventions and Shaker imagery:

Taste my Sister sweet repose,
Such as in her garden grows;
Pluck the lily and the rose
Of delightful flavor.

O'er the hills of gladness skip,
From the fount of goodness sip;
Eat that fruit which never yet,
Had an earthly savor.

Here the imperatives, addressed directly to the deceased, reinforce the traditional pattern of the speaker gaining and

revealing mastery of the loss by becoming the actor rather than one acted upon. In addition to the imagery of "Gospel family" ("my Sister sweet"), the imagery reflects Shaker interests at mid-century, when Believers gave each other imagined or "spiritual" gifts of fruit and flowers and hiked "o'er the hills" of their communities to the "holy founts" where they had outdoor worship. In the poem the speaker has Leavitt continuing the spiritual activities she and other Believers participated in on earth, even though in the final stanza she states that "dissolution [of the clay] paves the way/ To a world of glory" (ll. 19-20).

Even poems written to those who died unexpectedly in accidents during the years prior to mid-century reflect the Shakers' assurance of eternal life; such providential events do not raise doubts as they might in the world. B. J. Kaime's poem memorializing John Rowel, who died in 1822 after being thrown from a wagon, follows the traditional pattern of movement. It begins with specific incidents about the deceased, using the natural image of a bird and its unnatural death brought about by an unheeded fowler, and it closes with the transcendent image of the deceased in heaven, sitting down to "Mother's feast." As in the other poems, the speaker, who refers to herself only with the collective "our," appears to be buoyed both by Shaker theology of a resurrection life which begins with crucifixion of the flesh on earth and by a supportive,

church family.

The poems dedicated to those who died closer to mid-century begin to break some of these conventions by expressing more emotions and by giving more specific references to the deceased's life. This shift reflects the poet's more personally felt sense of loss and the increasing individualism in Shaker literature at that time. The poem memorializing Deacon Francis Winkley, who died in 1847, breaks the typical patterns. In addition to informing us of Winkley's activities in both "the world" and the Shaker community, it reveals information about the particular poet, Asenath Stickney.

Stickney employs the rhetorical device occupatio by implicitly comparing Winkley to three secular successes. She states that he should not be likened to Webster, Calhoun and Clay: "To whom shall we like this venerable one/ To Webster the Orator to Clay or Calhoun? Not to these, not to these with their high sounding name" (ll. 1-3). Of course, by being a Shaker and not "of the world," Winkley was worthy of more honor than these three, especially since by 1856 their reputations were somewhat tarnished. These men were all Winkley's contemporaries and all involved in political affairs. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, both orators and statesmen, died in 1852; and Calhoun, lawyer and vice president of the United States under Andrew Jackson, died in 1850. As a Shaker deacon, Winkley was in a position which

allowed and demanded interaction with "the world." From Winkley's journal we learn that he, too, was involved in politics and public speaking, as he testified in court. This interaction, filled out by details of Winkley's journal, also appears in the poem's last two stanzas.²⁹ Stickney depicts Winkley in thinking and speaking in court: "In the Courthouse of justice where worldly men ruled/ Thy mind was consulted, & thy word oft controlled," (ll. 15-16).

Thus, Stickney selects appropriate images to delineate characteristics unique to Winkley; additionally she uses discourse characteristic of the Shakers at mid-century. These images abound in the second, third, and fourth stanzas, where she distinguishes Winkley from Webster, Calhoun and Clay. The phrases "Zion," "United Body," "worthy parent," "the fruit of thy labors" and the image of the tree reflect Shaker discourse. "A fountain of love" draws from the Shaker image prevalent during the "Era of Manifestations" when trips to holy sites with their imaginary fountains were frequent rites of worship. (At Canterbury, the site was known as Pleasant Grove). And in the poems' final stanza, Stickney displaces the customs and laws of Webster, Calhoun, Clay and the secular courts with "Shaker Customs and laws."

Stickney reveals she knew more of the world than Winkley's interaction with it, possibly gleaned from his journal or from oral tradition. Although the poet lived most

of her life as a Shaker (she came to Canterbury at the age of four, in 1830), she also knew something of her nation's politics (seen in the references to Webster, Clay and Calhoun) and her culture's rhetoric. In addition to the use of occupatio, a technique Stickney may have picked up through oral or written culture rather than overt training in rhetoric, she uses the term "encomium"--referring to a formal expression of praise--at the end of the first stanza. And the overall form of this piece demonstrates her grounding in the rhetorical arts. Stickney was one of the Canterbury schoolteachers (she served from 1855-1861 and 1866-1880). She may have taught speech or rhetoric, she most likely read a lot of poetry, including occasional and didactic verse, and she probably had her students read and memorize it as well. Thus, the poem adheres very closely to traditional elegiac form, seen for example, in the opening question: "To whom shall we liken;" repetition: "Not to these, not to these;" direct address: "Thou wert noble"; an envoi: "Go then worthy parent"; and a call for imitation of the deceased: "and be our endeavors,/ To copy thy goodness." A poem written by another Shaker might have mentioned Winkley's interaction with the world, but it may not have done so in the same way.

The Journal entry devoted to William Dennett, who died in 1858 after falling from a building, also reflects the relationships between poets and deceased. A poem by James V.

Chase and another by Asenath Stickney both include more specifics about the deceased and more expressions of confusion and grief than poems devoted to those who died earlier. Stickney and Chase follow traditional elegiac patterns of "the world" and of the Shakers, but their tributes to Dennett exhibit the characteristics which appear increasingly in the poems written for those who died around and after 1856.

Both Stickney and Chase employ the ineffability topos. Chase begins, "How feeble are words to portry the emotions/
Which obtain in our midst;--moving every heart/
Consequent on the exit of our brother William/
With whose mortal presence, death calls us to part" (ll. 1-4). Stickney, after attempting through several lines to praise Dennett, concludes, "Too much cannot be said/
In thy praise dear brother; Yet words are/
Powerless and unavailing" (ll. 30-32).

Stickney's poem opens with several answered questions directed to "Death," that "mysterious messenger": "Why was it? Did we not appreciate/
The prize once ours? Did we not know what/
Could be lost in losing William?" (ll. 5-7). She also includes references to Dennett's singing voice, which personalize him: "we no longer list/
To the deep-toned voice, that eloquent in/
Praise of our Heavenly Father was often/
Raised in seasons of divine worship/
And now silent in death!" (ll. 16-20). In this moment of praise, she

quickly stops herself from erecting a verbal memorial too ornate or extraordinary:

. . . Oh devoted brother!
 We need not rear the perishing marble
 To perpetuate thy memory; Worth
 Excellence love and faithfulness combine
 To form a monument Kings & Princes
 Cannot boast. A monument which will
 Resist decay. Ah and outlive the stately
 Obelisk of Darian or Grecian
 Marble; lettered with the most glowing
 Eulogy suggested by mortal man. (ll. 20-29)

This movement suggests her awareness of the Victorian world's patterns of memorializing and the Shakers' conscious decision to resist it--perhaps instigated by Bible verses and perhaps by secular events such as the opening of the garden cemetery in Concord, New Hampshire, Canterbury's nearest city.

The Shakers' belief in the eternal life of the spirit world and in the spirits' abilities to communicate with those living physically appear not only in the images of the deceased in the spirit world but also in inscriptions of their voices. These voices may be read as consolations to the living that the spirits are on their side or as a tacit recognition of the growing weakness of the community who will have to count on the dead rather than the living for help with evangelism and conversions. Zilah Randlet's poem to Nancy Bacon opens with questions about Bacon's early death (at 22 years), but by line 6 the speaker confidently sends the deceased off to the spirit world: "Be as it may, in peace repair/ Beyond this vale of toil and care" (ll. 6-

7). Here Bacon's spirit explains to the living:

In wisdom I was called away,
 To leave the transient things of time
 And dwell in fairer worlds sublime;
 I am not free from wit and care,
 The cross of Christ I still must bear,
 To find a mansion with the just,
 A treasure free from moth and rust,
 So farewell friends in purest love
 With you in union I will move.

Bacon's message (inscribed by Randlet) reveals that she continues to work in the spirit world and that her work is "in union" with those still living physically. Randlet's doubt or uncertainty about the help of those in the spirit world emerges nonetheless, even as she works to certify it through the poem. Bacon's message is preceded by the phrase, "Methinks the spirit seems to say" (l. 9).

In Mary Wilson's poetic tribute to Marion Montague, who died in 1879, Wilson completely silences the speaker (the "living" mourner) and gives voice throughout the poem to the deceased (the living spirit), who addresses the would-be mourners. The poem opens, "Dearest friends, I still am with you,/ Working for the heavenly prize;" (ll. 1-2). Marion's avowal may be read as a statement that she continues to be with the living, who are "Working for the heavenly prize." She offers them a "blessing/ From her spirit store of wealth," and she "speak[s] a word of cheer" to them (ll. 11-12, 14). Or the opening avowal may be read as a reflection of the Shaker belief that the deceased continue to work and to progress to perfection in the spirit world. The latter

would especially need to be expressed in Marion's case, since her death at age 19 prevented her signing of the covenant and allowed her less time than Believers such as Winkley to "progress" while in her physical "form."

Several poems written to those who died after 1856 rupture the pattern of less personal memorial poems written to those who died earlier by referring specifically to the relationship between the poet and the deceased. For example, in Mary Whitcher's poem dedicated to poet Lavina Clifford, who died in 1857, Whitcher refers to the speaker (or herself) in the first person rather than with the collective "we" which is typical of the more generic poems: "My helpful sister, patient friend,/ At length has passed away,/ I've seen her childhood, youth, & all/ Up to the present day" (ll. 1-4). As the poem continues, Whitcher expresses the love between the two as different from that among herself and other Shakers, a break from the teachings of the Millennial Laws, which discouraged special friendships or relationships: "I own her mortal, tho my love/ For her was strong; sincere,/ But nothing more than the return/ Of what her heart did bear./ She loved me too, beyond deserts" (ll. 5-9). Whitcher uses this unique love as an ideal she hopes to share with all her Shaker family: "In like may love inspire my soul/ For all my gospel kin,/ To think no ill, but love them all/ Thus their forebearance win (ll. 13-16). Yet she turns in the poem's close from this statement of

aspired love for all her Shaker family to that unique love between herself and Clifford, which she visualizes continuing in the spirit world: "Take this [poem] enwrapped in purest love/ A gem from heaven's store,/ Ere long we meet beyond, above,/ To love and part no more" (ll. 21-24).

Marcia Hastings's poem dedicated to Emeline Kimball also reveals the close relationship between speaker and deceased. The second stanza concludes: "We've been companions from our youth,/ One year, toiled side by side" (ll. 13-14). The "toil" Hastings and Kimball have shared for one year we gather from Canterbury records and the poem's first stanza, where Hastings comments, "How many souls and bodies too/ You're nurtured, vivified;/ 'Beloved Physician' many years,/ And true as sun and tide" (ll. 5-8). Hastings turns from a use of "we" which refers to her relationship with Kimball to a more collective "we" in the second stanza: "Your helping presence still we ask,/ Nor ever would divide" (ll. 15-16). Hastings's plea for Kimball's "helping presence" reflects the belief in those living in the spirit world to continue to help the few remaining living physically. The plea for wholeness or Kimball's undivided state could refer to the unity of spirit to body, or it could refer to Hastings's unwillingness to divide Kimball's attention or love.

Asenath Stickney's poem to Mary Acton, who died at age 14 in 1861, reveals the relationship between the poet and the deceased by using the singular first person rather than

the collective Shaker "we": "A mournful feeling o'er me steals as silently I view/ The vacant desk where Mary sat not many months ago" (ll. 1-2). The poem unabashedly opens with sorrow, instigated by Stickney's relationship with the deceased. We understand from words such as "desk" and "my darling little scholar" (l. 9) the relationship to be that between teacher and student. As the poem continues, Stickney speaks of Acton's ability to influence her, the teacher on earth, while the young scholar continues to progress in the spirit world.

Though to thy earthly presence I'm forced to bid
farewell
I trust thy gentle influence will rest upon me still.
Thy every upward tendency proclaims to me this truth
"Eternal progress thine shall be, no blight shall check
thy growth"
Go then and grace the spiritland thou bud of promise
rare
E'en as a flower shalt thou expand in life & beauty
there.

(ll. 11-16)

Like these poems which express personal relationships between the speaker and the deceased and continued progress in the spirit world, poems dedicated to those who died accidentally or unexpectedly (especially after the Journal's initiation at mid-century) mark a point of departure from others in the Journal. They express more uncertainties, unanswered questions, and judgments, and they have a more narrative pattern. Though not uncommon in the world in this period (Simonds & Katz Rothman), the need to narratize the events of death in a type of ballad form indicates

ambivalent feelings about the deed and its consequences.

S[usan] Whitcher's lengthy poem memorializing Clarissa Morrison, which includes many more specific physical details and much more emotion than do the earlier poems, exhibits this need to narratize. It opens with allusions to the specific situations surrounding Morrison's youth and unexpected death.

When bowed with age, or worn by toil and care
Our active powers bereft of natural tone;
We welcome death as a kind messenger
To call the spirit to its untried home.
But when it comes an unexpected guest,
To chill the vitals of a youthful friend
It brings a sadness one cannot repress
To see the cords of life so quickly rend.

The date of Morrison's death, 1859, indicates Whitcher wrote out of her own immediate emotions, rather than from a mediated story of a Shaker of an earlier generation. Thus, the expression of sadness and self-reference--she uses "one" rather than "we" to refer to herself (l. 7). However, when the speaker asks in the second stanza, "Ought we to murmur, or repine at this?" (l. 13) she quickly turns the emotion with the rhetoric of a second question of spiritual transcendence: "Or shall we plant our happiness so high/
That resignation fills us with such bliss/ We can behold a loving Sister die" (ll. 14-16). Whitcher answers the questions implicitly throughout the remaining three stanzas, where she falls into the traditional pattern of recreating the deceased's "virtuous traits" and calling the living to "imitate" her.

In these three stanzas which attempt to emphasize a transcendent spirit, however, Whitcher continually refers to the deceased's body, its significance to the community, and the significance of other Believers' bodies to the spiritual community. The third stanza opens, "Not on a bed of sickness was she laid,/ Wasting away as heavy hours rolled on--/ but walked among us with familiar tread/ . . . Until the purple current issued forth" (ll. 17-19, 20). The poem's closing states: "May we be mindful of the 'outer man'/ Preserve it in good health as stewards wise." The emphasis on preserving the physical body emerges from a concern for the immaterial, spiritual body, but the elegy underscores the integral relation of the two.

Whitcher first suggests the importance of the physical body in the second stanza, where she refers to Morrison, at the time of death, as "Just in the strength and bloom of woman hood/ When every faculty we might deem ripe/ To honor God and do the greatest good" (ll. 10-12). In Shakerism, of course, the "bloom of woman hood" does not include a woman's "ripeness" for bearing children and mothering biological offspring. Yet her physical loss would be felt more acutely in a community beginning to worry about the proportion of able-bodied adults to children and aged members.³⁰

Another example of the need to narratize appears in the poem devoted to the fourteen year old Henry Mead, who drowned after testing the ice. The poem implies Mead

unnecessarily hastened the movement to "the other side." The community probably would have been ambivalent about Mead's eternal life, since he was neither a child nor a covenanted Believer. And because of the scandals and accusations surrounding the deaths of their charges at Enfield and Canterbury, Shakers might have been conflicted about their responsibilities for the death.³¹

Two other poems to those who died unexpectedly also mark confusion. Brownson's poem devoted to Achsah Gross breaks the patterns of those within the Journal in its physical appearance on the page. The section which should give the "reason for death" in 1849 is notably absent; the poem, however, suggests suicide. In the first half of the sixteen-line poem, the speaker raises four questions which remain unanswered in the second half: "What are we poor feeble worms/ Of mental powers bereft/ O why should souls in human form/ To such rash deeds be left?/. . . What was the cause alas? why should/ She to this deed be moved?" (ll.1-4, 7-8). The questions are not simply why death, but why this particular kind of death. In the poem's second half, "this deed" becomes a "rash act" that Achsah committed.

The Canterbury Historical Record fleshes out the unwritten narrative suggested in the poem. Henry Blinn notes that Achsah Gross was appointed Eld.[er] S[iste]r. of the Second Family on February 28, 1838 (260) and then "removed on account of ill health" less than a year later, December

22, 1838 (261). She remained in the Second Family until her death 11 years later, at the age of 74. In another record, he includes a transcription of the "Coroner's Inquisition," which states that

those charged to inquire for the state, when, how and by what means the said Achsah Gross came to her death, upon their oaths do say that on the morning of the 5th day of Septmber, 1849 between the hours of one and two o'clock the said Achsah Gross left her place of residence and proceeding eastward about one fourth of a mile to a mill pond owned by the Shakers in said Canterbury, then and there voluntarily and feloniously did kill and murder herself against the peace and dignity of the state" (Church Record, 86).

Drowning was not an uncommon means used by female victims of suicide in the nineteenth. However, in addition to revealing a similarity between Shaker sisters and "the world's" women, the transcription's mere appearance in Blinn's work much later in the century bills the event as an anomaly at Canterbury. (Written records indicate only one other suicide in the community, Henry Hathaway's, in 1908.)

Although the State's legal language, recorded in Blinn's work, clearly labels Gross's death a crime against the state, the Shaker stance toward suicide is not so clear. Remarkably, John Whitcher's official Church Journal, which was a day to day account rather than a retrospective history like Blinn's, does not comment in 1849 on Gross's death. Perhaps he refrains from recording the suicide because his record is primarily concerned with the Church family rather than with the Second family of which Gross was a part.

However, the families were so close physically, it seems more likely that Whitcher consciously decided not to inscribe her death in the record because he had conflicted responses to it. "Normal" Shaker apostasy perhaps could be accepted more easily than suicide. Willfully turning away from the Shaker life to win worldly possessions such as spouse and children was an action that made some sense; willfully leaving life on earth was another matter.

The Shaker attitude, as reflected in the poem surrounding Gross's death, appears to revolve around the good use of what had been given individuals. The speaker softens the "deed" she describes as the "rash act"--i.e. Gross's responsibility for her own death--in several spots. She presents Achsah as victim, as acted upon rather than primary actress. Though the acting agency is left unstated, the speaker explains "She to this deed [was] moved" and "to this rash act was led" (ll. 8, 11). The speaker also says that Gross was "left" to the "deed," which occurred in an "unguarded hour" (ll. 4, 12), phrases which implicitly place responsibility on Gross's caregiver. References to Gross's mental state--"of mental powers bereft" and "Twas when that slender mental thread/ had failed and lost its power" (ll. 2, 9)--also soften the act. Brownson shifts the focus from questions about suicide to questions about insanity and free will, which culminate in the speaker's closing prayer, "O may I keep . . ./ My mental faculty,/ that I may ever sense

and know/ What God requires of me" (ll. 13-16). Gross's life (and its end) serve as motivators to the speaker, as is common in other memorial poems. However, she is not depicted in the spirit world. Perhaps the writer had problems imagining her living eternally.

The poem written after the second Canterbury suicide, almost 60 years later, presents slightly different treatment of the deceased's act. S. F. Wilson's poem dedicated to Henry Hathaway in 1908 gives no glimpses of the reasons for his death. As Wilson begins the poem, the questions rise to the surface and float unanswered throughout:

Sometimes the darlings of our God,
Seem past our finding out
Ofttimes His great and wondrous works
Encompass us about.

We plan for long and happy life,
With household friends most dear
We ponder not the coming days,
Our hearts have ne'er a fear.

We wake, to find our loved ones gone,
They're passing on before,
We failed to hear the Angel call,
Unto the other shore.

Here the deceased and his death are presented in a much more positive light than in Brownson's poem to Gross. An implication of the first line is that Hathaway was a "darling"--a favorite or a loved one--of God, perhaps because he's been called to the spirit world rather than left behind. The closing two lines' references to "the Angel call" and "the other shore" imply that Hathaway's spirit lives there with the Angels. His death and departure are

considered, according to the first stanza, "great and wondrous works" of God. God is clearly the agent; any blame for Hathaway's death is displaced from him to God. The overall emphasis of the poem is on the loss of loved ones through death in general rather than on the suicide of a specific individual. The penultimate line, "We failed to hear the Angel call," may be read as the speaker's small sense of blame, since the living Believers "failed to hear" the deceased's interactions with the spirit world. However, the overall thrust is not one of guilt for the death and doubt about the deceased's eternal state but one of loss and general uncertainty about the future of Shaker's living physically at Canterbury.

A primary reason for the differences in the two poems dedicated to suicide victims is the historical context of each; these poems reflect the shift in the Obituary Journal's ritualized work as it moves from its initiation in the mid-nineteenth century through the numerical decline of the twentieth century. Wilson's poem, typical of the poems of Volume III, contains few references which might be called uniquely Shaker, a mark of the Canterbury Shakers increasing interaction with "the world's" literature and theology. God in this poem is masculine, and the angel who calls from "the other shore" could be beckoning one from any Christian sect. In Volume III we see poems by secular poets such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Harriet Beecher Stowe transcribed

into the journal. The changes show the increasing blur in the boundaries between the world and the sect, also seen in the poems about death which appear in Cedar Boughs. Gooden provides another explanation for these shifts. She suggests that in poems where deceased and poet knew each other more intimately, which would have been the case in the twentieth century, the covenant renewal "is expressed less ritualistically, less formally, and less didactically" (167).³²

Certainly, Volume III breaks the prior ritualized format in many ways. Sometimes old Shaker hymns were transcribed instead of a new poem, and on one occasion an "old" poem was used--the Shaker poet whose name was given with the piece had been deceased for several years. Prose pieces, rather than poems, began to be written and included. And miscellaneous notes appear as epigraphs, postscripts, and marginalia much more frequently than in the earlier pieces: "Casket taken to Blossom Hill, Rev. Lamb, Concord, until May 18th" (27); "Funeral service conducted by Rev. Mr. Fitzpatrick," (35); or "Second Alto in Qui Vive Quartette, she had a rare voice" (38).

The description of the work, as noted on the volumes' title pages, also indicates the changes within the Society and the accompanying changes in attitude toward the Journal. Volume I and II describe the poetry as "a passing notice to each [deceased] one." In Volume III the reference becomes a

"Memorial Tribute to Each." The former more openly suggests direct address to the deceased, indicating the spirit communications were more popular at mid-century than they were in later years (though the belief in spirit communications continued, by 1856 at Canterbury they had slowed considerably). The former, written during what some have called the peak of Shakerism, indicates no overt need to memorialize (though of course, the need existed), while the latter, written in the midst of years of numerical decline, does. But these twentieth century Shakers seem to have accepted the numerical decline and are willing to overtly memorialize the deceased with poems from the world.

The works individually considered and as a collection mark, in typical elegiac fashion, the rising generation taking the torch from the older generation, attempting to seize power and master forces that would be otherwise overwhelming and disheartening. In the early years of the Journal's compilation, the ritualized composition and transcription fulfilled an immediate need to counter losses and uncertainties. As years progressed, the Journal's use continued to be of importance as a ritual or habit which stabilized living mourners in the face of a particular death. However, it and the other funerary rituals it accompanied reflected the Canterbury Shakers' embracing of the Christ Spirit at large. By imagining the world as full of believers in Christ's Second Appearing, and by

incorporating the world's funerary and literary rituals, Canterbury Shakers sustained themselves and their community in the face of individual and private losses.

Notes

1. For information on Kimball, see Henry Blinn's Church Record, Vol. I (1784-1879), (256). See also The Shaker March 1876, 24, which refers to her as "a physician, nurse, and dear good Sister." Apparently the reference to a Shaker woman as both physician and nurse was typical around mid-century. The "Physicians Journal" kept by Susan Myrick at the Harvard Community beginning in 1843 shows that both men and women served in the "Physicians Order" through the 1820s, and only sisters served in the "order" until 1843 (WR V-B:41). Harriot Hunt wrote in Glances and Glimpses, "in each of their societies a woman is set apart as a physician, because they believe she has a peculiar gift in that direction" (230). Of Canterbury and Kimball, she wrote, "I went to Canterbury, and visited the Shaker society; taking a severe cold I was there nearly a week, and tested the kindness, skill, and care of Dr. Emmeline" (275). The Shakers referred to Hunt as a physician, though she had been denied entrance to Harvard Medical School in 1847 and 1850.

2. See especially her first two chapters (17-43).

3. Brewer calculates that at Canterbury in 1840 there were 103 males and 157 females; in 1850 85 males and 163 females; in 1860 82 males and 159 females; by 1870, the numbers had decreased significantly to 54 males and 123 females. In 1840, 62 of the 258 Believers were 60 years or older; in 1850, 37 of the 248 Believers were 60 years or older. In 1840 there were 72 Believers age 15-29; in 1850 there were 76; in 1860, 68; in 1870, 51; and in 1880, only 38 (Shaker Communities, 235).

4. Douglas writes that "the authors of consolation literature were intent on claiming death as their peculiar property . . . a place where they would dominate rather than be dominated. . . . it was crucial to the rationalization and exploitation of their status that they inflate the significance of death, dilate heavenly time and compress earthly calendars, stake out a property in territory where claims were by definition untestable" ("Heaven our Home," 68). Mourning of mid-nineteenth century "is still intended clearly to foster spiritual development, but a curious kind of exhibitionism seems to be doing the work formerly expected of the rituals of self-scrutiny"; it is a "therapeutic self-indulgence" ("Heaven our Home," 57). She

also writes that clerical-feminine biographies mark a celebration of the individual rather than an acknowledgment of human limitations as earlier spiritual biographies and the other social histories do. Social historians "were always concerned with the individual, but they refused to sever him from the context of historical change which both created and overcame his heroism" (Feminization, 189). In contrast, the clerical-feminine works "contain a therapeutic indulgence in the power of the individual" (Feminization, 189-90). They are dislocated from history or time.

5. See Brewer ("'Tho' of the Weaker,'" 628-35) and Stein (Shaker Experience, 256-272).

6. Evans raise this question at the opening of the fourth section, "Funeral Reform," of a 15-page pamphlet entitled "Shaker Sermon: He is Not Here" (Richmond 637). No publication date appears on the piece, but the title pages refers to the "sermon" being delivered in 1886 at the funeral of John Greves of the North Family, Mt. Lebanon. This final section of the pamphlet appears to be a reprint or revision of his "Shaker Burials" (1877) and his "Rational Funerals" (1878).

7. A thorough social history of death in nineteenth-century England is John Morley's Death, Heaven and the Victorians. He examines the "theatricality and drama" surrounding death which follows from the tradition of the execution sermon; the material objects, such as gloves, candles, and tea sets, associated with mourning; graveyards and rural cemeteries; debates over disposal methods; and the influence of scientific progress and spiritualism upon funerary rituals. On death in American culture, see Jessica Mitford's American Way of Death; Martha Pike's and Janice Armstrong's A Time to Mourn; and David Stannard's Death in America, which includes a bibliographic overview as well as eight essays. Lewis Saum suggests "intimacy" with death due to high mortality rates and lack of institutional services for preparing the dead as a primary reason for the nineteenth century preoccupation with it. He explores letters, diaries and journals in an attempt to recreate "Death in the Popular Mind" (in Stannard, 30-48). On the rural cemetery movement, see French, Stanley, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution" in Stannard (69-91); Donald Simon, "The Worldly Side of Paradise" (in Pike and Armstrong, 51-66); and John F. Sears, Sacred Places (99-115). On mourning portraiture, see Phoebe Lloyd, "Posthumous Mourning Portraiture" (in Pike and Armstrong, 71-87). On mourning costume, see Barbara Dodd Hillerman, "Chrysalis of Gloom" (in Pike and Armstrong, 91-106).

For discussions of scrapbooks and the literary traditions surrounding mourning rituals, see Norma Johnsen,

"'Our Children Who Are in Heaven,'" ; Barton St. Armand's Emily Dickinson and Her Culture; Ann Douglas, "Heaven our Home;" and Wendy Simonds and Barbara Katz Rothman, Centuries of Solace. Twain's Emmeline Grangerford appears in Chapter 17 (137-141). St. Armand describes the scrapbook and the quilt as domestic "art[s] of assemblage" which influenced Dickinson's poetry. See his introduction and first chapter.

8. Richard McKinstry describes several documents which sound similar to the Obituary Journal. For example, between 1856 and 1860, Isaac Newton Youngs kept a record which contains a list of "Casualties among Believers," including deaths, fires, drownings, suicides, floods, and what are called "woundings." These casualties occurred at many Shaker communities between 1797 and 1853 (206) W 861. Angeline Brown's 60-page volume of essays and poetry contains "many . . . pages [which] carry recollections of Shaker funerals.-- probably maintained by more than one person. Deborah Ann Night, Mary Anne Newman (233) W 991. An 8-page bound, manuscript hymnal from Hancock, ca. 1835, contains "Elder Nathaniel's funeral hymns" and "Mother Dana's funeral hymns" (212) W 885; the South Union, Kentucky, community preserved "Eldress Molly's funeral hymn," from 1835 (228) W 971. Of a 13-page bound hymnal, ca. 1876, McKinstry writes, "Most of the hymns in this manuscript were written for or sung at Shaker funerals, 1813-1876" (218) W 919. McKinstry also describes several manuscripts of funeral addresses and sermons. See W 1055, 1056, 1060, and 1068 (253-55).

The Shaker periodicals, the Shaker, the Manifesto, and the Shaker Manifesto published obituaries and memorial poems from the 1870s through the 1890s. These appear with increasing frequency and length as the century progresses, marking the sect's concern with the losses.

A collection of poems called "Facts and Gems" by Edith Green, written ca. 1898-1912, reflect the continued tradition. Among the 18 entries, two are memorial poems. One of these is dedicated "To Eldress Dorothy [Durgin] and Eldress Joanna [Kaime]," who died in 1898. Green also records "Lines received from Eldress Joanna/ March 16, 1901," where Kaime's voice addresses those physically living. The poem manifests the Shakers' belief in communication between the spirit world and the physical world, even after the turn of the century.

9. I extrapolate this section from Rotundo's essay, which describes not only funerals and cemeteries but also "laying out" of the deceased.

10. Job Bishop's funeral is described in Whitcher's History, 151-154. Henry Blinn writes that Bishop's funeral, "contrary to the usual custom of Believers, was made public" (Shaker Manifesto, May 1882, 103).

11. Notably, the speakers--Elder Micajah Tucker, Elder Benjamin Witcher, Elder John Witcher, Elder John Lyon, and Elder Elisha Pote--were all male. This phenomenon could reflect a backlash of male authority after Mother Lucy Wright's death in 1821, or it could signify the male to male friendship bonds within the community. Since friends spoke on behalf of friends, it is not surprising that male communal leaders would speak about Bishop.

12. For an example of a funeral hymn, see Andrews (Gift, 102).

13. Daniel Patterson's Shaker Spiritual is the comprehensive text on Shaker hymns. Suzanne Thurman describes the importance of the hymn writing of Eunice Wyeth in "The Order of Nature" (157-60). See also Marini (Radical Sects, 156-171).

14. Although Gooden makes these points about late nineteenth-century Shaker memorial poems in Chapter VI of her dissertation (132-172), analyzing the phrase "Mother in Israel" as a unifying concept for female Believers, the poetic ritual unifies male Believers as well. She writes, "the memorial service was also the ritual whereby a female Shaker was symbolically transformed, through poetic tributes, eulogies, and songs, from Eldress to 'a mother in Israel' (133). She also explains that "the Shaker practice of printing memorials as broadsides and including memorials in letters was common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in New England." Like the Puritan funeral elegy, the Shaker memorial "combines portraiture and exhortation in honoring a departed Believer or 'saint'" (134).

15. In some funerals "of the world," a poem which speaks about death in general terms rather than with specific references to the death, such as William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis," might be read. For example, several of the journal-keeping attendees of Emily Dickinson's funeral in the rural, western Massachusetts town of Amherst in 1886 noted Colonel T. W. Higginson's reading of "Immortality" by Emily Bronte (Leyda, 474-476).

In his analysis of elegies, Sacks emphasizes the dramatic and performative work of the genre. Thus, he refers to the community in which the speaking mourner eventually reimmerses him or herself as the "cast of mourners." His first chapter, "Interpreting the Genre: The Elegy and the Work of Mourning" (1-37), sketches the dramatic conventions.

16. The Shaker funerary ritual, like other communal practices, could have changed drastically over the years. The "feminization" of Shakerism after mid-century and the

longstanding "feminist" cast of the Shirley community (Thurman, "Order of Nature") could be said to contribute to the open sharing and spontaneity of this particular service. But because Howells' description affirms accounts of other services, I would argue the spontaneity, openness and affection has changed only in intensity.

17. Robert Emlen notes that charts and maps of Shaker villages were generally kept by males who were teachers and elders, while females created spirit drawings (16-19); he does not refer specifically to cemetery charts.

18. The Journal includes poems by at least 80 different poets. Some of the poems are unsigned, some are marked only by initials I have not been able to attribute to particular Shakers, and some are by poets "of the world." Poems by poets such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and James Russell Lowell appear dedicated to those who died in the twentieth century.

19. Kimball's role among the sick, dying and deceased was a common female role of the nineteenth century. Cynthia Griffin Woolf's biography of Emily Dickinson (Chapter 1) explains women were expected to become "trained" watchers at the death and sickbed.

20. See especially the works of Frederick Evans.

21. Shaker Henry Blinn gives dates to the era with the title of his The Manifestation of Spiritualism among the Shakers, 1837-1847. White and Taylor write in one instance that the era spanned 1837-44 (163). On another occasion they write that the manifestations lasted about ten years (222). Yet they emphasize the "spiritualism" has always been a significant part of Shakerism (219-252). Andrews implies the period closes in 1850 by closing his chapter on "Mother Ann's Work" (152-176) with an 1850 quote from Youngs, who wrote, "we are satisfied that this form of communion with the spirit world is not for Believers in our faith" (175). Sasson avoids discussing closure dates by focusing on the 1840s, when the Era "culminated . . . with the appearance of Holy Mother Wisdom" ("Individual Experience," 45). Stein delineates the period loosely as "beginning in the late 1830s and extending into the 1850s" (Shaker Experience, 165), but he cites "the standard account of the period [which] begins with the report of some extraordinary behavior among 'a class of young girls, ten to fourteen years old,' in the Gathering Order at Watervliet, New York" who began to manifest unusual "trancelike activities" (165). "No single event," he writes, "marked the close of the revival period The commitment to spiritualism, in

fact, never disappeared completely" (183). He cites Andrews, People Called Shakers, 152, as one who unnecessarily "heighten[s] the distinctiveness of the revival period" rather than recognizing the continuities it has with earlier Shakerism. Morse describes it loosely as "during the late 1830s and lasted into the 1850s" (173).

22. For a thorough discussion of the concerns and conflicts of the revival throughout Shaker communities, see Stein, Shaker Experience, 165-184. At Canterbury, Durgin and Blinn took over as "second" elder and eldress in 1852. Durgin became first eldress in 1857 and James Kaime became first elder the same year.

23. Other "health" reports follow, including the gory, bodily details of Elder Sister E. Sharp's recovery from a compound fracture of the lower leg. Canterbury correspondence for 1850-59 is IV A 3-8, Reel 17. There are 111 items, but only 3 letters from 1856.

24. In his history of 1856 and the interaction with the Providence "spiritualists," Blinn writes, "This was our introduction among the Spiritualists and since the above date [July 24, 1856], have been introduced to nearly every phase of spiritualism and but little benefit has been derived" (115). Blinn's 135-page "Diary of the ministry's journey to New Lebanon and Groveland via Worcester, Pittsfield and Hancock, and return via New York City, Providence and Boston" from 1856 could provide interesting insights to the leadership's attitude toward these "spiritualists." (At the Emma B. King library, Old Chatham). See also his Historical Notes (4-AS-020) for possible information.

Blinn's notes on Peter Ayers suggest the conflicts as well. Ayers "had a full acquaintance with Mother Ann and all the Elders, and was an active minister among the evangelists" (Vol. I, 143). Blinn writes later, "It was surprising to many that Peter could make such a radical change. Among the lighthearted, he was the lightest hearted. At feasts and at parties he was always at home and could dance till nearly all had left the floor. As a boxer he would be obliged to go far to find his equal, and even after he embraced the faith, it was not safe to offer him or his gospel friends an insult" (200, 219). Blinn also describes him as "a great reader [who] obtained a fund of information" and founder of "the hatter's trade" at Canterbury-- perhaps he was a "mad hatter." In the Report of the Examination of the Shakers of Canterbury and Enfield, before the New Hampshire Legislature (1849), which resulted from accusations that the Shakers beat the boy George Emory to death, several witnesses testify that Ayers was gagged and beaten by other Believers, instruments to native spirits,

because he did not agree fully with them; lived by himself on the margins of the community; and "tried to express his opinion" (17; 25; 57-58). These records suggest the conflicting views Believers at Canterbury had during the 1840s and 1850s, as they worked through "the world's" spiritualism and concerns of the sect.

25. From 1853-55 at Canterbury, just prior to the initiation of the Journal, someone kept a "Record of the Quantity of Fluid Drawn from Mary Jane Thurston who had a Tumor" (VB5, 1853-55, Reel 29).

26. The "gospel union" she is most interested in is that of female Shakers during the late nineteenth century. As she writes, "memorials help to provide a clearer understanding of Sisters' relationships with one another, and the meaning of spiritual motherhood as demonstrated by the female leadership and denoted by the phrase, 'a Mother in Israel'" (134). She summarizes:

the ritual of symbolically transforming an Eldress to "a Mother in Israel" offers some sense of spiritual security to aged female leaders who have dedicated their entire lives to the Society and, perhaps, need some reassurance in the sect's declining years that the Shaker Way and the principles of "Mother" will continue. The memorial highlights a cult of devotion surrounding Mother Ann, Mother Lucy, and all subsequent Mothers in Israel. (170)

27. On published poems as evangelical tools, see also the introduction to Mount Lebanon Cedar Boughs.

28. On nineteenth century verses, Norma Johnsen has argued, drawing from "simple psychology," that journals and scrapbooks about death, and in particular the numerous poems which depict the deceased in a comfortable Heaven, provide consolation by "mak[ing] what is feared into something attractive" (80). Though focusing specifically on poetry written by grieving mothers (published in Godey's and other popular nineteenth century periodicals) which deals with the loss of infants, Wendy Simonds and Barbara Katz Rothman have also argued that the primary role of this type of literature is consolation, regardless of any larger cultural impact or role it had or played (21). Sacks also draws from psychoanalysis, but adds to it linguistic theory and the history of the genre to provide a thorough structural and "dramatic" analysis. See especially his first chapter.

29. Winkley records in his journal entry for October 4, 1810: "Fisher Lyon & I (viz.) Francis Winkley went to Enfield--the

8th we went with Deacon Nath'--& others to Haverhill to attend Court in a Case against John Heath who Wished to Brake our Covenant, But did not succeed. the Law Suit cost us besides our time \$71.00" (51). And according to Henry Blinn's Church Record, Winkley spoke "in behalf of the Society" before the New Hampshire Legislature in 1828 when "a bill was introduced praying that the Shakers might be forced to do military duty" (79).

30. See note 3 above.

31. See note 24 above.

32. In her discussion of memorials to Dorothy Durgin and Joanna Kaime, "special companions" and leaders at Canterbury, she writes, "the differences in structure and style in the two memorials highlight the difference in the status of the two Eldresses" (166). Sister Joanna's lacks a description of the service and poetic tributes, and the prose tributes included, except for one, were written by Sisters. "Compared to the Lead Eldress, an associate Eldress was more intimately involved with the family in various situations in their daily lives" (168).

CHAPTER VII

PRIVATE ACTS AND POSSIBLE WORLDS: SHAKER LITERACIES AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The previous chapter demonstrated the Shakers' work at preserving spiritual literacies through the ongoing ritual of writing, recording, and reading memorial poetry at Canterbury throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. In this concluding chapter I discuss how two turn-of-the-century Shaker writers preserve and revise the sect's literacies. A brief look at Anna White's and Leila Taylor's Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message (1904) offers final views of consistent elements of the Shakers' literacies while it exemplifies the ever-present differences among individual Shakers, whose personal experiences and interests contribute to quite different writing and reading styles and abilities. The writers' high levels of alphabetic literacy and their highly self-conscious attempts to preserve Shakerism through written records address the project's central questions and mark both the great and small changes in Shaker literary practices since the sect's inception by an "illiterate" female more than a century earlier.

Kathleen Deignan discusses White's and Taylor's work as

one among "a variety of minor texts . . . [which] suggest rather than state an echatological revision" (193). Their revision, she argues, is "orient[ed] all the more in the direction of pneumatology" (199). White's and Taylor's work, like that of Emeline Kimball, Alonzo Hollister, Rebecca Jackson, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy, suggests the authors favor "improvement" and "progress" in the intellectual and literary realms; yet they also believe strongly in the presence of an active, living spirit. In their inscribed text the writers point to the importance of ecstatic gifts and uninscribed "reading" and "publishing" while they illustrate the importance of reason, of education, and of alphabetic literacy.

The critics who have discussed the work in any detail-- Stephen Stein, Priscilla Brewer and Kathleen Deignan-- recognize its function as a history--it gathers the past to serve the present's concerns. All three emphasize the influence of "the world" and the physiological changes (such as numerical decline and "feminization") occurring within the communal body. Stein writes, for example, that the text "was one with the missionary effort launched by the Society in the 1860s and 1870s because it attempted to extend the influence of Shakerism outside the boundaries of the community" (Shaker Experience, 267). He implies that this outward directedness of the text is largely due to the concerns of its authors, which he describes elsewhere as

being part of a line of female leaders of the latter part of the nineteenth century who turned their concerns from "the needs and concerns of their own sex within the society." Unlike their forebears of earlier years, they "took seriously the social and political implications of the Believers' religious views" (Shaker Experience, 263). They were involved with vegetarianism and other dietary and social reforms, believed in the new sciences and their compatibility with religion, and explored the spiritualism of "the world." Like Stein, Brewer writes, "the authors, ideological heirs of Elder Frederick Evans who had died in 1893, asserted that the Believers had a vital contribution to make to twentieth century America" (Shaker Communities, 200). Brewer explains their "progressive departure from traditional beliefs and practices" as necessary for continuance of the sect.

Stressing Shaker success in communalism over its evangelical, Christian roots, they pointed to a long list of accomplishments that demonstrated Shaker relevance to the twentieth-century world, including: brotherhood of man, communism, rights of labor, sexual equality, protection of animals and children, pacifism, temperance, health food and sanitation, and personal freedom. They felt that this shift in emphasis was necessary if Shaker influence in the world was to continue. (Shaker Communities, 201)¹

Deignan's analysis differs from Brewer's and Stein's in that she emphasizes spiritual life and theological changes. Partially responsible for these theological shifts are the "radical changes in the intellectual climate of America . . .

. introduced by the new sciences of psychology, sociology, and evolutionism, and the newly developing critical study of both the Bible and comparative religions." As she explains, "these developments posed serious problems for the churches, challenging as they did the previous assumptions about, and modes of understanding, the Christian faith" (208). The revision of Shakers such as White and Taylor in this period is also a result of "the undeniable pattern of diminishment" within the sect. While it

provoked pessimism among some Believers, it also provoked the characteristic spirit of Shaker optimism among others To these, decline was seen as heralding a greater rebirth of spiritual life in the world at large, in which Shakers were to play a critical and essential role. Indeed, these Believers would insist that the new spiritual life of the larger world, seen as evidence of the ever increasing eschaton, might require their own near extinction. From this liberal perspective a reinterpretation of Shakerism's role in the eschatological designs of God would emerge, orienting their vision all the more in the direction of pneumatology. (199)

As Deignan points out, White's and Taylor's emphasis on the spirit's work plays a crucial part in their text.

The full title of their work, Shakerism: Its Meaning and Message; Embracing an Historical Account, Statement of Belief and Spiritual Experience of the Church from Its Rise to the Present Day, indicates White and Taylor not only see their work as a history but also that they view "spiritual experience" as having been a consistent element among Believers since their earliest days. The Shakers' ever-present emphasis on the spirit is but one indicator of their

"progressivism" in the eyes of White and Taylor. This implicit thrust of the work emerges in the retrospective accounts of Ann Lee and the Shakers' early years. This progressive element of Shakerism which recurs throughout the text does so not only as a statement of the sect's past experiences and a credo but also as a rhetorical tool which could win converts in this "new age" of religious beliefs and biblical criticism.

Roughly the first half of the 417 pages provides a chronological history, with sections on the founders and brief sketches of each communal site. In these chapters White and Taylor prepare the ground for their final exhortation by emphasizing the Shakers' progressivism. In an aptly titled chapter, "Yesterday and Today (1865-1904)," White and Taylor create a narrative bridge to the remaining chapters which, organized topically, focus on theology and spiritual gifts.

The first pages of White's and Taylor's work attempt to bring together the oral and the written as elements of spirituality. The volume's epigraph, for example, sets the tone by emphasizing reading: "Let him that readeth understand." The epigraph, following Lee's example, is an innovative reworking of Scripture. Jesus prefaces his teachings on many occasions with an emphasis on orality and aurality: "Let him who hath ears hear" (Mt. 11:15; 13:9; 13:43; Mk. 4:9; 4:23; 7:16; Lk. 8:8; 14:35). White's and

Taylor's epigraph, like Jesus's remark, suggests that not all who receive the text will understand. It also marks the move in Shakerism from Lee's oral teachings to the predominance of inscribed texts. Yet White and Taylor view their text, according to their Preface, as inscribed utterance; their message is "embodying the thought and word of many Shakers" (3).

Their attitude toward their own inscribed words forecasts their statements about the Bible:

Shakers have always distinguished between the Bible and the Word of God. To them, the Word of God is not a book, but the Christ Spirit, ever uttering, ever revealing God,--the Invisible, the Unknown, and to the finite being the Unknowable, save as the Christ Spirit, Son and Daughter, who is in the bosom of the Father-Mother, has declared and manifested, God. (329)²

Their attitude toward Scripture, they argue, corresponds with and even preceded the present popular "Higher Criticism":

While not, as a people, learned or scholarly; while, with individual exceptions, unversed in ancient languages and in laws of historic and literary criticism, they have, from early times, held nearly the same ground, in general principles, that the world of scholars is slowly attaining through the long upward climb of critical investigation known as the Higher Criticism. (329)

Thus, White and Taylor attempt to revise Shakerism of the past with attention to the religious, political and intellectual concerns of "the world" at the turn-of-the-century.

The authors begin this revision as early as the opening

of their history, as they retell the story of Ann Lee. They write:

There is something here worthy of consideration. Ann could not read and the sermons, the whole body of divinity, as well as the philosophy, religious and infidel, of her time, were of no use to her; she knew not even their names. Church and clergy helped her not. She turned from them, for they lacked the knowledge and power of salvation. (18)

This approach to Ann Lee's relationship to "orthodox" Christians is a new one among Shaker writers. The passage demonstrates White's and Taylor's belief in personal knowledge of and relationship with the divine in a period when organized religion had been taking a beating by "enlightened" thinkers. They continue:

The conditions of her problem were few and simple. She, an unlettered woman, burdened with her sins, was one of a lost race; God, the Creator, was on high and to Him she went. There was no doubt, apparently, of His being, nor of His power to grant her requests. . . . There were four elements intensely real to her--a double duality. There were Ann Lee and sin; she was sure of them. There were God and salvation; she believed in both as surely as she knew their human correlatives, and she went to work. (18)

White and Taylor clearly want to debunk the myth that Shakers are behind the times, repressed and limited in their thinking. They summarize at one point, "Shaker[ism] . . . is but another name for 'advanced Christianity'" (379). They want to counter the argument that Shakerism is attractive only to people with severe personal "deprivations," who can neither think independently nor support themselves financially. Of the "deprivations," they write:

The conclusion arrived at by a well-known writer, that communism is successful only among people whose misery is so extreme that any change is for the better, and therefore the hard straits of communistic life are agreeable because they have known so much worse, can hardly be accepted by Shakers, a large proportion of whose members come from homes of comfort or luxury and who, in most cases, are quite equal to holding their own in the competitive ranks of the world's industrial army. (297) ³

White and Taylor partially counterbalance Lee's economic and educational deprivations, discussed in their first chapter, by devoting a good bit of the remaining text to defending the importance of intellectual endeavors, education, and reading and writing of inscribed texts within Shakerism. In a section on Shaker schools, for example, they describe Lee's stance toward education in a positive light:

Mother Ann Lee, although unschooled, recognized, as does everyone who is taught of God, the necessity of training and developing the higher intellectual and spiritual faculties. Her famous maxim, "Hands to work and hearts to God," has always meant to her people work of the brain as well as the fingers. (132-33)

Throughout this section they similarly exonerate the sect's educational practices in the years after Lee's death.

As another sign of their progressiveness in the realm of literacy and literature, these women draw from their own experiences in the Mount Lebanon, New York, community, to describe such educational activities as the "Self-Improvement Society." Created in 1891 among the "young sisters" there, the Self-Improvement Society's aim was "'harmonious development of being, physical, intellectual and spiritual, unity of sentiment and individuality of

expression.'" The Society was also to "'establish a radical improvement in habits and manner, address and conversation and the cultivation of the mind in substantial, beautiful and interesting things.'" While these aims were stated as the goals of one particular group--the sisters at the North Family at Mount Lebanon rather than all Shakers everywhere--they provide an articulation of ideas the writers believe Shakers had exemplified from their earliest years and which influenced their writing and reading practices.

The method for achieving these aims within the Self-Improvement Society was adhering to a set of rules, which included avoiding the use of "'all manner of slang, by-words, extravagant expressions . . . and encouraged the use of grammatical language and correct pronunciation.'" These sorts of external controls--here expressed only with regard to linguistics--may seem to work against one of the Society's aims: "unity of sentiment and individuality of expression." Though "individualized self-expression" was practiced during much earlier periods, the articulation of individualized self-expression as a goal was not something frequently expressed; these statements contain elements unique to this historical period of Shakerism. How could individuals express themselves freely when constricted by such societal limitations? Without explaining how, White and Taylor summarize the success of their group, "original work of a superior stamp resulted from this earnest effort

at self-education. The efforts of this society have been very apparent in the manner, thought, address and writing of the class engaged in it" (212-213, emphasis mine). The Self-Improvement Society's emphasis on "substantial, beautiful and interesting things," as vague as it may be, also marks a turn in direction from earlier years of Lee's leadership and Seth Wells Young's oversight of Shaker schools, when "usefulness" was the determining standard for judging the appropriateness of literary and educational activities.

White's and Taylor's revisionary remarks about their literary practices make Shakers appear little different from "the world" at the turn-of-the-century. But the authors are well aware that, in "the world's" eyes, "Shakers have sometimes been regarded as averse to literary and artistic efforts." Rather than ignore accusations outsiders have made about textual repression within the sect, White and Taylor, like many Shakers before them, rise to a defense, asserting "this estimate is hardly a correct one." In a chapter entitled, "Literature--Worship," they explain reasons for shifts in writing and reading practices. For example, because Shakers of earlier days were occupied with temporal concerns and devotional exercises, they did not have time to "engage in literary or artistic enterprises."

White's and Taylor's revision of the past and description of the present with regard to literary endeavors inevitably turns to the spirit's role, the element which

distinguished their literacies from "the world's." They write, for example:

In seeking the highest possible spiritual development, Shakers have left behind much in art and literature commonly regarded as of value, yet, in this very renunciation, in attaining purity of life and thought, they have developed a pure, refined, spiritual taste, eminently fitting them for the appreciation of the highest in art and literature. (319)

Although White and Taylor imply "spiritual development" is the Shakers' ultimate goal, they never explicitly define the spirit or spirituality. They obliquely suggest some definitions, however, through other discussions in their text. In the description of the "Self-Improvement Society," for example, they divide "being" into "physical, intellectual and spiritual" parts. They distinguish the being's physical nature from its mind, or intellect, but this is more than a simple reiteration of the mind-body split, for they provide a third term--the spirit. Distinct from both mind and body, the spirit is an integral third part of a being. The spirit for them is not, as it was for Dunlavy, the mind or the reason, which makes "man" like the divine. Nor do White and Taylor place the spirit and the intellect above the body. Rather, according to them, Shakers seek and sought a "harmonious development" of the three. "Harmonious development," White and Taylor explain, could be achieved through "improvement in habits and manner," which include "address and conversation." That is, attention to the body's activities--its habits--would contribute to

development of both mind and spirit.

The authors also delineate what they mean by "spiritual" in their continued attempt to show themselves familiar with (and as knowledgeable as) "the world" as well as distinct from it. They write, for example,

While Shakers have little sympathy or affiliation with those coarser phenomena characterized as spiritism, seldom visit seances and have held themselves aloof from the spiritualistic development of the times, they have watched with full sympathy the unfolding of a purer, higher type of manifestation and recognize with hope and pleasure the gradual evolution of a portion of mankind to whom the world of spirit is a living reality. (249)

This "higher type of manifestation" they refer to as "Higher Christian Spiritualism" (250). They later conclude that "the widening vistas of the modern spiritualistic philosophy are outgoings from the life that started in spirit manifestation in 1758" (387). Although this is White's and Taylor's claim, the Shakers' openness to ecstatic or mystical spiritual gifts, established by Ann Lee and her generation of followers, allowed many Believers such as Rebecca Jackson and those at Canterbury to experiment with the spiritualism of "the world" in mid-nineteenth century America. White's and Taylor's stance in 1904 marks the movement among the Shakers toward a belief in a universal spirit.

Throughout their work the authors attempt, as did the early doctrinal writers, to build a bridge between the learned and the unlearned. The bridge is the active and living spirit, which always involves itself in literary

endeavors. In their closing exhortation to possible converts, they ask an imagined question, "What of literature, art, music--must I abandon these?" and provide an eloquent answer from the Shaker perspective:

Here is the most noble freedom of all. What do you desire, license to roam through every miasmatic swamp or deadly fen of putrid imaginations? Then will you find true love for your soul's health forbidding. But do you want to breathe pure airs of lofty ideals? Do you want the breadth and height of God-enkindled thought? Is it the expression of absolute harmony for which your soul yearns? Then, with those whose lives are attuned to God and truth, will you find freedom and encouragement, not only to enjoy the works of masters, but yourself to create, if touched by the creative spirit of beauty, truth and harmony. The noblest conceptions in literature, art and music are yet to come, from intellects clarified by spirituality, from lives attuned to purity, holiness and love. In this development of the aesthetic, as well as the intellectual nature, the principles of Shakerism open the noblest of opportunities and invite to the grandest efforts. (388, emphasis mine)

As in this paragraph, the entire text's emphasis when discussing reading and writing is on the spirit's work. Though their intellectual pursuits differ significantly from Ann Lee's, White and Taylor continue to uphold spiritual literacy as crucial to Shakerism.

With closing exhortations such as this one, the women's text exudes a positive perspective and hope for the future. In their final two chapters, "A Look into the Future" and "A Message to Shakers," they emphasize the immense possibilities and unknown future of Shakerism, calling Shakers to action and prospective converts to open themselves to the progressive work of the spirit. Using the imagery of

contemporary geology and Darwinian thought, they explain and exhort:

nor from the accomplishments of Shakerism in its primal epoch, its era of foundation laying, can its later evolutions be foreseen. Sufficient to know that it holds the great substratal principles of truth--purity, harmony, eternal growth. Then, from the knowledge of what God has wrought in nature, enter into intelligent, sympathetic and responsive receptivity, and place yourself in the line of highest ultimate development. (388-89)⁴

For White and Taylor, this line of development depends upon spiritual reading and writing. Although they are open to the numbers and kinds of texts people may read and write, like Lee and many Believers before them, they continue to uphold the spirit's role in interpretive and expressive acts.

The polished prose of White and Taylor's published volume, like the methodical poetry of the Obituary Journal and Alonzo Hollister's rambling, reflective "Reminiscences," emphasizes the spirit's work through uninscribed texts. As Hollister and Canterbury poets look back, they gather and preserve the "presence" of former Shakers such as Rebecca Jackson and Philemon Stewart. These female authors, however, go beyond retrospection to look forward, prophesying with force an impending "new age" of Shakerism. Rather than turning merely inward to the Shaker collective body, these women turn outward, wanting to embrace the world and share their understanding of spirituality with it. Their public gesture of Shakerism at the turn-of-the-century mimics the bodily work of Ann Lee in textual form. Both traditional and

innovative, it manifests the spirit's work within and around human bodies and inscribed texts.

White's and Taylor's progressive and optimistic thrust sustained the Shakers' spirituality throughout at least the first half of the twentieth century, in spite of the continued numerical decline and the closing of several villages. The collecting, cataloging, and describing of the sect's material artifacts by such admiring outsiders as John MacLean and Edward Deming Andrews attested to this optimistic spirit yet questioned the sect's continuance. In the early 1960s the Shakers themselves began to manifest signs of another period of revival as they began publishing the Shaker Quarterly. The periodical, like the periodical publications of the late nineteenth century, became the outlet for personal expressions and the communal voice. The publication, which continues today, consists of articles of contemporary concerns and events as well as reprints of nineteenth century publications and manuscripts and scholarly histories. Thus, it serves the community as well as those outside Shakerism.

Initiated in 1961 by Theodore Johnson, the publication of the Shaker Quarterly also reflects the sect's continual conflicted attitudes toward tradition and innovation, or progress. Johnson, a graduate of Colby College and Harvard Theological Seminary, became an active part of the community at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, just prior to the death of Delmer

Wilson, the only other male Believer. Johnson helped establish the library as a working archive for researchers, and he pushed for continued literary development. Johnson's thrusts (and perhaps the social climate of America in the 60s) brought in new Believers, but they caused some older ones to distinguish themselves as "true Shakers," part of a communal movement that had come to a close.⁵ Following Johnson's lead, however, more recently converted Believers at Sabbathday Lake continue to practice the Shaker lifestyle. They read, write and publish inscribed texts for themselves and for "the world." And they believe that the spirituality they embody, like that of Ann Lee and numerous Shakers before them, makes their lives among the most important texts which may be read.

Notes

1. Stein describes the text as both "history and theology" (Shaker Experience, 266) and "an exercise in apologetics" (267). He writes that the history section "celebrated in detail the accomplishments of the Believers" (266) and is "the most comprehensive historical statement ever written by members of the society" (267). See also (268, 306, 322-23). Brewer writes that the text was "the last major Shaker public statement" and "was a substantially progressive manifesto" (Shaker Communities, 200).

2. They quote from progressive Shaker Elder Frederick Evans to reiterate their point:

Said Elder Evans:--'Bibles are records of the utterances of Divinity--records of God's word. . . . All Scripture records of Divine inspiration help to reveal the power and wisdom of God to mankind; and they should be preserved, studied and interpreted by the light of a present, living revelation, as that includes the whole focal light of all former revelations.' (329)

3.The "well-known writer" to whom they refer is probably Charles Nordhoff, whose Communitistic Societies of the United States appeared in 1875 with a lengthy section on the Shakers.

4.For the last chapter, Taylor provides another perspective. She wrote in her Memorial to Anna White that White, apparently disturbed by the text's extreme optimism, felt that

"'the whole truth had not been told. The cause of its [Shakerism's] temporary failures had not been portrayed. She seized the pen in hand and in a trenchant, but terrible indictment, declared the tale of unfaithfulness, blight, mistake, and wrong. These passages, the strongest in the book, embodied in the last chapter can be readily recognized.'" (Quoted in Richmond, I, 209)

To outsiders, however, this chapter has the voice of a jeremiad, but does not appear as scathing as Taylor sees it.

5.See Stein for details about Johnson and the schism between Believers at Canterbury, New Hampshire, and Sabbathday Lake (Shaker Experience, 384-394).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women. 1868. Franklin Center, PA: Franklin Library, 1982.
- Ashbridge, Elizabeth. Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge. Heath Anthology of American Literature, 2nd. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994. 596-607.
- Bates, Paulina. The Divine Book of Holy and Eternal Wisdom, Revealing the Word of God. Canterbury, NH: United Society, 1849.
- Blair, Hugh. Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres. Facsimile Imprint. 2 Vols. Ed. Harold F. Harding. Foreward David Potter. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965.
- [Blinn, Henry C.] Church Record. Canterbury, 1784-1879. [Vol. II]. Canterbury Shaker Village Archives, 764.
- Blinn, Henry C. A Historical Record. of the Society of Believers in Canterbury, NH. From the time of its organization in 1792 till the year one thousand eight hundred and forty eight . . . East Canterbury, 1892. Vol. II [Vol. I?]. CSV 763.
- [Blinn, Henry C. et al]. Church Record, [Canterbury], 1872-1889. CSV 22.
- Briggs, Nicholas. "Forty Years a Shaker." Granite Monthly. 52 (Dec. 1920), 463-474; 53 (Jan. 1921), 19-32; 53 (Feb. 1921), 56-65; 53 (Mar. 1921), 113-121.
- Brown, Thomas. An Account of the People Called Shakers. Troy, NY: Parker and Bliss, 1812.
- Bunyan, John. The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come The Second Part. 159-303. In No Editor. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1968.
- Coffin, John. Copy Book. 1823?, 1833. Sabbathday Lake, manuscript. Box 23.
- [Collins, Sarah], comp. "Memorial of Sister Polly C. Lewis." Mt. Lebanon, 1899. (R471).
- [Cummings, Ada S.], comp. In Memoriam, Sister Aurelia G. Mace 1835-1910. Portland, ME, 1910.

- Dunlavy, John. The Manifesto, or a Declaration of the Doctrines and Practice of the Church of Christ. 1818. New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1847.
- Dyer, Joseph. A compendious Narrative, elucidating the Character, Disposition, and conduct of Mary Dyer, from the Time of her Marriage, in 1799, Till She Left the Society Called Shakers, in 1815. Concord, NH: Isaac Hill, 1818.
- Dyer, Mary Marshall. A Portraiture of Shakerism. Printed for the Author, 1822.
- Edwards, Jonathan. "A Divine and Supernatural Light." Heath Anthology of American Literature, 1st. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1990. 527-540.
- _____. "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God." The Works of Jonathan Edwards. Vol. 4. Clarence C. Goen, ed. 1972. 144-211.
- _____. "Treatise Concerning Religious Affections." The Works of Jonathan Edwards. Vol. 2. John E. Smith, ed. 1959. 91-461.
- Elkins, Hervey. Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of Shakers: A Narration of Facts, Concerning that Singular People. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth Press, 1853.
- Evans, Frederick. "Rational Funerals." Shaker Manifesto 8(June 1878), 130-131.
- _____. "Shaker Burials." American Socialist (Oneida Community, New York), 2 (Feb. 22, 1877), 60.
- _____. Shaker Sermon. "He is not Here." Mt. Lebanon, 1886. (R637)
- Foster, Hannah Webster. The Coquette; or, the History of Eliza Wharton. 1797. Intro. Herbert Ross Brown. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.
- Franklin, Benjamin. The Autobiography. 1866. New York: Walter J. Black, 1941.
- Fuller, Margaret. "Woman in the Nineteenth Century." 1844. Heath Anthology of American Literature, 2nd. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994. 1634-1655.

The Gospel Monitor. A Little Book of Mother Ann's Word to Those Who are Placed as Instructors & Care-takers of Children; Written by Mother Lucy Wright, and Brought by Her to the Elders of the First Order, on the Holy Mount, March 1, 1841. Canterbury, New Hampshire: 1843.

Green, Calvin. Biographical Account of the Life, Character, & Ministry of Father Joseph Meacham. Rpt. from a manuscript copy of the 1827 manuscript, in Shaker Quarterly, X (Spring 1970), 20-32); (Summer 1970), 51-68; (Fall 1970), 92-102.

[Green, Calvin and Seth Y. Wells]. A Summary View of the Millennial Church, or United Society of Believers. Albany: Packard & Van Benthuysen, 1823.

Green, Edith. "Facts and Gems." Manuscript. CSV, ca. 1898-1912.

Hampton, Oliver C. "In Memoriam." Elder William Reynolds. 1881.

_____. "Relation of Intellect and Emotion." Manifesto X (Oct. 1880).

Hollister, Alonzo G. "Calvin's Confession." 1904 (R 780)

_____. "Divine Motherhood." Mt. Lebanon, 1887. (R 785)

_____. "Heaven Anointed Woman." Mt. Lebanon, 1887. (R 789)

_____. "Prophecy Unseal'd." Mt. Lebanon, 1905. (R 803)

_____. "Reminiscences, by a Soldier of the Cross." Lebanon, NY, manuscript. OClWHi, X:B-31.

Holmes, John. "Short Diary of John Holmes' Work Activities. c. 1804. March 27, 1804-Oct. 19, 1805." Manuscript. SDL.

Holmes, Lucy. "Church Journal Kept by Lucy Holmes, 1834-1850, New Gloucester, ME." Manuscript. SDL.

Howells, William Dean. "A Shaker Village." Atlantic Monthly 37 (June 1876), 699-710.

_____. Three Villages. Boston: J.B. Osgood, 1884.

- Hunt, Harriot. Glances and Glimpses. Boston: J. P. Jewett & Co., 1856.
- Jacobs, Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Heath Anthology of American Literature, 2nd. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994. 1753-1777.
- Johnson, Theodore E. "The 'Millennial Laws' of 1821." Shaker Quarterly Vol. VII (2 Summer 1967): 35-58.
- Kimball, Emeline. Obituary Journal of Members of this Society since the opening of the Gospel AD 1792. 3 Vols. Manuscript. CSV 759.
- Lamson, David. Two Years' Experience Among the People Called Shakers. West Boylston, MA: By the author, 1848.
- Mather, Cotton. Bonifacius; or To Do Good. 1710. Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967.
- McNemar, Richard. The Kentucky Revival. Cincinnati: John W. Browne, 1807.
- [Meacham, Joseph]. A Concise Statement of the Principles of the Only True Church. Bennington, VT: Haswell & Russell, 1790.
- Meacham, Joseph. Notes. Copied by Rufus Bishop, 1850.
- Mount Lebanon Cedar Boughs: Original Poems by the North Family of Shakers. Buffalo: Peter Paul Book Company, 1895.
- Myrick, Susan. "The Physician's Journal or an Account of the Sickness in the Society at Harvard." WRHS V B 41.
- Nordhoff, Charles. Communistic Societies of the United States. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875.
- Poetry and other writings at the time of Elder Job Bishop's Death. Manuscript. Winterthur 986.
- Rathbun, Daniel. Letter from Daniel Rathbun. Springfield, MA: 1785.
- Rathbun, Valentine. An Account of the Matter, Form, and Manner of a New and Strange Religion. Providence: Bennett Wheeler, 1781.
- "Record of the Quantity of Fluid Drawn from Mary Jane Thurston who had a Tumor." Manuscript. WRHS (V B 5, 1853-55, Reel 29).

Report of the Examination of the Shakers of Canterbury and Enfield, before the New Hampshire Legislature. Concord, NH: Ervin B. Tripp, 1849.

A Return of Departed Spirits of the Highest Characters of Distinctions, as well as the Indiscriminate of all Nations, into the Bodies of the "Shakers", or "united Society of Believers in the Second Advent of the Messiah. Philadelphia: J.R. Conlon, 1843. (R 473)

A Revelation of the Extraordinary Visitation of Departed Spirits of Distinguished Men and Women of All Nations. Philadelphia: L.G. Thomas, 1869. (R 508)

Rowlandson, Mary. A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Heath Anthology of American Literature, 2nd. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994. 343-366.

Rowson, Susanna. Charlotte Temple. 1794. Ed. Cathy Davidson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Sigourney, Lydia. The Weeping Willow. Hartford: Henry S. Parsons, 1847.

"Sketch of the Life of Issachar Bates." Ed. & Rpt. Theodore Johnson, Shaker Quarterly I (1961): 98-118, 145-163, and 2 (1962): 18-35.

Stewart, Philemon. Holy, Sacred and Divine Roll and Book. Canterbury, NH: United Society, 1843.

Taylor, Amos. A Narrative of the Strange Principles, Conduct and Character of the People known by the Name of Shakers. Worcester: For the Author, 1782.

Taylor, Leila Sarah, ed. A Memorial to Eldress Anna White & Elder Daniel Offord. Mt. Lebanon, 1912.

Testimonies Concerning the Character and Ministry of Mother Ann Lee and the First Witnesses of the Gospel of Christ's Second Appearing. Albany: Packard and Van Benthuysen, 1827.

Testimonies Concerning the Life, Character, Revelations, and Doctrines of our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee, and the Elders With Her. Hancock, MA: J. Talcott and J. Deming, Junrs., 1816.

Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. 1884. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

- Warner, Susan. The Wide, Wide World. 1850. New York: Feminist Press, 1987.
- Wells, Seth Young. Remarks on Learning and the Use of Books. (Watervliet, NY, March 10, 1836). Manuscript. Winterthur.
- _____. "Letter to the Elders, Deacons, Brethren & Sisters of the Society in Watervliet." (1832). Manuscript.
- _____. "Circular Address to the Society at Watervliet Concerning the Education of Children".
- Whitcher, John [et al]. A Brief History or Record of the Commencement & Progress, of the United Society of Believers, at Canterbury. County of Merrimack. And State of NH. By John Whitcher, A Member of Said Society. Vol. I. 1782-1871. CSV 21.
- [White, Anna], comp. Affectionately Inscribed to the Memory of Eldress Antoinette Dolittle, 1887. (R1434)
- White, Anna and Leila Taylor. Shakerism; Its Meaning and Message. Columbus, OH: Fred J. Heer, 1904.
- Whitson, Robley, ed. The Shakers: Two Centuries of Spiritual Reflection. New York: Paulist Press, 1983.
- Winkley, Francis [et al]. Journal, [Canterbury], 1784-1845. CSV 25.
- [Youngs, Benjamin Seth]. The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing. Lebanon, OH: From the Press of John M'Clean, 1808.

Secondary Sources

- Andrews, Edward Deming. The Gift to Be Simple: Songs, Dances and Rituals of the American Shakers. New York: Dover Publications, 1940.
- _____. The People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Society. 1953. New York: Dover Publications, 1963.
- Andrews, William L. Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- _____. To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

- Backus, Margot Gayle. "Judy Grahn and the Lesbian Invocational Elegy: Testimonial and Prophetic Responses to Social Death in 'A Woman Is Talking to Death.'" Signs (Summer 1993): 815-837.
- Bainbridge, William Sims. "Shaker Demographics, 1840-1900: An Example of the Use of U. S. Census Enumeration Schedules." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 21 (December 1982): 352-365.
- Bakhtin, M. M. The Dialogic Imagination. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- _____. Rabelais and His World. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Barthes, Roland. S/Z. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Bauman, Richard. Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Baym, Nina. Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70. Second Edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.
- Belenky, Mary Field, et al. Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Boone, Joseph Allen. Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Braxton, Joanne. Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition within a Tradition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Brewer, Priscilla J. Shaker Communities, Shaker Lives. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986.
- _____. "'Tho' of the Weaker Sex': A Reassessment of Gender Equality among the Shakers." Signs 17 (Spring 1992): 609-635.
- Brodhead, Richard H. Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Bruner, Jerome. Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

- Buell, Lawrence. New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Buzard, James. "A Continent of Pictures: Reflections on the 'Europe' of Nineteenth-Century Tourists." PMLA 108 (Jan. 1993): 30-44.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker, Stevan Harrell, and Paula Richman, eds. Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- Caldwell, Patricia. "The Antinomian Language Controversy." Harvard Theological Review. 69: 3-4 (July-October 1976): 345-367.
- Calloway, Colin. North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992.
- Carby, Hazel. Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Chodorow, Nancy. Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- _____. The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Christian, Barbara. Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Coffin, Margaret M. Death in Early America. New York: Elsevier/Nelson Books, 1976.
- Connerton, Paul. How Societies Remember. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Cott, Nancy F. The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- _____. "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology." Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society 4 (1978): 219-36.

- Crosthwaite, Jane F. "'A White and Seamless Robe': Celibacy and Equality in Shaker Art and Theology." Colby Library Quarterly 25, no. 3 (September 1989): 188-198.
- Darnton, Robert. The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History. New York: Basic Books, 1984.
- Davidson, Cathy. Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Davidson, James West. The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Deignan, Kathleen. Christ Spirit: The Eschatology of Shaker Christianity. Metuchen, NJ: American Theological Library Association, 1992.
- Desroche, Henri. The American Shakers: From Neo-Christianity to Presocialism. Trans. John K. Savacool. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971.
- Dictionary of American Religious Biography. Ed. Henry W. Bowden. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1977.
- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Knopf, 1977.
- _____. "Heaven our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880." Death in America. Ed. David E. Stannard. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975. 49-68.
- Douglas, Mary. Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology. Boston: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1978.
- Emlen, Robert P. Shaker Village Views: Illustrated Maps and Landscape Drawings by Shaker Artists of the Nineteenth Century. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987.
- Fetterly, Judith. The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- Fishman, Andrea. Amish Literacy: What and How It Means. Heinemann, 1986.
- Forcey, Blythe. "Charlotte Temple and the End of Epistolarity." American Literature 63 (June 1991): 225-41.

- Foster, Frances Smith. Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Foster, Lawrence. Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons and the Oneida Community. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984.
- _____. Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1991.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- Frederickson, George M. The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Garrett, Clarke. Spirit Possession and Popular Religion, From the Camisards to the Shakers. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- _____. "Introduction." "Race," Writing and Difference. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- _____. The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Gee, James Paul. Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses. New York: Falmer Press, 1990.
- Gilmore, William J. Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780-1835. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.
- Glenn, Cheryl. "Author, Audience, and Autobiography: Rhetorical Technique in The Book of Margery Kempe" College English 54 (1992): 540-553.
- Gooden, Rosemary. The Language of Devotion: Gospel Affection and Gospel Union in the Writings of Shaker Sisters. Diss. University of Michigan, 1987.
- Graff, Harvey. The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century City. New York:

- Academic Press, 1979.
- Hall, David D., ed. The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1968.
- _____. Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Harpham, Geoffrey. "Conversion and the Language of Autobiography." Studies in Autobiography. Ed. James Olney. New York: Oxford, 1988. 42-50
- Hambrick-Stowe, Charles E. The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Harris, Sharon. "Mary White Rowlandson 1637?-1711." Heath Anthology of American Literature. 2nd. Ed. Vol. I. Ed. Paul Lauter et al. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994. 340-42.
- Holifield, E. Brooks. The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
- Humez, Jean McMahon. Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson, Black Visionary, Shaker Eldress. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981.
- _____. Mother's First-Born Daughters: Early Shaker Writings on Women and Religion. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- _____. "'Weary of Petticoat Government': The Specter of Female Rule in Early Nineteenth-Century Shaker Politics." Communal Societies 11 (Spring 1992): 1-17.
- _____. "'A Woman Mighty to Pull You Down': Married Women's Rights and Female Anger in the Anti-Shaker Narratives of Eunice Chapman and Mary Marshall Dyer." Journal of Women's History. Vol 6, No. 2 (Summer 1994): 90-110.
- _____. "'Ye are my Epistles': The Construction of Ann Lee Imagery in Early Shaker Sacred Literature." Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion. (Spring 1992): 83-103.
- Johnsen, Norma. "'Our Children Who Are In Heaven':

- Consolation Themes in a Nineteenth-Century Connecticut Journal." The Connecticut Historical Society. 51 (Spring 1986): 77-101.
- Jones, Jacqueline. Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Juster, Susan. "To Slay the Beast: Visionary Women in the Early Republic." The Power of Faith: Explorations in Race and Gender in American Protestantism. Ed. Susan Juster and Lisa MacFarlane. eds. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (forthcoming) 1996.
- Kamensky, Jane. "Governing the Tongue: Speech and Society in Early New England." Diss. Yale University, 1993.
- Karlsen, Carol F. The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Kasson, Joy S. "Narratives of the Female Body: The Greek Slave." The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in Nineteenth Century America. Ed. Shirley Samuels. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. 172-190.
- Kern, Louis J. An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias--The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981.
- Kibbey, Ann. The Interpretation of Material Shapes in Puritanism: A Study of Rhetoric, Prejudice, and Violence. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Kitch, Sally L. Chaste Liberation: Celibacy and Female Cultural Status. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Lacan, Jacques. Feminine Sexuality. Ed. Jacqueline Rose and Juliet Mitchell. Trans. Jacqueline Rose. New York: Norton, 1985.
- Leyda, Jay. The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.
- Lowance, Mason I., Jr. The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- MacCannell, Dean. The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure

- Class. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.
- MacCormack, Carol. "Nature, Culture and Gender: A Critique." Nature, Culture and Gender. Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. 1-24.
- Mack, Phyllis. Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- MacLean, John P. A Bibliography of Shaker Literature. Columbus, OH: Fred J. Heer, 1905.
- Madden, Etta. "Resurrecting Life through Rhetorical Ritual: A Buried Value of the Puritan Funeral Sermon." Early American Literature 26 (1991): 232-250.
- Materese, Susan and Paul Salmon. "The Artist as Individual and Communitarian: The Case of Brother Isaac Newton Youngs." Art in Community Session. Communal Studies Association Conference. New Harmony, Indiana. 15 Oct. 1993.
- McKay, Nellie. "Nineteenth Century Black Women's Spiritual Autobiographies: Religious Faith and Self-Empowerment." Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989. 139-154.
- McKinstry, E. Richard, comp. The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987.
- McLoughlin, William G. Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967.
- Mercadante, Linda A. Gender, Doctrine, and God: The Shakers and Contemporary Theology. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Mitford, Jessica. The American Way of Death. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963.
- Miller, Perry. The New England Mind: From Colony to Province. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.
- Morley, John. Death, Heaven and the Victorians. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971.
- Muller, Charles R. and Timothy D. Rieman. The Shaker Chair. Canal Winchester, Ohio: Canal Press, 1984.

- Neal, Julia. By Their Fruits: The Story of Shakerism in South Union Kentucky. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947.
- Niemtzow, Annette. "The Problematic of Self in Autobiography: the Example of the Slave Narrative." The Art of the Slave Narrative: Original Essays in Criticism and Theory. Ed. John Sekora and Darwin Turner. Macomb, IL: Western Illinois University Press, 1982. 96-109.
- Nissenbaum, Stephen. Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Ong, Walter J. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. New York: Methuen, 1982.
- _____. "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction." PMLA 90 (January 1975): 9-21.
- Orsi, Robert A. "'He Keeps Me Going': Women's Devotion to Saint Jude Thaddeus and the Dialectics of Gender in American Catholicism, 1929-1965." Belief in History: Innovative Approaches to European and American Religion. Ed. Thomas Kselman. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. 137-169.
- Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds. Woman, Culture and Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974, 667-87.
- Ortner, Sherry B. and Harriet Whitehead, eds. Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Pagels, Elaine. Adam, Eve, and the Serpent. New York: Random House, 1988.
- _____. The Gnostic Gospels. New York: Random House, 1979.
- Patterson, Daniel W. The Shaker Spiritual. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Pike, Martha V. and Janice Gray Armstrong, eds. A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America. Stony Brook: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980.
- Porter, Dennis. Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991.

Proctor-Smith, Marjorie. "'Who Do You Say That I Am?' Mother Ann as Christ." Ed. Mick Gidley. Locating the Shakers: Cultural Origins and Legacies of an American Religious Movement. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990. 91-93.

_____. Women in Shaker Community and Worship: A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985.

Promey, Sally M. Spiritual Spectacles: Vision and Image in Mid-nineteenth-century Shakerism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Ramazani, Jahan. "'Daddy, I Have Had to Kill You': Plath, Rage, and the Modern Elegy." PMLA 108 (Oct. 1993): 1142-56.

Richmond, Mary L., comp. Shaker Literature: A Bibliography. Two Vols. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977.

Rotundo, Barbara. "Crossing the Dark River: Shaker Funerals and Cemeteries." Communal Societies 7 (1987): 36-46.

Sacks, Peter. The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

St. Armand, Barton Levi. Emily Dickinson and Her Culture: The Soul's Society. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

St. George, Robert. "'Heated' Speech and Literacy in Seventeenth-Century New England." Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts. (Volume 63) Boston 1984: 275-322.

Sanchez-Eppler, Karen. "Bodily Bonds." The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in Nineteenth Century America. Ed. Shirley Samuels. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Sasson, Diane. "A 19th Century Case Study; Alonzo Giles Hollister (1830-1911)." Shaker Quarterly 17 (Winter 1989): 154-72; 188-193.

_____. "Individual Experience, Community Control, and Gender: The Harvard Shaker Community During the Era of Manifestations." Communal Societies 13 (1993): 45-70.

- _____. The Shaker Spiritual Narrative. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983.
- Schenck, Celeste M. "Feminism and Deconstruction: Reconstructing the Elegy." Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature. 5 (Spring 1986): 13-27.
- Scribner, Sylvia and Michael Cole. The Psychology of Literacy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Shaw, Peter. American Patriots and the Rituals of Revolution. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Simonds, Wendy and Barbara Katz Rothman. Centuries of Solace: Expressions of Maternal Grief in Popular Literature. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.
- Smith, Valerie. Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "Discourses of Sexuality and Subjectivity: The New Woman, 1870-1936." Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past. Ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. Markham: New American Library, 1989. 264-280.
- Spufford, Margaret. Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Stannard, David E., ed. Death in America. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975.
- Stein, Stephen J., ed. Letters from a Young Shaker: William S. Byrd at Pleasant Hill. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985.
- Stein, Stephen J. The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Stepto, Robert B. From Behind the Veil. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979.
- _____. "Narration, Authentication and Authorial Control in Frederick Douglass's Narrative of 1845." Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction. Ed. Dexter Fisher and Robert Stepto. New

York: MLA, 1979. 178-191.

- Swain, Thomas. "The Evolving Expressions of the Religious and Theological Experiences of a Community: A Comparative Study of the Shaker Testimonies Concerning the Sayings of Mother Ann Lee; An Exploration of the Development from Oral Traditions to Written Forms as Preserved in Four Documents." Shaker Quarterly 12 (Spring 1972) 3-31; (Summer 1972) 43-67.
- Taylor, Frank G. "An Analysis of Shaker Education: The Life and Death of an Alternative Educational System, 1774-1950." Diss. University of Connecticut, 1976.
- Thurman, Suzanne. "The Order of Nature, the Order of Grace: Community Formation, Female Status, and Relations with the World in the Shaker Villages of Harvard and Shirley, Massachusetts, 1781-1875." Diss. Indiana University, 1994.
- Tompkins, Jane. Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Toulouse, Teresa. The Art of Prophesying: New England Sermons and the Shaping of Belief. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.
- Turner, Victor. The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure. 1969. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989 ed.
- Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- _____. "'Vertuous Women Found': New England Ministerial Literature, 1668-1735." American Quarterly 28 (1976): 20-40.
- Urry, John. The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies. London: Sage Publications, 1990.
- Van Sant, Ann Jessie. Eighteenth-century sensibility and the novel: The senses in social context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Walker, Alice. "Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson." In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1983. 71-82.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1840."

American Quarterly 18 (1966): 151-74.

Williams, Richard E. Called and Chosen: The Story of Mother Rebecca Jackson and the Philadelphia Shakers. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1981.

Woolf, Cynthia Griffin. Emily Dickinson. New York: Knopf, 1986.

Yellin, Jean Fagan. "Texts and Contexts of Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself." The Slave's Narrative. Ed. Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 262-78.

Ziff, Larzer. Writing in the New Nation: Prose, Print, and Politics in the Early United States. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.