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SPIRIT POSSESSION BELIEF AND TRANCE BEHAVIOR IN A RELIGIOUS GROUP IN ST. VINCENT, BRITISH WEST INDIES.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1968  
Anthropology

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SPIRIT POSSESSION BELIEF AND TRANCE BEHAVIOR
IN A RELIGIOUS GROUP IN ST. VINCENT, BRITISH WEST INDIES

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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1968

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FIELDS OF STUDY

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Comparative Study of Religion. Professor Bourguignon

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INTRODUCTION

In this study I am concerned with an examination of institutionalized dissociational states and spirit possession beliefs among the Spiritual Baptists of St. Vincent. I undertook this investigation as a result of association with a research project entitled A Cross-Cultural Study of Dissociational States. The project, under PHS Grant MH 07463-05, began in 1963. It was conceived by, and has been under the direction of, Dr. Erika Bourguignon at The Ohio State University.

The project had several aims and purposes: (1) to study institutionalized dissociational states and spirit possession beliefs on a world-wide basis, (2) to map the distribution of institutionalized dissociational states and spirit possession beliefs, and (3) to isolate and consider the possible cultural, social, physiological, and psychological aspects of these phenomena. The members of the project developed an outline (subject to revisions) of the data that were considered pertinent and useful for making cross-cultural comparisons, and, with the outline as an aid, data were gathered from the available literature. It was intended that using our outline as a check-list in field situations also, might help us, and others, to produce better, more detailed observations and accounts of dissociational states than some that we encountered in the literature.
The renewal of the grant under which the project operated gave us the opportunity to try collecting some of our own data by making it possible for us to plan and carry out field work. This study was one of four field studies that were accomplished.

The work of the project is reported in greater detail in the Final Report (Bourguignon, 1968b).
CHAPTER I

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Aims of the Study

This research was undertaken for the purpose of investigating institutionalized dissociational states and their attendant belief systems as they occur in a hitherto unstudied society. I expected to contribute, thereby, to the general ethnoology of the Caribbean, and, particularly to the area of non-syncretic religions in the Caribbean—an area that has been somewhat neglected. Principally, however, I expected to contribute to the literature on dissociation.

Terminology

Dissociational, or trance, states have a widespread distribution throughout the world. Of a total sample of 488 societies representing all the major ethnographic regions of the world, taken from Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas (1962-1967), and coded, institutionalized forms of dissociational states were found to be present in 437, or 89% (Bourguignon, 1968b: Table IV). A belief in possession by spirits was found to be present in 360, or 74% of the total sample (ibid.: Table V). In only 51, or 11%, of the 488 societies were no institutionalized dissociational states reported (ibid.: Table VIIa).
With the exception of certain sub-cultures, modern Western societies have tended to regard dissociational states as psychopathological. M. J. Field (1960: 56), among others (e.g., Belo, 1960: 9), protests such a categorical classification of dissociational states. Much has also been written about what, precisely, constitutes psychopathology. Kaelbling (1961: 10-11) takes up the problem of defining what is meant by "psychopathology in all cultures," which, he states, is "a prerequisite for making medically meaningful comparisons," and he observes . . . the very same behavior may represent in one culture genuine, "autochthonous" psychopathology, while in another it is either the product of enculturation, of culture contact, or is at least decisively facilitated by cultural institutions (e.g., homosexuality, suicide, yogism, possessions, taboo, visions, witchcraft).

Dentan (1968: 136) has decried the lack of data on the sociological aspects of mental disorders in non-Western societies and the inaccuracy of the existing data due to the confusion of sociological and psychological factors.

The evaluation of certain behavior as psychopathological or non-psychopathological is beyond the scope of this study, however. My interest lies solely in the cultural patterning and cultural usage of that behavior in a society where it is highly standardized and culturally rewarded.

Many societies institutionalize dissociation and give it a positive value (Bourguignon, 1965: 42). The variety of explanations and interpretations offered for such states by the people concerned depends upon the society and the situational context in which they occur. These societies frequently explain dissociational states as possession by
spirits. Many authors reporting the phenomenon confuse the terms and use "possession," a common theory or explanation for dissociation, interchangeably with "trance," a form of behavior (ibid.: 40). Wallace (1959: 59) refers to "possession" as "that perennial flower of confusion," and remarks that

. . .casual observers and many anthropologists alike use this word in two very different senses: as a label for some person's overtly observable behavior, and as a label for a native theory to explain this behavior.

The lack of terminological precision has hindered accurate reporting. I will use the words "dissociation" and "trance" as Bourguignon and Pettay (1964: 42) use them—to indicate "states of altered consciousness."¹ I will use the term "spirit possession," or "possession," to mean "the entry, either temporary or permanent, of an alien spirit or power into the body of its host" (Henney, 1968a: 3).

Firth (1967: 198) distinguishes between "trance" as a "blurring of consciousness of the individual concerned such that the full controls of ordinary life are not operative," and "dissociation" as a state in which "the personality of the individual appears to have altered or a different facet of the personality is presented than ordinarily appears in social life." I will not make such a distinction, but will use the two words synonymously as Bourguignon and her associates have done (Bourguignon and Pettay, 1964: 42; Bourguignon and Haas, 1965: 1).

¹Field (1960: 19) defines dissociation as the "mental mechanism whereby a split-off part of the personality temporarily possesses the entire field of consciousness and behavior."
Various combinations of behavior and explanatory beliefs may occur. As indicated above, dissociational states may be explained as possession by spirits, but they may also be explained with other interpretations than spirit possession, e.g., spirit journey (see Chapter VI). Spirit possession, on the other hand, may or may not be manifested in a state of dissociation. For example, in some societies, such as the Aymara (LaBarre, 1948: 223) or the Venda (Stayt, 1931: 302-304), illness is believed to result from possession by spirits; in some others, such as the Monachi (Gayton, 1948: 277), insanity may be attributed to spirit possession. In some societies, such as the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard, 1956: 43) or the Havasupai (Smithson and Euler, 1964: 5), the host acquires certain positive advantages, such as power, curing ability, foresight, etc., by virtue of the embodied spirit, and so on. Hence, three possibilities exist: trance may occur without an accompanying possession belief, possession beliefs may occur without accompanying trance behavior, and a belief in spirit possession may accompany trance behavior. I will refer to the situation in which trance behavior is explained as spirit possession (or a belief in spirit possession is manifested in trance behavior) as possession-trance.2 The presence of any one of the three possible types does not preclude the possibility of any other type of situation, or all three types existing in the same society.3

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2The use of the term "possession-trance" is in accordance with the usage developed for the research project, A Cross-Cultural Study of Dissociational States.

3See Bourguignon (1968a: 5,10), Possession Belief and Associated Behavior, and Trance Behavior and Associated Belief charts for the range of possible combinations.
The Caribbean

For more than thirty years, the Caribbean has been an area of interest for anthropological scrutiny. Several approaches have characterized the studies that have been made in this area.

1. The Afro-American approach, developed primarily by Herskovits and his students in the United States, is essentially a study of culture contact and ensuing acculturation. This approach attempts to discover culture traits traceable to traditional African cultures that have persisted in New World Negro societies, and applies not only to the islands of the Caribbean but to the continental areas where there are heavy concentrations of Negroes as well.

Several concepts have been important in the Afro-American orientation. "Retentions" as a result of adaptive processes may be found in the contemporary situation in various forms: as "syncretisms," which result from the identification of elements in the dominant European culture with similar elements in the traditional Negro culture; or "reinterpretations" which may occur when syncretism is impossible and expression is then sought "in substance, rather than form, in psychological value rather than in name" (Herskovits, 1946: 350-351). The concept of "cultural focus" has also been important in Afro-American research. Herskovits (1945: 164-165) stated

...a people's dominant concern may be thought of as the focus of their culture; that area of activity or belief where the greatest awareness of form exists, the most discussion of values is heard, the widest difference in structure is to be discerned.

He hypothesized that elements lying within the cultural focus of a
people are more apt to be retained in situations of contact than those outside the focus. Bascom (1952: 65) enlarged the concept somewhat by suggesting that the "'focus' of an institution or culture pattern—to transfer a term from culture as a whole to a part of culture" might also be retained. Herskovits labeled those elements which lie beyond the cultural focus and "below the level of consciousness," but which, nevertheless, tend to persist after contact, "cultural imponderables" (Herskovits, 1946: 352). Herskovits (1947: 615) also devised a "scale of intensity of New World Africanisms" which indicates the degree of retention of a variety of cultural traits and which can be used as a tool for comparisons.

Afro-American research has been advanced primarily by the ethno-historical method. Some of the most important contributors to this orientation, in addition to Herskovits, have been G. E. Simpson, J. G. Moore, and D. M. Taylor. Certain Caribbean and Brazilian scholars have also used such an approach. At the present time, interest in Afro-American research, which Whitten and Szwed (1968: 50) criticize for "analyzing only the retentions and cultural processes and using vague concepts such as 'focus,'" has declined.

2. A social structural approach has been utilized by some Caribbean scholars. M. G. Smith (1967: xi) points out three theoretical perspectives that have been developed. The concept of the "plantation" as a framework has been advocated by Mintz (1959), Wagley (1960), and Rubin (1960). Wagley (ibid.: 9) views Plantation-America as a culture sphere with certain common features, such as
... monocrop cultivation under the plantation system, rigid class lines, multi-racial societies, weak community cohesion, small peasant proprietors involved in subsistence and cash-crop production, and a matrifocal type family form.

Mintz (1959: 44) stresses the economic characteristics of the plantation—"the capitalistic nature of the enterprise, with the planter as businessman, not farmer." Parsonian structural-functionalism has been the orientation employed by Braithwaite (1953), for example, in his study of social stratification in Trinidad and by R. T. Smith (1956) in his work on the Negro family in British Guiana. M. G. Smith has been a major advocate of the concept of the "plural society," originally developed by J. S. Furnivall to describe the colonial Far East (Smith, 1965: vii). Smith (ibid.: 14) states,

By cultural plurality I understand a condition in which two or more different cultural traditions characteristic the population of a given society. . . . In a culturally homogeneous society, such institutions as marriage, the family, religion, property, and the like, are common to the total population. Where cultural plurality obtains, different sections of the total population practice different forms of these common institutions; and, because institutions involve patterned activities, social relations, and idea-systems, in a condition of cultural plurality, the culturally differentiated sections will differ in their internal social organization, their institutional activities, and their system of belief and value. Where this condition of cultural plurality is found, the societies are plural societies.

Although Mintz (1966a: 1047) declares that "the plural society concept, as applied to the Caribbean, has not caught hold widely," the recent study by Despres on British Guiana (1967) is evidence that interest in the concept is still alive.

3. A psychological approach has found favor among other Caribbean scholars. Bourguignon has analyzed dreams and their interpretations in Haiti (1954a). She has also reported on dissociational states as they
occur in Haitian vodun "from the perspective of the self and its behavioral environment" (1965: 45). And she has undertaken to add "a social-psychological dimension to the concepts retention, reinterpretation, and syncretism" in her study of reinterpretation and the mechanisms of culture change (1954b:329). F. Mischel (1958) studied prestige as a motivating factor in a Shango religious group in Trinidad. F. and W. Mischel (1958) undertook to inquire into the psychological aspects of spirit possession in the framework of social learning theory on the basis of Trinidad material. Herskovits (1966) has also contributed to this approach with his work on Freudian mechanisms in Negro psychology.

It might be pointed out that both the Afro-American and the plantation approach have defined a larger area of which the Caribbean is only a section. Mintz (1966b), however, has also approached the Caribbean as a socio-cultural area on the basis of nine common features. Cultural pluralism refers to a type of society, although Smith does use it to characterize a region. Structural-functionalism and psychology, on the other hand, are theoretical approaches that are applicable anywhere.

The specific study of religion in the Caribbean has been developed, for the most part, by the ethnohistorical tradition, and most of the work has been done among adherents of African-derived religions, such as Shango in Trinidad and vodun in Haiti. Some work has been done, however, by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947) and G. E. Simpson (1961, 1964, 1965, 1966a) among the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad, and by Simpson (1956), Moore and Simpson (1957-1958), and Moore (1965) among
the Revivalist cults in Jamaica. The results of these investigations have provided the only comparative studies that I have been able to draw on directly.

My own research has been multi-faceted. Not only have I been concerned with a specific institution within a specific society in the Caribbean, but I have also been concerned with the definite problem of dissociational states which reaches beyond the Caribbean. My approach has, consequently, been eclectic. I was interested in Africanisms that might be evident among the Shakers, but African origins were not my primary interest. I was interested in the social structure of St. Vincent, but only insofar as Shakerism related to it or reflected it. I was interested in experimental psychology to the extent that it provided experimental results that helped to elucidate the results of certain religious practices among the Shakers, but I was not interested in clinical psychology, individual differences, or psychopathology. I have attempted to investigate the functions of Shakerism for the Shakers and for the larger society. And I have also attempted to compare the Vincentian Shakers, or Spiritual Baptists, with those groups in the Caribbean that are most like them— the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and the Revivalist cults of Jamaica.

A further comment on theory is in order. Although a great deal of work has been done in the Caribbean in the years since Herskovits fostered an interest in that area, Stavenhagen (1966: 1048), reviewing a collection of 28 articles on Middle and South America and the Caribbean, can complain that
there appears to be widespread interest in ordering and classifying data or in describing changes, but much less interest in testing hypotheses on social behavior or in exploring social processes or in interpreting phenomena in the light of solid theoretical constructs.

The lack of an adequate theory of religious syncretism in the Caribbean has been pointed out by Bourguignon (1967).

Several approaches to the subject of dissociational states have been offered. Ludwig (1968: 69) has attempted to "integrate and discuss" knowledge concerning "daydreaming, sleep and dream states, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, hysterical states of dissociation and depersonalization, pharmacologically-induced mental aberrations, and so on" in order to discover

(a) the conditions necessary for their emergence, (b) the factors which influence their outward manifestations, (c) their relatedness and/or common denominators, and (d) the adaptive or maladaptive functions which they serve.

He concludes that "many altered states of consciousness serve as 'final common pathways' for many different forms of human expression, both maladaptive and adaptive" (ibid.: 91). Oesterreich (1930) has approached "possession" (as evidenced by dissociational states) from the standpoint of the institution within which it is found. I. M. Lewis (1966) takes an "epidemiological approach" and theorizes that the conflict existing between the sexes in certain male-dominated societies may give rise to spirit possession cults, which, in this context, he terms "deprivation cults." Wilson (1967) taking issue with Lewis' hypothesis, offers one of his own—that such cults arise rather as a result of the conflict between members of the same sex. I (Henney, 1964) have suggested, on the basis of Hausa-Nupe material, that, in an
economically-rewarding, female-dominated society, women do not turn
to possession cults. This would tend to substantiate the theories of
both Wilson and Lewis. I (Henney, 1966) have also analyzed Luo materi-
ial using "rituals of rebellion" (Gluckman, 1954) as an approach, which
is similar to Lewis' concept, but which stresses the lack of desire on
the part of the cult members to institute changes in the established
system. Harris (1957) has viewed the Teita in a similar fashion also.
The work of Bourguignon, F. and W. Mischel, and M. J. Field referred
to above have also contributed to a theory of dissociation.

**Methodology**

Certain general methods are used by cultural anthropologists in
gathering data. These have been described in detail by T. R. Williams
in *Field Methods in the Study of Culture* (1967). They entail resi-
dence, usually for periods of a year or more, within a chosen society
foreign to the fieldworker, learning the language of the people,
observing their behavior, selecting and interviewing informants, and
recording data. I followed these general methods but with some modi-
fication and adjustment because of the special nature of my investi-
gation. Since I was making a problem-oriented study based on several
years of prior preparation, I did not spend as long a period in the
field. Nor did I learn a language, since I worked in an English-
speaking society. However, I did find it necessary, as mentioned
below, to become acclimated to the unfamiliar way in which they spoke
English. I did follow the general cultural anthropological methods
in observing and participating in the activities of my hosts.
(especially in the area of my particular interest), in selecting key informants, and in supplementing and clarifying the information and impressions gained from my observations with data obtained from talking with my informants, and in recording my data.

To be specific, I arrived in St. Vincent on June 11, 1966, and remained until August 5, 1966. Upon arrival, I established myself on the outskirts of the capital city of Kingstown, and began to make inquiries about Shaker congregations. Since transportation about the island is difficult and expensive, I had planned to look for a Shaker group in Kingstown. But, although there are at least two Shaker churches in the city, my first contact with a Shaker group was made through a laundress who was a member of a church located at Lowmans, a neighborhood several miles from Kingstown (see Map II). Since I could expect my association with this informant to last throughout my stay in St. Vincent, and since I had been well received in my first visit to her church, I decided to concentrate my efforts on that particular group of Shakers. Several interested non-Shakers assured me that I was making a wise choice because the head of the Lowmans church, Pointer B., was one of the most respected and active Shaker pastors on the island. He had four other churches under his direction in addition to the one at Lowmans, and he seemed not only willing but eager to have me attend the meetings of his congregations.

\[4\] "Pointer" is the title given to the head of a Shaker church.
I attended almost all of the regular meetings of the Lowmans congregation while I was on the island. I also attended meetings of Pointer B.'s churches at Questelles and Chapmans Village (see Map II) and meetings that were held by his various congregations for special purposes such as blessing a house, celebrating a Forty Days Memorial, etc. These rituals are described in Chapter III. A non-Shaker informant, Mr. S., an attorney who had risen from lower class beginnings, was instrumental in introducing me to the heads of two other Shaker groups and I attended services in each of their churches. And in the course of a tour of the island one Sunday afternoon, I happened upon a Shaker group holding a service in the middle of an intersection of two roads in a small village. I remained to observe the meeting and to meet the pointer.

Pointer B. was very helpful in introducing me to the various members of his churches and in giving my presence and my actions his approbation and endorsement. The members of his churches followed his lead and were friendly, open, and receptive. I visited some of them in their homes to obtain interviews, and, upon occasion, they visited me. I also visited some of them at their work. And I met and conversed with Shakers on various casual occasions. Although I influenced the direction of the conversations to a certain extent, I did not work from a rigid schedule of questions. Interviews of the open-ended variety seemed to me to be most productive. The Shakers whom I interviewed were enthusiastic about the subject of their

5Usually Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday nights.
religion. They found my interest in their religion and in them curious, but gratifying, and they seemed to enjoy having an audience. I introduced myself as a teacher who intended to write about their religion and they were eager to contribute material.

On four occasions, I hired a car and arranged excursions into the country, taking as many passengers as the car would hold. My expressed purpose was to visit other Shaker churches and meet other pointers, but I was also in a position to learn much from the informal conversations. I also hired a car to take me to the church meetings and usually several church members asked to ride with me. Such trips lasted from about twenty minutes to as long as an hour one way, depending upon the location of the meeting, and again provided an opportunity for me to "listen in" as well as to participate in the conversations.

In addition to my Shaker informants, I talked to other Vincentians who were not Shakers. They represented various socio-economic and religious backgrounds, and from them I gained some concept of the attitudes of the rest of the society toward Shakerism. I also visited non-Shaker churches. I attended services at the Anglican and Methodist churches in Kingstown. And I attended a number of meetings of Streams of Power, a recently introduced Dutch healing cult which practices "speaking in tongues." Data derived from this group are presented in Appendix A.

It should be noted that English is the language spoken in St. Vincent, and according to Duncan (1963: 29), no African dialect has
ever been spoken. But, the Vincentians--particularly the lower-class Vincentians--speak English with a pronunciation, cadence, and choice of vocabulary that sounds very strange to someone who is accustomed to American English, and it is frequently unintelligible. For example, an informant told me that when a person becomes a pointer, "The Holy Spirit give you a belt, basin, towel, bell, Bible, and gong." For several weeks I watched attentively for the gong, and finally I asked when I would see it. My informant said that the pointer would wear his long, white gown at the baptism service. It had not occurred to me to question the word since I was unaware that I had misunderstood. Many times I did ask informants to repeat more slowly or to explain what they had said. On one occasion the pointer was talking about "idolatries." The word did not seem to me to be appropriate, so he undertook to explain it. "Nobody in here knows nothing about idolatries? When you see a sister have a book and you no have it. You want it. You be corrupt. This is idolatries." At times, even after an explanation was given, I remained confused. I found sermons and prayers in the church more difficult to understand than conversations with informants, probably because I was more concerned with observing the worshippers in the church.

During my first few visits to Shaker churches, I made no attempt to do more than observe as attentively as possible and take detailed notes. I had become familiar with dissociational states from reading descriptions of them in the literature, many of which were violent and dramatic enough to be unmistakable, and from witnessing a macumba
meeting in Brazil. When I first witnessed Shaker services, the trances, in many instances, were so mild that I was uncertain as to whether or not the performers were, in fact, dissociated. Close and repeated observations were required to make me confident of my judgment.

After the novelty of my presence at the meetings had worn off and I was more or less taken for granted by the worshippers, I asked the pointer's permission to use a camera and a tape recorder during the meetings. He was completely cooperative and I was able to photograph Shaker devotees during the services and record facial expressions and postures of those who were dissociated (see Plate V, 2). I discovered that flash bulbs served as a test for levels of trance: the flash was sufficient to distract a trancer when the trance was not very deep, but the flash was unheeded by an individual in a deeper level of trance (see Chapter V). I was also able to record pertinent parts of the services on tape, particularly the sounds of dissociation and also sermons, testimonials, songs, etc.

I did not attempt to study Streams of Power in as much detail and depth as I did the Shakers, but since the meeting times of the Streams of Power church rarely coincided with those of the Shakers, I tried to take advantage of the presence of this unexpected bonus. I observed the phenomenon of speaking in tongues repeatedly and recorded numerous examples of it on tape. This material has been analyzed by F. Goodman (1968). I also interviewed the evangelist and some of the members of his church.
Since I have returned home, I have been able to maintain some contact with the Shakers and the Streams of Power church through correspondence. In this way, I have been informed of some of the important happenings in Pointer B.'s churches, such as baptisms, the building of a new church, etc. The Streams of Power evangelist sends me a bi-monthly pamphlet concerning the work of his church. And several of my informants have advised me about personal events in their lives, and have tried to answer questions that I have sent them about their beliefs and practices.

Significance of Study

My research has been concerned with the observation and investigation of dissociational states within a specific culture and context, and relating these findings to their context. Therefore, I believe that I have made some contribution to general Caribbean ethnology by working on an island that had not been the object of any prior anthropological investigation. More specifically, I have added to the material that exists for the Southern Caribbean area and to the data that is available on the slightly studied small islands and those with a relatively homogeneous population.

I have also attempted to add to the literature on Caribbean religion. Religions in the Caribbean that include few African retentions among their beliefs and practices have not received as much attention as those in which syncretism is prominent. By studying the Spiritual Baptists in St. Vincent I have provided material on such a group that was previously unavailable in the literature. My additional
investigation of the Streams of Power church has provided data for an analysis of glossolalia that has proved useful for cross-cultural comparisons. The study of two religious groups deriving their membership predominantly from the lower class has brought into focus the differences between them, their appeals and their social functions. This comparison has thus contributed to the understanding of some of the forces at work among lower-class Vincentians.

My principal contribution, however, has been to the literature on dissociational states. Although this scattered literature affords many descriptions of dissociational states, few of them offer much detail or are of much value in making cross-cultural comparisons. I have attempted to provide a detailed description of possession-trance based on careful systematic observation of many individuals on repeated occasions. In contrast, most other studies emphasize the often dramatic description of a single occasion. I believe that my description and analysis of possession-trance among the Shakers might have some usefulness in cross-cultural studies and might serve as a possible stimulus to others to make additional observational studies of dissociational states and modify, add to, or correct my analysis.

My analysis of the Shaker mourning rite is, I believe, a contribution to the literature on sensory deprivation on the one hand and to that dealing with a category of initiatory rites on the other.
CHAPTER II

THE SETTING

St. Vincent is a small island in the British West Indies (see Map I). Eleven miles wide and eighteen miles long, it lies 100 miles west of Barbados and 170 miles north of Trinidad. The island is very mountainous and boasts a volcano, Mt. Soufrière, which is considered semi-dormant at the present time. A number of small rivers flow down the mountain sides. Soil is quite fertile, and rainfall is adequate. The mountainous region in the center of the island receives over 100 inches of rain a year and the coastal areas from 60 to 80 inches. An average temperature of about 80° F. prevails; only rarely does the temperature rise above 90° F. (Duncan, 1963; St. Vincent, 1962 and 1963, 1966).

While on his third voyage, in 1498, Columbus discovered and named St. Vincent.¹ For almost the next forty years, Spain dominated the Caribbean area except for the Lesser Antilles,² but no effort was made

¹Unless otherwise indicated, historical information has been obtained from Sir Alan Burns, History of the British West Indies (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954).

²"The West Indies were given this name through the mistaken belief of Columbus that he had reached the Indies. . . .

"The islands were also called the Antilles, and still are so called by the French. This was because of
to colonize or exploit these small islands. They lacked the riches necessary to attract Spanish attention. They were thickly forested which prevented the Spaniards from raising cattle as they did in Hispaniola, for example. And they were occupied by the fierce and warlike Carib Indians who were reputed to be

. . . 'bloody and inhuman man-eaters, and as such were dreaded by the inhabitants of the great islands of Cuba, Hispaniola and Jamaica, who were harmless people, and on whom they prey'd, coming over in their piraguas or great canoes and carrying off many of them to devour' (Burns, 1954: 44-45, quoting Barbet, 1732).

During the remainder of the sixteenth century, Spain's supremacy in their supposed identity with the legendary Antilia, or island of the Seven Cities, believed to have been settled by Christian refugees, under the leadership of seven bishops, after the conquest of the Iberian peninsula by the Moors in the eighth century. The Greater Antilles consist of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, while the other (smaller) islands are known as the Lesser Antilles, and were also called the Caribee Islands.

"The name West Indies is often loosely applied to the mainland territories of South and Central America (the Spanish Main) and in the past was even applied to those in North America. . . .

"Confusion has been caused by the British use of the terms Windward Islands and Leeward Islands. The Spaniards correctly called all the eastern islands of the West Indian chain the Windward Islands (Islas de Barlovento) and the small islands close to the northern shores of South America the Leeward Islands (Islas de Sotavento). The British, however, gave the name of Leeward Caribee Islands (Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts and the Virgin Islands) after their government had been separated from that of Barbados in 1671. At a later date other British islands to the south of the Leeward Islands colony were called the Windward Islands; the Windward Islands group now consists of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. In fact the British Leeward Islands are not to leeward of the Windward Islands and the nomenclature is obviously incorrect and misleading" (Burns, 1954: 33).
the Caribbean was contested by the French and English and the period was marked by continual fighting and raiding.

The early years of the seventeenth century brought the first English attempts at colonization in Guiana and Bermuda, and in 1623, the first English colony in the West Indies was established at St. Kitts. In 1627, the English king granted the Earl of Carlisle proprietary rights over the "Caribees Islands," which included St. Vincent. The French claimed the same islands on the basis of a grant made to d'Esnambuc, founder of the French colony on St. Kitts, (St. Kitts was divided between the French and English at this period) by Cardinal Richelieu in 1626. A few French and English settled on St. Vincent, but neither country made any attempt at formal colonization. The French, who were more numerous and who were able to establish friendlier relations with the Caribs than the English, settled at the site of the present capital, Kingstown, and along the Leeward coast, where French place names have persisted to date (St. Vincent, 1962 and 1963, 1966).

Meanwhile, the English and French had been establishing settlements on other islands in the eastern Caribbean. The first English settlers arrived in Barbados in 1627, in Nevis in 1628, and in Antigua in 1632. The Irish settled in Montserrat in 1632 also. In 1635, the French established colonies on Guadeloupe and Martinique.

In 1660, the French Captain-General of St. Kitts made a treaty with the Caribs giving them the rights to Dominica and St. Vincent provided the Caribs would relinquish their claims to the other islands.
In 1668, several Carib chiefs on St. Vincent and St. Lucia agreed to a treaty acknowledging their allegiance to England, but the French and English continued to dispute ownership notwithstanding.

There are conflicting reports as to when and how the first Negroes came to be on St. Vincent. According to one version, a slave-ship was shipwrecked on the island of Bequia near St. Vincent in 1675 and the surviving Negroes who reached the island lived more or less peacefully among the Caribs (Burns, 1954: 51 note). The report on St. Vincent (1966: 49) gives the date as 1673 for the shipwreck. Another version holds that the Negroes were escaped slaves who made their way from Barbados in canoes or rafts (Burns, 1954: 51 note). The offspring of Carib-Negro unions became known as Black Caribs. The first Negro slaves did not arrive in St. Vincent until about 1720 when French planters from Martinique brought their slaves with them when they settled in St. Vincent (Duncan, 1963: 3). By 1764, there were 1,300 French settlers and 3,400 slaves on the island (Burns, 1954: 485 note).

Periods of war between the English and the French and/or Spanish continued to alternate with short periods of peace, but during war there was "little change from the conditions which had existed during 'peace'" (Burns, 1954: 441). The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 ended the War of Jenkins's Ear with the Spanish and French and provided again for the neutrality of St. Vincent. The French and British were to evacuate their citizens and leave the island to the Caribs. The indifference of the French about departing, however, was a contributing cause of the Seven Years War which began in 1756. War against
Spain was declared by the British in 1761. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris was signed by Britain, France, and Spain, and St. Vincent was given to the British.

War broke out between the settlers on St. Vincent and the Caribs in 1772. The peace treaty of 1773 granted a sizeable piece of land to the Caribs and their descendants in perpetuity provided they would promise their allegiance to the British king.

During the American Revolution, the French took St. Vincent, but the British regained possession of the island by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. Ten years later the French and the British were again at war. In 1795, the Caribs, aided by French troops from Guadaloupe took over most of the island except for the capital. British reinforcements arrived in January 1796, but not until June of that year were they able to turn the tide and defeat the French and the Caribs. The Black Caribs (5,080 of them) were deported to Roatan in the Bay of Honduras. A smaller group was sent to the Spanish Main a year later. The "Red" Caribs had not been involved in the fighting and were allowed to remain. The Carib lands were sold or granted as rewards for service (Burns, 1954: 572). The remaining Caribs were sent to live in the extreme north of the island (Duncan, 1963: 23). "By the second decade of the twentieth century only one family of Caribs of pure origin survived" (St. Vincent, 1962 and 1963, 1966: 48).

War between Britain and France, under Napoleon, began anew in 1803. On January 1, 1804, the Negroes in the French colony of St.
Domingue, after staging a successful rebellion, declared their independence and renamed their country Haiti. In 1812, the United States declared war on Britain, but neither war seemed to have much direct effect on St. Vincent--the island had returned to "unobstructed cultivation of the soil and other works of progress" (Duncan, 1963: 25)--and apparently enjoyed a few years of prosperity. The year 1815 brought to a close two centuries of almost continual war or threat of war. For the next century, peace prevailed.

An economy and a society had been built on sugar and slavery in the West Indies. Sugar cane had first been brought to the Caribbean by Columbus, but the Dutch revolutionized the industry when they introduced efficient techniques of cultivation and manufacture in Barbados in the first half of the seventeenth century, soon after it was settled (Burns, 1954: 232-233). By the end of the seventeenth century sugar had become the most important crop in many of the islands. In the changed society based on sugar, there was little room for the small-scale white planter. Sugar was grown on large estates and manufactured on a large scale for maximum profit. The immigration of white settlers and white indentured servants was inadequate to handle the increased labor requirements (Goveia, 1965: 105), and the demand for Negro slaves, which had not previously been great, grew rapidly. The number of Negroes increased to the point that "deficiency laws" were passed. These were laws which "required the

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3 Indian slavery had been tried much earlier and proven unsuccessful. By this time, most of the Indian populations of the islands had been eradicated.
maintenance of a number of Caucasians proportionate to the black population on each estate under penalty of an annual fine for each one short. Both ratio and payment varied from time to time" (Ragatz, 1928: 8).

The growing of sugar, however, was a hazardous and unpredictable undertaking and "of those who engaged in the 'West Indian lottery' not one in fifty drew a prize" (Mathieson, 1926: 3). The crop was not only susceptible to an array of natural perils, but the capital required for large-scale sugar planting and processing was of such magnitude that operating on credit seemed an inevitable development, and economic depressions no less inevitable. In 1811, the legislature of St. Vincent had

...declared that the planters' crops were unsalable, that their incomes had consequently ceased, and that they were unable to secure stores as dealers, finding it impossible to collect debts, refused to carry further charge accounts (Ragatz, 1928: 327).

In 1812, Mt. Soufrière erupted, causing extensive damage and destroying, among other plantings, the sugar crop (St. Vincent, 1962 and 1963, 1966: 50). Mrs. Carmichael (1833, I: 63), whose husband was a planter in St. Vincent and later in Trinidad, found that there were "few West Indian estates that are altogether out of debt, and some it is feared are involved beyond their value." Goveia (1965: 103-104) noted that the "great age of West Indian prosperity based on sugar" had been reached "in the middle of the eighteenth century."

The first Christian religious influence in St. Vincent was brought by Roman Catholic priests; one was working among the Caribs
as early as 1700. With English rule, however, Catholic activities were restricted and the Church of England became the Established Church. But it catered only to the free, white, upper class, to which the clergy themselves frequently belonged (Goveia, 1965: 265-266), and the slaves, in St. Vincent, were not permitted to enter the Anglican Church (Duncan, 1963: 37). Ragatz (1928: 21) in examining the place of religion in West Indian society, remarked that

The established Church in tropical America...failed sadly both as a religious and a cultural force due to the combination of inferior representatives and general indifference on the part of the planter class. The later work of the sectarianists, destined to affect so profoundly social development in the West Indies, was conducted primarily among the slaves and, far from uplifting the proprietors, served rather to arouse their hostility.

Quakers had been in the British West Indies since the seventeenth century and were most numerous in Barbados, Antigua, Nevis, and Tortola (Burns, 1954: 284-285), but they seem to have had less influence on the religious developments in the West Indies than some denominations introduced later. The Moravians, or the Church of the United Brethren, initiated their evangelistic endeavors among the slaves in the eighteenth century, and had a great influence on the missionaries who followed them. Their first missionaries arrived in the Danish Islands in 1732. In 1754, the first Moravian mission to the British West Indies was established in Jamaica, but was unsuccessful. The Moravian missions established in Antigua in 1756 and in St. Kitts in 1774-1775 were quite successful, but those established in Barbados in 1765 and in Tobago in 1790 struggled for existence (Goveia, 1965: 271-272).
Independent churches were also developing. A group of Loyalists and their slaves came from the United States after the American Revolution and settled in Jamaica. Among them was a former slave who had been the pastor of a Negro Baptist Church in Georgia and one of the members of his church. They began preaching Baptist doctrines and converting the slaves with some success (Ragatz, 1928: 29).

But none of the religious denominations experienced success in the West Indies to the same extent that the Methodists did.

During the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Methodism had been making rapid gains in Great Britain;

... more people in the country took their religion seriously than at any previous period since the Reformation... it could not be disputed that this was the largest revival that the Church of England had known (Bowen, 1937: 255).

The movement had been started by John Wesley, a clergyman of the Church of England. While at Oxford, he had been the leader of a "Holy Club," nicknamed "Methodists," which was dedicated to the attempt to recapture life according to the precepts of the Primitive Church through praying, fasting, meditating, and searching to know the Divine Will. Wesley began to travel about preaching these doctrines "in house, meeting-hall, in the field, by the roadside" (ibid.: 221) and "wherever he went there was agitation, disturbance; the times were fat and drowsy, brutal and dull; there had been no spiritual excitement for more than a hundred years; it was a long time since anyone had seen visions in England" (ibid.: 201). Wesley attributed the unusual results he was able to provoke in his listeners to the power
of God and he took note of scenes in which some of his audience

...began to call upon the Lord with strong cries and tears; some sank down and there remained no strength in them, others exceedingly trembled and quaked; some were torn with a kind of convulsive motion in every part of their bodies, and that so violently, that often four or five persons could not hold one of them. One woman greatly offended, being sure they might help it if they would; she also dropped down in as violent agony as the rest (ibid.: 249, quoting Wesley).

Methodism reached the West Indies in 1760 when Nathaniel Gilbert, the speaker in the House of Assembly in Antigua, began teaching the Gospel to the slaves. He had been influenced by Wesley when he was in England, and he and ten of his slaves had been baptized. He returned to Antigua "full of holy zeal" (Jackson, 1839: 100; Ragatz, 1928: 29). The first Methodist missionaries from England under the direction of Dr. Thomas Coke arrived in the West Indies by accident 27 years later, after having been unable to reach Nova Scotia, their destination. Dr. Coke placed a missionary at Antigua, another at St. Vincent, and a third at St. Kitts. In contrast to the Anglican clergy, the Methodist missionaries were "men of no fixed status in the close-knit white community," (Goveia, 1965: 273) which made them peculiarly suitable for the task of promoting Methodism as "the religion of the blacks" in the West Indies (Garcia, 1965: 220).

Apparently the intense religious excitement that had distinguished the Methodist Congregations in Great Britain was also likely to occur among the New World Methodist audiences. We are told that Dr. Coke found a slave, Harry, in St. Eustatius,

...who had been a member of the Methodist Society in America, had taken to exhorting in that island, and had been silenced by the governor, because the slaves were so
affected at hearing him, that 'many fell down as if they were dead, and some remained in a state of stupor during several hours.' Sixteen persons had been thrown into these fits in one night (Southey, 1925: 272).

According to Southey (ibid.: 275),

...if Dr. Coke...had distinctly expressed his disapprobation of such excesses, things might possibly have taken a different turn. But he had learned to regard them as the outward signs and manifestations of inward grace; and the governor, seeing that the black preacher was acknowledged by him as a fellow-labourer, regarded him and his companions as troublesome fanatics, and treated them accordingly.

Southey (ibid.: 278-279) recounts another similar episode that affords some impression of the approach used by the Methodist missionaries:

The Methodists were increasing in Antigua; but here a symptom appeared of that enthusiasm of which it is so difficult for Methodism to clear itself, sanctioned as it had been by Wesley. At the baptism of some adults, one of them was so overcome by her feelings that she fell into a swoon; and Dr. Coke, instead of regarding this as a disorder, and impressing upon his disciples the duty of controlling their emotions, spoke of it as a memorable thing, and with evident satisfaction related that, as she lay entranced with an enraptured countenance, all she said for some time was, 'Heaven! Heaven! Come! Come!' It requires more charity and more discrimination than the majority of men possess, not to suspect either the sincerity or the sanity of persons who aim at producing effects like this by their ministry, or exult in them when they are produced.

In 1790, Coke again visited St. Vincent and "found that the word preached during his absence had been attended with much success, particularly among the Negroes" (Drew, 1818: 219). Sometime later, however, he found that the Methodist chapel in St. Vincent had been entered by vandals, who had damaged the seats, taken the Bible and hung it from the public gallows (ibid.). In 1792, when he was in St. Kitts, he was informed that
...the banners of the prince of darkness had been unfurled in St. Vincent's, and that Mr. Lumb, the missionary, was then a prisoner in the public jail. The crime of which Mr. Lumb had been guilty, was that of preaching in the Methodist chapel to the Negroes and others who attended. The law which had been passed had forbidden anyone to preach, the rectors of the parishes only excepted, who had not procured a license from the legislature of the island. At the same time it had enacted that no license should be granted to any person who had not resided twelve months on the spot (ibid.: 247-248).

Previously to the enacting of this law, no missionary could have been more respected than Mr. Lumb; and no society in the West Indies was in a more flourishing condition than that of St. Vincent's. Nearly a thousand slaves had stretched out their hands to God; and throughout the island, the Negroes seemed everywhere ready to receive the Gospel (ibid.: 255).

A complaint was made to the English government and, in 1793, a dispatch was sent to St. Vincent declaring that "'His Majesty the King was graciously pleased to disannul the Act of the Assembly of St. Vincent'" (Duncan, 1963: 10).

It was reported at a conference of the Methodist Church in the West Indies held in 1793 that there were 6,570 converts in all the Methodist societies in the West Indies, and 30,000 people regularly attending the services (Goveia, 1965: 293-294).

The anti-slavery movement that had begun in the last half of the eighteenth century and picked up momentum in the first part of the nineteenth was about to bear fruit. The sensitivities of the British people were awakened, and they found the institution of slavery upon which the monocrop economy of the West Indies had been dependent for so long intolerable. The slave trade was abolished in 1807, and the
planters had to rely on natural increase or illegal means to augment their slave supplies. In 1834, the slaves were emancipated. The British government provided compensation payments to the slave-owners for their slaves, and in St. Vincent, compensation was paid for 22,266 slaves (Burns, 1954: 629). The ramifications of emancipation were many.

The overthrow of the traditional labor regime marked the final blow at the old-time prosperity of the West India islands. . .the shock of emancipation sent that magnificent structure, the old plantation system, tottering to the ground. Nor could it be rebuilt (Ragatz, 1928: 456).

But slavery had already left its indelible marks on the society and culture of every island.

After emancipation the former slaves were reluctant to work as field hands and they demanded wages that were unrealistic from the planters' point of view. Cheaper sources of labor were tapped under an indentured labor system. In St. Vincent, beginning in 1846, Portuguese workers were imported from Madeira. In 1848, free Africans from Sierra Leone were brought in, and, beginning in 1861, East Indians arrived to augment the labor supply (Burns, 1954: 662-663; Duncan, 1963: 36; Garcia, 1965: 247). There was also some

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4Burns (1954: 662) states that 36,000 Madeiran Portuguese came to the West Indies between 1835 and 1882; more than 30,000 went to British Guiana, over 2,000 to Antigua, about 900 to Trinidad, about 100 to Jamaica and "a few" to Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, and Nevis.

5The total number that came from Africa to the West Indies was over 14,000" (Burns, 1954: 663).

6Between 1862 and 1880, 2,746 East Indian migrants arrived in St. Vincent (Garcia, 1965: 252).
The decline in the market prices of sugar prompted some planters to turn to less-profitable arrowroot (Maranta arundinacea) as a substitute crop.

St. Vincent, in the throes of economic depression, was further harassed by natural disasters and disease in the last half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An epidemic of small-pox in 1849 was followed by an epidemic of yellow fever in 1852, and, in 1854, by cholera which alone accounted for 2,000 deaths. Several severe hurricanes took their toll in 1886 and 1898. And in 1902 and 1903, Mt. Soufrière erupted causing extensive damage and loss of life.

A dismal economic outlook has continued into the twentieth century. Sea Island cotton, introduced in 1903 in an attempt to boost the economy, sugar, and arrowroot have been the most important crops, but each has met with some misfortune. The Government Cotton Ginnery was burned down in 1959, the Mount Bentinck sugar factory was closed, not to reopen, by a strike in 1962, and the market for arrowroot has been diminishing. At the present time, the most important export crop is bananas. Canada recently built a deep water harbor for St. Vincent which facilitates the loading and unloading of ships. There is also

García (1965: 247) notes that "within the Caribbean itself there was a certain amount of movement of free labour. Although the islands from which they emigrated resented it, the drift of Negroes from the Lesser Antilles to the south (which had begun in the pre-emancipation era), continued. In Trinidad in one day a labourer could do three tasks and earn more than three times the wages for a nine-hour-day's work in St. Vincent or Grenada. Crown lands were divided into allotments and granted to the newcomers to encourage them to stay. But those who came usually did not stay, for the cost of living was lower at home. . . ."
talk of reviving the defunct industries and developing new ones to help meet the island's economic needs, but no positive action has been taken as yet. St. Vincent, unlike some of the neighboring islands, has thus far remained relatively untouched by tourism.

A local political observer recently decried rule by the white minority over the years and the form of government that they had chosen to circumvent the participation of the former slaves.

From 1763-1838 Vincentians existed under a very repressive regime dominated by a sprinkling of White Plantocrats. The slaves, far and away the bulk of the population, had few rights. They were not human beings, legally speaking; they were mere chattel. After the Emancipation Act (1838) quite a few of the ex-slaves bought out mountain lands and by their industry and resource began to qualify for the franchise. It was this prospect of eventual government by the free Blacks placed against the backdrop of the Haitian revolution and Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica which prompted the White overlords to surrender the constitution and opt for pure Crown Colony rule in 1877. Thus a trend which might have developed peacefully into democratic institutions was stunted at its birth. . . . (John, July 1966: 1).

For the last few years the political situation in St. Vincent has been chaotic and confused. Adult universal suffrage only came into being in 1951 when a new constitution went into effect providing for the election of the majority of members in the Legislative Council. In 1956, a ministerial system of government was introduced in St. Vincent. In 1958, the ten English-speaking islands of the West Indies made an attempt at federation, but it was unsuccessful and the federation collapsed in 1962. Independence, which has been achieved by some of the islands of the British West Indies, has been postponed in the case of St. Vincent several times—in 1967, because of "unrest and tension in the territory" (Caribbean Monthly Bulletin, February, 1967).
St. Vincent and some of the other small islands remain "still fragmented and working out some kind of half-way house between being politically dependent colonies and fully independent nation-states" (Bell and Oxaal, 1967: 15).

According to the 1960 census, the total population of the island was 79,948; 37,561 males and 42,387 females. The total population of Kingstown, the capital, was 4,308; 2,067 males, 2,241 females. The census data show a preponderance of Negroes for the island; 56,207 were listed as Negroes; 7,361 mixed; 2,444 East Indians; 1,265 Carib Indians; 1,840 whites. Primary education is free but not compulsory in St. Vincent and is available for children between five and 15 years of age. About 83.6% of the males and 86.7% of the females 15 years of age and over had finished a primary school education; about 8% of the males and 7.6% of the females 15 years of age and over had had no schooling. In a total number of women between 15 and 44 years of age of 15,511, 3,084 were married, 2,985 were living under a common-law arrangement, 1,993 were categorized as being part of a "visiting" union. Nine hundred and three were single, and for 6,046 no union was reported, 498 were in some "other" type of union and for two, the

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8A category developed from the inference that "any birth to a woman who at the time of the census was not in married or common-law union was the result of a union differing from the married or common-law type, and indeed may be taken as indicative of the existence of such a union. Wherever therefore a birth was recorded in the 12 months preceding the census to a woman who was not in a married or common-law union the enumerator, without putting any questions to the respondent as to the visiting status, entered this classification. . . ." (Population Census Bulletin, Number 18).
type of union was not stated. Of a total adult (15 years of age or older who were not attending school) male population of 17,247, 5,738 were married,\(^9\) widowed, divorced, or separated, 11,501 had never married. Of a total adult female population of 22,832, 7,482 were married, divorced, widowed, or separated, and 15,347 had never been married. Eight thousand, two hundred and ninety households were reported to have male heads, and almost as many, 7,423 had female heads. The extreme mobility of the West Indians is reflected in the statistics on immigration. In 1962, the total number of immigrants was 17,707 and in 1963, it was 19,345. For the same years, the total number of emigrants was 19,100 and 20,009. The report for St. Vincent (1966: 36) offers the following breakdown for persons migrating to Britain in those years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1962</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking employment</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>725</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1960, the census data on religious affiliations indicated that 37,671 persons were Anglicans; 26,537 were Methodists; 8,843 were Roman Catholics; 2,195 belonged to the Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Pentecostal churches, none of

\(^9\)"Married covers all persons legally married, whether or not they are living with their legally married partners." (Population Census Bulletin, Number 14.)
which had over 1,000 members. The category "other Christians" accounted for 3,289; 398 either had no religious preference or it was unknown, and ten were listed as non-Christian. It should be noted that Shakers, the subject of this study, for the most part, have been confirmed in one or another of the legally established churches. Hence, they are counted as members of those churches in the census.
CHAPTER III

THE SHAKERS

What the Shakers Are

"Shakers"¹ is the popular name for a fundamentalistic Protestant cult² group in St. Vincent. The members refer to themselves as

¹ The term, "Shakers," has been applied to a variety of unconnected religious groups. The sect founded by Ann Lee, "Mother Ann," in the eighteenth century in England is probably the best known group to bear the name. The members of the sect were referred to as "Shakers" because of "their custom of dancing in a frenzy to express religious ecstasy" (Life, 1967: 58). Mother Ann and some of her followers moved to the United States in 1774. Unlike Vincentian Shakers, they practiced communal living and celibacy, and, although at one time they had 6,000 adherents, they are rapidly dying out at the present time.

Near the end of the nineteenth century, a religion arose among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest and has continued to function with vigor to the present. Because dissociation, or "shaking," is an important feature of the religion, its adherents are also designated as "Shakers" (Barnett, 1957).

² Whether the Shakers, or Spiritual Baptists, of St. Vincent should be designated as a cult or a sect is unimportant for this thesis. Herskovits and Herskovits (1947) and Herskovits (1958) refer to the Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad as a sect, and to Shango, a religion in Trinidad that has considerably more African retentions in its roster of beliefs and practices than the Spiritual Baptists of either St. Vincent or Trinidad, as a cult. Simpson (1965, 1966a) refers to both the Spiritual Baptists and Shango as cults.

Yinger (1946: 19) states that a sect "stresses acceptance of literal obedience to the Synoptic Gospels; it tends to be radical, with a small, voluntary membership that lacks continuity; it is usually associated with the lower classes. The sect stresses
Spiritual Baptists, or merely as Baptists, or as "converted people."

Shaker informants say that John and Charles Wesley were the originators of their religion, and many of its elements do, indeed, point to a Methodist background or base, but this has been subject to much elaboration and modification. Shaker beliefs and practices seem

individual perfection and asceticism; it is either hostile or indifferent to the state, and opposes the ecclesiastical order. . . . The sect is lay religion, free from world authority. . . ." Later, he added (1957: 146) that "sect" referred to "any religious protest against a system in which attention to the various individual functions of religion has been obscured and made ineffective by the extreme emphasis on social and ecclesiastical order." The term "cult," according to Yinger (ibid.: 154) is applicable to a group that is "small, short-lived, often local, frequently built around a dominant leader (as compared with the greater tendency toward widespread lay participation in the sect). Both because its beliefs and rites deviate quite widely from those that are traditional in a society (there is less of a tendency to appeal to 'primitive Christianity,' for example) and because the problems of succession following the death of a charismatic leader are often difficult, the cult tends to be small, to break up easily, and is relatively unlikely to develop into an established sect or denomination. The cult is concerned almost wholly with problems of the individual, with little regard for questions of social order. . . . The cults are religious 'mutants,' extreme variations on the dominant themes by means of which men try to solve their problems." The Shakers seem to hover between being a sect and a cult as Yinger defines them. Like a sect, membership is small and voluntary and associated with the lower class, literal obedience and individual perfection are emphasized. But, like a cult, on the other hand, the Shakers show little concern as a religious group for questions of social order, and they are preoccupied with the search for a mystical experience. Simpson (1956: 340-341) applies Yinger's categories to Jamaican religions and he lists as cults those groups that are most similar to the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and St. Vincent.

The Shakers might be further described according to Clark's (1937: 27) seven categories of sects (Pessimistic, Perfectionist, Charismatic, Communist, Legalistic, Egocentric, Esoteric). But, again, they do not fit neatly into any one category. They have some of the features of the "Perfectionist Sects" in that they seek "personal perfection of life" and emphasize "strong emotional reactions." But, in addition, they incorporate glossolalia and trance into their worship which Clark classifies as "Charismatic Sect" features.
to be an eclectic hodge-podge of elements borrowed, perhaps, with some adjustment, from Anglicanism, Catholicism, and Pentecostalism; traditional African elements that have been redesigned or retained; and unidentifiable elements, perhaps invented, all of which have been added to, and mingled with, the selected Methodist elements. One of the most outstanding features of Shakerism is that its adherents may experience mild trance states that are attributed to possession by the Holy Ghost.

The cult apparently had its origin in St. Vincent\(^3\) (Loveland, 1967) and has been in operation there at least since the early years of this century. In 1912, it was outlawed. According to Mr. P., Inspector of Schools and a non-Shaker, "It was really a health measure more than a moral question; after shouting all night, Shakers were affected physically," while Mother O., a Shaker, stated, "From the time I was a child, the ministers of the other churches wanted a condemnation against this denomination." Vincentians offer a variety of reasons for the legal action, not only the physical and/or mental health impairment that resulted for the participants and the animosity of the established churches, but also the immoral practices reportedly indulged in by some of the members, the noisy meetings that lasted far into the night and disturbed others living in the vicinity, etc. The ordinance "to render illegal the practices of 'Shakerism' as indulged in in the colony of St. Vincent" states

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\(^3\)Smith (1962: 10) indicates that the Shakers of Grenada have an American Spiritual Baptist, or Shouters, provenience.
There has grown up a custom amongst a certain ignorant section of the inhabitants of the Colony of St. Vincent of attending or frequenting meetings from time to time at houses and places where practices are indulged in which tend to exercise a pernicious and demoralizing effect upon the said inhabitants, and which practices are commonly known as "Shakerism" (Rae, 1926: 1091).

The Shakers went "underground" after 1912, but they were harried and persecuted by the police. According to Mother O., the police

"...used to persecute us like in the days of Saul. At meeting, you couldn't shout, they would imprison you, take you under arrest and make a case. One Sunday there was a baptism and from it they were in a meeting. Some police arrest and beat them. They had cattle carts; they handcuff them and throw them in the carts like beasts. Some got away and run hide. Some got six months, nine months, four years, according."

In the thirties, a more tolerant attitude began to prevail; the last case against the Shakers, according to Mother O., was in about 1932. But, although they were suffered to hold meetings without interference, their status was still questionable until 1965 when the law was repealed. A Shaker pastor now has certain prerogatives commensurate with his position as head of a recognized church; he may christen infants, conduct burial services, and upon paying a fee to obtain a license, perform legal marriage ceremonies. A minister of one of the organized denominational churches indicated that, in the short time since the Shakers have acquired legal status and, perhaps more important, since the government in power in 1965 and 1966 fostered and promoted them, they seem to be increasing in numbers and respectability.

He remarked that legalization of the Shakers had been a political move, and that it was being alleged that the Chief Minister had been baptized a Shaker. He said that the Chief Minister had been including Shakers
in his processions recently and had even chosen Shaker pastors to lead prayers, all of which had been responsible for a great upsurge in Shaker converts.

The attitude of upper class, non-Shaker Vincentians toward the cult varies. Mr. P., a dark-skinned Negro, was disturbed because "People have left the organized churches and gone down morally. They are not uplifted. It is an African cult—a terrible thing for St. Vincent." Other informants looked upon it with tolerance, amused or apologetic, some mocked and poked fun at the Shaker antics, others attempted to excuse them. Still others, with a display of pride in an African ancestry (which the local radio broadcasting station seems to be promoting with such programs as "Old Time Stories"), boasted to me about Shaker contributions to religion. Such informants mentioned the emotion and spirit that characterize a Shaker service and set it apart from the impersonal and impassive services of the Catholic and organized denominational churches. They also called attention to the "really nice little churches" that the Shakers are building on the island and expressed the opinion that the Shakers have adjusted their activities to some extent to make them more acceptable to the society as a whole.

Spiritual Baptists are also found in Trinidad, where they are known as Shouters. The cult apparently spread there from St. Vincent.

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4In the Debates in the Legislative Council of Trinidad and Tobago, January-December, 1917, Session of November 16, 1917, the following reference to the Shakers is made: "Apparently the Shouters have had a somewhat stormy history from all I have been able to learn regarding
and has experienced similar legal hardships (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947: 340-345). Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad have been described in detail by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (ibid.) and Simpson (1961, 1964, 1965, 1966). To my knowledge, no work of an anthropological nature has been done among the Shakers in St. Vincent, and little has been written about them. According to Mr. C., a Methodist minister in Kingstown, a short paper on "Shakerism" was published some years ago in a Methodist journal by the Reverend Edward Augustus Pitt, a former minister in the Kingstown Methodist Church. The Shakers have also been mentioned by other authors in works concerning other areas.

Who the Shakers Are

Hadley (1949: 351) enumerates and defines the components of the class structure in the West Indies generally, but in St. Vincent in particular, as follows:

1. The "proletariat. . .the people engaged in agricultural field labour, in fishing, and in occupations in which wages are earned on a daily or weekly basis, as for example, in road making and dock work."

2. The "unestablished, emergent or lower-middle class" in which "salaries are paid, and individuals. . .are found in such occupations as elementary school teaching, in the junior posts in business, and in civil service; they may also be landed proprietors."

They seem, if they did not arise there, to have flourished exceedingly in St. Vincent, and to have made themselves such an unmitigated nuisance that they had to be legislated out of existence. They then came to Trinidad and continual complaints have been received by the Government for some time past as to their practices." (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1947: 343).
3. The "established upper-middle class...composed of individuals in the professions, or in senior posts in the civil service or in business, and whole families usually have behind them at least one or two generations of such status."

He further states (ibid.: 361), "There is no aristocracy in any real sense of the word in the West Indies--there are merely people with more or less money;" in St. Vincent, there are not even very many families in the middle class as a whole, and most of the middle-class families belong to the lower-middle stratum.5

Economic considerations, education, and occupation were the criteria that Hadley used for dividing St. Vincent society into classes. He did not include nuances of skin color as a factor contributing to class placement although he recognized the antagonism existing among people of different skin pigmentation as a factor forming personality. Simpson (1962: 30) observed for the West Indies as a whole that "generally the poorest people are black and those with the highest status are white or near-white." Lowenthal (1967: 597) declared, "Race and color do not define West Indian classes. But class grievances are

5A non-Shaker Vincentian informant also divided St. Vincent society into three parts. But she included in her scheme a very small upper class, composed of the old, moneyed families; a larger middle class, composed of professional people, business men, etc.; and a large lower class, which she unwittingly subdivided--she placed the incapacitated poor at the lowest level, the laborers who "can always find a day's work, if they want to," washers, street cleaners, etc. in the next highest level (and here she placed Shakers), and in the highest level, the clerks in the stores, etc. The Shakers do not regard themselves as belonging to the lowest class either; a Shaker informant made the same distinction: that "the poor" are those people who cannot take care of themselves, who are unable to work; the Shakers, therefore are not the "poor."
mainly expressed in terms of color." Skin color differentiation and its importance are inextricably linked with the West Indian slave era when the slaves were almost without exception Negroes. A white minority constituted the dominant class and an inevitable hybrid group arose to form a free colored population. Over the years, color has become a "matter of culture. Whatever their actual appearance, middle-class folk tend to be considered and to view themselves as 'colored,' while lower-class folk are 'black'" (ibid.: 598).

St. Vincent is one of the West Indian islands that has a "poor white" group; they are "not part of the elite but are close in culture and status to the black peasantry" (ibid.: 593). They do not seem to be very numerous, however.6 Excepting this group of poor whites, the poorest, lower-class people seem to be the darkest-skinned, but it cannot be said that the darkest people are necessarily the poorest and of the lower class. It is not rare to find a dark individual in the lower-middle, or even in the upper-middle, class (using Hadley's terminology), but the reverse seems almost never true—with the exception of the poor whites, light-skinned people are rarely found in the lower class. All of the Shakers observed were dark-skinned.7

The Shakers draw their members from the "proletariat," or lower class. The particular congregation of Shakers—a group of about forty

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6I never encountered any of the poor white group while I was on the island.

7The presence of a single East Indian, a visitor from the northeastern part of the island, at one meeting, should be mentioned. I was told that there were quite a few East Indians in that neighborhood, and that it was not unusual for them to be Shakers.
people—with which this study is principally concerned, lived, for the most part, in or near Kingstown, the capital and harbor city of St. Vincent. Work opportunities, and other opportunities such as education, medical care, etc., differed from those prevailing farther away from the city. Fewer men in the selected group of Shakers worked as agricultural laborers or fishermen than would probably have been the case with Shakers living deeper in the country or in the small villages along the coast. Instead, the men worked on road building or construction crews, as part-time dock hands, as delivery men, etc. The women worked as domestics, as laundresses, as seamstresses. Some worked part-time as banana carriers; some worked at two jobs—when a banana boat was in the harbor, they loaded bananas, but they also worked elsewhere in some other capacity. (D., for example, worked as a laundress at a guest house on a regular basis, but she carried bananas whenever a boat was loading.) Some of the women who were married, or who had formed a stable attachment with a man, did not work. In several instances, the husbands were away from St. Vincent working as sailors, or working in England or Canada. They sent money back to their wives, apparently in sufficient amounts that the women did not need to work.

Many authors have commented on family life in the Caribbean and the apparent indifference to legal marriage (e.g., Herskovits, 1958; Simpson, 1956; Smith, 1960). Among the Shakers, family living arrangements of several varieties were observed ranging from legal marriage, through stable "living together," to the situation in which a woman served as head of the household and might have children by several different fathers. Deprecatory attitudes toward the participants in unions made without the benefit of clergy were not evident. Although Shaker pointers were able to perform legal marriages, the fee for the required license deterred the pointer of the group in question from
Some of the married women supplemented their resources by becoming entrepreneurs. One woman roasted peanuts, and sold them and candy to the school children at recess. Another termed herself a "speculator;" when she "felt like it," she bought produce in large lots and resold it in retail lots.

The Shaker homes that I visited were usually small, two- or three-room rectangular structures, built on one floor. In some, the kitchen was incorporated as part of the house, in others the cooking was done in a small shack away from the house. (Some cooking was done outdoors in any event, breadfruit was roasted over a fire built on the ground, for example.) The living rooms were usually furnished with a small sofa, and perhaps a chair or two, that had upholstered seats; a table and some straight chairs, and a small coffee table. The coffee table invariably held a vase of artificial flowers centered on a ruffled, crocheted doily, surrounded by what-nots. Curtains of flocked, pastel net usually adorned the windows. The walls were decorated with family pictures, highly colored religious pictures, post cards, calendars, etc. Almost every house had a radio, and in several, treadle sewing machines were prominent. Most of the houses had electricity; none doing so. Informants reported that he told his flock to return to the church where they had received infant baptism for marriage rites. However, there was no apparent pressure by the church leaders or other devotees on Shaker adherents to marry.

I was not always sure whether a legal marriage had taken place and I usually referred to a case of a man, woman, and children living together as a "marriage." Occasionally I was corrected and told that someone was not a particular woman's husband but her "mister." There is no attempt at subterfuge.
had a telephone. Each house had some land around it which provided space for a vegetable garden or a few fruit trees.

Most of the Shakers that I questioned had received some formal education, but few had more than a primary education, and most had considerably less. Most of them seemed to be able to read and write, although several of them needed some prompting when reading from the Bible. A non-Shaker informant commented that some Shakers cannot read, but have memorized long passages from the Bible and are able to give the illusion that they do read. On the other hand, the Shakers who have grown up near Kingstown probably have been exposed to better educational advantages than their country counterparts.

As children, most of the Shakers interviewed had received religious training in one of the established churches, and had been confirmed. As adults, some of them are sending their own children to church operated schools, and to Sunday school and church at one of the large organized churches.

The Shaker Churches

Shaker churches are well scattered around St. Vincent. I was able to attend meetings in six of them, and visit eight more that were easily accessible, and there are probably at least that many more Shaker churches on the island. Known as "praise houses" or "prayer houses," they vary in physical aspects, but within certain limits. The differences are probably dictated as much by the funds available as by the tastes and desires of an individual congregation.
According to Pointer B., the land on which a church stands may be owned or rented by the church; rent for the land for one of Pointer B.'s churches was $5.00 EWI (about $3.00 in U. S. currency) per year. Or, as in the case of the praise house at Lowmans, the land may belong to a member of the congregation who donates its use to the church.

The simple, rectangular buildings are designed to accommodate a gathering of between 50 and 75 people. The altar is at one end of the room, and it may be rather elaborate with a raised platform, altar rail, satin or velvet altar cloths, wooden candelabra and crosses, etc. Or, the altar may only be a kitchen table, converted for the purpose and covered with a plastic tablecloth (see Plate III, 1). The floor may be concrete or packed earth. Some churches have whitewashed, plastered wall, galvanized iron roofs, glass windows and wooden doors. Others may be less prepossessing; one praise house that I attended frequently was a simple structure of interlaced branches and a thatched roof, with no windows or doors, only the openings for them (see Plate I, 1). Pointer B. told me that it was unfinished and that, as soon as the church had the money available, an iron roof would be added, the walls would be plastered, and windows and doors would be put in. However, as far as I know, the work has not yet been started and the church is still being used in its unfinished state.

Religious pictures may hang on the walls. These may depict episodes in the life of Christ, or, in spite of the Protestant orientation
of the group, they may be of Catholic saints. Banners may hang from
the rafters or the church may be bare. Rough wooden benches, usually
backless (see Plate I, 2), and arranged in various ways, provide
seating, but they are often inadequate for the number who attend the
services, and late-comers often have to stand. Some churches have
electric lights and may be quite well lit; others may depend for
lighting upon an oil lamp or two, candles, and the additional candles
that all Shaker worshippers carry. Some churches have a center pole
that is not necessarily of any structural function which serves as a
secondary focal point, but many do not. If there is a center pole,
candles are affixed to it and banners may hang around it. Certain
altar equipment seems to be ubiquitous: a glass of water with flowers,
a candle, a brass handbell, a Bible, and a saucer (see Plate III, 1).

Upon occasion, a church may be improvised. Meetings may be held
in an intersection of two village streets (there is very little traffic in the country), in which case, a kitchen table will be used as an
altar, and whatever chairs that happen to be available from houses
nearby will be grouped around it (see Plate II, 1). The bell, Bible,
glass of water with flowers, candle, and saucer will grace the table
as usual. Or, a meeting may be held in someone's yard or house. If

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9 From the description given by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947:
190-192), it would seem that the Spiritual Baptist churches in Trinidad
are very similar, physically, to those in St. Vincent. When a Shaker
church in St. Vincent boasts a center pole, however, it receives some
attention, but less than they describe for a Shouters church in Trini-
dad. Simpson (1961: 2) writing later, states that the center pole may
be omitted from the Trinidad churches too, even as in St. Vincent,
suggesting that de-emphasis of the center pole may be a trend in both
islands.
outdoors, a tarpaulin ("borrowed from the Banana Association," perhaps) may be erected to form a "tent." The men arrange extension cords and bare light bulbs to provide illumination, and take a table and chairs from the house. When outdoor meetings are held in the city or a village, a crowd of bystanders will usually gather around to watch the proceedings.

Each Spiritual Baptist church is ordinarily autonomous. In the case of the churches that I visited most frequently, however, the situation was unusual, if not unique. Pointer B. had five churches on the island under his direction, at Lowmans, Questelles, Chapmans Village, Brighton, and Spring Village (see Map II). He had selected the leaders who were in charge of each church when he was not present. There was much visiting back and forth among the congregations of the various churches, particularly between Lowmans and Questelles which are not very far apart. The several leaders would sit in honored positions facing the audience, and would share in leading the service, or would take turns sermonizing. A bus was usually hired to transport the congregation when the distance was too great for walking, as would be the case between Lowmans or Questelles and Chapmans Village or Brighton. Mischel (1958: 55) described a somewhat similar situation among the Shangoists of Trinidad. In St. Vincent, as she pointed out for Trinidad, a certain group traveled about, and the rest of the congregation at any given place would be composed of people living in the vicinity who did not always, or perhaps ever, do any visiting.
Pointer B.'s flock not only traveled about to his various churches, they also visited the churches of other pointers, and they were occasionally invited to hold thanksgiving or memorial services in homes of members, or even of non-members. They might also go to some of the small islands of the Grenadines, Union or Bequia, to hold services upon occasion.

It should probably be mentioned that several members of Pointer B.'s church alluded to the friendship that existed between the incumbent Chief Minister and Pointer B., and to the rumors that the Chief Minister had made overtures to the pointer concerning the possible organization of the island's Shaker groups under Pointer B.'s direction as archbishop. Apparently such organization is progressing in Trinidad among the Spiritual Baptists.

**Internal Organization**

The freedom and autonomy that characterize each Shaker group vis-à-vis other Shaker groups contrast sharply with the hierarchical structure and positive emphasis on obedience and discipline existing within each group. Informants say that "Obedience is the first step to Christ." Consequently each member is expected to obey those "elder to him" in the group. "Elder" as they use the word does not necessarily mean "older," but refers instead to those who have higher positions in the cult which were supernaturally awarded to them during a period of retreat known as "mourning" and which entitle them to deference from the lesser achievers. Mother A., for example, held a highly responsible position despite her 22 years. D., however, had
been baptized but had never been to "mourn" and thus had not acquired an elevated position, and, although she was considerably older, she owed obedience to Mother A. Those who comprise the group of elders, in their turn, owe help in the form of guidance and advice to those beneath them.

Some ambiguity seems to prevail as to the exact titles and duties of the various offices. Most informants, however, mentioned nurses, mother matrons, assistance mothers, pointer mothers, mother counselors, mother hunters, warriors, provers, captains, leaders and pointers as possible "gifts," or positions that could be acquired during mourning.

A nurse, I was told, "cares for the candidates sitting on the mercy bench [a front bench on which candidates for baptism are seated during church services]. She can give them water, clean the lights, and take them outside if they want to go." According to another informant, a nurse "works with candidates [for baptism] or pilgrims [those who are going to mourn], those sitting on the bench of repentance for baptism, wipes their faces, gives them water, and prepares their meals." According to Pointer B., a nurse "takes care of the room [mourning room], gets meals, and takes care of everything." A mother matron "commands the children [mourners] and assists the pointer. If someone does something wrong, she can go and speak to them over the wrong they did. She can give them a word of consolation." An assistance mother "helps the pointer and assists him when he have pilgrims to mourn or candidates to baptize. She signs the bands [makes chalk designs on them]." The assistance mother is "mother of every little thing in the church.
and can do anything she sees that needs doing." Mother O. described herself as a mother hunter, "I hunt out anyone in a little corner, because the Spirit give me utterance. At meetings, I can discern things like a pointer. I have seen a young servant and I yell out that he is coming to the mercy seat and next night the young fellow come to bow." A mother counselor also "commands the children," or "counsels the children." She or a mother helper "works with the pilgrims. There is always someone in the mourning room with them. It is a higher office than nurse." A mother helper also "washes their hands and feet, that's all, whether they mourn or baptize." An assistance mother, or nurse, or matron "assists in changing their clothes after baptism." A pointer mother seemed to be the pointer's second-in-command. Pointer B.'s wife held the position of pointer mother; she served as head of one of his churches in his absence, and took an important part in the meetings when he was present. Queen mothers were also mentioned; they "will also be a close nurse to the children and assist when they are in the room." A warrior has a "rosette on her dress. They stand at the pole and when the Holy Spirit move them, they walk around the pole and clear the whole place. They sit near the pole, and go around in adoption\(^\text{10}\) and see that everything is in order." Captains are men who "as a head of a ship, lead the whole crew in the spirit. They have a bar on the sleeve; sometimes a ribbon across the chest--these are king captains in the

\(^{10}\)"Adoption," is the term used by the Shouters in Trinidad for hyperventilation (see Simpson, 1965: 114).
spirit."

The leaders are men who lead a meeting in the pointer's absence, and who read scripture, sermonize, lead hymns, etc. when he is present. Pointer B. was variously spoken of as being a teacher, a pastor, and a pointer of souls. The pointer holds the apex position, and according to informants from Pointer B.'s congregations, the head of the church should be a man. "A woman is not supposed to head a church. The leading instrument is supposed to be a man." It is usual for church leadership to be passed along in a family from father to son, perhaps, or brother to brother. The leader seems to serve as an apprentice pointer; "The children should obey him in every point—he is rising [becoming more important]." After receiving sufficient and proper "spiritual gifts" a leader may go elsewhere to take over a church of his own, or, under some circumstances, may become the pointer of the one in which he had been working as leader.

Although the members seemed to have some difficulty giving a coherent list of offices in the church and the duties expected of each, there seemed to be little apparent confusion in their own minds. Each individual seemed to have a reasonably clear concept of what he could or should do and what he should not do, as well as the rights and duties of others. This did not preclude the possibility of usurping or avoiding responsibility. On one occasion, for example, D., emboldened by certain circumstances, arose from her seat and proceeded to remove the hot wax drippings from the hand of the candidate for baptism, which was outside her set of acceptable behaviors. She
was quickly reprimanded by the pointer and sent back to her seat. A mother later finished the job that D. had begun.

The men are outnumbered by the women in the Shaker church; a congregation of 50 might include 10-15 men. However, according to Pointer B. all the men have some office to fill; none of them are merely members or "followers" as many of the women are. (This is interesting in view of the fact that some of the men had not been to mourn.)

Pointer B. strictly controls the conduct of the members in his churches and seems to be feared and respected by them. He has several devices at his command: he has a temper that flares suddenly and a raucous voice that he uses advantageously for sharp, public reproof, and he carries a wide, leather strap. Ordinarily, he pounds the table, altar, or Bible with the edge of it for emphasis or to mark the rhythm of a hymn. He uses it particularly when quickening the beat. Upon occasion, however, he will wield it against a group of inattentive or giggling women or against a specific individual. Discipline seems to be dispensed on two levels. Pointer B. may react impulsively and personally, apparently because of his own offended sensibilities resulting from the display of inappropriate behavior. Or he may be acting as the instrument of the Holy Ghost, in which case the occasion becomes full of ritual.

During an outdoor meeting one evening, the pointer directed a lengthy ritual that reached its climax in the physical punishment of a woman. The performance took place in plain view of a sizeable
crowd of passers-by that had gathered to watch the service. While the rest of the congregation was singing a hymn, the pointer led the woman, Mistress S.,11 from her seat to the table that served as altar. Both of them became dissociated12 as he held her hands and swung her arms from side to side. They recovered only partly and, while the pointer still held her by one hand, Mistress S. knelt and offered a chanted prayer. The pointer gave her three sips of water, then said, "I'm gonna give this Bible to this daughter." He put the Bible in her hands and she knelt with it. The pointer rang the bell at her three times and Mistress S. performed a ritual known as "taking a prove," a divinatory method frequently resorted to among the Shakers, which consists of opening the Bible at random and noting the three verses indicated on each page by the thumbs--these passages are believed to carry a message for or about the performer. After Mistress S. had opened the Bible, a mother stepped forward and, carefully marking the relevant passages with her own thumbs, took it from her. Pointer B. announced, "The Bible is our teacher" and remarked to the kneeling, agitated woman, "Satan, he wait for you!" Then, musingly, he said to the congregation, "I wonder if I charged this daughter wrongfully." The mother read the verses of the "prove" and the pointer appeared to be well-satisfied. He proceeded to strike the woman's open palms with his strap several times. After hitting her, he held her head close to

11"Mistress" is the title accorded to married women.

12A detailed description of the observable symptoms of dissociation is given in Chapter V.
him for a moment, put the Bible on her head, raised her from her knees, put a lighted candle on her head, then gave the candle to her. She returned to her seat, and during the next hymn, became more violently dissociated than was usual.

I was told that Mistress S. had been guilty of cursing several other women. The pointer's actions received approbation not only from the congregation but from some of the bystanders as well, several of whom marveled at the singular fitness of the biblical passage of the "prove." Discussing the matter later, one non-Shaker observer remarked with amazement, "The lady who disobey her honors to the Lawd got the part just to suit her complaint. That was just magnificent, I tell you that much, they got just the part they wanted!"

Thus, the pointer may dispense discipline as an ordinary human being subject to human emotions. In his capacity as pointer of a church responsible for his congregation, he acts in much the same way as an authoritarian father might be expected to behave in a family setting. The image of the pointer as a father is reinforced by the reference to his congregation as "daughters" and "children." Certain disciplinary practices found in the Shaker church reflect disciplinary practices among lower-class Vincentian families generally. Corporal punishment is an accepted manner of correcting children after they reach a certain age. Infants are indulged, fondled, picked up when they cry; but "When they get to two, you start to teach them. You flog them and put them on their knees." Herskovits (1958: 195-197) discussed the importance of whipping as a method of correction among
New World and West African Negroes and suggested that a historical relationship to traditional methods obtains. Emphasis on corporal punishment may have received reinforcement from the physical punishment meted out to the slaves as well as from the prevailing British-derived educational methods.

When behaving in his role as a human being performing his job expectations, the pointer may indulge in overt outbursts of righteous anger accompanied by corrective measures meted out directly and impulsively, without explanation, apology, or appeal to higher authority. He may lash out at a misbehaving woman with his strap, scowl and perhaps yell at her. Several times he threw kernels of corn from the altar-table at inattentive women. The infractions that invoke his displeasure are obvious to anyone who happens to be observing. Certain behavior is considered appropriate in the church context. "When you are in a meeting, you are supposed not to speak, but to listen attentively to the word of the Lord. You are supposed to say 'Amen' because 'those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,' so, in the meeting this is what you are supposed to do. And you also have to sing." Deviations from the standards of acceptable conduct are not difficult for the pointer, facing his audience, to spot.

When the pointer is acting as the agent of the supernatural, however, certain differences from the situation described above are apparent. The nature of the transgression seems to differ; it is regarded by the Shakers as being more serious than a simple lapse in
deportment. The circumstances under which the transgression occurs seem to differ also. In the example above, the act occurred outside the church and could, quite possibly, have remained unknown to the pointer. But, according to Pointer B., "The Spirit will reveal to me that something has been done wrong." Hence, he discovers the misdeed, not through his own perception, but by revelation from the supernatural. He subjects his information to further supernatural validation through the mechanism of the "prove." He stated, "The Bible itself will take a prove. It will speak to you the same thing she have done." The entire process of judgment and castigation on this level is carried out with dignity and ceremony, with a skillful build-up of tension and of an atmosphere of impending doom that is dissipated by the climax. Further post-climatic ritual assures the miscreant of her return to the fold.\(^{13}\)

The attitude of the pointer throughout the ceremony is one of benevolence and love toward the culprit. He makes no display of anger. His behavior is consistent with the image of the supernatural as possibly punitive, but always compassionate. Since the pointer is dissociated to a greater or lesser degree during the procedure, he becomes more than the mere instrument of the Holy Ghost carrying out

\(^{13}\)The ritual of correction falls nicely into Van Gennep's (1961: 10-11) three-stage scheme of "rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation." The wrong-doer, who has separated herself spiritually from the other worshippers by her act, is then physically separated from them. She is subjected to measures of adjustment to restore her to a position of acceptability, and is then re-incorporated into the group with reassurances of their love and acceptance of her, and of her spiritual purification.
His instructions, he is possessed by "that Power" and impelled by it—"It is the Holy Spirit who give punishment to you." The pointer is under further compulsion to carry out the demands of the supernatural in order to avoid possible penalty to himself: "If Pointer had not given Mistress S. the lashes, the Holy Spirit would have lashed him."

The possibility that the pointer might have been informed about the women's misdeed in this particular case by someone who had knowledge of it was flatly denied. According to informants, the only way the pointer could have known about it was by divine revelation. However, it became evident from listening to informal conversations and bits of gossip that Mistress S. was not well liked and was frequently criticized for her asocial behavior.

**Shaker Meetings**

Shaker services are usually held on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday nights, but this schedule is flexible. Members usually walk to the meetings and if the weather is inclement it is possible that no one will appear. If a boat is in the harbor on the usual meeting day, the meeting may be re-scheduled for another evening or canceled to accommodate the members who work as dock hands or banana carriers. The Sunday meeting may be held in the afternoon if it is a street meeting or if someone offers his home for the meeting. Additional meetings may be held if someone is being "put to mourn," (see below) or if the

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14 Shaker churches do not list their services in the weekly newspaper, The Vincentian.
group is invited to conduct a memorial service. Meetings involving a
given congregation may be held not only in its own church but in other
churches, in homes of members or non-members, in the mourning room, or
in the street.

The worshippers usually begin to arrive for an evening meeting
about 7:30 or 8:00. They do not arrive in any particular order. They
kneel at the altar or center pole, cross themselves,¹⁵ and pray silently before taking a seat. They may drop a coin in the saucer on the altar; a collection is not taken by passing a basket or plate through the congregation, nor is any reference made to the saucer or its contents. There may be some hand-shaking and quiet conversation but soon someone will being humming or singing a hymn and the others will join in. There are no musical instruments or drums. Everyone carries a candle which may be lit from the altar candles, or from the candles on the center pole, or from a neighbor's candle. Many carry Bibles and hymnals.

All the women wear head ties because, according to Mother A., "It says in the Bible that women should have their heads covered in church . . . the Spirit is 'shamed of a woman's head if it is not covered." Most of the head ties are white. A few are colored—solid pastels, usually light blue, green, or lavender—which indicates that their wearers are "the more spiritual people" and "have received the higher gifts." They are the ones who have been to "mourn." Even after going to mourn, however, they may still wear a white head tie since they must wear "what the Spirit gives them." M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1936:

¹⁵This may possibly be due to Anglican or Catholic influence.
8-9) report that the manner in which the Negro women of Paramaribo tie their head ties can convey a variety of meanings. Shaker women averred, however, that the manner in which they tied the wraps around their heads was insignificant. The important consideration was to cover the head. (See Plate II, 2 and Plate VI, 1; some head ties are tied in front, others in back.) Most of the women wear straw hats, even dressy ones with veiling, ribbons, and flowers, perched on top of the head tie (see Plate IV, 1 and 2 and Plate V, 1). Men do not have to cover their heads and many are bare-headed, but some of them wear a tie that covers only the forehead (see Plate V, 2) and others cover their entire heads as the women do. Shoes are supposed to be removed in the church since it is a "holy place" but although most worshippers do take off their shoes, some do not.

Shakers who have been "to mourn" and have certain work to do in the cult have uniforms or some insignia of office to wear. A "queen mother" for example, may wear a blue dress, with a tight bodice, full skirt, short sleeves, and a collarless square neck, and a white apron with a bib; an "assistance mother" may wear a mauve dress made in the same fashion with tight bodice, full skirt, and short sleeves, with a white half-apron, a white tippet with white lace around the edge, and a rope around her waist; a "warrior," I was told, can be identified by the rosette on her dress, and a "captain" by bars on his sleeve and sometimes a ribbon across his chest.

Whenever the group is visiting another church, or having a special service such as baptism, everyone wears the full regalia to which he is entitled, if he has it. It seems to be the responsibility of each
person to provide his own uniform, and acquisition of a uniform may be put off indefinitely, depending, presumably, upon the person's resources. In the ordinary meetings, most of the worshippers will wear only part of the uniform or none of it. Sister E., for instance, complained that she suffers from "pressure" and gets too hot if she wears the tippet that belongs to her uniform. Mother O. usually wore the rope that was part of her uniform, with an ordinary dress. Pointer B. informed me that he had a white robe, but during my entire stay in St. Vincent, he never wore it.

The meeting begins, not according to the clock, but according to the number of people who have assembled. A hymn from the Methodist hymnal is announced by the leader and sung, with the congregation standing. Those who have hymn books follow the words in their copies; the others seem to have the words memorized. All stanzas are sung. The congregation is seated and the leader reads a Bible lesson. If the pointer is present, he frequently inserts comments, exclamatory repetitions of parts of the lesson being read, or phrases such as "Praise God!" The congregation may respond, in an approving manner, with an "Amen!" or "Yeah, man!" The pointer's comments, apparently intended to elucidate the biblical passage, are in turn frequently interspersed with hymns which the pointer may introduce with an expression such as "Someone told me that..." and which are sung while the congregation remains seated.

Another hymn is announced which is the signal for a particular ritual. Two people approach the altar. They kneel, according to Mother A., "to sanctify themselves first by praying to make themselves
acceptable in His sight." One takes the glass of water with the flowers, which the leader previously prayed over, and goes to the east, west, north, and south corners of the room, to the doorways, the center pole, and the four corners of the altar. At each station, she sprinkles water from the glass with the flowers three times, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," says a silent prayer, makes the sign of the cross with her lighted candle, and curtsies. The other person, who has taken the bell from the altar, follows her, and rings the bell three times at each station. Standing before the altar, they each take a sip of the water, replace the bell and the glass, shake hands ("to signify unity"), and return to their seats.

The Apostles' Creed is recited with the congregation facing the center pole if there is one, and holding their hands forward about waist high, palms open and up. Kneeling, they repeat the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and "O Lord, open Thou our eyes, and our lips shall show forth Thy praise." They stand to sing the Gloria Patri, the short hymn that is also known as the lesser doxology, in English, and to repeat a psalm, chanting it with eyes closed, hands raised as before. Another hymn is sung during which, in follow-the-leader fashion, everyone walks around and shakes hands with everyone else, eventually returning to his seat.

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16Every time that I witnessed this ritual in the praise house, the person who sprinkled the water was a woman and the bell ringer, although usually a woman, was occasionally a man. This ritual was performed in somewhat modified fashion when the meeting was held outdoors. Lighted candles were placed in the center and at the four corners of the table that served as altar. The leader or pointer, after praying over the glass of water, sprinkled the five candles and rang the bell over them.
The leader reads a psalm. Those who have brought their Bibles follow the reading. The pointer is again apt to interrupt to make some comment, often lengthy, on the text, or to add emphasis with an "Amen!" or "Yes, man!" As before, comments may be interspersed with hymns. When the leader has finished, he states, "Here endeth the portion," and the congregation stands to sing the Gloria Patri. More or less the same routine is followed for a biblical lesson taken from the New Testament.

After the lessons and the psalms, the pointer may sermonize at some length, interrupting himself periodically to insert a hymn. Various members of the congregation may offer lengthy prayers. The person leading the prayer kneels at the side of the altar and offers the prayer in a chanting fashion and the congregation responds. Various members may also "say a few words of consolation" interspersed with hymns and rarely lasting less than a half an hour, and usually longer. It is during this latter part of the service that dissociation is most likely to occur.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{17}}\text{Informants insist that their chanted prayers and "words of consolation" are spontaneous and deny that they might plan or prepare what to say in advance. However, it becomes obvious to the observer that there is much repetition in what is said. Not only may each speaker repeat himself, but he may repeat biblical and non-biblical phrases that seem to be Shaker favorites and are used over and over by many who speak. (One such phrase that might be heard several times in a single meeting and at almost every meeting was, "In my Father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. He goes to prepare a place for us.") In a chanted prayer, such phrases as "Loving God and my Redeemer," or "Jesus, guide them, if You please," seemed to serve a double purpose. They provided the supplicant with a ready-made formula to use, and, since it might be repeated as a kind of refrain throughout the prayer, it set the rhythm scheme for the rest of the phrases. So, although the prayer or speech might be spontaneous, it was not necessarily original.}\]
The service is closed with a benediction and, again, the Gloria Patri.

Other elements may be included in the service depending upon the purpose of the meeting or the whim of the pointer or leader, parts of the usual service may be omitted or the usual order may be altered. However, a high degree of consistency seems to prevail, despite the lack of organization among the separate churches and despite the apparent opportunity for innovation, and variations that obtain between churches and pointers as well as within the same church seem to be of a minor order.

Blessing a House

Meetings held at the homes of members for the purpose of blessing or "christening" a house or part of it seem to be popular. Such meetings are termed "thanksgiving" meetings. The table that serves as altar will have fruit, corn, and farina scattered over it, but the members do not seem to recognize the foodstuffs as representing a sacrifice. 18

The usual Methodist Order of Morning Worship is observed. The sermonizing, "words of consolation," and prayers, however, are concerned with the purpose of the meeting. The focal piece of ritual that is peculiar to this kind of service is carried out as follows. The pointer selects several people to assist him. He sends four with lighted candles to stand in the four corners of the room to be blessed

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18 According to Mother O., "Sacrifices were in the days before Jesus. They used to offer living sheep and goats and burn them. But Jesus made Himself the sacrifice."
(if the whole dwelling is being blessed, he sends people with lighted candles into the other rooms as well). A group of four then proceed from corner to corner. The first person in the group carries the Bible and reads a psalm at each station. The pointer follows him, carrying a glass of brandy or wine and a lighted candle. He dips the unlit end of the candle in the brandy, prays, and makes three splashes of brandy in the corner "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He marks a cross on the floor with the unlit end of the candle. The third person goes to the corner carrying a plate of broken pieces of bread, puts one on the rafter, and prays. The fourth carries the bell, prays, and rings the bell three times. In the last corner to be visited, the pointer also makes chalk designs on the wall. The four people perform the same rituals at the doorway that they had performed at the corners, and the pointer makes chalk designs on the floor before the door. A lighted candle is left standing on the floor in the doorway on top of the brandy that has been splashed there. The remaining brandy or wine is poured into glasses and passed to those in the congregation who want it and it is immediately consumed. After the meeting, which is quickly brought to a close after the important ritual, "beer and buns" are brought out and a period of conviviality ensues.

Rituals After a Death

Even non-Shakers (specifically, however, in the lower-class category, I was told) are likely to invite a congregation of Shakers to come to their homes and conduct the traditional ceremonies after a

19Non-alcoholic ginger beer.
person has died. These take place on the third night, the ninth night, and the fortieth night after the death. At the Forty Days Memorial Service I attended, corn and farina were scattered on the improvised altar. The service was the familiar routine, the only deviations were in the subject matter of the sermonizing, prayers, words of consolation, and hymns chosen. These all dealt with the central theme of death and what a Christian might expect in the afterlife, etc. After the service, "beer and buns" were featured as they seemed to be whenever a meeting took place at someone's house.

The composition of the group differed from the usual church congregation. The immediate family of the deceased, his relatives and friends--none of whom might be Shakers--attended as well as the members of the Shaker congregation that had been invited.
CHAPTER IV

IMPORTANT SHAKER RITUALS: BAPTISM AND MOURNING

Baptism--Becoming a Shaker

Baptism is requisite to becoming a Shaker, but a person seeks baptism only in response to a dream, or vision, or some sign that can be interpreted as a personal bid from the supernatural. Not everyone in the congregation, therefore, will have been baptized; those who have not are called "followers."

The supernatural call, however, would not appear to be very difficult to obtain. Vincentians generally regard dreams with awe and respect, not only their own dreams but those that other people have concerning them. A 25 year old non-Shaker, a Methodist communicant who attended the Methodist services regularly and ridiculed the Shakers unmercifully, admitted that she would obey the summons to join them if she were to have a dream that could be interpreted as an invitation or command to accept baptism, or if someone else were to have such a message revealed to him concerning her. One Shaker woman stated that she was quite perturbed because she had had several dreams that she knew meant that her adult daughter should be baptized but she had been unable to convince the girl to accept baptism as yet.

Several members revealed that they had been great scoffers of Shakerism before receiving the directive that had brought them to it.

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Few members had heeded the first call promptly. Mother E. waited 11 years, another woman had three dreams before making her decision. The pointer heard a voice one day when he was in the mountains, but waited for a later vision before obeying. Most informants described a "gentleman," often white and dressed in white, as an important element in the dream or vision; water and bodies of water were also important; several mentioned stones falling from heaven but not hitting or harming the dreamer; being in strange surroundings was common; and, in some cases, specific hymns, perhaps not previously known, were remembered as being outstanding features. One informant said that she had not had a dream or vision experience; she had been in the habit of attending the meetings and "saw that they were good." One night she felt something pushing her forward in the meeting. Her legs felt very light and she had to feel them to see if they were there. She followed the impulse, went forward and knelt at the altar, and was subsequently baptized. All informants had received earlier religious training in one of the large, organized churches: Anglican, Methodist, or Catholic. Frequently another member of the family was already a Shaker, but informants were adamant that this was not a factor in their own acceptance of the faith.

Ignoring the call seems to have physical consequences for the chosen person. Mother E., speaking of the years between her initial vision and her final decision "to baptize," said, "I was ill all that time." Sister W. had a similar experience: "If I strong today, tomorrow I sick; and if tomorrow I strong, next day, I sick." According to Sister A., "You don't feel good until you accept baptism," but
after baptism, then, "After you say your prayers and go to bed, you begin to be able to see beautiful things, like in the Bible, and you realize there is a God alive."

Children may attend Shaker services and younger children, seven or eight years old or younger, frequently do accompany their mothers. (It was interesting to note the relative absence of older children who were presumably old enough to be left at home to care for themselves or, perhaps, for younger children.) Children may be christened by sprinkling, but "later they have to be baptized in the faith" if they are to be Shakers. Pointer B. does not baptize anyone younger than 12. As mentioned before, children go to other churches for their early religious education since there is no provision for their specific religious instruction in the Shaker church. Mother E.'s daughter, for example, attends the Catholic school and is almost ready to make her First Communion. Despite the apparent conflict with the firmly-held notion that a person does not become a Shaker because a member of his family is one, E. said that her daughter intends to accept baptism and become a Shaker like her mother when she is old enough.

The person who decides to accept baptism becomes an important actor in a series of rituals. The first, at which he becomes officially recognized as a candidate for baptism, is known as "bowing."^ The bowing ceremony that I witnessed was divided between two meetings. Part of the ceremony was performed one night but the pointer was absent, and the two leaders and the mother who were officiating in his stead

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^Note the similarity to the "Vowing" service of the Jamaican revivalist churches (Simpson, 1956: 369-370).
were not qualified to perform all parts of the ritual. Several evenings later, the pointer completed the ceremony. At the first of the two meetings, except for a lengthy comment on baptism made by Leader M., the early part of the service followed the usual pattern. Leader M. then extended an invitation to "anyone who wants to give his heart to Christ Jesus" to "come now and bow." A young woman and a man went forward and knelt on the ground before him. The congregation stood and sang while Leader M. exhorted everyone to come to Jesus. A woman arranged the kneeling candidates, positioning their hands as they would be required to hold them for the duration of each meeting they would attend before baptism: each held a lighted candle in the right hand; the left was kept open, palm up (see Plate IV, 1). Both hands were extended, waist high, at right angles to the body. The candidates kept their eyes closed and were told that they were supposed to meditate constantly on their sins. Leader P. addressed some remarks particularly to "those of you who are about to ask Jesus to give you some of that water." Mother A. spoke next. She put the Bible with her lighted candle held on top of it on the head of first one, then the other, of the candidates, apparently praying over them. Holding the Bible and candle balanced on the man's head with one hand, Mother A. took the woman candidate's candle in her other hand, held it on the woman's head, prayed, marked the sign of the cross over the woman's head with the candle, and finally handed the candle back to her. She put the Bible on the head of each again and rang the bell over them. Taking the candle of each in turn, she marked a cross with it before them. She helped them to rise from their knees, explaining that she
had not yet had everything revealed to her so she would leave the rest for the elder (Pointer B.). But first she told them, "Not only are you going to sit there with your hands open but you are going to repent every one of your sins. He is going to make of you a better child."

Pointer B. continued the rites at the next meeting. It was held at another church (Questelles; the first part had taken place at Lowmans) but the composition of the congregation was about the same. The man who had "bowed" was not present, but the pointer said that, even so, it was his duty to introduce the woman candidate to the Christ Jesus. During one of the early hymns he used a piece of chalk to mark a circle on the floor around the center pole. He made four straight lines out from the pole to the circle and within the quadrants thus formed, he proceeded to draw designs.² Mother A. had put a lighted candle on the floor by the pole. He moved it to a place on one of the lines drawn out from the pole. Taking a glass of water and another candle, he dipped the unlighted end of the candle in the water and sprinkled his drawing with it. He then rang the bell in each of the four quadrants.

After the routine part of the service was over, Pointer B. gave Mother A. a prayer book. He directed the candidate to kneel on a pillow before him (this was a more elaborately furnished church than the other). With his hand on the woman's head, he prayed aloud asking the Holy Spirit to abide in her. While the seated congregation sang a hymn, Pointer B. put a lighted candle on the kneeling woman's head,

²An example of a chalk design is given in Appendix D. The one described above was much less elaborate.
then put the Bible on her head with the candle on top of it. He rang
the bell beside her. The mother read the questions for a candidate
for baptism from the prayer book and the woman responded. The congre-
gation sang another hymn while the pointer marked a cross on her head
with the lighted candle and gave her three sips of water. He marked a
cross on her forehead and her palms with chalk. The pointer announced
that he was going to "take a prove." Mother A. made a cross on the
woman's chest with the edge of the Bible, then handed it to her. The
candidate held it with both hands, the edges pointed toward her, and
made the sign of the cross with it. She opened it and Mother A. care-
fully noted where her thumbs touched the pages, and took the book from
her. She then read the three verses so indicated on each page. The
pointer interpreted the message therein to the congregation.

The "bowing" ritual required several hours to perform. The
pointer, leaders, and Mother A. were frequently in various stages of
dissociation, which seemed to hamper and retard their activities con-
siderably, but which seemed, at the same time, to augment the excite-
ment and importance of the proceedings.

After the candidates "bow," they undergo a period of training
which may vary from several weeks to several months depending, ac-
cording to informants, upon when the pointer is satisfied with the pre-
paredness of the candidates. In reality, it seems as if the pointer
waits until he has a group of candidates that he feels is large enough
to warrant holding the baptism ceremony; it is obviously a matter of
pride to be able to refer to an impressive number of "children."\(^3\)

According to Mother E., "The leader will give them (the candidates) the 51st psalm to read," to learn and be able to repeat back to him, and "they have to learn plenty other things." Mother O. stated that "When they are in the mercy seat,\(^4\) the leader and mothers teach them where to walk and how to speak in the way leading to the Lord, they read and learn things from the Bible, and teach them the way to baptism." At the meetings, the candidates sit on the front bench, "the bench of repentance," they "have their hand open, beggin' and askin' God to forgive them for all their sins while they are on the mercy seat."

The night before baptism, the mothers and leaders "will give words of consolation so that they will be able to tread the way as us do." The culminating ceremony is held on Sunday, around noon, but the candidates undergo what is apparently an attenuated form of the "mourning" ritual on Saturday night. They are blindfolded. Mother O. said, "Three white bands are tied around your eyes. They lay you down as if you going to mourn--you does journey that one night." "Banding and lying down," according to the pointer, "is symbolic death before being born again in baptism." Sister E. indicated that the candidates' hands and feet were ritually washed. The night is spent in prayer and "askin' God's mercy on them.

\(^3\) Pointer B. reported that he had baptized a total of 584 "children" and, at that time, had nine candidates preparing for baptism.

\(^4\) The bench on which the candidates for baptism sit--used here to mean the period between "bowing" and baptism.
For the baptism service, the pointer wears a "long, white gown, like a minister." A wooden cross, about eight feet high, is carried by the cross bearer, a man, who stands in the river beside the pointer—"He has to get wet"—and the pointer "plunges you under that cross."

Mother O. provided the following information: "Two women, can be a mother or a nurse, take you to the pointer in the water. He holds you, dips you backward three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. After the first dip, some shake depending on how they are expecting to receive something. The pointer hands you to the mother. She takes you back and gets another to take to the pointer."

Speaking later as a mother who had assisted in the baptism of others, she said, "When they come out of the water, they shake so you have to hold them up so they won't fall in the water again." An assistance mother, nurse, or matron helps the candidates change their clothes.

Mother O. continued, "When you see those who have been baptized in white dresses and white veils with blue crosses on their foreheads, and the men in white with white head ties, it is very beautiful."

Sister E. said, however, that it is a "hard thing to take baptism."

**Mourning—Becoming a More Important Shaker**

"Mourning" is a Shaker rite of great importance both for those who undergo its rigors and for those who do not. The former are in a position to benefit from its blessings; the latter do not acquire the resulting advantages, and consequently, remain ordinary members in the cult. Unlike baptism, mourning can be repeated with the possibility of

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5 No baptism was held during my stay on the island.
deriving further benefits. After the initial experience, however, the rite is more accurately referred to as "building." Baptism, mourning, and building are rites that intensify division and increase specialization. Baptism separates the converted from the non-converted. Mourning divides the Shaker in-group into those who have mourned, and hence have some position in the cult, from mere members. And, since not all of those who mourn receive the same gifts, it initiates the separation into various capacities that is furthered by building, the more exclusive in-group composed of mourners being divided into various classes of elders. Thus, for any given Shaker, there are those who are elder to him in the cult, and, if he has been to mourn, there are also those to whom he is elder.

Mourning in this sense does not mean grieving for the dead. A Shaker who goes to mourn, mourns for his sins. Mourning may also be referred to as "taking a spiritual journey" or "a pilgrim journey." Like baptism, mourning is undertaken in response to a sign from the Holy Spirit. But again, since this can be as indefinite as the interpretation of someone else's dream, it is not likely that a supernatural sign would be too difficult to discover.

When a Shaker has decided to go to the "secret room" (the mourning room), some practical preparations may have to be made, since mourning is a lengthy procedure requiring perhaps six to 14 days or more. For example, when Sister W. and A. were planning to go, she said that they were going to have to "beg for jobs, a few day's work, because we have

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6See page 53.
to have money to buy bands and food." (She did not regard this as an unsurmountable difficulty. The incumbent Chief Minister had been her teacher when she was in school and had been instrumental in legalizing Shakerism, and she intended to apply to him. She said that she and A. would each need $5 - $6 BWI. A. received $1.60 per day for work on the roads.) Three people were being put to mourn at the same time. Sister W., a large, powerfully-built woman, had mourned previously, but not under Pointer B. The pointer under whom she had mourned, she complained, had "robbed" her. During her spiritual journey she had seen the queen remove her crown and place it on her (Sister W.'s) head, which indicated that she was entitled to a ritual known as "being crowned," but the pointer had not "crowned" her. When she took her grievance to Pointer B., he had told her that he could do nothing and that she would have to repeat the mourning ritual. A., a short, slight man who lived with Sister W. and her husband, had once been a choir boy in the Methodist church. He had already mourned five times, and had been fulfilling the office of prover for Pointer B. The third mourner was a man from another part of the island and unknown to me.

That mourning was regarded as something of a feat was made explicit at the service held the night before the trio were put to mourn. The leader not only expounded at length on its hardships but invited anyone who felt so inclined to add to his remarks, saying, "We do know it is not an easy task \(\text{\textit{to mourn}}\) so if anyone want to give a word of consolation, they are at liberty." Several availed themselves of the opportunity, expressing such thoughts as, "At the beginning it is rough
and stony and some mortals faint by the way. As my sister and brother are about to renew the covenant, may they faint not."

The tiny mourning room near Pointer B.'s house at Chapmans Village in the country was the setting for the beginning ritual in the mourning rite the next evening. As Sister W. had expected, "All the girls who want to, will come to see us put to mourn," and the room was crowded. Some worshippers were standing outside looking in the open door. A circle had been made on the floor with chalk. A lighted candle was standing in the middle of the circle, four other candles were placed around it, and a variety of designs had been drawn within the circle. According to informants, the chalk design served as a "map" for the mourners on their journey (see Appendix D). The usual Methodist Order of Morning Worship was more or less followed. The consecration of the corners was performed. The three mourners, or "pilgrims," stood or knelt together at one side of the room. They kept their hands in the receptive or begging attitude that the baptismal candidates had maintained, palms open and up. Several leaders and mothers led hymns or knelt to offer the typically chanted prayers, accompanied by fairly general dissociation.7

Several women, at Pointer B.'s behest, prepared a basin of water with green leaves and a lighted candle in it, to "wash the feet of the pilgrims." Pointer B. said a prayer over it, the candle was removed, and the faces, hands, and feet of each mourner were washed (see Plate VI, 1).

7 See Chapter V for a detailed discussion of dissociation.
A "prove" was taken for each which the pointer commented on with apparent satisfaction. He then wrapped the Bible in the "bands." They were of various colors--white, blue, mauve--and resembled wide neckties or ascots. Designs had been made on them, circles, crosses, etc., with chalk and dripped candle wax (see Plate VI, 2). The pointer put two bands across Sister W.'s head, one across the head of one of the male mourners, none across the head of the other. He put three bands across the outstretched hands of each of the mourners and three around the shoulders of each. In response to his question, at this point, Sister W. confessed that she had been guilty of calling someone a fool. The pointer lit a candle, held it over her head, and prayed. Returning to the bands, he lifted and removed Sister W.'s head tie, marked three crosses on her forehead, put two bands from the top of her head around her eyes, then one at a time, took those from around her shoulders and across her hands and tied them around her eyes. Mother B. followed him to put Sister W.'s head tie back on and tied it loosely around her neck. Moving on to the men, the pointer and mother repeated the procedure (see Plate VII, 1).

After the service was brought to a close, several mothers busied themselves preparing the room for the mourners. They made three pallets on the floor with pieces of burlap and put a pillow at one end of each. Cloths were arranged over a rope that was stretched across the room so that two sections were formed, one for Sister W., the other for the men. The mourners lie either on their right sides or on their backs, because "you can't get nothin' on the left."
The mourners' diet is limited, but Shakers give every assurance that it is adequate (although this is not the consensus of non-Shakers). The kitchen in which the food is prepared must be near the mourning room so the food can be carried directly to them, and it must be carefully covered so that Satan cannot contaminate it or gain access to the mourners. For breakfast and the evening meal, the mourners are given "bush tea," made of guinea pepper and mint, with or without milk, and bread. At lunch they are given rice and codfish, but no fresh fish or potatoes. Persons with dietary problems are not excluded from mourning, however, because the Spirit can intervene and make known that they are to have other foods than those generally provided.

Mother A. said that three days elapse before the pilgrims have conversation with anyone "except they have to go out or a mother talks to them. They pray all the time." "On the third day," according to Sister W., "they rise you from the ground. They have candles and the bell and the Bible set on the ground. You march around in a ring with the bell to your feet. You try to catch the song of the bell. Then you take off. Then you travel." During the travels, the mourner discovers what his work in the cult is to be. "If you are to be a mother, you will see the dress you are to wear. You get gifts which have a

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8 The Public Health doctor, for example, stated that "They may keep mourners two or three weeks, and starve them. They may not get enough fluids--and see all kinds of things. The teachers know full well that if you starve a person he becomes deluded and sees things. By suggestion, he is helped along."
symbol; a book means you have to go out and preach; a switch in hand, means you are to be a leader."

Going to mourn was referred to as going to school. Each time you return you learn more. Apropos of speaking in tongues, it was said that "in one class, you may get one unknown tongue, and the next time you go to mourn, you may get another." According to the pointer, when you go to mourn you "regenerate. Then you have the true zeal of the Spirit. You go for a deeper knowledge of God." The other sisters and brothers may go and "pray and offer words of consolation" to the mourners. The pointer gives them "some charges" from the Bible and "teaches them how to live." And the Holy Spirit will "come and teach you all things."

Some people are not fit subjects for mourning. According to Pointer B., "You, who have laid the pilgrim, will know. The Spirit reveals it to you. The nurse in the room may know. If the person went to the Spirit in malice against his fellows, they have to go back in humility and ask God's pardon and make things right with the person before they can have a frequent with the Spirit." Another informant said that "The minute you take the band, the Holy Spirit will put you off. You will see those things you did in front of you \(\sqrt{\text{evil}}\) and you just can't get no place. The Holy Spirit can't magnify in you when you are evil." Sister W. said that "If you don't have faith, you run out. If you kill somebody, even throw away children, you can't get no place

\[\text{Dr. Cordice, Public Health doctor, commented that "Some under this treatment will have complete breakdowns--those with a potential schizophrenic background."}\]
to try to mourn." It is the responsibility of the pointer to evaluate each subject. An unsuitable person "will go crazy if you don't release them. The pointer has to know what to do." According to Mother E., about eight of the people who have mourned under Pointer B. have been so affected. There have been 11 souls, she said, that he has rejected.

There is no definite length of time for a mourner to remain in the "secret room." Mother A. said that a mourner stayed "according to the limit of the spirit." Sister W. expressed the hope that if she were to "pray fast and pray hard" she would be able to leave in eight days. (This did not happen. She remained for ten days.) The pointer determines when a mourner may leave. "He knows when to dismiss you. He will ask questions to see when you are ready to come out, if you've been any places."¹⁰

When the period of mourning is over, a special meeting is held in the praise house so that the pilgrims may "shout," or describe in detail, their visions and spiritual journeys to the congregation, and, again, they are the center of attention and the objects of specific rituals.

I attended one session at which two mourners "shouted." Each mourner regaled the congregation with a rambling, detailed account of his spiritual journey. They frequently interrupted their recitals to interpose hymns which were featured on their journeys ("I hear a song . . ." or "I heard someone singing. . .") and which the congregation then joined in singing. One mourner had apparently experienced some

¹⁰See Mayhew (1953) for mourning in Trinidad.
anxious moments before the desired visions were initiated; he informed his audience, "I prayed four days--four solid days--I don't see nothing. When I prayed, I started, 'My God! What have I done? You turn Your back against me. I don't kill nobody!'" The mourners in recounting their experiences indicated that the visions included much that was familiar and ordinary for them, such as walking along the road to a nearby village, meeting and conversing with one of the cult mothers, going to church, having an ache or pain, etc. Some of the happenings described were probably of a somewhat less familiar nature to them, but, still within the range of possibility, such as, "I find myself into an office and I have to sign. I take a pen. I have to sign." And much of what they told was extraordinary, as, for example, "I heard a voice speak to me. It said it would send Peter and Gabriel to visit me. Hear what I said, people? The voice I heard sent Gabriel and Peter."

Several informants who had mourned mentioned being "crowned." One woman said that, on her journey, she had seen the queen take her crown off her own head and put it on the head of the mourner, indicating that she was eligible to be "crowned." Such a vision entitles the mourner to the central role in an impressive and coveted bit of ritual when he shouts--"They put the Bible on your head and the mothers hold candles around your head" (see Plate VII, 2). However, as with all gifts acquired on a spiritual journey, the pointer has to concur before any gifts are forthcoming. So, "Unless the pointer sees it too, you don't get crowned." Colors for head ties are also "given" to the pilgrim on his journey. Those who have been to mourn will usually wear colored
head ties, non-mourners wear white. However, the Spirit will occasionally decree that a mourner will continue to wear white. Directives concerning other wearing apparel are also given. Pointer B. took much pride in wearing only "what I get from the Spirit," and spoke disdainfully of another pointer who "enlarges himself and wears other things to increase his importance."

The values of mourning for a Shaker are obvious. A successful spiritual journey becomes his key for admittance into the Shaker elite.
Possession by the Holy Spirit is manifested in a state of disassociation among the Shakers, and is a common occurrence during Shaker meetings. Trance rarely occurs during the early part of the service, however; at that time the worshippers are busy with responses, following

1The Shakers conceptualize trance during the meetings as the result of the entry of the Spirit into the body of the worshipper, but the details of the concept seem to be somewhat vague and confused. According to Pointer B., the "Power is a breeze descended that comes as a rushing wind into the heart. When It leaves, you feel something leaving you." Mother A. mentioned having the feeling "that you were in the spirit," and said that the Spirit might "manifest on someone and bring something in the person's heart." Sister E. gave the clear-est statement, "That Power sincerely be inside you."

The same ambiguity can be found in the discussion of spirit possession among the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits. They state that the "'Spirit' actually touches the worshipper with an unseen hand, and a shiver electrifies his body causing him first to stiffen, then to begin to shake. The 'Spirit' fills him with joy, causing him to dance, to speak in tongues, to prophesy, to 'see.'" And, although it is not clear whether or not the Spirit is believed to actually enter the person, M. J. and F. S. Herskovits seem to be satisfied that this is an example of possession: "The phenomenon of possession by the 'Spirit,' the physical manifestations of such possession in the shaking, the dancing, the speaking in tongues, the bringing back of spiritual gifts are all at the core of the Shouters worship everywhere" (1947: 192-193).

In his discussion of the Trinidadian Spiritual Baptists, Simpson also leaves an uncertain impression. He states that the "spirit may come to" a person, or that a person may "get the spirit," and speaks of the "manifestations of the spirit on the pilgrims." He also seems to regard this phenomenon as spirit possession (1966a: 541).
the Bible lessons in their own Bibles, singing hymns from their hymnals, kneeling, sitting, standing, shaking hands, etc., so that states of dissociation apparently have little opportunity to develop. If a worshipper begins to slip into a trance, as evidenced by a sob, a yell, or a shudder perhaps, it very quickly aborts.

As the service proceeds beyond the early period in which the conventional, prescribed forms are read or recited from memory, the opportunity for more originality and improvisation occurs. The leaders, for the most part, have been assuming the responsibility for the program, but at this point a member of the congregation may take an important solo part by offering "a few words" or a prayer. When the speaker takes his position to give the "words of consolation," he stands while the congregation remains seated. He usually begins by singing the first few words of a hymn, the congregation quickly joining in. While he preaches, he walks back and forth. As he becomes more deeply engrossed in his subject, he may wave his arms and appear more excited. Periodically, after the initial hymn, he interrupts his sermonizing with the favorite device of Shaker speakers by saying, "I t'ink I heard someone say. . ." or some other appropriate phrase to lead into a hymn, which everyone sings. While the speaker is performing, the congregation usually maintains a steady, monotonous background of low singing or humming, which often becomes louder and more persistent. When a person offers a prayer, he kneels before the seated congregation, usually at the corner or side of the altar, and chants or sings the prayer while the congregation chants a response at the end of each metered verse. During activities of this nature, dissociation is
likely to occur.

The worshippers sit with their eyes closed, or half-closed, on the narrow, backless benches. Often holding up their heads, yawning perhaps, and appearing to be half asleep, they give the impression that they are lost in their own inner concerns and are paying little attention to what is transpiring around them. This impression is reinforced when they sing while someone is preaching. But, although they seem less than interested in the sermon, they do not appear to be any more interested in their own singing.

When standing for a hymn, the worshippers keep time by swaying from side to side, or by swinging about in a semicircle, pivoting first on one foot, then on the other, and/or by clapping their hands or slapping themselves lightly with a branch of sago or a book, or by pounding their Bibles or prayer books with the end of a candle. When seated, they also mark the rhythm—by rocking back and forth, by twisting from side to side at the waist, by tapping their bare feet or clapping their hands, or by some arm-hand or head movement. They do not cross their legs.

Trance seems to occur either as a single individual project or one in which each dissociated individual acts as a soloist (see Plate V, 1), or as a group performance (see Plate V, 2) in which the trances

\[2\] Note the similarities to Field's (1960: 56-57) description of the "possession fit" in West Africa.

\[3\] The Shakers say there is no reason for not crossing their legs. According to M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947: 336), however, the Trinidadian Shouters say that "anything 'crossed' will keep the 'saints' away."
take on choral aspects. At any time (although, as has been noted, it is less likely to happen in the early part of the service) a person may exhibit symptoms of developing trance. He may be the only one in the group to do so at the time, or there may be several individuals scattered through the church. He may be one of the members of the audience or he may be the person who has been performing--preaching or praying. In the case of the former, he has been sitting with his eyes closed, or half-closed, humming or singing or inserting the proper responses, probably marking the rhythm established by the singing or the prayer in some manner. The first outward indication of dissociation may be a convulsive jerk of an arm or arms, of a shoulder or shoulders, or of the head. Or it may be a shiver, or shudder, or trembling. It may be a sudden shout, sob, or hiss, or series of unintelligible sounds, or any combination of such movements and/or vocalizations that would indicate a departure from the earlier apathetic behavior of the person. He may even stand up suddenly and dance. These external signs of probable inward lessening of control are apparently spontaneous, and for each trancer they have a random quality lacking rhythmic or kinetic patterning. If several persons in the group are affected at the same time, their motions and sounds are not standardized. Each will display a different set of symptoms. At this level of trance\(^4\) then, symptoms viewed either for the individual or for the group are random and unpatterned. However, from one session

\(^4\)When I first witnessed Shaker services involving dissociation, the trances seemed completely chaotic to me. But with repeated and attentive observation, I became increasingly aware of the reality of
to another, the movements and sounds of a particular individual can often be predicted and identified at this level, since each trancer seems to develop his own peculiar style. For example, Mother O.'s head would droop as though she were dozing, then suddenly jerk back; she would move her arm forward and up, with her fist tightly clenched. Her usual shout accompanying the movements was "Hi!" or "Hi! Yi!" Sister W. would usually shake her shoulders and jerk both arms forward and up, and she frequently sobbed.

If the trancer happens to be the performer, the first indication that a trance is developing may be a quaver in his voice. He may jerk spasmodically, or tremble, or occasionally break into his own prayer or preaching with a yell. He may become more restless and excited, and if he is on his feet, he may pace back and forth more rapidly. He will, however, maintain sufficient control to be able to continue and to be understood. When Mother R. was addressing the group, her voice would tremble noticeably, she would become somewhat breathless and excited, and she would interrupt her sermonizing from time to time to insert a loud "Holy Ghost!"

The incipient trance might not advance beyond this first level. The manifestations might subside more or less quickly, or they might persist and the trance might be maintained at this level, or there might be repeated returns to this level after periods of normalcy, or the manifestations might develop further into the next level.

"levels of trance" and the possible sequences of trance levels that might occur. The concept became fully clarified when I listened to the sounds of dissociation on tape. That the various levels of trance were dramatically different became obvious from the sounds.
When the trance progresses to the second level, it frequently involves more than a single individual and becomes a group phenomenon. As more and more individuals become involved in the first level type of random symptoms, a subtle shift, without a definite break and change, is made to behavior characteristic of the second level. Each individual will have established an action pattern for himself which he repeats over and over, quite rapidly. This may only be an arms or head movement pattern, or it may involve more of the body. If the person is standing, as he might be if the trance develops as the aftermath of singing a hymn, his feet may be involved in the pattern of movements, but he never strays far from his own circumscribed area. Most trancers bend forward from the waist, and, if they are standing, their knees are also slightly bent. When Leader M. was on his knees praying and reached this stage of dissociation, he would bend forward, putting his knuckles on the ground, gorilla-fashion, almost touch his head to the ground, then jerk back up again with amazing speed. This movement was repeated over and over and was accompanied by gasps as he jerked back. Leader R., when seated, would bend his head almost to his knees, jerk his head up and back, bubbling his lips on the way down and audibly taking in gulps of air on the way up.

Whatever idiosyncratic movements or sounds or breathing peculiarities prevail they become less conspicuous because of the concerted attention to the same rhythm pattern. Whether this stage of trance occurs as the outgrowth of a prayer, sermon, or hymn is immaterial. In any event, there has been some singing or humming or chanting to afford the group a rhythmic beat to cling to. The pointer or leader
frequently quickens the pace by beating out a faster tempo on the altar with his book or strap, or by singing more loudly and raucously in faster time, and the congregation accepts and adapts to such changes readily. If they have been singing a hymn, the words at the beginning of it are distinct and understandable. But as the worshippers continue singing and dissociation begins to appear, the tempo changes and the words slowly degenerate into repeated syllables which, in turn, with the achievement of the second level of trance, become grunts and gasps—these are emitted in unison, however, with each person maintaining the established beat. In the first level of trance, the sounds of the various trancers can be singled out on a tape of the proceedings and, in many cases, the person responsible for them can be identified. But at the second level, the sounds are so well blended that it becomes impossible to identify anyone by the sounds. At this level, understandable speech is no longer produced.

Several trancers, at this level, rolled their eyes back so that only the whites could be seen, others kept their eyes closed. Some showed signs of profuse sweating, which might not seem unusual in the hot, humid climate and considering the physical exertion, but others engaged in the same activities did not. Some sprayed saliva, but there was no frothing. There was no yelling or shouting at this level. In several instances, a trancer was seen brushing a lighted candle without reacting. But, interestingly, in spite of the number of lighted candles and the trancers' apparent inattention, nothing ever caught fire.

In crowded situations, the breathing of the trancers are kept to a precise tempo, and the motion patterns are depersonalized and unified
so that each person, as if in a dance line, is reproducing much the same movements. This was observed several times when the group was standing and huddled together. All of the trancers were bent over at the waist, with their knees bent, and they all bobbed up and down simultaneously, keeping the rhythm. This would appear to be very similar to the "trumping and laboring" described by Moore (1965: 64) for several Jamaican revival cults--"a shuffling two-step dance done to 2/2 rhythm, bending forward and up in rhythmic sequence, while sucking the breath into the body and releasing it with a grunting sound."

Eventually the patterned, rhythmic production is upset and slowly obliterated. If the trancers had formed a huddle, some of them wander a few feet away from the group and undo the choral dance aspect of the phenomenon further by interjecting idiosyncratic movements that no longer observe the established tempo. The breathing ceases to be a disciplined activity spaced at set intervals. Some trancers destroy the rhythm with irregularly timed yells and loud sighs. Occasionally, the close of the second level is accomplished abruptly. In some cases, it seems as if the regular tempo is disregarded by universal, tacit consent of the trancers. At other times, there seems to be a signal—someone rings the bell or begins singing a hymn with a conflicting beat.

At the third level, movements and sounds are without discernible pattern as they were at the first level. They become random and spasmodic, degenerating from the smooth, rhythmic performance of the prior level. But, in contrast to the first level, the sounds produced
are not spotty, occasional yells against a musical background. Trancers
in the third level do not sing or hum, rather they produce gasps, groans,
sighs, and shouts in profusion. The trancers sound and appear to be
bewildered and perhaps breathless from exertion. The scene is one of
confusion. No special treatment is required to bring the trancers back
to normal, and the trances are terminated in a short time.

Although some trances follow this outline, most sessions are not
quite so simple. In many cases, instead of returning to normal follow­
ing the third level of the trance, the trancers again slip into the
second level activities, and then, later, return to the third level,
and so on. If a trancer does return to normal after the third level
and before the meeting is over, it is likely that he will return to a
state of dissociation again. And, although the second level is usually
a shared period of more or less general dissociation, not everyone
achieves it nor departs from it simultaneously, so that, at times, one
group may be at the second level while others are still maintaining
the more individualistic prior level, or while others have already
escaped the set tempo and are at the third level.

The total gross period of dissociation during a particular meeting
may last only a short while, as it did one evening when there were only
momentary indications of beginning trances that did not persist and
came to naught, or it may last for two, three, or four hours.\(^5\) When
the period is longer, however, the trance level does not remain con­
stant. A person may spend from several minutes to perhaps an hour or

\(^5\)Perhaps longer. I often wondered whether the meetings were being
terminated earlier than usual for my convenience.
more fluctuating between a near-normal state (during which activities apparently conducive to trance development are taking place) and the first level of trance. And, at any time during that period, after an initial few minutes, the trancer is apt to slip into the next level. Transition periods required for the shift from one level to another seem to be relatively short, usually of the nature of less than half a minute to a minute and a half. A deeper trance for an individual may last from about five minutes to perhaps forty-five minutes, but the second level trance as described for a group usually lasted between five and ten minutes, before some of the participants broke away. The third level is usually short, a few minutes at the most.

Certain people in the group can be depended upon to become disassociated at almost every meeting while others were never seen to be affected. The Shakers explain this by saying that some people never shake externally; the Holy Ghost enters them but only shakes them within. But, on the other hand, they also say that "Some people have a deeper zeal, they whip and shake more." The non-trancers continued the background singing or humming, rather half-heartedly, it seemed to me, during the periods of group dissociation when the trancers, presumably, were no longer able or interested in doing so.

On several occasions, a trancer, usually a woman, was observed who was more boisterous than the others or who had become sufficiently disoriented that she, or he, was in danger of falling. Each time, several people nearby stood ready to support her and help her to her knees so she would not be hurt. It is interesting to note that, in one instance, a woman who was about to fall had just "bowed," (see
Plate IV, 2) or declared her intention to accept baptism, and had been the focus of a rather lengthy and impressive ritual. In another case, a woman had just been chastised for cursing someone as a climax to an equally lengthy and impressive ritual to establish her guilt. When she became dissociated, although she did not fall since she was seated, she was much more violent than most trancers and flailed her arms about, striking her neighbors. On several occasions, Pointer B. was seen to reel as if intoxicated and to fall, or almost fall, into a group of seated worshippers. Each time, hands went up to support and stabilize him and to prevent his falling. This occurred on the evening described above when he was taking the woman to task. More violent trancing was also described for persons being baptized. It might be that this apparently atypical trance behavior in the Shaker church is more apt to occur following an experience fraught with emotion and possibly fatigue. For the most part, however, trance was extremely well controlled; there was no violence to one's self nor to others, and it was regarded as a welcome and benevolent experience.

Informants say that they know the Spirit is going to come to them because they feel "a tremblin' within" before they begin to shake. When the Spirit comes, "It is very nice the way It take you and that

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6 Mischel and Mischel (1958: 252) mention crises such as "serious marital or other interpersonal problems, . . . difficult decisions, . . . involvement in court cases, or . . . other severely frustrating or conflict-producing events" as situations stimulating the induction of possession among shangoists in Trinidad. Although the Shakers did not seem to require extraordinary stimulus for the usual trances, such stimulus did seem to be a factor in the production of atypical trances.
Power have you and shake all your sins away." They say it feels "like a breeze passing through you--it makes you feel very light like you are going to faint, but you don't." When asked whether they experienced amnesia, informants qualified their remarks to the effect that they do remember shaking and shouting and what they say, but they only remember what happens between themselves and the Spirit. If someone were to touch them or speak to them when the Spirit was shaking them, they would not remember that. "When It comes, It really shakes you so you pay no attention to anything but the Spirit. When It leaves you, you feel relaxed and strong."

Vincentian Spiritual Baptists insist that they do nothing (aside from being "pure in heart") to attract or invite the Spirit to "manifest on" them; it is the Spirit's choice. When it was suggested that they also might seek possession by devices such as the "trumping and laboring" reported for Jamaican revival cults as the "means whereby the Spirits are invited to enter into the body of the dancers" (Moore, 1965: 64), they flatly denied it--such breathing was the result of the Spirit shaking them. In fact, Shakers' breathing anomalies do not occur at the early stage of the trance nor as an induction measure for trance; rather they seem to be indicative of the greatest distance from reality and normality that was witnessed. Unconsciousness can occur, according to informants (in response to my questions), but was never witnessed nor were any specific anecdotes recounted to substantiate the report.

The usual Shaker trances, then, seem to fall rather nicely into three levels. For a given individual, the first level, at which the
trance seems to be fairly shallow, may either be of momentary duration or may continue at approximately the same level for a period of time, perhaps as long as a half-hour or more. The trancer can be diverted at this level. A flash of light may intrude sufficiently to attract his attention, as may the voice of the pointer or other external stimuli. The various situations in which the course of a trance reaches the first level and then returns to normalcy without further development may be diagrammed in the following ways:

(a) Brief duration.

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Normal   Normal
//------------
First level
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(b) Extended duration.

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Normal   Normal
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First level
```

(c) Repetitive.

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Normal   Normal   Normal   Normal
//  //  //  //
First level First level First level
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Fig. 1.—First Level Trances.
In 1 (a), the trance slips from the normal state, via a transitional period, into an instantaneous trance state. After another transition period, normalcy is re-established.

I have designated as a period of transition that time, whether inappreciable or measurable by ordinary means and units, when the subject is undergoing a change from any level in the scheme to any other level. Hence, the transition period is not marked by distinctive behavior peculiar to it alone, but rather by a meld of the behaviors characteristic of the stages adjacent to it. It is used in the figures as an indication and reminder that an individual rarely plunges precipitately from one level to another, but that the shift is blurred and indistinct. Dotted lines are used to emphasize this indefinite quality.

In 1 (b), the trance develops in the same manner as in 1 (a), but it lasts for a longer period before the transition is again made to normalcy.

In some cases, as shown in 1 (c), the achievement of the shallow, first level trance and the subsequent attainment of normalcy may recur repeatedly without a deeper trance being reached in the interim.
In some cases, the trance becomes perceptibly deeper than in the first level and environmental distractions are no longer heeded. The second level trance develops from the first level, and eventually shifts to a third level, characterized by confusion and apparent bewilderment, random movements and sounds. The third level is usually brief and, after a transition period, the subject may return to normalcy. This situation is shown in figure 2.

The third level is diagrammed as being less deep than the second level but deeper than the first because it was my impression that the third level shared with the second a more restricted awareness of distractions, yet no longer partook of the greater "loss of self" in rhythm that was characteristic of the second level.

7The relative length of lines is not intended to be an accurate indication of the duration of the level or transition in question.

8The distractions that occurred at the services witnessed, however, were of low magnitude; perhaps more demanding stimuli, such as a sonic boom nearby, etc., might be able to penetrate the barrier against certain aspects of the environment.
During the course of an evening, the diagram of an individual's trance activities, his trance "map," so to speak, may present a series of ups and downs from one level to another, without any break in which the person returns to normalcy during the period of dissociation. This situation is shown in figure 3.

Fig. 3--Possible Sequence of Trance Levels for an Individual During a Total Trance Period.

Fig. 4--Trance Maps for Several Individuals Superimposed to Show Fields of Reinforcement.
If the trance maps of all the trancers were superimposed on one another, we would have a picture of the group trance pattern for an evening. The transition periods of all the individuals would not coincide, of course, nor the lengths of time that each individual would remain in a certain stage, but, where the individual trance maps would agree during the second level trances, the resultant reinforcement would produce the choral phenomenon described above, and shown in figure 4. At points A and C, most of the trancers are engaging in the same rhythmic pattern. At points B and D, they are beginning to return to more individualized rhythms (or non-rhythm) and actions. From A to B and C to D, however, the choral aspects are prominent.

A fourth level might have been included to cover the situation in which a trancer has apparently withdrawn farther than is ordinarily the case, has lost his ability to interact in a coordinated manner with his surroundings, and is in danger of falling or colliding with others. However, as has been stated, this is not the usual case.

Shaker trances, on the whole, seem to be simple and uncomplicated, a source of satisfaction and perhaps benefit to the participants.
CHAPTER VI

THE TRANCE PHENOMENON AMONG THE SHAKERS:

MOURNING AS AN EXPERIENCE IN SENSORY DEPRIVATION

Trance unaccompanied by a belief in spirit possession occurs among the Shakers during the period of seclusion referred to as "mourning" (see Chapter IV). The mourner is expected to go on a "spiritual journey" and see various signs during his travels that will indicate what his future work in the cult is to be. And it is likely that the mourner becomes dissociated, experiences hallucinations, and does "see" what he later reports; he is subjected to a series of restrictive conditions that are so strikingly similar to those created for certain formal investigations of the effects of sensory deprivation on the human organism that similar results might reasonably be expected. In fact, it might conceivably be suggested that insofar as the results are the same, they are dependent on human biological reactions to the conditions of deprivation, and that to the extent that the results differ, they are influenced by the cultural make-up of the subjects. Therefore, I will first review some of the important sensory deprivation experiments that have been performed and then I will compare experimental sensory

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1A more detailed version of this chapter may be found in Working Paper #21, A Cross-Cultural Study of Dissociational States, The Ohio State University, 1967.
deprivation with ritual sensory deprivation as it is practiced by the Shakers in their mourning rite.

**Sensory Deprivation Experiments**

In 1951, Dr. D. O. Hebb and his associates at McGill University began a series of experiments to determine the effects of sensory deprivation on human beings. Their subjects were male college students, who were paid twenty dollars a day to participate in the study. They were instructed to lie on a bed in a lighted 8 x 6 x 4 foot room and remained as long as they were willing, usually three or four days. They wore cotton gloves and cardboard cuffs which covered their fingers to lessen tactual perception and translucent goggles which admitted light but precluded patterned vision. The room was partially sound-proof. Auditory perception was further limited by a foam rubber pillow and the masking sounds of an air conditioner and an intercommunication system. The intercom connected the subject and the experimenter who was always stationed outside the room, but communication was kept to a minimum. The subjects were taken to the toilet and given food when they requested it (Bexton et al., 1954; Heron et al., 1956; Heron, 1961; Scott et al., 1959; Doane et al., 1959).

Hallucinations were reported by some of the subjects. In one experiment, all 14 subjects described imagery of a simple nature, 11 reported more complex forms, seven reported figures or objects without backgrounds, and three described full-blown scenes (Bexton et al., 1954: 74). Three McGill experimenters utilized themselves as subjects, and all of them experienced hallucinatory activity after the first day.
They likened the effects that they experienced to those reported "after administration of certain drugs (such as mescal and lysergic acid) and after certain types of brain damage" (Heron et al., 1956: 14-18).

The translucent goggles worn by the subjects were changed to opaque goggles in order to discover the effect of light on hallucinating. For the first two hours after the goggles were changed, hallucinatory activity increased, but then it stopped or decreased sharply. A return to translucent goggles brought a corresponding return to hallucinating. Doane et al. (1959: 214) suggested that "unpatterned sensory stimulation increases the probability of hallucinatory activity."

Bexton et al. (1954: 75) found that "There was some control over content; by 'trying' the subject might see certain objects suggested by the experimenter, but not always as he intended." Heron (1961: 18), however, in a study involving 29 subjects, 25 of whom reported hallucinatory activity, found that the subjects were unable to exert much control over content, activation or cessation of the phenomenon.

The effect of propaganda presented to the subjects during isolation was tested and compared with the effect on a control group. "Both groups showed a significant change of attitude after listening to the propaganda, but the change was much greater for the experimental subject than it was for the controls" (Scott et al., 1959: 205).

Vernon and his associates, experimenting later at Princeton University, placed their subjects in a 4 x 6 foot cubicle within a 15 x 9 foot "floating room" that was specially constructed for maximum
soundproof and lightproof conditions. Their subjects wore earplugs and cardboard cuffs, and were instructed to remain as quiet as possible. The cubicle was equipped with a bed and a chair. The subjects were blindfolded and led to toilet facilities, and, in some experiments, to meals outside the room. A hidden microphone permitted the researchers to monitor the subjects. A "panic button" was within easy reach if a subject wished to terminate his stay before the experiment was completed. For some studies a 48-hour confinement period was used; for others, a 72-hour period (Vernon and Hoffman, 1956; Vernon et al., 1958; Vernon and McGill, 1957; Vernon, 1963).

In the first Princeton study, a red light was used to illuminate the experimental chamber during meals. No hallucinations were reported. The use of the red light was discontinued and meals were taken without light. Six of the nine subjects then tested reported hallucinations. Conditions were further changed so that the subjects no longer needed to leave the dark room for toilet necessities. An increase in hallucinations was expected because the conditions were more severe. However, only one subject reported an hallucination and it was considered doubtful. Vernon et al. (1958: 34) reasoned

...that confinement which allows no visual stimulation... produces a minimum of hallucinations. Confinement that allows a slight amount of light stimulation may produce some hallucinations... Confinement permitting a great deal of visual stimulation, but not pattern vision, produces the greatest number...not only the greatest number but also the greatest variety of hallucinations.2

2But Ludwig (1968: 71) reports hallucinations after eye operations.
In experiments at the University of Manitoba, Zubek and his associates (Zubek et al., 1960; Zubek et al., 1961) used conditions of silence and darkness similar to those used at Princeton, but with a confinement period of one week. They reported that their subjects did not usually begin to hallucinate until the third day of confinement. At Duke University, however, after only two hours in a partially soundproof, completely dark room, seven of ten experimental subjects, chosen at random without regard to sex, occupation, education, or economic status, reported visual phenomena ranging from flashes of light to fairly complex illusions or hallucinations (Cohen et al., 1961; Silverman et al., 1962).

Freedman et al. (1961) summarized the results of eight sensory deprivation studies by various investigators and found that hallucinations occurred in all studies (four) in which the light conditions eliminated normal perception, but only in half the cases in which a complete blackout prevailed. In all cases in which motility was restricted, however, hallucinations were reported. They suggested that although "Some one sensory occlusion may be necessary to produce 'sensory deprivation' effects, the sufficient condition may prove to be a combination of different atypical conditions" (ibid.: 62). Arnhoff, Leon and Brownfield (1962: 900) at the University of Miami, however, used the McGill sensory deprivation conditions for a group of 12 subjects and received no reports of hallucinations. They concluded that "Major disruptive psychological effects...are the product of a complex interaction of personality, anxiety, expectation,
situational structuring, and amount and patterning of external sensory input."

Jackson and Kelly (1962), working at the University of Michigan, considered the effect that the subject's expectations might have on results of sensory deprivation experiments. Fourteen male college students were placed in isolation conditions of the McGill type for one hour. Each was informed of bizarre cognitive and perceptual results that might occur and given a pill, professed to be an hallucinogenic drug, but actually a placebo, for the purported purpose of reinforcing the sensory deprivation effects and increasing the possibility of imagery, odd sensations and ideas, etc. All subjects reported auditory and kinesthetic phenomena, and difficulty in thinking. Twelve reported visual phenomena, and 12 reported emotional experiences. The investigators concluded, "The subject's prior knowledge of the expected or anticipated effects, his motivation to experience and report, or not to experience and not to report, and the use of continuous free associative reporting are variables that are generally underemphasized but are clearly of great importance" (Jackson and Pollard, 1962: 340).

Orne and Scheibe (1964: 3) stressed in addition the importance of "the matrix of social cues," or "demand characteristics" on sensory deprivation experiment results. They suggested that devices such as the panic button featured in the Princeton studies--cues within the experimental procedure--serve as "eloquent instructions" for the subject.
Other experimental techniques have been used for restricting external stimulation. Shurley (1962) attempted to keep all sensory input to a nearly absolute minimum by submerging his subjects in a water immersion tank. A group of Harvard investigators placed their subjects in a tank type respirator (Solomon and Mendelson, 1962; Mendelson et al., 1961). Hallucinations were reported by some subjects in both experiments.

Comparison of Shaker Ritual Sensory Deprivation and Experimental Sensory Deprivation

Some striking similarities can be seen between Shaker mourning room practices and the reported subjective experiences of the mourners, and the sensory deprivation experiments cited. The physical conditions in the McGill studies and in the Shaker mourning room parallel each other to a remarkable extent. Both the mourner and the sensory deprivation subject remain lying down within a strictly circumscribed area. Interference with visual perception is maintained: the mourner's bands and the sensory deprivation subject's goggles serve to limit vision effectively while admitting some light. Not only are the mourners and the experimental subjects removed from their usual environments and deprived of their usual social contacts and routine activities, but they are placed in positions of regression, dependent upon the attendants in the mourning room or the observers in the test locale. Both are confronted with monotonous and reduced external stimuli. Neither is given prior information about the duration of confinement. And, although the mobility of the mourner is not
restricted by any mechanical device as it is with the sensory deprivation subjects, the mourner is restrained by his beliefs and goals since a mourner must lie on his back or right side in order to experience the sought-for trip.

Since hallucinations can and do occur under experimental conditions of sensory deprivations, it is not surprising to find that the mourners also report perceptual occurrences that partake of hallucinatory qualities. The most important achievement of the mourning period, the "spiritual journey," seems to be fulfilled, at least partially, through the agency of hallucinatory activity.

In more recent sensory deprivation investigations (1959-1963), fewer hallucinations have been reported due, partly, to increased precision among experimenters in defining hallucinations--"More attention is now being paid to differentiating among such phenomena as hallucinations, delusions, fantasies, hypnagogic states, etc...\" (Zubek, 1964: 39). Such precision is impossible and undesirable for the Shaker material. Wallace (1959: 59) has considered the problem facing the anthropologist:

...Most psychiatrists...impose two restrictions on the word "hallucinations," excluding from its extension those ideational experiences which occur during sleep and assigning to it a generally negative valence. These restrictions are useful in psychiatry in our own cultural setting, but they are not helpful in establishing a cross-culturally applicable definition (nor need they be, for a Western psychiatrist's definition is to be regarded as only one cultural variant), since in some societies dreams and waking visions may be for many purposes treated as equivalent. For the purposes of this study, "hallucination" will be defined, very broadly, as pseudoperception, without relevant stimulation of external or internal sensory
receptors, but with subjective vividness equal to that aroused by such stimulation. Included in its extension, therefore, are dreams, the waking "hallucinations" of psychiatric terminology, and hypnagogic imagery; excluded is the fainter audiovisual imagery of reflective thought.

Wallace's more inclusive definition is better suited to the Shaker situation, but I would submit that attempting to separate "imagery of reflective thought" would be difficult since the Shakers do not seem to make any such distinctions. The mourners, like experimental subjects, probably experience imagery attributable to hallucinatory activity, dreaming, wishful thinking, hypnagogic and hypnopompic transitional states, etc., but they are probably abnormally alert to all of them and to their content because of the particular mental set engendered by their belief system. The Shouters in Trinidad also seem to experience a range of phenomena from simple daydreams to complex hallucinations. Simpson (1966b) writes of Shouter mourners,

... My impression is the visions seen by the Pilgrims on such occasions included the three phenomena... dreams, the results of imaginative thinking, and visions in which dissociation is actually involved. However, they all believe they have had the visions or at least they call whatever experience they have had during their spiritual "travels," visions.

Shaker mourners, like some experimental subjects, have prior knowledge of what constitutes "appropriate" behavior in the mourning room. Many of them are repeating the rite and, consequently, are fully cognizant of what to expect and what is expected of them. All Shakers have the opportunity to hear mourners "shout in the temple" after their isolation in the mourning room, at which time the emerging pilgrims share their "travel" experiences with the congregation. And
past mourners do not seem to be reticent about discussing their experiences in the course of ordinary conversation. In addition, all Shakers who are baptized are exposed to an attenuated form of mourning during the pre-baptism night when they are "banded" and "put on the ground" for several hours. Thus, it is unlikely that even new, inexperienced mourners approach the rite in ignorance.

Certain cues in the mourning room situation may further serve to communicate to the mourner what is expected of him. During the service before the mourners are "put on the ground" they are separated from the congregation and subjected to ritual treatment (they confess their sins, their feet are washed, "proves" are taken, they are blessed, etc.) which emphasizes the sacredness and solemn importance not only of their undertaking but of the individuals themselves. The chalk design, which Pointer B. referred to as a "map" for the mourners, is prominently displayed on the floor--"eloquent instructions" of what is expected of them. The mere presence of their friends (the mourning

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3 Little information is provided in the published accounts of the experiments in sensory deprivation to indicate whether or not any communication was taking place among their subjects, nor what relationship, if any, existed among them. Vernon did imply that the subjects for the Princeton studies were apt to be friends and that the researchers cautioned them not to discuss their experiences lest they reveal information that might influence a possible subject. He states that this "worked very well," but does not say how he knows that the directions were, in fact, followed. Unfortunately he did not run an experiment in which inter-subject communication was permitted. As mentioned before, some studies have been carried out in which the investigators outlined to the subjects the kinds of reactions that might occur under conditions of sensory deprivation, or that they expected or hoped for, but none of the studies have been designed to utilize past subjects as models and indoctrinators in the manner of the Shakers.
room that I attended was in the country, and was not easy of access for many of them) indicates the importance attached to the ritual and those about to undergo it, and assures the mourners of their moral support during the trying ordeal ahead.

The importance of the "attitude of people toward their own hallucinations" and the "cultural response towards people who have hallucinations" is mentioned by Smythies (1956: 338-339) as a factor in the production of hallucinations. Shakers are eagerly receptive to their own hallucinations and regard those who have visions as favored individuals. Since hallucinations and trances have a positive value in the Shaker sub-culture, mourners are motivated to "experience and report." The achievement of an acceptable mourning experience not only brings the approbation of the pointer, it also grants the pilgrim a more prestigious position in the cult, and guarantees that he will be the center of attention of the post-mourning ritual when he "shouts." Most sensory deprivation experiments utilized college students as subjects, and if they did not regard hallucinations negatively, at least it is unlikely that they would have regarded them as a spiritual privilege.\footnote{Some college students today (1968) also place a positive value on "trips," which result from drugs. But the drug fad was less of a factor at the time when many of the sensory deprivation experiments cited were performed.} They may have been eager to cooperate with the investigators, but the rewards for experiencing and reporting such phenomena would differ in kind and importance from the rewards awaiting the mourners. For a possibly prestige-starved Shaker in a
community which offers few opportunities for the uneducated lower-
class individual to attain prestige (cf. Mischel, 1958), these
benefits probably seem worthwhile and motivation to achieve them is
probably great.

The experimental technique of continuous reporting, mentioned by
Jackson and Pollard as a device that is apt to promote the production
of sensory deprivation phenomena, has its parallel among the Shakers.
The pointer is kept informed of the mourner's progress in his "spiritu-
tual journey," and he offers some guidance along the way. When the
pointer is satisfied with the mourner's trip, he terminates the period
of isolation.

Anxiety and stress are characteristic of conditions of sensory
deprivation, and undoubtedly aid in the generation of perceptual
disturbances. It might be argued that the mourners would be liable
to the same stresses due to restricted motility and visual perception,
confinement, isolation, and dependency that experimental subjects
would experience. But it would seem more likely that the mourners
would find the physical conditions themselves less anxiety-generating
because of their belief system, the personal goals to be achieved,
the probably greater prior knowledge of what to expect, their rela-
tionship to the pointer and mourning room attendants. Most important
is the fact that they are not experimental subjects for a scientific
investigation, but are children of God embarking on a difficult but
exciting adventure destined to bring them into closer rapport with
the supernatural, which should guarantee them a quite different
outlook. However, other sources of anxiety do exist for the mourners. There is always a possibility that the anticipated visions and gifts will not be forthcoming. Or, if the "spiritual journey" is accomplished, the pilgrim's interpretation and the pointer's interpretation of its meaning and significance might differ, and the pointer might refuse to acknowledge the gift claimed by the mourner. Further uncertainty might stem from the knowledge that aspirant mourners can be rejected by the pointer if they are unworthy. And, although it seems to be the responsibility of the pointer to determine whether or not an individual has the stamina to undergo the rigors of mourning without developing symptoms of mental illness, and to turn him away or release him if he does not, it is common knowledge that some mourners have become "mad" and have been sent to the mental hospital. The constant presence of the mourning room attendants, although a comfort, might also be a stress factor, underlining as it does the dependence of the mourners and the possibility of something untoward happening that might require their assistance.

The McGill studies indicated that subjects under conditions of sensory deprivation are more susceptible to suggestion than they would normally be, and that attitudes acquired under these conditions tend to linger. Such susceptibility to suggestion would seem to be relevant in the case of the mourners. Although positive attitudes toward Shakerism must surely be established before Shakers submit to

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5According to the Public Health Doctor, insanity occurring during mourning is less common today than in the past, however.
the mourning ritual, it is highly probable that implicit or explicit suggestions are proffered during the confinement period that, although they would not, in this case, reverse the pilgrims' attitudes, would perhaps change them in intensity, reinforce and strengthen them. Shakers who have been to mourn were observed to be fairly dependable trancers--they were apt to become dissociated at almost every meeting. The mourning room experience might well have affected their attitude toward dissociation as well as their facility for it. (I was told that "teaching" took place during mourning, but no mention was made of any direct instruction in becoming dissociated. However, even presuming a lack of specific instruction, it would seem that conditions of sensory deprivation combined with the non-deprivaional factors of the mourning room situation might generate dissociational states repeatedly, thereby establishing an ease in trancing that would carry over into the post-mourning period. Repeated hypnosis seems to render subjects increasingly easy to hypnotize.) Further, those who had mourned were never seen as objects of the pointer's wrath or corrective measures during a meeting. Mourning room indoctrination might have been partly responsible for their approved, more serious approach and solemn demeanor. In addition, believing as they do that those who can mourn have led reasonably good lives and are "pure in heart," the successful mourners, having accomplished the ordeal, might well feel superior to non-mourners, and might be encouraged to display their dedication.
Sensory deprivation investigators have been interested in the content of their subjects' hallucinations principally as an indication of their complexity. Several of them have remarked on the ability, or inability, of their subjects to exercise control over the content. Shakers seem to be able to control the content of their hallucinations fairly well, although, or perhaps because, they would ascribe such control to the supernatural. The content of their visions--at least of those that are reported--seems to be restricted to the culturally-prescribed topics, or to the material that lends itself to culturally-biased interpretations. Their hallucinations also seem to be quite complex. Wallace (1959: 63) has commented on the differences between Indian and White hallucinations produced by mescaline intoxication:

White hallucinations are "largely idiosyncratic in content," whereas Indian hallucinations are "often strongly patterned after doctrinal model." He attributes these variations in hallucinatory content (as well as other variations involving feelings, behavior, etc.) between Indians and Whites to

... two related factors which are independent of possible differences in racial physiology, of chemical action of the drug owing to variations in dosage, mixture with other agents, of method of introduction, and of intragroup personality differences: first, the influence of the setting in which the drug is taken (the white subject's experiences occur usually in a hospital or university research setting; the Indian experiences, in a ceremonial lodge during a solemn religious ritual); and, second, differences in the psychological meaning of the primary drug effects when experienced. Certainly, gross enough situational and semantic differences exist: White normal subjects generally take mescaline once or twice, in a clinical research setting, with definite knowledge of an experimental or a clinical purpose in the investigation, and without any
commitment to or interest in peyote, or to mescaline in any form, as a personal religion; Indian peyote users take mescaline repeatedly, in a solemn religious setting to the accompaniment of serious ritual, with a definite knowledge of a religious purpose in the usage and, often, with hope for personal salvation, of which the vision is the evidence (ibid.: 64).

Much the same variation in factors obtains between the sensory deprivation experimental setting and the Shaker ritual setting. Although details of the structuring of the situation for the experimental subjects is not always included in the published reports, it can be assumed, when not definitely stated, that the subjects were informed or were aware that a scientific experiment was being conducted, whether the full and exact purpose of the experiment is explained to them or not. The Shakers, on the other hand, like the Indians, are engaging in an important religious ritual. For the experimental subject, the experience would probably be a unique occurrence; the mourner, however, might, and probably would, repeat the experience. The subjects in sensory deprivation studies, like subjects in drug experiments, would have little "commitment to or interest in" sensory deprivation. Many of them were paid to participate which would tend to give the experiment a "job" flavor with no particular lasting personal benefits nor any unusual satisfactions to be derived from it. For some experiments, unpaid volunteers, or even the investigators themselves, served as subjects. Their interest was probably greater, but of a clinical or investigative nature; they probably regarded the experiment as a step to further knowledge and understanding, but not as an end in itself. The mourners, on the other hand,
were involved in an experience that give them deep spiritual satisfaction and that was also expected to give them permanent advantages.

Weinstein (1962: 237) gathered information on the content of hallucinations among psychiatric patients in the American Virgin Islands, and found that the hallucinations and delusions described "are not bizarre or exotic phenomena but rather are very much a part of the fabric of the society in which they occur." Shaker mourners may report journeys to exotic places and seeing exotic personnages but some of the material from which these accounts are woven is derived from their folklore, while much of what they relate concerns familiar people, places, and pursuits. If the content of hallucinations induced by drugs and the content of hallucinations of the mentally ill are amenable to cultural factors, it seems reasonable to suggest that Shaker hallucinatory content is also affected by the "cultural milieu."

It would seem, then, that abnormal perceptual experiences may occur under a variety of sensory deprivation conditions. But, in addition to the physical conditions acting upon the human organism, psychological and cultural factors also appear to contribute quite significantly to the production of these phenomena.
CHAPTER VII

FUNCTIONS OF SHAKERISM

A consideration of the value of Shakerism for its participants indicates that many of the same functions that have been noted for similar cults in other societies are applicable here (e.g., Simpson, 1956; Simpson, 1965; Hogg, 1960).

Shakerism affords its devotees an inexpensive and time-consuming form of diversion, a leisure time activity that is entertaining for spectators as well as for the worshippers. The trips that the group takes to various parts of the island for memorial services and to visit other churches, and to other islands are high points in Shaker lives. They look forward eagerly to them. They enjoy the bus or boat ride, which is a special treat for them, and often pass the time en route singing hymns.

St Vincent offers little in the way of recreation for the lower class. Every family seems to have a radio, and the island has a weekly newspaper, but the Shakers I knew did not seem to read it. There is no television, nor are there telephones even among the more privileged people. Kingstown has two movie theaters, but none of the Shakers that I interviewed mentioned attending. Political rallies were popular when I was there but they seemed to have little appeal for the Shakers with whom I was acquainted. Although they all intended to take advantage of their franchise and had decided opinions about the candidates for election, they seemed to be interested in political developments more as spectators than as participants. Carnival season apparently offers an exciting respite to routine living but only for a limited time.
The cult also seems to offer some outlet for esthetic yearnings. As slaves, the Negroes were probably not in a position to continue any of their traditional art forms nor to develop new ones. Even today, Vincentians do not seem to be producing crafts or art of any particular note (with the exception of some "primitive" paintings). An altar table decorated for a thanksgiving service seems to give pleasure to those who create it and those who observe it. One table, for example, was arranged with kernels of corn and flower blossoms in groups of three at intervals around the table. Saucers of farina and corn and piles of fruit also graced the table. When questioned about the significance of the food and the arrangement of corn and flowers in groups of three, informants stated that no sacrifice was involved, nor was there any reason for grouping in threes. The only reason for the food and the arrangement was the esthetic one--to make the table "look nice." The Shakers also seem to appreciate an attractive church. They comment on colors and richness of altar cloths, on the beauty of other furnishings--candelabra, banners, religious pictures, etc. They obviously enjoy singing too, and once a year, they produce a program of choral music for which they sell tickets. (And, although they may be unaware of it, and although some upper-class Vincentians regard it as a disgraceful Africanism, the Shakers have developed a rhythmic creation of no little beauty in their possession-trance phenomenon. The bodily motions and metered breathing of the trancers, considered individually or in the choral context, and the singing and humming of non-trancers in the background, form a well-integrated whole.)
Although I would be unable to attest to specific therapeutic values in the dissociational states achieved by the Shakers, I did not notice any obvious detrimental effects. Like the Africans portrayed in the film, Les Maitres Fous, by Jean Rouch, and contrary to Simey's opinion that "the energies of the devotees are sapped" (1947: 38), the Shakers were apparently relaxed and normal after a meeting where they had been in trance, and they seemed to be quite able to work and suffering no ill effects the following day. Informants declare that they feel uplifted by the experience; "You feel happy after, the joy is unspeakable." The tension-releasing and anxiety-reduction aspects of dissociation have been noted by many observers (e.g., Sargant, 1959; Mischel and Mischel, 1958; Simpson, 1965), and, as a device for such release, Shakerism serves a positive purpose.

Further, Shakerism, like Shango (Mischel, 1958), affords its worshippers an opportunity to achieve prestige which is denied them by the larger society. Not only is prestige available through the mechanism of spirit possession, but the offices in the cult are accessible to those who mourn (and, apparently, to men whether or not they mourn). This is not to suggest that there are no forces at work in the attainment of these positions other than the worshipper's desire to achieve one. Undoubtedly several other factors are involved, such as the personal feeling of the pointer for the aspirant, the relationship of the aspirant to the other cult members, etc. Nevertheless, positions are open to cult members and those who do achieve them can find prestige satisfaction in holding them.
The feeling of security that comes from belonging to a group may also attract lower-class Vincentians to Shakerism. Sermons in Shaker meetings frequently emphasize the thought that, "Everyone of you have a servant. Going down the road, if you need something, you can ask a sister or a brother."

Shakerism has no ostensible political function other than as its members represent potential votes. There is no concern with politics at the cult level nor in the cult context, although the Shakers are interested in political developments as members of a social class and as Vincentians.

Lewis (1966: 318) has observed that "women and other depressed categories" use spirit possession frequently to "exert mystical pressures upon their superiors in circumstances of deprivation and frustration when few other sanctions are available to them." The Shakers are a deprived group but they do not seem to be exerting pressure upon their superiors through their use of possession-trance. Rather they seem to be attempting to establish a tolerable position for themselves.

Wallace (1966: 140) has suggested that one function of religious ritual is as a possible "avenue to identity renewal." Many avenues exist but all of them "involve some kind of identification with an admired model of the human personality, and differentiation from a despised model." This seems to be relevant in the case of the Shakers. Wallace and Fogelson (1965: 380) define identity as "any image, or set of images, either conscious or unconscious, which an individual has of himself." They provide a minimal four part division of a person's
total identity which includes real identity, claimed identity, feared identity, and ideal identity. On the basis of the impressions derived from interviews with various Shakers and from observations of Shakers, individually and collectively in different social contexts, I would suggest that a tentative description of these identities for a composite Shaker might be as follows. His feared identity seems to be an image of himself as lazy, incompetent, inferior, and stupid. Pointer B., for example, was very much on the defensive when trying to explain why he could only find part-time work. He seemed quite anxious lest he appear unwilling to work or incapable. A Shaker's real identity might be his image as a laborer, dock hand, etc.; as a father, mother, etc., in a family situation; as a pointer, nurse, mother, etc., in the cult. His claimed identity might be his image of himself as a self-effacing child of God, as a hard worker, a good father, etc. And his ideal identity might picture him as a person particularly chosen and favored by God, hence, superior; as a person eligible for rewards by reason of his righteousness, consequently, a receiver of the Holy Spirit.

Since an individual...

...strives to keep his real identity reasonably close to the ideal, and reasonably far away from the feared identity, by definition the ideal identity is relatively more positive, and the feared identity more negative, in affective value than the real identity. Thus, there is generally a motivation, more or less pressing, to change the real identity, and, pari passu, to increase the distance between the real and the feared identity... To the extent that real, ideal, and feared identities are internalization of the implicit or explicit commentaries and values of others, they are built upon, and require, repeated validation in social communication (Wallace and Fogelson, 1965: 382).
Unfortunately for the lower class Vincentian, such validation is not forthcoming in the social situations in which it would be most convincing and meaningful to him. The members of the upper classes openly express their opinions that lower class workers are indolent, worthless, and undependable. They insist that there are plenty of jobs waiting for them if they only had the desire to work. Members of the lower class who are also Shakers are the butt of additional vilification. Their practices and beliefs are mocked and ridiculed. Ego-damaging remarks are frequently made in the presence of the worker as if he were not there or were deaf, further evidence of the attitude of the upper classes toward the lower class and the trauma to which lower-class self-esteem may be subjected. It has been observed (Smith, 1965; Ragatz, 1928; Goveia, 1965; Lowenthal, 1967) that West Indian society is a society in which separate sections exist as a result of several factors: the early development of a "planter class," a slave population, and a hybrid group; emancipation of the slaves without assimilation; and a population whose members seem to be adamant about maintaining the separation of the strata of the society. Race and color, real or imputed, have given direction to the persistence of the sections. Education, occupation, wealth, and sometimes religion have

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2According to Lowenthal (1967: 598) "The adage 'every rich Negro is a mulatto, every poor mulatto is a Negro' fits West Indian society today as in the past. Family background, wealth, and education make the distinctions between 'colored' and 'white' almost as flexible. Many West Indians known to have colored forebears are locally accepted as white. In St. Vincent, for example, 'even plainly negro folk by virtue of the mixing with the Whites in clubs and organizations are counted as pass-for Whites, or Vincentian Whites!'" (quoting Kenneth John).
contributed to their maintenance, aided by inter-class attitudes. "The elite and the middle class do not want to know anything about folk culture" (emphasis mine, Lowenthal, 1967: 593). Many lower-class West Indians "retain much the same psychological attitudes as did their forefathers under slavery" (Hadley, 1949: 353) and have "repudiated middle class standards" (ibid.: 356), and, as Lowenthal has observed, "What the sections of society do know about others they usually disapprove of" (1967: 595). Hence, the lower-class Vincentian probably finds it necessary periodically to seek some means of restoring to himself a supportable identity image since it is constantly susceptible to being shaken by upper-class attitudes and remarks, in addition to being shaken by his own realization of his inability to overcome the barriers to his occupational, educational, and financial improvement.

The lower-class Vincentian, then, as a result of communication with others, and as a result of his own self-evaluation, may experience a "profound sense of dissatisfaction with [his] secular identity" (Wallace, 1966: 152). Shakerism offers one pathway for soothing his injured identity image. Spirit possession affords a most dramatic

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3 Mrs. Carmichael (1833: 18) noted that slaves had a "most decided dislike to the coloured population."

4 Pointer B. preached, "Please God rather than man," which might easily be interpreted to mean that, from a Shaker viewpoint, it is useless to try to please upper class folk anyway. For example, D.'s employer complained about the slovenly appearance of her servants, yet when D. changed to a neat, attractive dress, new hat and shoes, preparatory to going with me, her employer remarked sarcastically that she was trying to give the impression that she was better than she was.

5 Hadley (1949: 350) has observed that the West Indian is "exceptionally vulnerable to ridicule."
validation of the worthiness of the individual, and assures him that his feared identity does not approach congruence with his ideal identity. Since the Spirit only shakes those who are pure, his righteousness is publicly demonstrated. This becomes all the more significant since spirit possession does not occur among the upper class people in St. Vincent. Shaker devotees have usually had early religious training in large denominational or Catholic churches and are aware that the kind of involvement that the Shakers have with the supernatural is lacking in the other churches. And for Shakers who do not experience dissociation, there is the comforting thought that the Spirit may possess a worshipper even though the outward signs are less evident.

In addition to spirit possession, the worshipper finds other devices in Shaker worship to bolster his identity image. The biblical texts, sermons, prayers, and hymns are also important. They are often directed to the congregation as the chosen people of God. Such texts as, "He has gone to prepare a place for you," are frequently repeated, as are references to the coming of Christ and the Judgment Day, when, it is implied, the Shakers will come into their own--"I hear Christ is coming with a crown. He will soon appear to gather His chosen ones home. One morning, we are going to receive our blessing." Occasionally, reference to the congregation is more explicit, "I know Jesus choose me. I know the Lord choose many here."

Stress is placed on how much greater were the sufferings of Jesus and other biblical characters than are the sufferings of the Shakers. The implication is made that the Shakers, being favored by God even as the biblical examples, should expect, even welcome, suffering since it
brings them into closer affiliation with that heavenly group. For example, in one sermon the pointer asked, "As Christ came with the heavy cross, must He bear it alone? No! There is one for you and me. . . . We know the Christian pathway is not a bed of roses. We know we are not toiling in vain, for one morning we will get our reward. Everyone of us would want to meet on that beautiful shore. Jesus will welcome us there."

The necessity of being baptized in order to be saved underscores the gulf existing between the Shakers, who, like Jesus, have been baptized and are, therefore, eligible for salvation, and the upper classes, who are not. "The man Christ Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, for unless man is baptized, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. We have to be born again to enter into that Eternal Life."

While "admired models" with whom the Shakers can identify are provided by the Bible, "despised models" from whom they can differentiate themselves are supplied by those who deviate from the Shaker concept of a Christian. The upper classes, being in possession of worldly goods, become an appropriate scapegoat. "They find theirself more puffed up, with a few cents they find theirself in a high lifted way.

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6Finding an acceptable personality with which to identify one's self seems to require simultaneous identification of others in some consistent manner. My presence as a white, non-lower-class foreigner, who showed respectful interest in their religion, was difficult for the Shakers to comprehend. They shrank from fitting me into their Christian-non-Christian dichotomy, and finally resolved their dilemma by saying that I was an angel, that I was Saint Veronica. At the same time they averred that it was useless to try to tell me anything about religion or teach me about the Bible because, as an angel or saint, I was already "good" and knew far more than any of them did. Fortunately, they did not act on that judgment but continued to explain and enlighten me.
They find they is too good to think about God. Those who have money don't think about Christ. They think about their furniture and money. That is their God." Being poor, the Shakers extol poverty and preach, "Empty-handed, you go to Jesus . . . . Loved one, do not put your faith in the material things of this world." Being excluded by the upper classes, the Shakers exclude the upper classes, indirectly, perhaps, but definitely saying, for example, "Let us lift up our hearts and our voices and rejoice in glorious hope knowing that soon Jesus will come. But not everyone will be with Him--only those who do the will of the Father." Being ignored by the world, they ignore in return, saying, "Think not of this world. This world has nothing to give you but shame and disgrace."^7

Although both men and women seem to be seeking restoration of a tolerable identity image through the agency of the cult beliefs and activities, subtle differences in the objectives and satisfactions of the sexes seem to prevail. On the whole, Shaker men appear to derive less satisfaction from their lives in the larger society than the women do. Job opportunities seem to be fewer for the men unless they emigrate. (The thought of emigration in itself is a tantalizing prospect that tends to keep the men dissatisfied with the present and uncertain about the future.) The kinds of jobs that are available to them do not fulfill their desires, so that there are complaints and expressed wishes to find better jobs with better pay. The women, on the other

^7See Malcolm Calley (1965: Chapter XI) for a discussion of role enactment and "ritual withdrawal from the world" among West Indian Pentecostalists in England.
hand, seem to be more satisfied with the kinds of work they are doing, and there seems to be a greater number and a greater variety of work opportunities for them than for the men. With a small amount of capital, they can set themselves up in businesses of their own and, as entrepreneurs, they are in a position to find some satisfaction for their prestige cravings—a situation that seems to be less possible for the men. Some women do not need to work at all since their husbands provide for them adequately; this seems to afford them some feeling of superiority.

The cult compensates the men for the lack of authority and prestige positions available for them in the society by awarding all of them offices in the cult. It may, in fact, be necessary to offer the men this additional feature in order to attract them to the cult. Men, being more dissatisfied as a group and apparently more eager for the monetary rewards of upward mobility, may also be more sensitive to the ridicule aimed at the Shakers and more concerned about the effect their affiliation with a stigmatized group would have on their opportunities. The women, being more satisfied with their lives, may be less sensitive and in less need of the attraction of cult status.

The women seem to derive pleasure from the social contacts in the cult. Those who are heads of their own households may also find some compensation in the cult organization and discipline for the lack of a male figure in their home situation. (During a social period after a

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8Women who set themselves up as vendors with small amounts of capital are not unusual for the Caribbean. See Mintz (1960 and 1964) for discussions of similar activities among Haitian and Jamaican women.
meeting, one woman was observed teasing the pointer until she succeeded in provoking him into lashing her with his strap. Then, although she was in tears, she was apparently satisfied and was smiling. Although I cannot analyze this kind of compulsion, I would suggest that it may play a part in the women's satisfaction in the cult.)

Identity renewal, among the Shakers, might be regarded as a "ritual of rebellion." Gluckman (1954: 3), in developing the concept of rituals of rebellion, stated

. . .Whatever the ostensible purpose of the ceremonies, a most striking feature of their organization is the way in which they openly express social tensions: women have to assert license and dominance as against their formal subordination to men, princes have to behave to the king as if they covet the throne, and subjects openly state their resentment of authority.

The Shakers, in similar fashion, have to exhibit their superiority over those to whom they are usually subservient, and they exhibit it by constructing an image of themselves as God's chosen people and by demonstrating the validity of the image through spirit possession. Thus, it might be argued that a renewal of identity is an accompanying feature of such ritualized expressions of social tensions.

But, as Gluckman (ibid.) points out, ritualized rebellion is made in a special context—one which does not disturb the system—"these ritual rebellions proceed within an established and sacred traditional system, in which there is dispute about particular distributions of power, and not about the structure of the system itself." A ritual of rebellion "allows for instituted protest, and in complex ways renews the unity of the system." It is interesting to note that Methodism, in its early days, allowed "for instituted protest" in ways similar to
Shakerism against the imperfections in the established order, and, by so doing, maintained the order and "helped to steady the country during the French Revolution, and prevented similar upheaval from taking place in England" (Bowen, 1937: viii). As Sargent (1959: 201) remarked, "Wesley had taught the masses to be less concerned with their miserable life on earth, as victims of the Industrial Revolution, than with the life to come; they could now put up with almost anything." Simpson (1965: 127) has noted for the Shangoists in Trinidad that

...the time, thought, energy, and resources which are invested in shango are not available as means to an alternate end, i.e., trying to bring about social, economic, and political changes. Also, the emotional release from accumulated frustration obtained from shango activity reduces the amount of fervor available for political activity. In terms of the perpetuation of the status quo this consequence is positive.

Shakerism also monopolizes the time and energies of its devotees and curtails resources that might otherwise be utilized in revolt. And, further, by permitting assertions of superiority and personal worth within a ritual context, and by providing the worshippers with an acceptable identity image, Shakerism serves to discourage any disturbance of the established system and contributes to the maintenance of the status quo.

In his discussion of Shango in Trinidad, Simpson (1965: 129) summarized its manifest and latent functions and dysfunctions for the person, subgroup, social system, and cultural system. A somewhat similar summary might be prepared for the functions of Shakerism, as follows.
### Positive Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manifest</th>
<th>Latent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Prestige satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esthetic outlet</td>
<td>Anxiety and tension release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystical experiences</td>
<td>Social control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Identity renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaker group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shaker group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group loyalty</td>
<td>Strengthens group identity, contributing to perpetuation of Shakers (not necessarily a + function).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural system</strong></td>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural system</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No apparent function</td>
<td>Group of potentially dissatisfied people kept occupied, thus helping to maintain the status quo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Negative Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manifest</th>
<th>Latent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No apparent function</td>
<td>Possible emotional disturbance (rare).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibits search for alternate satisfactions of possibly greater value to individual (not necessarily negative).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaker group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shaker group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No apparent function</td>
<td>No apparent function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Socio-cultural system
   No apparent function

Socio-cultural system
   Preoccupation with Shaker affairs inhibits participation in political, social, and economic endeavors of possibly greater value to the society; thus retards social change (not necessarily negative).

In many cases, as can be seen, the functions of Shakerism appear to be the same as those that Simpson outlined for Shango.
CHAPTER VIII

COMPARISON OF THE SHAKERS AND SIMILAR RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Local religious groups in which elements of Christianity are found intermingled with elements of African religious tradition in varying amounts are one of the outstanding features of the Caribbean islands. These hybrid religions range from the "very African" religion of the Haitian peasants (Herskovits, 1948: 615) to the Shaker religion of St. Vincent which has retained very few Africanisms. Herskovits (1958: 214) has observed that

... the most striking and recognizable survivals of African religion are in those behavioristic aspects that, given overt expression, are susceptible of reinterpretation in terms of a new theology while retaining their older established forms.

M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947: 305-309) have discussed Africanisms that they found among the Shouters of Trinidad. Some of the features that they consider African are also found among the Shakers. These include the importance of the center pole, the removal of shoes during worship, chalk markings on the floor, sprinkling the corners and center pole three times with water, "talking in tongues," the white dresses that women initiates wear, the "mourning" period of seclusion, hand-clapping and foot-patting as musical accompaniment, and the rhythms of the hymns. The most important aspect of Shaker worship, possession trance, resembles Herskovits' description of African possession trance.
in several ways. For example, the Shaker phenomenon occurs in the 
presence of others, stimulus and rhythmic background is provided by 
singing, tapping of feet, and clapping of hands, etc. However, Shaker 
possession trances differ in an important respect— the concept of 
becoming the possessing spirit is absent. A Shaker does not "perform 
after the fashion of the spirit who has taken possession of him" 
(Herskovits, 1958: 245). Shakers regard the worshipper experiencing 
possession trance as being seized and shaken by the Holy Spirit.

The variation in the degree of retention of African traits in 
the Caribbean has provoked questions that have troubled students of 
Caribbean religion for some time. With reference to St. Vincent, for 
example, we might ask why St. Vincent lacks the spirit cults that are 
so prominent on some of the other islands. Why is there no religion in 
St. Vincent that is any more replete with Africanisms than Shakerism? 
How does St. Vincent differ, and how did it differ in the past, from 
those islands that have religions of a more African nature? On the 
other hand, how can the development, or acceptance, of a religion that 
includes so few Africanisms be explained? And how does St. Vincent 
compare with other islands that have religions similar to Shakerism?

To examine and compare all of the independent religious groups 
that have been reported for the Caribbean would be a separate problem 
and beyond the scope of this study; however, I do propose to examine 
in some detail some of the groups on other islands in an effort to 
place the Shakers in sharper perspective and, perhaps, to gain a better 
understanding of the forces that were at work in the initial reception
or development of Shakerism as well as the forces that operate in its continuing acceptance. I have chosen groups to compare with the Shakers that seem to correspond rather closely to them as being the most likely to indicate some of the environmental variations that may support, or at least tolerate, Protestant-derived religions that have been modified to accommodate some Africanisms. Because of their St. Vincent derivation, the Spiritual Baptists, or Shouters, of Trinidad are a logical choice for comparison with the Vincentian Shakers. Presumably they appeared in Trinidad with the same belief system and practices that the Spiritual Baptists of St. Vincent had at the time of migration. Since that time, the two groups have had over 50 years to operate separately in markedly different milieus, although with some inter-communication. The nature of the inevitable changes and the differences in environmental influences might suggest some answers for some of our questions. The Revivalists of Jamaica have been reported (Simpson, 1961: 2) as bearing a close resemblance to the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad, yet the Jamaican environment differs in some ways from Trinidad or St. Vincent, and, again, inspection of the Revivalists and comparison with the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and St. Vincent might suggest some possible answers.

After becoming established in St. Vincent, the Spiritual Baptists, as has been said, spread to Trinidad where they found fertile ground and where they were considered sufficiently obnoxious for the legislators to outlaw them in 1917. The prohibition against them was lifted in 1951. The line of communication between the Shouters in Trinidad
and the Shakers in St. Vincent would seem to have remained active through the years—Pointer B. stated, "Most of the Trinidadians come to St. Vincent to take their spiritual work and then go back."\(^1\) His own brother, also a pointer, had gone to Trinidad where he carried on "this work" until his death.

Despite the absence of a unifying administrative body and despite the different influences to which each "branch" of the Spiritual Baptists has been exposed, the Shouters in Trinidad are remarkably similar in practices and beliefs to the Shakers in St. Vincent. The Trinidadian Shouters derive their members from the lesser privileged lower class also. Obedience and discipline are important in the Shouters church, and a variety of offices in the church is available to those devotees who undergo mourning. The rites of baptism and mourning are much the same in Trinidad and St. Vincent. The bell, candles, and flowers in water on the altar are common to both. The account of the ritual for consecrating the corners and doorways given by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947: 218-219) is very similar to the ritual as it was witnessed in St. Vincent. In the Trinidadian Spiritual Baptist services, the worshippers also chant "the rambling prayers characteristic of these meetings, punctuated with song in which the members" (ibid.: 220) join. The description of a "prayer by a lad who knelt and held a candle as he half-chanted his rhythmic and almost metered plea" (ibid.: 214) could apply equally well to the St. Vincent Shakers.

\(^{1}\)Extra-Trinidad training is not mentioned by M. J. and F. S. Herskovits nor by Simpson.
Hymns seem to be "jazzed" in much the same way by both groups. M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947: 220) refer to the "jazzing" of a hymn at a Shouter service they attended—

...the people were carrying the melodic line sung slightly faster, while the song-leader and a few others ornamented it with harmonized 'ram-bam-bam, bam, bam, ram-a-bam, simulating drums and making the song irresistible to patting feet, and handclapping.

And although I am not prepared to make as fine an analysis of the singing as M. J. and F. S. Herskovits did, the change of words to syllables, the quickening of the tempo, and the importance of the rhythm that I observed among the Shakers, seem to be quite similar to their description for the Shouters (ibid.: 210-222).

But certain differences obtain between the Trinidad and St. Vincent Spiritual Baptists. Some seem to be of a superficial nature, but others are more significant. The Methodist prayer book and hymnal that are so important in St. Vincent were not mentioned for the Trinidadian Shouters. The Shouters use oil to anoint the hands and feet of baptismal candidates and to anoint mourners, which the Shakers did not mention. Although they both use chalk designs, they do not use the same ones, nor are the designs mutually understood. Thus Pointer B., when confronted with samples of the chalk designs that Simpson (1966a, passim) had collected among the Shouters, was nonplussed and unable to decipher the meanings. When I explained some of the symbols to him, he countered by giving examples of symbols that he used and their meanings, and he explained that every pointer has "his own alphabet."
The ritual handshake occurs in both groups. But, in Trinidad, the handshake is

... exchanged with everyone present, three downward shakes of the right hand, then the hands elevated above the head, the touching of the left breast of first one and then the other party to the handshake, and a final downward shake" (M. J. and F. S. Herskovits, 1947: 218).

In St. Vincent, the handshake is strong, definite, and emphatic, and some preface it with a gesture that is almost a salute, but there is no further embellishment.

Shaker informants state that they do not offer sacrifices as their Trinidadian counterparts are apt to do; neither "fruits or vegetables into the sea, nor goats or chickens." They support their rejection of bloody sacrifices with biblical references. Various foods were placed on the table that served as an altar at the thanksgiving services held in the homes, but the food was not disposed of by throwing it into the sea or river, nor by burning it, but was distributed among the worshippers after the service and consumed or taken home.

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2Simpson (1964: 25-26) described a Shouters service that he observed in 1960. This passage was discussed with several Shaker informants who were vehement in their disapproval:

"... A fire was lighted on the beach at Maracas Bay and offerings were made 'to the sea, the land, and the river.' 'Sweet' (olive) oil was poured on the fire, and shelled corn, rice, pieces of fish, rolls, tomatoes, and candles were thrown into the flames. The leader whispered into a pigeon's mouth and released the bird to carry a message to Eternal Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. A live pigeon was placed on the fire and consumed by the flames. Another pigeon was held over a man's head and killed as the bird was consecrated to Eternal Father. Before killing the
According to Simpson (1965: 115):

When a Spiritual Baptist is possessed by the Holy Spirit in a church he is likely to fall on his knees, sit down, pick up the large brass handbell, spin the "chariot wheel," pick up the "lota" (an East Indian cup) and throw water into every corner of the church, or run for the shepherd's crook. When a person is possessed by an orisha power in a Shouters church, he is likely to call for and look for the implement of the god manifesting on him, e.g., a shay-shay, a sword, a whip, an axe, etc.

In St. Vincent, a Shaker might have been helped to his knees if trancing were more violent than usual, but none was seen to fall on his knees. And he might have rung the handbell when in trance, but the shepherd's crook, "chariot wheel" and "lota" were not seen in any Shaker church visited. The Vincentian Spiritual Baptists realize that there are differences between their version of the cult and what they know, or have heard, or perhaps suspected, about the cult in Trinidad. They regard their own version as being more perfect and desirable, and tend to speak disparagingly of the Shouters. Pointer B. remarked, "In

pigeon the woman pastor said: 'I am killing this pigeon on your head so that the spirit will be manifested on you.' The head and the body of the pigeon were then thrown on the fire. Finally, a large wooden tray containing many fruits, flowers, and a goblet of water was carried into the sea and the contents were emptied into the water. According to a close associate of the leader, the tray held an offering for 'every saint she adores, but especially for St. Anne and Jonah.' (In shango St. Anne is equated with Oshun, one of Shango's wives, who is thought of as a river in Yoruba mythology; Jonah is associated with Erelay, a river god in Nigerian religion.) This devotee added that St. Anne and Jonah call the other water saints to dine with them, adding that the baptismal rite and the throwing of food in the river are 'on the Baptist side while any burning offering or blood shedding is on the orisha side!'"
Trinidad, they use the spirit; it is not the spirit using them. Some is jus' practice their own understanding, some use books, but this is not the Holy Spirit."

Simpson (1965: 114-115) states that he "saw no 'groaning' or 'grunting' (hyperventilating or overbreathing) at Shango ceremonies, but this method of facilitating spirit possession, called 'adoption' in Trinidad, is followed by some devotees in some Shouters groups." However, the Shouters insist that they do not "groan" to bring the spirit. One person said,

"...'Adoption' (groaning) is seeing things and speaking in the unknown tongue. If you do that before the spirit manifests, you are 'mocking.' The spirit causes you to do that. You don't do that to invite the spirit" (Simpson, 1966a: 542).

A similar, but somewhat stronger, statement was offered by Vincentian informants. They seemed to feel that they could do nothing to invite the spirit, that the spirit controlled absolutely the choice of when and upon whom to manifest. They gave the impression that they thought it was presumptuous of a mere human to think that he could influence the supernatural in such a situation. But they also insisted that the spirit manifested on worshippers who were "pure." Like the Shouters, they maintained that the abnormal breathing was caused by the spirit during manifestation and not done prior to it.

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3 Probably the de Laurence books. M. J. and F. S. Herskovits report, "...great interest was expressed in the books of de Laurence who furnished tracts on healing, and magic formulae of various kinds. 'The work that de Laurence does is a correct Baptist work. They are taught in the spirit..." (1947: 228-229).
St. Vincent Shaker informants further maintain that a person cannot be possessed by a saint nor, they declare most emphatically, by any African powers, "only by the Holy Ghost." Simpson (1965: 115n.) states that, in Trinidad,

. . .It is not unusual for a shango power to manifest on a worshipper at a Spiritual Baptist ceremony. This is a slightly embarrassing situation, but when it happens nothing can be done about it. Since many people attend both shango and Shouters ceremonies, it is not surprising that occasionally a spirit appears in the wrong place.

Some of the differences that can be noted between the Vincentian and Trinidadian versions of the Spiritual Baptist cult can certainly be attributed to the presence of, and interaction with, Shango in Trinidad. Shango is a syncretic religion that combines "religious and magical practices. . . derived from the Yoruba traditions of southwestern Nigeria and from Catholicism" (Simpson, 1961: 1). Shango is not practiced in St. Vincent and the Shakers, therefore, have been exempt from direct Shango influence.

The African elements in Shango include "dancing, drumming, hand-clapping, spirit possession, the sacrifice of animals, and the offering of food to the gods. . . . The belief in revelation by the gods in giving remedies to men for illness or trouble" (ibid.: 3). Shangoists identify African gods with Catholic saints and, consequently, may become possessed by a wide variety of spirits.

. . .Other Catholic elements in Shango include: Catholic prayers, rosaries, crosses, and crucifixes (sic), the occasional reading of passages from the Bible, the sign of the cross, and candles. . . . The numerous uses of water in religious and magical rituals seem to be African-Christian syncretisms, as does the extensive use of charms (ibid.: 3).
Simpson (1964: 26) states that there are "aspects of Shango and Shouters 'work' mixed to some extent in the same service," in Trinidad (see note, p. 142). He mentions the possibility of Shango leaders providing opportunities for Shangoists to participate in the Spiritual Baptist rites of baptism, mourning, and building, which are not offered by the Shango cult. Such cooperation is not universal, however; some Spiritual Baptist leaders disdain Shango elements in their services and some Shango leaders, despite their dependence upon them for the rites mentioned, scorn the Spiritual Baptists. Nonetheless, according to Simpson (1961: 3), "Spirit possession in Spiritual Baptists ceremonies is seldom, if ever, limited to manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Sooner or later one or more devotees become possessed by one of the Shango powers."

African spirit cults other than Shango have also appeared in Trinidad. For example, an African immigrant who had been a diviner and healer in his native land established a Rada community in Trinidad in 1868. The religion of the community achieved a blend of Christianity and Dahomean religious tradition in which the African deities were identified with Christian saints. Spirit possession, drumming, dancing, sacrificing, etc., characterize the Rada religion, even as Shango (Carr, 1953).

Simpson has reported (1961: 2) that the Trinidadian Spiritual Baptists "correspond fairly closely to the Revival Zionists of Jamaica." Jamaica has several varieties of revivalism; Moore (1965) described three groups known as Revival, Zionists, and Pocomania.
He found certain differences in the groups: "The method of trumping, since spirit possession in Revival and Poco groups comes with the breath released in a downward motion, while the Zionists labor and trump releasing their breath with an upward beat;" Poco groups use strong liquor or marijuana, Zionists and Revival groups do not; Poco is more concerned with the working of evil, even using a ground altar "because of the evil forces that lurk there;" and finally, "the violence of Poco (devil worship) possession cannot be matched in any of the other cults" (ibid.: 64). Simpson (1956: 342) suggests that there is

... less emphasis on preaching and Bible explanations and more emphasis on singing and 'spiritual' dancing; greater use of witchcraft; more extreme techniques of healing; and perhaps, more emotional instability among the leaders, in Pocomania than in Revival Zion.

However, he found it difficult to distinguish sharply among the various kinds of revivalism.

Like the St. Vincent Shakers and the Trinidadian Shouters, the Jamaican revivalists derive their followers from the low income, low status groups. Dissociational states that are believed to indicate possession by supernatural entities are a prominent feature of revivalism also. The physical aspects of revivalist churches are much the same as those of the Spiritual Baptist churches in Trinidad and St. Vincent, and some of the ritual equipment is the same: the large wooden cross used in baptism, the banners with inscriptions that are carried in processions, containers of water with flowers, special robes and insignia of position, candles, the Bible, etc. Many of the
same elements are included in their services: Bible reading, hymn singing, praying, impromptu sermonizing, giving testimony, and so on.

The revivalists, however, have certain paraphernalia that is never seen in a Vincentian Shaker church. They may have a red flag which is waved at the beginning of a service "to 'cut down' all evil spirits" (ibid.: 362), swords and machetes to use for the same purpose, sacred stones, keys, shepherd's crooks, a whistle to stop the singing, restore order, or inform the spirit that the service is going to begin, etc., colored candles, de Laurence books, a central altar. One of the most striking differences is the use of drums or other musical instruments which is not found among the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad or St. Vincent.

The revivalists believe in the existence of and possible possession by, a great variety of spirits. According to Moore (1965: 68-69),

"Many Jamaican peasants believe that Oto, the top sky god of Cumina, still is present in Revival and Revival Zion, but his Western name is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. . . . African sky gods and earthbound gods are generally replaced in name by the great saints and celestial spirits of the Old and New Testaments, with particular reference to Revelation in the New Testament.

Simpson, however, working in West Kingston, found that the "Pocomanians and Revival Zionists do not worship old African gods," they do not even recognize West African deities' names. One informant said that the names of African gods might be used in private ceremonies (Simpson, 1956: 435-436).

Like Shangoists and some Trinidadian Shouters, revivalists may perform bloody sacrifices, and they are more preoccupied with healing
than was found to be the case in St. Vincent. Little use is made of chalk designs and no mention was made of any specific denominational liturgy or ritual procedures. Baptism is an important rite among the revivalists, but "mourning" in Jamaica is a "memorial service for a dead member of a family" rather than the period of seclusion so named by the Vincentian and Trinidadian Spiritual Baptists. A revivalist ritual exists, however, that seems to bear some resemblance to the Spiritual Baptist "mourning" ritual: to atone for his sins, a revivalist may spend three days or a week fasting and praying, then give testimony in church, and perhaps, a "table" (a combined religious service and feast). No increase in rank accrues to such a person as it does among the Spiritual Baptists, however, nor is there any report of visions, taking a spiritual journey, etc.

Possession trance among the revivalists appears to be a more violent affair than among the Shakers. "The possessed person may scream, whirl, leap, moan, tremble, cling to other worshippers, run, crawl, fall to the ground, or roll on the ground" (Simpson, 1956: 352). Even as the worshippers are subject to possession by a variety of spirits, so they may exhibit a variety of behaviors depending upon the possessing spirit. However, Simpson suggests, "A possession is identifiable mainly because those present know whom a given person follows or because that person shouts the name of his spirit or quotes him" (ibid.: 353). As mentioned before, although possession is a desirable state for the St. Vincent Shakers, consistent with their professed belief that the Spirit controls the choice of who is to be
possessed and when, they make no overt move to invite possession. The Jamaican revivalists, on the other hand, have several admitted ways of inducing possession: "divine concentration," spinning a worshipper around, striking him with a rod, and "labouring in the spirit." Simpson (ibid.: 354) explains the last method as consisting of "trumping" ("stamping hard with the right foot while the body is bent forward from the waist and breath is expelled") and "sounding," the groaning that occurs when they over-breathe "on the up-swing" ("stamping more lightly with the left foot as the body straightens up and as the maximum amount of air is breathed in"). Moore (1965: 64-65) elaborates:

As the hymns are sung the band starts dancing in 2/2 time; changes occur, the words and melody give way to trumping and laboring. The members move about the altar counter-clockwise, first with a mild swaying motion, then with a deep bend from the waist. The movement is increased and breath is loudly sucked in and released with each bend, making a kind of grunting sound. As the service continues, the dance is heightened in intensity, until some of the members are taken in possession, filled with the Holy Ghost, or the spirits of the saints of deceased former members. As members are possessed, they are cared for by other members until their dance is stable; then, although seemingly unconscious, they dance or as they say, trump and labor alone. The words and even the music of the original Sankey hymn have vanished and the rhythmic sound is now spirit-possession music.

The degeneration of the words and music would seem to be much the same phenomenon among the revivalists and the St. Vincent Spiritual Baptists.

Cults retaining more African characteristics than revivalism exhibits are also found in Jamaica. Moore and Simpson (1957: 983-984)
have rated the Jamaican religious groups (other than the major conventional denominations) from "quite Christian-European to non-Christian-non-European" on the basis of "the use of the Bible at services; prayers to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the use of Christian hymns; the absence of spirits other than God at services; and the use of the English language exclusively during services." They arranged the groups from "the Church of God and Pentecostal Holiness Zion Tabernacles. . .through Revival and Revival Zion. . .to. . .Pocomania, and, finally, to african Cumina or Maroon Dance." Hogg (1960) has since reported on the Convince cult which has retained more African elements than any other Jamaican cult except Cumina. In Cumina, the possessing spirits are sky gods, earth gods, and ancestral zombies; in Convince, they are ghosts of former cult members. Cumina members are usually born into the cult which is "primarily a family religion" (Moore and Simpson, 1958: 74), linking the living with the dead, the New World with Africa. Members of Convince are chosen by the spirits through visions or by possession. There seems to be less interaction between the more African cults and revivalism in Jamaica than is true of the more African Shango and the more Christian Shouterism in Trinidad.

In both Trinidad and Jamaica, obeah--"every pretended assumption of supernatural power or knowledge whatever for fraudulent or illicit purposes or for gain or for injury to any person" (M. J. and F. S. Herskovits, 1947: 346, quoting the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago)--seems to play a more important role in the religious practices of the
Shouters and the revivalists then seemed to be the case among the Shakers in St. Vincent. Obeah to the Shakers (or so they reported) was an evil practice that happened on some of the other islands or, if at all on St. Vincent, only in the country or in the past.

We turn now to a consideration of some of the mechanisms that seem to have been involved in the development of the various kinds of Afro-Christian religions in the West Indies, particularly those blending Protestantism and African tradition, and particularly for the island of St. Vincent.

In a situation of culture contact as exemplified by the West Indies, where a slave population and a dominant population were interacting, some accommodations could be expected to occur. Certain African traits might be preserved in an unaltered state; these are referred to as retentions. Other traits, however, might undergo

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Healing, by the same token, seemed to have far less importance as a religious responsibility among the Shakers of St. Vincent than among the Shouters of Trinidad or the Jamaican revivalists. Informants admitted that the pointer might be given knowledge in a dream of an herbal cure for some ill, but no one knew of any specific instance. They also stated that the pointer might go to the bedside of someone who was ailing and pray over him, but not, it was stated emphatically, to cure him. Shakers who were ill seemed quite willing to avail themselves of the local hospital facilities. (It should be remembered that these Shakers lived in or near the capital city; those living in the less accessible areas might very possibly react differently.)

It was obvious, however, that the Shakers had not rejected all magic; for example, some babies with Shaker mothers wore black shoe strings tied around their waists to ward off evil. Such practices are not connected with Shakerism, however, but are part of the lore of the general population. Streams of Power adherents were just as likely to observe such a precaution "just in case" there might be some truth in it.
varying amounts and kinds of change. Such traits have been termed reinterpretations, and in special cases, syncretisms (Herskovits, 1947: 553-558; also see Bourguignon, 1954). According to Herskovits (ibid.: 553-554), "Reinterpretation marks all aspects of cultural change. . . . Syncretism is one form of reinterpretation." Syncretism, M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (1947: 330) elaborate, is a phenomenon observed and reported upon especially from many parts of the New World, where Africans have translated their aboriginal religious structure into the patterns of worship of their new environment. Such renderings of belief and worship have proved both simplest and most felicitous when the accommodation was made to a pattern of Catholicism, since its multiplicity of saints made feasible parallelisms to a multiplicity of nature deities.

Where the dominant religious influence was Protestantism, however, M. J. and F. S. Herskovits (ibid.: 304) observe that "reinterpretations of necessity were of a less direct and more subtle character."

The term "syncretism" does not appear to mean the same thing to all people. Moore (1965), for example, wrote at some length on "Religious Syncretism in Jamaica," yet Smith (1965: 12) declared that "Where Protestantism has been historically dominant, as in Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, and Antigua, aesthetically rich religious syncretisms such as Shango are absent; and Revivalism or Shakerism (Shouting Baptist) is the characteristic folk ritual form."

Following Herskovits, Shakerism's African traits that have been strained through Methodism are reinterpretations; Shakerism, in the absence of identification of African deities with Christian saints, would not be considered a syncretic cult.
Bourguignon (1967: 7-8) suggests further that:

...whereas Catholicism provided an opportunity for reinterpretation and syncretism at the perceptual and cognitive level—in the cult of saints and in some aspects of its ritualism—it did not provide such an opportunity within its organizational structure. . . . The structure of the church...was both rigid and integrated—taking the African in, but allowing no room for innovation in dogma, ritual or Church organization. Protestantism, in many ways, appears to have represented the very opposite: it did not integrate the African into its own rigid forms, but, particularly with the coming of Methodism, allowed for separate structures, in which both innovation and reinterpretation were possible. This was true in particular with regard to biblical interpretation and ritual, including enthusiastic services and initiation practices (baptism, "mourning," and "building").

The role of the Bible and its interpretation in the hands of untaught leaders and congregations should not be overlooked, not only as a possible active force in the development of belief and ritual, but also as a rationalizing agency for possibly reinterpreted practices and beliefs that have become part of the various Afro-Protestant religions. Moore (1965: 67-68) points out that the Africans were confronted with "Epistles and Gospel or lesson from the Bible, read but not explained. . . . Careful instruction as to the nature of the sacraments in cultural terms they could understand was lacking." Mrs. Carmichael (1833: 237) reported that, in St. Vincent in the early nineteenth century, although the white and colored people in the Methodist congregation were able to understand the sermon, "the slave population comprehended almost nothing of it. . . . it was evident that they had not one rational or distinct idea upon the subject, although many of them had attended (church services) regularly for years." Hearing or reading the Bible without the traditional understanding or explanation would appear to
have contributed to idiosyncratic interpretations. Vincentian Spiritual Baptists, for example, state that the Bible tells them to go to mourn: "It says in the Bible, 'Blessed are they that mourn.'" Herskovits (1958: 223) mentions that the Bible is used to support the custom of removing their shoes among the Trinidadian Shouters. The same source is given for the same custom among the Shakers.

Spirit possession, one of the most conspicuous features of the Afro-Protestant religions and our major concern, also finds its raison d'être in biblical text. But it also exemplifies the disagreement that obtains in assigning traits to a particular culture. Smith (1960: 36) objects to regarding spirit possession as an African element because many West African tribes do not practice it while some Europeans do. Simpson and Hammond (1960: 48) spell out the differences between the typical West African spirit possession and the European type arguing that it seems to be "mainly" a West African trait. We cannot overlook the fact, however, that the eighteenth century did produce religious groups in Europe that found their way to the West Indies (e.g., Quakers, Moravians, Methodists) that were noted for their enthusiastic, even ecstatic approach to religion. In the case of the Methodist missionaries, although there may have been no direct teaching of excitement, it seems obvious that when such behavior was encountered on the part of their Negro congregations, they, having been inured to demonstrative reactions in the English congregations accepted it and did not attempt to halt it. In Jamaica, the Baptists tolerated the "infiltration of

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See LaBarre (1962: 11-12) for another example of this phenomenon.
African religious practices...requiring special dreams, and seizure by 'the spirit,' as a qualification for baptism..." (Curtin, 1955: 164-165). Simpson and Hammond (1960: 48-49) indicate that the motor behavior and the positive value attached to possession trance were African traits, but I would submit that the apparent ready acceptance of the phenomenon by some of the sects probably helped to establish possession trance firmly as part of the developing religions.

Klein (1966) compared the differing policies toward the slaves of the Catholic Church in Cuba and the Church of England (later the Episcopal Church) in Virginia. He demonstrated that the Catholic Church, by assuming a paternalistic attitude toward the slaves, by admitting them to the Church, and by various other means, was effective in encouraging religious syncretism and in facilitating the assimilation of the African into Cuban society. The Church of England, on the other hand, did not enjoy the same powerful position. In Virginia the church was subordinate to the local planters, and the religious destinies of their slaves depended upon the wishes of the separate planters. For the slaves, the general atmosphere was repressive, and those who were converted were in the minority. "Absolutely no syncretization of Christian belief with folk religion of African origin..." (ibid.: 321) occurred. The planters were no more eager for their slaves to be influenced by the non-conformist preachers who began to arrive in the mid-eighteenth century than they had been for the Church of England clergy earlier.

The situation in the British West Indies was much the same as Klein has described it for Virginia. The Church of England was the
Established Church, but it was concerned with the white population, not the slaves. The planters were "unanimously opposed to any action on the part of the clergy likely to arouse discontent in the minds of their slaves" (Ragatz, 1928: 28). In St. Vincent, slaves were not allowed to enter the Anglican church and when the Methodist missionaries arrived, attempts were made to interfere with their activities; in 1800, the Methodists were charged with contributing to "insubordination and discontent" among the slaves (ibid.: 284).

Goveia (1966), however, observed that Klein, in attempting to explain the varying features of slavery that characterize it in different parts of the New World, has emphasized the influence of religion to the exclusion of other factors. She suggests that the ratio of Negro slaves to whites can also be a significant factor. Klein reported a slave population approximately equal to the white population in Santiago de Cuba for the years 1752-1755. This is a quite different situation from the British West Indies. In Jamaica in 1788, there were about 18,000 whites to about 226,000 slaves; on Dominica in 1804, about 1,600 whites to about 22,000 slaves (Ragatz, 1928: 30). Mrs. Carmichael (1833: 56) wrote that a small estate on St. Vincent would have about 100 slaves and at most two white men in addition to the planter. On islands where the number of slaves was so disproportionate, the white people were constantly fearful of a slave revolt. Requiring a set ratio of whites to Negroes was attempted through deficiency laws, white militias were organized and martial law was usually declared when large gatherings of slaves were anticipated (Ragatz, 1928: 31). In such a
climate of uneasiness, a planter's hostile reaction to attempts to convert and teach Christianity to his slaves, and to gather them together for religious meetings can be understood.

The form of government in the various Caribbean islands, and the accompanying complacency (or lack of it) of the people in complying with its decrees, should also be considered. Mathieson (1926: 43) has noted that:

...slavery is always more tolerable under arbitrary than under constitutional rule; for in a free state not only do the slave-owners make or help to make the laws, but, being unaccustomed to the interference of the Government, they are more likely to resent it when exerted in restraint of their authority.

Slavery in autocratic Spanish Cuba, then, was characterized by a fairly equal distribution of whites and Negroes, by careful supervision of the rights and religion of the slaves by the ubiquitous Catholic Church, and by religious syncretism. Slavery in the more democratic British West Indies was characterized by an overwhelming preponderance of Negroes, tension on the part of the minority whites that was translated into further repression of the slaves, an established Protestant church that reflected the attitudes and will of the planters in ignoring the religious life of the slaves, and the later introduction of nonconformist religions which catered to the slaves. As in Virginia, no religious syncretism took place in St. Vincent, and Methodism became the religion of the slaves. But when we look at Jamaica, this neat formula breaks down; in Jamaica, where the same general conditions prevailed, religious syncretism did take place. Why would syncretism occur in Jamaica but not in St. Vincent?
Aside from the general historical background shared by the various islands of the British West Indies, each island has a unique history which has contributed to the religious character as it appears today. For example, some islands were exposed to denominations that were not introduced in other islands; Mrs. Carmichael decried the absence in St. Vincent of Moravian missionaries, who were active on Antigua (1833: 238); Carriacou would seem to have been exempt from any direct denominational influences (Smith, 1962). Some islands have been affected by individual innovators; this was the case in Jamaica with Bedward, and in Grenada with Norman Paul. Some were influenced by Negroes emigrating from the United States or Africa; the Native Baptist Church was introduced into Jamaica by American Negroes, the introduction of the Rada religion was due to the presence of a free African immigrant in Trinidad, and Shango in Grenada was the religion of several communities of free Africans who arrived in 1849. (Grenada had originally been colonized by the French whose Catholic influence has remained even though Grenada became a British colony the same year that St. Vincent did. Like Trinidad and St. Vincent, Grenada also has Spiritual Baptists). And we cannot discount the importance of inter-island mobility and communication. From the time of discovery (and before) there seems

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7Bedward was a religious leader and healer who attracted a large following between 1891 and 1921. He was arrested and sent to the insane asylum when he claimed that he was Jesus Christ and that he was going to ascend into Heaven, taking his awaiting followers with him. Nevertheless, he had a great influence on the revivalist movement in Jamaica (Simpson, 1956: 337).

Norman Paul was a Grenadian "healer, diviner, and seer who practiced a highly individual form of cult" which blended Shakerism, Shango, and Seventh Day Adventism (Smith, 1963: 7).
to have been a fair amount of movement between islands. The possibility of ideas, innovations and news of innovations, cult members, and, of course, cults, moving from one island to another must be considered. Unfortunately, we do not have the necessary historical data to fill in the details of all the various religious influences that may have helped to shape the present situation. Nor have we discovered why Jamaica and St. Vincent would exhibit different religious features.

Smith points to the "importance of group cohesion for the persistence and survival of a trait or complex of traits" (1965: 22), illustrating his statement with the example of Grenadian Shango which developed in three closed Yoruba communities. Leiris (quoted by Bourguignon, 1968: 7) observed that escaped slaves were also able to form communities which served as repositories for African traditions on some islands. This was the case with the Maroons in Jamaica. In St. Vincent, although escaped slaves formed a society separate from the slave society, they lived among the Carib Indians, and, instead of preserving their African traditions in a more or less pure form, they adopted many Indian customs (Coelho, 1948: 1). The racial composition of the group was also eventually altered. But since the mixed Negro-Carib population disturbed the peace of the island, they were deported soon after St. Vincent was officially open for colonization, hence they had little, if any, effect on the Vincentian religious situation. Further, the "cultural heterogeneity" of the slaves, which was an important factor in their lack of group cohesion, "was apparently reinforced by plantation practices, since attempts were made to prevent any substantial
numbers of slaves of a common tribal background from being concentrated on the same plantation" (Mintz, 1966: 921).

The size of an island may also be significant in the development of its present religious character. Size was probably a consideration in the past in the assigning of clergy and missionaries to the islands. And today, some of the small islands are without a resident church and are dependent for religious leadership and ritual events on occasional visits by religious groups from the larger islands. The larger islands, by the same token, are more likely to show the effects of the onslaughts of a variety of religious forces, as Jamaica does. However, size is not the whole answer either. For example, Grenada, about the size of St. Vincent, displays a variety of religious groups.

It becomes increasingly obvious that there is no adequate theory of religious syncretism in the Caribbean. Bourguignon (1967: 14-15) discusses the subject at length. She suggests that "we need more, and anthropologically better informed, historical work" in the area. She further suggests that answers to the following questions should be sought:

. . .What were the teachings of the Churches, and to whom were they available? And in addition to the formal teachings, what were the folk beliefs and practices brought by European settlers? In fact, what was the nature of these settlers and of the types of contacts established by them with the Africans . . .?

What were the policies in the field of religion, of the Churches in the Colonies. . .and how were these policies mediated, and, indeed, by what forces were these policies influenced?

What was the sequence of events: Sequence of colonial administrations; sequence of religious movements. . .continuation--or cessation--of contacts between the colony, or
ex-colony, and the metropolis on the one hand, and with West Africa on the other?

What was the social organization within the various Caribbean countries at various points of their histories, and what do we know of the inter-island contacts, which appear to weigh so heavily at present?

To this list we might add several more questions. In addition to the policies of the established churches in the various colonies, we might also ask what the policies of the various missions, and the various missionaries involved, were in the colonies. We know, for example, that the Baptists in Jamaica were able to capitalize on the previous work of the Native Baptists, that they permitted the inclusion of Africanisms, and that they experienced a rapid increase in membership from 1831 to 1845. But as the missionary churches began attacking the morals of the Negroes, the Negroes developed a distrust of the missionaries; the Baptists began training native ministers, but this measure did not restore the earlier position of the Baptists, because the newly trained ministers left the church and started new cults (Curtin, 1955: 169). So, in Jamaica, the policies of the missionary churches drove the Negroes to the Afro-Christian cults which incorporated those beliefs that were in harmony with the Negro value systems and to the African cults.

We might also suggest that contacts within the islands between various sub-societies might be significant. We have such an example in Trinidad in the case of the interaction of the Shango cultists and the Spiritual Baptists. And perhaps more information concerning the contacts that have been made, and perhaps are being made, between the United States and the islands might be productive. Smith, for example,
gives the American Spiritual Baptists as the provenience for the Spiritual Baptists of Grenada. It would be useful to know more about the American Spiritual Baptists, when they appeared in Grenada, where they came from in the United States, what the conditions of their introduction into Grenada might have been, what connection, if any, they might have with the Spiritual Baptists of Trinidad and St. Vincent, etc.

With this kind of historical information, we might hope to be able to explain religious syncretism more satisfactorily.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has been primarily concerned with dissociational states as they occur among the members of a West Indian Protestant religious group, the Shakers of St. Vincent. The worshippers may experience trance states in several different forms and contexts, and they provide a different interpretation for each. Trance, evidenced by shaking and other physical manifestations, occurs in a group context during Shaker services, and is interpreted as possession by the Holy Spirit. Trance also occurs during retreats, known as "mourning," when it apparently takes the form of hallucinations and is interpreted as a "spiritual journey" during which the trancer's spirit is believed to travel away from his corporeal body.

Some historical background has been given for a better understanding of the development and existence of the present social, economic, and religious conditions on the island that at least tolerate if not nurture and support Shakerism. The composition and internal organization of the cult, as well as the various kinds of services and rituals, with particular emphasis on the crucial rites of baptism and "mourning," have been described.
The dissociational states that are characteristic of Shaker meetings and those described for the "mourning" period were subjected to close scrutiny. In the church context, it was observed that trances were mild, and, though apparently simple, were of sufficient complexity that it was possible to discern, on the basis of behavioral changes, different levels through which the trances progressed. Mischel and Mischel (1958: 253) had noted levels of possession-trance for the Shangoists in Trinidad.

The level of possession (the depth, involvement, loss of control and consciousness, and intensity of behavior) is by no means constant, either among individuals or at different times with the same person. At times it appears to consist merely of a brief "overshadowing" or momentary loss of control, dizziness, and a partial and temporary loss of consciousness. On other occasions, it involves an almost total and prolonged loss of consciousness, and of many controls over motor behavior. . . . It should be emphasized that possession does not appear to be an all-or-none process, utterly separated from the individual's usual state. Rather, an extension and distortion of everyday behavior seems to be involved, and possession behavior cannot be rigidly dichotomized from the person's secular roles. It would appear more useful to deal with different levels of involvement in possession behavior rather than "possession" versus "normality."

However, they made no attempt to develop the concept further.

The usual Shaker trances fell rather precisely into three divisions, with intervening transitional periods of short duration, according to certain relevant criteria. Typical trances were diagrammed, and it was demonstrated that, by superimposing individuals' trancing patterns one over the other, they would indicate reinforcement at certain points, explaining the choral-like aspects of the trancing group taken as a whole.
The concept of levels of trance as it has been expanded here would seem to have some usefulness and meaning cross-culturally. Darmadji and Pfeiffer (1967: 9) reported their findings on Kuda-kepang in Java and commented:

. . .Das Verhalten vor, während und nach dem Trancezustand weist eine Reihe von Zügen auf, die sich bei solchen Zuständen in aller Welt wiederholen. So kam J. Henney auf Grund ihrer Beobachtungen bei den Shakers auf St. Vincent zu einer ähnlichen Stadieneinteilung wie wir. 1

Dissociation during "mourning" was not interpreted as spirit possession. It was noted that, in many ways, the conditions under which mourning was fulfilled were very similar to those used in sensory deprivation experiments: the mourner was confined, his visual perception was limited by a blindfold, his motility was restricted since he was required to lie on the ground in a specified position, he was fed a limited diet, he was isolated from his ordinary contacts and activities, and he was in a situation of dependency. Under such conditions, both the mourners and subjects in sensory deprivation experiments reported hallucinatory activity. But certain aspects of the hallucinatory experience reported by the mourners differed from those reported by the experimental subjects. This variation leads us to conclude that insofar as the results of similar sensory deprivation

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1"The behavior before, during, and after the trance condition shows a number of traits which in such states repeat themselves all over the world. On the basis of her observations with the Shakers on St. Vincent, J. Henney arrived at a similar organization of stages as we did." (Translated by Mrs. Felicitas Goodman.)
experiences are the same for different groups of people, they are dependent on "biological commonalities," but in the areas where they are different, we are dealing with results that have been influenced by variations in culture. Thus, it would seem that the capacity for hallucinating under certain conditions is a biological possibility common to humans, but the content of the hallucinations will vary with the belief system of the people involved, with their expectations, etc.

Shakerism has been considered from the standpoint of its value for its participants. It has been argued that it serves a positive function by affording lower-class Vincentians caught in an apparently unresolvable socio-economic plight, aggravated by racial prejudices rooted in the bridgeless chasm between slave and planter and by unequal educational and vocational opportunities, an image with which to identify that demonstrates that superiority and worth lie in the very qualities with which the Shakers are most generously endowed—poverty, rejection, persecution, etc. I have further suggested that by withdrawing and seeking identification with a biblical hero, or even with Christ Himself, the Shakers are, in reality, however unconsciously, staging a ritual of rebellion. They indicate their scorn for the treasures of the other classes, which they may covet but are unable to obtain, by regarding them as sinful and less worthy and desirable as goals than the Kingdom of Heaven. By expressing their disdain through identification with Christian martyrs and heroes, they reassure themselves of their superiority over the group that is
ordinarily superior to them. Yet, consistent with the concept of rituals of rebellion, their rebellion against the classes that dominate them remains in ritual form and does not become open revolt, but actually serves to maintain the established system. By directing the worshippers' aspirations toward the afterlife, by concentrating their resources on preparation for eligibility for its rewards, and by soothing and relieving their envious desires with a satisfying belief that they, not the upper class--the "despised model"--are the chosen of God, Shakerism supports the status quo.

Finally, Shakerism has been compared with similar cults in the Caribbean--the Shouters of Trinidad and the Revivalists of Jamaica, in particular--in an effort to isolate the forces operating, first of all, in the development of such groups, and second, in their acceptance and persistence--often in the face of opposition. Although several influences appear to have a larger or smaller role in the development and reception of syncretic religions in the Caribbean, no one factor, nor any one group of factors, can be singled out as the necessary precursor or concomitant. Catholicism, where it was the dominant religion, encouraged the acceptance of Christianity by the slaves and provided a slate of saints with which native African deities and spirits could be matched and merged--vodun in Catholic Haiti and Shango in Catholic Trinidad exemplify such syncretization. Where the Anglican Church was the Established Church, admission of the slaves to Christianity was discouraged, and syncretization of Christian and African spirits is less likely to occur. Nor is it
found in some islands that are, and have been predominantly Anglican--
St. Vincent, for example. But in Jamaica, Moore (1965) reported that
African spirits were identified with Old and New Testament personali-
ties. Additional contributing factors to religious syncretism appear
to include the size of the island, the colonizing country, inter-
island movements, individual innovators, specific missionary influ-
ences, size of the slave population, economy of the island, fortuitous
immigration, and, in general, historical accidents. The problem of
explaining religious syncretism in the Caribbean, however, remains
unsolved.

Certain considerations for future research have been implied by
this study. First, more historical data are needed to help untangle
the problem of religious syncretism. An historical survey of the
development of religions in the Caribbean would be a tremendous under-
taking, but there is no doubt that it would be a significant accom-
plishment. Although some broad generalizations can be made, it has
been demonstrated repeatedly that each island has been subject to a
unique set of influences which affects the lives and institutions of
the inhabitants.

A more detailed study of Vincentian society as a whole would
have been useful as a background to such a study as this. Hadley's
(1949) article is interesting but we need a larger investigation--one
that would include information on family relationships, interaction
between social classes, relationships existing within social classes,
etc.
Inquiry into religious groups in St. Vincent, other than the Shakers, that attract the lower classes might be profitable. What appeal do they have, how do they attempt to meet the lower class needs and how successful are they? How do lower-class Vincentians who join the Shakers differ from those who turn to other churches, or from those who reject institutionalized religion entirely? The data on the Streams of Power Church (Appendix A) suggest that its members, although of the lower class also, are attempting to better their socio-economic positions and have some faith in their ability to do so. The Shakers do not seem to have either the urge for upward mobility nor the confidence that it can be achieved. What other avenues for identity renewal and what other satisfactions for prestige cravings are available to lower-class Vincentians who do not become Shakers? And how are these changing? Vincentians have only had the franchise for 17 years; to what extent is this entry into the political scene affecting the lower classes and their aspirations? And how do the urban-dwelling lower-class Vincentians differ from those in rural areas? Do more of the rural people, possibly more remote from Western influences, become Shakers; or are they less apt to turn to Shakerism because pressures on them may be less? Or is there any difference? How does migration affect a Shaker?

There is room for many more detailed observations of dissociational states in other societies. It would be helpful if ethnologists in the field were made aware of the kinds of data that would be useful for cross-cultural comparisons. It is to be hoped that the project
outline will serve in this capacity. And, although difficulties can be foreseen, the gathering of certain measurements during trance would be desirable—pulse rates, blood pressure, etc. (Apropos of this aspect of the study of dissociational states, Prince [1968] has suggested a means whereby EEG's could be taken during trances.) Additional insights into the effects of sensory deprivation might be forthcoming if its use and its results in non-experimental situations, such as the Shaker mourning room, were further investigated, and if persons whose cultural "givens" included a positive value on hallucinations were used as experimental subjects.

To recapitulate, dissociational states are of tremendous importance to the Shakers. In the group context, trances are visible proof to the trancer and the congregation of the inclinations of the deity toward the Shakers, and they support Shaker contentions to superiority. For the isolate, dissociation not only underscores these same features, but also gives the mourner justification for, and supernatural validation of, increased status in the cult. Thus Shaker beliefs and practices serve a positive function for the lower-class Vincentian, and, by channeling class antagonisms into a ritualized form, Shakerism serves a positive function for the maintenance of Vincentian society as a whole. The investigation of the variety of belief systems applied to dissociational states by the Shakers demonstrates the importance of culturally patterned cognitive factors for dissociational behavior and experience.
APPENDIX A

STREAMS OF POWER: A DUTCH HEALING CULT

Streams of Power came to St. Vincent in February 1965. The movement was started in Holland about 1952 by an artist who had made a promise to God to preach His word if he were cured of an illness, and after his recovery he proceeded to carry out his promise. The blossoming of such religious movements is not unusual for Holland, and this particular one has since spread to the Dutch West Indies and Dutch Guiana, to Trinidad, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, and to various parts of Europe and Africa.

The evangelist who introduced Streams of Power to St. Vincent conducted a highly successful crusade. He stated that as many as 14,000 people attended some of the sessions in the park in Kingstown. (Fourteen thousand spectators seems almost unbelievable when the total population of St. Vincent, the total population of Kingstown, the problems posed by transportation, and the physical aspects of the island are considered, however.) Many miraculous cures were reported. Several of the present members of the church who were suffering from various ailments, heart trouble, cancer, blindness, etc., aver that they were healed at that time. As far as I know, none of these claims have been

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1Personal communication, G. A. Banck, December 8, 1966.
substantiated by the medical profession. However, a minister of one of the large organized churches stated that many who were allegedly healed had not, in fact, been healed.

The impact that Streams of Power made on the island was of sufficient proportions to pose a threat to the established churches, and they took steps—-even as drastic as excommunication--to restrain their members from attending Streams of Power meetings. A discouraging period of opposition and antagonism ensued for Streams of Power, during which attempts were made by the larger churches to achieve the legal extinction of the new cult. The size of Streams of Power congregations declined sharply. According to several informants, the political climate of the island was such, at that time, however, that the fate of a religious group deriving its membership from the lower social strata was bright, if not assured. The evangelist recounting the tribulations of the first year gave credit to the Chief Minister and his wife for the fact that, within a year, Streams of Power had achieved full recognition and approval of the government. The cult now seems to have settled into a period of relative calm; the hostility of the other churches is less evident. The present growth (in 1966) of Streams of Power, though much less spectacular than in the initial period, is steady, according to the evangelist.

The Streams of Power physical plant is inviting. An arch over the driveway from the street proclaims that this is "Revival Hall." The big, rambling, white frame building that was once the estate house of a plantation, is picturesquely perched near the top of a steep hill, overlooking Kingstown and the harbor. The former drawing room has been
furnished with benches and will accommodate about 175 to 200 people.
A stage has been built at one end of the room. A cross-shaped pulpit
stands on the stage, a card table with a clean white drawn-work cloth
and a vase of fresh flowers is at one side. A microphone indicates
the existence of a public address system. On the wall behind the stage
hangs a banner bearing the Streams of Power device—a white dove with
a red cross on its chest against a bright blue background. Instrumental music is important in Streams of Power services. An upright
piano is at one side of the platform. Various other instruments may
be added—tambourines, guitar, bass—depending upon their availability.
The rest of the house is used by the evangelist and his family for
their living quarters and his office. Services are also held in other
parts of the island, but they are either conducted along the road or
in temporarily rented halls.

Meetings are held regularly on Sunday morning and evening,
Monday evening and Thursday evening. The island's weekly newspaper
lists Streams of Power with the other organized churches, giving the
times and places of its various services. The congregation is largely
composed of women; about 20% are men, another 20% are children. The
services begin on time and last for two hours. A period of singing
that lasts about 40 minutes opens each service. The songs are either
known to the congregation or are taken from an evangelistic hymnal,
Redemption Songs. The singing is loud and fast, and there is much hand

\[2\] According to the evangelist, the blue background represents
heaven-freedom for man. The two wings of the dove represent the Old
and New Testaments, "for we need both." The red cross is self-explanatory, since Christ died on the cross.
clapping, stamping of feet, and gesturing. There are some songs with "gimmicks" (such as might be used at children's camps in the United States), in which some of the words are omitted the second time the song is sung and gestures substituted. The piano and instrumental accompaniment is also loud and not necessarily accurate.

The period of singing is followed by the "service of adoration" during which glossolalia (more specifically, xenoglossia) or "speaking in tongues," is the prominent feature. The evangelist, with his head elevated and his eyes tightly closed, begins whispering repeatedly into the microphone such phrases as "Thank You, Jesus," "Hallelujah," or "Praise the Lord," setting the pattern for the congregation who do the same. Periodically, someone in the congregation breaks in with a series of unintelligible words or syllables. According to informants, the Holy Spirit chooses one person at a time, indicating to him when to speak; two or more people do not speak in tongues at the same time. (I was present at several meetings when two people did begin to speak at the same time, notwithstanding; the louder one seemed to be the one who continued, the other person stopped.) The speaker then continues with a sentence such as "So speaks the Lord," and proceeds to offer a bit of advice or counsel in English. About seven or eight people of both sexes may make contributions of this nature. The evangelist may also do so, but he does not speak in tongues routinely. The evangelist then closes the service of adoration with a prayer.

No singing or music, hand clapping or drumming, accompanies the service of adoration. It is a period of quiet reverence, in distinct contrast to the noisy singing period that preceded it.
On Sunday after the service of adoration, the evangelist preaches a sermon, on Thursday night he devotes the time remaining to Bible teaching, on Monday evening to a prayer meeting. The Thursday night Bible teaching is organized to develop a certain theme or topic. The evangelist refers to specific passages, giving those who have brought their Bibles with them (almost everyone) an opportunity to find the reference, then reads the passage with gusto making appropriate comments, with occasional attempts at humor which the congregation seems to appreciate. Many bring pencils and paper with them and write down each reference, apparently for future study.

Several more hymns are sung. During one of them an offering is taken in a soft hat, but no appeal is made for generosity. A prayer and a benediction end the meetings.

When someone is speaking in tongues, the Streams of Power adherents believe that the Spirit is giving a message in a foreign tongue, the essence of which is subsequently repeated in the vernacular. The unknown tongue is believed to be a legitimate foreign language which could be understood if someone who knew that language happened to be present. The words spoken afterwards in English presumably interpret

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3 An example is given in a Streams of Power pamphlet:

"Some years ago, Tommy Hicks was in Russia. Suddenly, his interpreter did not want to translate for him any longer; she spat into his face and said: I do not want to translate this nonsense any more, and went away. There he stood, without interpreter, in a foreign country, before multitudes of people. Then he began to speak in tongues, and the Holy Spirit gave him the language of the people to whom he was speaking, that means the Russian language. The crowd was moved to tears, and many surrendered themselves to Jesus."
the message which is said to be intended for some person, or persons, in the congregation. Interpretation thus rests not with the performer, nor with an interpreter, but with the Spirit. According to the evangelist, the person who is speaking "doesn't even know what he is saying; the Holy Spirit is within the person and uses the person to speak through."

Speaking in tongues is regarded as a highly desirable "gift of the Spirit" that is accessible to anyone who is a "child of God" (in other words, to anyone who has repented). The evangelist emphasized that speaking in tongues makes a believer strong and guarantees that he will not backslide. The members who speak in tongues state that they feel "uplifted" or "exalted" at the time. They say that they remember speaking in tongues, but do not remember what they say. The trances manifested in glossolalia are of short duration--from about 30 seconds to about a minute--too short and unspectacular for me to identify, or divide into, separate or distinct levels (see Chapter V). Most of those who performed showed no more excitement than most people might who are speaking in public. Eyes were kept closed. Only occasionally was trembling or shaking noted and it was minimal. Some excitement was

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Goodman (1968), however, working with my tapes was able to analyze Streams of Power glossolalia samples. She discovered a recurring pattern: "a threshold of onset, a rising gradient of intensity, a peak,
discernible in some of the voices and in somewhat more rapid breathing in some cases. One woman, for example, who performed several times, spoke somewhat louder and more dramatically than most, and shook her shoulder and right arm up and down. None of the speakers became so engrossed in performing as to continue beyond a short period of time, however. Recovery was always very rapid, almost instantaneous.

I witnessed a healing session one evening after the service was over. The evangelist invited those who were ailing and who desired the ritual treatment to come forward. Several people sat down on the front benches. The evangelist approached each one individually, asked the nature of the complaint, put his hands on the affected person's shoulders, raised his eyes heavenward, and called upon Jesus in a loud voice to cure the person. There was no trembling or evident excitement on the part of either the evangelist or the patient.

Several informants explained that the laying on of hands was not the curing agent. It was "believing in God, but you can't just say you believe. God knows and nothing would happen." God does not make a person sick. "It is the Devil and these are evil spirits in you making you sick; healing is driving out these evil spirits." Certain categories of illness or malfunctioning such as fever or deafness are believed to be the work of the Devil.

and a rapid drop or decay (ibid.: 14). She compared this glossolalia pattern with the sequences of levels of trance that I had discovered for Shaker trances (see Chapter V) and found them to be very similar. She concluded that the "pattern, reflected in the glossolalia in the phonological, accent, and intonational structure, can be shown to exist also in other artifacts of trance, such as. . .kinetic behavior. . ." (ibid.)
Curing may also be carried out for a person in absentia. One case was recounted to me which concerned an old woman who was blind. The woman's daughter took her mother's handkerchief to the evangelist and he blessed it. She returned home, placed the handkerchief over her mother's eyes and she was cured.

Comparison of Streams of Power and Shakerism

In some respects, Shakerism and Streams of Power seem to be very similar. They both preach a fundamentalistic approach to Protestant Christianity. They quote biblical passages to support their beliefs and practices and accept the Bible literally and its infallibility unquestioningly. That they both may quote the same passage to justify differing beliefs and practices does not seem to concern either group of believers. Nor do they seem to wonder at the fact that they are selective in the passages that they use for guidance--accepting some but ignoring others. Both groups appeal to the lower economic and less educated classes. Both require baptism by immersion and stress that man is a sinful creature and repentance an absolute necessity. Both emphasize the desirability and worth of individual, personal communication and interaction with the supernatural. There is much audience participation and involvement in the services of both cults.

For example, both the Shakers and the adherents of Streams of Power will refer to Acts 2:4 ("They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues.") to justify their beliefs in possession by the Holy Ghost. But for the Shakers, dissociation manifested in shaking is evidence of such possession. Streams of Power adherents, on the other hand, frown on shaking behavior and, by emphasizing the importance of speaking in tongues, interpret the passage to justify their own particular brand of glossolalia.
Each person joins in the singing of the hymns and songs—providing music is not assigned to a choir. Individuals may respond or exclaim during prayers or sermons. And both groups believe that a person may be entered by the Holy Spirit and caused to behave in an unusual fashion during the meetings.

The Streams of Power branch in St. Vincent, however, is only one outpost of an organization that is obviously able to support a rather elaborate operation. The evangelist indicated that the collections and gifts that were obtained from his congregation were supplemented by funds from Holland. Each Shaker church, on the other hand is autonomous. Pointer B.'s churches appear to be the only exception. The Shaker membership is small and poor. The saucer on the altar rarely contained more than a few pennies. And they have no superorganization to come to their aid.

The leadership of the two churches is strikingly different. The evangelist, his wife, and children appear to be a comfortable, middle-class Dutch family. The evangelist and his wife seem to be fairly well educated. They are clean and fashionably dressed. They have a nursemaid for their children, who always look well scrubbed. They are white. Pointer B., on the other hand, seems even less affluent than some of his parishioners. He rents a room in a small house in Kings-town. His wife and children live in the country, where his wife takes charge of one of his churches. He receives no salary for his work as pointer. "He will get a crown of righteousness as his reward." He works part time as a dock hand when a boat is in the harbor. He said that he has tried to get steady work or a better job to maintain his
family more adequately but he has been unsuccessful. His home in the
country is small and poor. He has 12 children, nine of whom are at
home. They are not very clean and their clothing is ragged. Pointer
B. comes from the very group to which he ministers. His education,
economic position, and racial background are similar. His problems
are much the same. The evangelist is from a higher class, presumably,
than his flock, and he is a foreigner. He does not share the social
and economic pressures, the educational inadequacies, nor any childhood
recollections of St. Vincent with his people. He does not speak their
language in his home. He is not even of their color.

Streams of Power meetings seem very simple and scheduled when com­
pared with Shaker meetings. They are devoid of familiar Protestant
litany. None of the responses, creeds, prayers, etc. that are common
to the Shaker and Methodist services are used. The songs that are sung
are simple and easy to sing. Many of them repeat the same, or nearly
the same, phrases over and over so that learning is minimal and fairly
effortless. The sermons are also simple and direct, full of down-to-
earth examples and stereotypes that are easy to understand. For example,
one evening the evangelist recounted the difficulties a brother evange­
list was having on a predominantly Catholic island. The government
closed the hall where he was holding his meetings, yet "The people
there didn't even know they could buy a Bible for $1.00 until Brother
C. sold \textit{retailed} them, telling them to read the word of God for them­
selves." The sermons are often designed to hold up to ridicule or
inspection certain human frailties; e.g., in developing the topic that,
whether he knows it or not, everyone has a god that he worships, the
evangelist remarked that "The drunk has alcohol for his god, the cigarette smoker worships cigarettes, the American worships the dollar."

The meetings last two hours. Each part of the service is timed and one part follows another in the established sequence: opening songs, service of adoration or blessing, sermon or Bible study, closing songs, closing prayers.

By contrast, a Shaker service is more complex and less scheduled. Although the Shakers use some of the same songs that are used in the Streams of Power church, most of the Shaker hymns are taken from the Methodist hymnal and are considerably more complicated both in words and music. Shaker meetings are longer but of an indefinite length. They are more involved with ritual and it is more elaborate: the Methodist Order of Morning Worship, the consecration of the corners, the ritual handshaking, lengthy chanted antiphonic prayers, etc.

Shaker services are further embellished with uniforms and other insignia of office, head ties, kneeling, making the sign of the cross, removal of shoes in the praise house, carrying candles, etc.

Shaker sermonizing draws heavily on the Bible for examples, rarely on ordinary present day life and happenings. Preaching is performed with a solemn mien and is obviously not intended to be amusing—the relationship with the supernatural and the biblical references are very serious and important and never treated lightly. Sermonizing is not directed toward drinking, smoking, politics, or any strictly contemporary problems, but is concerned with the promises made by God, as indicated in the Bible, for those who follow His precepts, as well as the penalties to be incurred by those who do not.
The possession-trance phenomenon in the two churches further emphasizes the simple-complex dichotomy. The Shakers also believe that they may speak in tongues, but speaking in tongues forms only one small part of their possession-trance behavior complex and is unlike the phenomenon bearing the same label in the Streams of Power church. For the Shakers, speaking in tongues is a benefit that may be acquired by those who mourn. Going to mourn and returning periodically to build is likened to going to different schools--in one, you may get one unknown tongue and in another, a different tongue. The members believe, and the pointer corroborated, that he knows what any of the others are saying when they speak in tongues, but they do not understand everything that he says. According to the pointer, speaking in tongues is like having a telephone line to God. No indication was given that the speaker was unable to understand the words that he was speaking, \(^6\) nor that speaking in tongues was evidence that the spirit was within the person. No interpretation is made in the vernacular. Speaking in tongues is a personal communication between man and God, not usually a matter of the supernatural using the person as a medium through whom His message passes on its way to another. Among the Shakers, possession-trance can be a lengthy and impressive phenomenon of some beauty involving as it does a regularity of rhythm and a certain grace of movement. In the Streams of Power church, the possession-trance performance is

\(^6\)Except for one instance of Shaker glossolalia. I was told that it was possible for a person to be speaking in tongues, not understanding what he was saying, and actually condemning himself for some wrong he had done. The pointer, however, would understand and would be able to take appropriate measures.
not very dramatic, is quickly over, and seems much less forceful by comparison.

The attitudes of the leaders in the two churches differ radically. The Streams of Power evangelist projects a "Pollyanna" type image, he tries to convince his congregation that others are in worse positions than they are and that they are fortunate to have so many things to be thankful for. He is usually smiling broadly, full of enthusiasm, eager to amuse, constantly trying to promote goodwill, and apparently trying to demonstrate that religion can be palatable, attractive, and not too difficult. The Shaker pointer, on the other hand, admits to his congregation (perhaps influenced by his own different background of experiences) that the way is hard. He makes no effort to make his meetings gay and pleasant; quite the opposite, he is authoritarian and strict, and is given to wielding a strap against offenders, which would be unheard of in a Streams of Power church. Where the evangelist cajoles, pleasantly ridicules, and gently urges his flock, the pointer commands, rebukes, and punishes his.

The whole atmosphere is different in the two churches. An observer does not have the impression during a Shaker service that the worshippers are enjoying themselves. A Streams of Power meeting is quite friendly and gay, the evangelist is constantly striving for a laugh from his audience, conviviality and camaraderie characterize the meetings. If refreshments are served after a service, the Shakers become jovial, but during a meeting they are more sedate, perhaps more fatigued. They clap their hands and tap their feet, but with unsmiling seriousness. They keep their eyes closed much of the time. Even the
ritual handshaking is performed deliberately, without a smile and apparently without recognition of the person whose hand is being shaken. In short, there seems to be a much greater emphasis among the Shakers on individual seeking and individual involvement, as if each Shaker present is interested only in his own relations with his God and is concentrating narrowly in order to exclude extraneous elements. In the midst of a group, and paradoxically while sharing group activities, the Shakers seem to withdraw and set up barriers against anything more than minimal contact with outside stimuli. The very act of possession-trance is more personal and exclusive among the Shakers. Streams of power possession-trancers are receiving a message for someone else. Shakers are experiencing the Holy Spirit for their own sakes. Streams of Power seems to be concerned with fostering good relations among men, here and now. The Shakers' main concern seems to be each individual's relationship with the deity and only secondarily the regulation of interpersonal relations.

Although both churches draw their members from the lower class, even a cursory examination of the two groups reveals that a distinction can be made between the socio-economic position of the Streams of Power devotees and that of the Shakers. Despite the fact that the evangelist describes his congregation as "very poor" and of the "lowest class," he is probably influenced by his own position, for, although some of his

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7After a Shaker leader had finished sermonizing, it was customary for several members to shake his hand and speak to him while the rest of the congregation was singing. The leader never seemed to pay any attention to the person speaking to him. He looked away from the speaker and sang while continuing to shake hands.
adherents would fit this category, many of them would not. Some of the Streams of Power women, for example, work as cashiers in department stores, some as nurses in the local hospital, some of the men are taxi drivers, etc. None of the Shaker women have professional jobs and most of the men are manual laborers. Streams of Power women wear neat, modish dresses, albeit inexpensive, high-heeled shoes, and dressy hats to church. The men usually wear white shirts, jackets, and ties. Shaker women, on the other hand, wear flat-heeled shoes, usually sandals, that can be easily slipped off and on, blouses and full skirts or full-skirted dresses that may be torn and fastened with safety pins, and head ties. The men wear their shirts open at the neck.

I would suggest that Streams of Power has appeal for certain Vincentians who have been able to achieve a modicum of prestige satisfaction in the larger society, and are not wholly, or almost wholly, dependent upon the church for such satisfaction, yet have not reached a sufficiently high social and economic level to feel as comfortable and secure in one of the organized churches as in a church in which the members are more or less on a par. They also seem to need more emotional involvement than the colder, more detached services of the organized churches provide. Yet, partly because of the position they have reached in the community, they disdain a religion that has the reputation of being "African." Streams of Power offers them the opportunity to identify with a group led by a dynamic, personable young man who, coming as he does from across the sea, driving a car, having a telephone, living in some luxury, etc., may serve as a symbol of the promise and opportunities believed by many Vincentians to exist in the
world outside the island. The evangelist offers them a religion that serves as inexpensive diversion, that does not require too much time, energy, or intellect, that makes vices of such pleasures as smoking and drinking, which they can ill afford in their economic circumstances, and that teaches virtues that advantageous to a group engaged in the competitive struggle for upward mobility. In short, Streams of Power seems to embody some of the values of the Protestant Ethic (Weber, 1958), especially the belief in the possibility of upward movement with hard work and avoidance of evil habits and conduct.

The Shaker church, on the other hand, like Shango in Trinidad, seems to appeal to those Vincentians who have "few realistically available means for the attainment of prestige in the larger society" (Mischel, 1958: 169). Shakerism with its hierarchy of offices provides opportunities for its adherents to satisfy their prestige cravings. Not only may they achieve positions of worldly authority, marked by tangible evidence such as insignia of office, within the cult, but they may also realize the probably highly gratifying experience of being chosen by the deity to serve as its host. Possession-trance affords the opportunity to be important—very important—since God as the Holy Ghost becomes involved individually in their lives, which He does not do with the most economically advantaged Vincentians. Possession by

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8For example, unions, some quite stable but unblessed by the marriage sacrament, are common particularly among the lower class in St. Vincent. The evangelist has been trying to urge the members of his congregation who are living together without the benefit of the clergy to be married, and he has had some success.
the Holy Ghost is also available to the Streams of Power worshippers but it is probably acceptable to them only because the manifestations are brief and shallow—Shaker manifestations are rejected as "having too much flesh" in them, which would make them inconsistent with the Streams of Power set of virtues.
APPENDIX B

MAPS
APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SHAKERS IN ST. VINCENT
PLATE I

THE SHAKER CHURCH AT LOWMANS

1. The exterior of the unfinished church.

2. The interior of the church
PLATE II

AN OUTDOOR SHAKER MEETING

1. A meeting held at the intersection of two roads.

PLATE III

SHAKER ALTARS

1. The simple altar in the church at Lowmans.

2. A more elaborate altar in the Mount Moriah Church.
PLATE IV

SHAKER CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM

1. Shaker "bowers in the posture they are required to assume.

2. The woman on the right above in a trance and being supported by a cult mother.
1. Woman in left foreground in trance.

2. A group of trancers.
PLATE VI

PREPARING "PILGRIMS" FOR "MOURNING"

1. Washing the "pilgrims'" feet.

2. Tying the bands over the "pilgrims'" eyes.
1. Ready to be "laid on the ground."

2. Being "crowned" after "mourning."
APPENDIX D

A CHALK DESIGN MADE FOR A SHAKER MOURNING RITUAL

Pointer B. made a copy of the chalk design that he had drawn on the mourning room floor before the service at which three pilgrims were "laid on the ground." He presented it to me, and offered the following meanings for some of the symbols used in the drawing:

- Charter
- Compass
- Nazareth
- Pilgrim
- Signal of the city. Every city you enter have a signal
- Cannan
Ladder to Heaven

Sago palm. The significance of sago; faithful unto death, palms of victory, the prize (?) is in view.

Emmanuel

Bell

Christian had lost his course. Evangelist spin him and give him three lashes. Sign of the pointer who point Christian to that celestial shore. Mr. Wooly Wiseman met him and told him that he would get rid of the burden on his back. He went to the hill; he journeyed many days and nights and he couldn't get rid of the hill. A storm came. There was no way he could escape. He began to pray. Evangelist knew then that Christian was off line. He promised not to turn back but go toward the true God.

Love. If you have no love in Christ, you are a dead symbol. God so loved the world.
Travel

Baptism. Became soldier born.

Jericho

Zion. You hit all the cities around.

If I rebuke these people the very stones will shout for joy. Sweeping Jerusalem, my happy home. The symbol shows the mystery of the Lord going to Jerusalem. Christ mourned (wept) in Jerusalem.

When you go to the Throne of Grace, you meet these things. When David was in the spirit, he saw the ladder Jacob climbed. We must be making steps to Christ. Obedience is the first step to Christ.
Five candles is five-pointed stars. These are the five cities. You have to travel to them first. Canaan, Calvary, Victory, Jericho, and Zion--these are five schools.

Each pointer has a different alphabet. A working mother in the spirit can point souls, that is, can make chalk marks on the floor; not all will know it. But she can't make everything.
A Chalk Design Made for a Shaker Mourning Ritual
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