

Quaker Studies

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QUAKER STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

This issue begins with a George Richardson Lecture and continues with an article consequent to another. Thomas Hamm enthralled the ninety participants at the joint Quaker Historians and Archivists/QSRA Conference in June 2008 with his lecture on the shift in perceptions which allowed the advent of Quaker pastors in a group historically opposed to a hireling ministry. Thomas Hamm's work is always thorough and like his previous contribution to *Quaker Studies* ('A Protest Against Protestantism—Hicksite Friends and the Bible in the Nineteenth Century' in 6/2), we have another tantalising glimpse of his larger work on Hicksite Quakers to accompany his excellent *Transformation of American Quakerism* (University of Indiana Press, 1988). We wait in eager anticipation.

In 9/2, we published Grace Jantzen's 2003 George Richardson Lecture, 'Choose Life—Early Quaker Women and Violence in Modernity'. As the article printed here states:

It was part of her ongoing work on the preoccupation of modernity with death and violence. In the lecture she argued that Margaret Fell and most other early Quaker women encouraged a choice of life over a preoccupation with death, while most male Friends (as Quakers are also called) maintained the violent imagery of the Lamb's War, the spiritual warfare that would usher in the kingdom. While both men and women developed what became the Quaker 'peace testimony' (the witness against war and outward violence), the language used by male and female Friends differed in its description of the inward spiritual life and its consequences and mission. Thus, Grace argued that these women Friends were choosing a language counter to modernity, while the male apocalyptic was indeed counter-cultural but still within the frame of modernity. The Quaker women's emphasis on 'Life' was at odds with modernity's emphasis on death and violence. It led to an alternative mode within the Quaker communities in terms of gender relations and the spiritual equality of the sexes, which extended to the whole range of social testimony and witness.

Grace Jantzen died in 2006 and as part of conference and forthcoming book to commemorate her life and work, four of us within the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies (Pink Dandelion, Betty Hagglund, Pam Lunn, Edwina Newman) jointly authored a collaborative and interdisciplinary piece (no doubt she would have encouraged us to work in this way), exploring this challenging thesis further in other parts of British Quaker history. Grace Jantzen gave enormously to us as colleagues and also to the Centre in her Lecture, a workshop at a Research Summer School and in subsequent teaching at Woodbrooke. She had planned to join the team here and we feel her loss deeply. We are grateful to Elaine Graham,

editing the volume arising out of the conference, for her permission to reprint the article here where in some ways it also obviously belongs.

Following James Walvin's 2007 George Richardson Lecture, reprinted in the last volume, Elizabeth O'Donnell adds to her published work on nineteenth-century north-east England Quakerism with an article on the Free Produce movement, the Victorian equivalent of fair trade, and its attempts to sell goods that had not been produced with the help of slave labour. Anna Kett at Brighton is now undertaking doctoral work on the wider picture of the Free Produce movement and we can look forward to her findings.

Mark Cary, Pink Dandelion, and Rosie Rutherford examine the 1990 and 2003 surveys of British Quakerism conducted by Dandelion and Rutherford respectively. The authors argue that while the sampling methods were far more rigorous in the latter survey and, it might be argued that Pink Dandelion's can only serve as a pilot for Rosie Rutherford's, the correspondence between the data collected is more than coincidental and indicates the possibility of valid comparability. The piece reports the key differences between the two surveys.

The issue ends with a selection of book reviews, edited by Betty Hagglund.

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

‘CHIPPING AT THE LANDMARKS OF OUR FATHERS’:
THE DECLINE OF THE TESTIMONY AGAINST HIRELING
MINISTRY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

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ABSTRACT

One of the distinctive features of Quakerism from the 1650s until the 1870s was its stance against any kind of pay for ministers, what Friends referred to as ‘hireling ministry’. Friends viewed a paid, authoritative pastoral ministry as contrary to Scripture, as tending toward preaching that pleased humans rather than God, as limiting the leadings of the Holy Spirit, and as generally corrupting. One of the criticisms of Orthodox by Hicksite Friends in the 1820s was that the Orthodox were compromising this testimony by associating with clergy of other denominations in reform and humanitarian causes, and both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends in the United States invoked this tradition to discourage Friends from joining abolition societies after 1830. Between 1860 and 1900, however, most Friends softened their stance. Hicksites, while eschewing paid ministry, came to view labeling other minister as ‘hirelings’ as being uncharitable and judgmental. American Gurneyites, swept up in a wave of revivalism in the 1870s, came to embrace pastoral ministry as the best way of caring for converts. In the British Isles, however, equally evangelical Friends of Gurneyite sympathies, for complex reasons, while also ceasing to label other clergy as ‘hirelings’, after some controversy and for complex reasons, rejected the pastoral system.

KEYWORDS

Quakerism; Society of Friends; Evangelicalism; ministry; Holiness; Home Missions

In 1878, the Hicksite Baltimore Yearly Meeting was in the midst of revising its book of discipline. One of the proposals was to drop the ancient query whether Friends upheld a consistent testimony against a ‘hireling ministry’. Some Friends argued that it was a relic of the seventeenth century. But not all agreed. One spoke up to tell the Yearly Meeting that he ‘did not like this chipping at the landmarks of our Fathers’. His protest was unavailing. The Yearly Meeting replaced the negative query against ‘hireling ministry’ with a positive one on upholding a ‘free Gospel ministry’.¹

The action of Hicksite Friends in Baltimore was not unique. Between 1800 and 1900, Quakerism was transformed by schism, missionary and evangelistic outreach, and social change. What had been a united Society of Friends splintered

into at least three, arguably four, bodies. Most had discarded the traditional practices of separation and peculiarity that had distinguished them, outwardly in dress and orally in speech, from their neighbors. An overwhelmingly Anglocentric group, most of whom were descended from seventeenth-century Quaker ancestors in the British Isles, had become more diverse, and was on the cusp of becoming far more international, as Friends sought converts in the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa. And a majority had given up the unique Quaker worship practice of waiting in silence and had become what we now usually refer to as pastoral Friends.

Even Friends who firmly rejected the pastoral system, however, had softened their opposition to a paid ministry in other denominations. Only among the most traditionalist members did one hear reference to 'hirelings'. Whether or not they embraced a pastoral form of worship for themselves, the overwhelming majority of Quakers had decided that active opposition to paid ministry was no longer a duty. This was, without question, one of the greatest changes to take place among Friends since the days of George Fox.

This evening I want to consider this change in four stages. First, after a brief examination of the foundations of the ancient testimony of Friends against a hireling ministry, I want to show how central it had become to Friends' understanding of themselves in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Second, I want to show its central role in the bitter Quaker divisions from the 1820s to the 1850s. Third, I want to show how, beginning in the 1820s, Friends came to soften their critique of a paid ministry in other denominations, and why even Friends who articulately affirmed what they called a 'free ministry' among Friends were willing to accept, and even praise, a paid ministry for others. Finally, I want to look at one of the great divergences of the Quaker world: how Gurneyite Friends in North America and the British Isles, equally evangelical in their understandings of Quaker faith in 1860, took such different paths on the subject of a pastoral ministry for Friends between 1880 and 1900. Both in the United States and the United Kingdom, decisions came with far more controversy than most Friends realize. The die had been cast for a divergence that has become greater with the passage of time and with whose consequences we still live.

One of the chief controversies between the first generation of Friends and their contemporaries was over the nature of ministry. Rosemary Moore has given us a succinct summary of the Quaker critique of the parish ministry they found in the 1640s and 1650s: 'The church building was not the house of God, formal worship of any kind was wrong, and ministers should give their services freely, like Jesus's disciples... Ministry should be given freely in accordance with the New Testament'. George Fox asked opponents: 'And is not this your own custom or tradition, that such must preach that be covetous, and strikers, and hirelings, when Christ tells you, "that a hireling will flee, and leave the flock"... By these doings the flocks are almost plucked to pieces by the hireling shepherds'. Thus, Quaker ministry came to be defined by what it was not. Like all Protestants, at least in theory, Friends accepted the necessity of a call; and like many of the radical sectarians of the seventeenth century, they believed that ministers should work at

a secular occupation, or, if called to travel, be supported by voluntary donations. What set Friends apart was their belief that ministry could not be on schedule—no Friend could ever be sure when or where God might call him or her to minister.²

Even as many Quaker edges softened in the eighteenth century, this one did not. The two foremost systematic American expositors of Quakerism before the Hicksite Separation of 1827–28, Jesse Kersey and Elisha Bates, although they would take opposite sides in it, were largely in agreement on this. In his 1815 treatise, Kersey was succinct but seemingly absolute. 'But though we are satisfied that male and female are called to the ministry; we do not believe they are to be paid for their labours, or to preach by contract; but agreeably to the charge of Christ to his disciples:—"Freely ye have received, freely give". We cannot therefore own any in the ministry who disobey this command of Christ'. Kersey went on to argue that it was the duty of Christians to relieve the necessities of the poor, which could include ministers. But, he concluded, 'as we do not unite with those who are hirelings, so neither do we own such to be the ministers of Christ, who profess to be always ready, and who make it their rule to preach at all times when an assembly is gathered'. Kersey effectively challenged the bona fides of virtually every minister who was not a Friend.³

A decade later, Elisha Bates, the clerk of Ohio Yearly Meeting, elaborated on these points. 'The Society of Friends, allow no salaries, for the support of their ministers, believing it right that they should minister to their own necessities', he wrote. 'The ministry never was designed for a *trade*; for the true ministers do not take the oversight of the Church for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind'. But Bates added a significant qualification that apparently never occurred to Kersey: 'And yet we do not suppose, that all those ministers are actuated by these motives, who, according to the roles of the Society to which they belong, are provided with a maintenance'. Still, Bates's emphasis was on the danger of preaching for pay: 'The gospel never can be made an article of bargain and sale, like merchandise in the market, or like a man's professional skill'.⁴

Friends agreed on the reasons for this testimony. First, they understood it as the command of Christ that Christians should support each other without the compulsion of contracts. They cited biblical texts such as Matt. 1:10 or 1 Pet. 5:2.⁵ But they saw hireling ministry as irreconcilable with other aspects of Quaker ministry as well. Thomas Willis, a Long Island Friend who found himself in a pamphlet war with Billy Hibbard, a Methodist minister, put one cogent argument forth in 1812. Hibbard called Quaker ministers 'eye servants', who were like a hired hand in a harvest field who sat down 'lolling till he sees the master coming, then jumps up and goes to work till the master retires'. Willis's answer was devastating: before Friends could go to work, they had to wait for the Master's directions. In contrast, the Methodist, 'whose time is always ready, feels not this necessity, and can preach on all occasions, may, by the power of his own natural abilities, operate upon the animal passions, and many times produce a warmth by the sparks of his own kindling, which being void of the Heavenly power, cannot profit the people at all'.⁶

Just as Friends believed that hirelings ‘preached in their own will’, they believed that hirelings had no choice. They were contracted to preach, and their congregations expected them to do so at stated places and times. If they refused, they would have broken their agreement and so would lose their living. Joseph John Gurney was pointed on this issue. Such agreements made ministry a matter of human arrangement rather than divine calling, and any right-minded believer would see that ‘the compact which binds the minister to preach, on the condition that his hearers shall pay him for his preaching, assumes the character of absolute inconsistency with the spirituality of the Christian religion’.⁷

Some Friends went further and argued that *all* who accepted pay for preaching were necessarily corrupt. Typical was Emmor Kimber, a Friend from Chester County, Pennsylvania. ‘A hireling preacher is a worldly-minded man who makes a trade of preaching; bargains with the people to preach for a specific sum, and sets down where he can get the most money’, Kimber wrote. Such ministry was, in his view, ‘a curse instead of a blessing’. Thomas Wetherald, a minister from Alexandria, Virginia, agreed. Hirelings were incapable of being true shepherds of the faithful. ‘And is it not obvious, that when men with interested minds undertake to preach the gospel of Christ, they will preach conformably to their own views?’ he asked. ‘Is it possible that men, receiving one, two, three, or four thousand dollars a year, can faithfully testify their sense of the slips and wickedness of those employ them? No; this fault must be covered, and that weakness overlooked, because they preach for hire, and divine for money’.⁸

A final implication of this testimony informed rules on marriage. Friends, of course, were required to marry only within the group. But usually in England, and often in the United States, marriage out of Meeting meant marriage by a ‘hireling’. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting recorded its judgment that this countenanced ‘the exercise of a function which is designed merely to advance the interests and profits of a certain class of men; and which is no part of the office of a Gospel Minister’. London Yearly Meeting urged the ‘great inconsistency and pernicious effects, of marriages by the priest’.⁹

Those familiar with early nineteenth-century Quaker history will have noticed that this Quaker consensus crossed the boundaries of the separation that would come in 1827–28. Kersey, Kimber, and Wetherald were Hicksites; Bates, Gurney, and Willis Orthodox. But one can make a case that the testimony against hireling ministry was an issue in the separation.

Certainly Hicksite Friends perceived that Orthodox Friends had formed common cause with ‘hirelings’ in the 1820s. Emmor Kimber worried that Orthodox Friends had fallen victim to what he called ‘a kind of fashionable cant...that has turned the Christian Testimony against hireling priests backwards; they call it *Charity!*... It exists in those that court popularity and the applause of men’. When Hicksites looked at Orthodox Friends who were active in Bible and missionary societies with non-Friends, they saw compromises of Quaker peculiarity and distinctiveness. ‘If we, as a society, so far depart from the teachings of the spirit of truth, as to mingle with other professors in what is called religious concerns, though professedly to promote the cause of Christ’, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

told its members in 1830, 'our individuality, as a people, will be lost, and our excellent testimonies, as it respects us, will fall to the ground'.¹⁰

Hicksites were unrestrained in denouncing what they saw as the corruptions of evangelical clergy in the 1820s and 1830s. Elias Hicks was unsparing. 'You might search the kennels of any great city, and take soldiers, sailors, and the very worst of mankind', he preached, 'and they would be more likely to enter into the kingdom of heaven than the hireling priest'. Many attacks focused on money, what one called 'the profligate avarice of the professed teachers of Christianity'. A Wilmington Friend, Benjamin Ferris, elaborated: 'The proofs of the *mercenary* character of *educated* ministers, generally of every age and sect, are so abundant as to produce embarrassment *only* on the *choice* of evidence'. Such Hicksites saw nothing less than an evangelical, primarily Presbyterian, plot to unite church and state. 'People already begin to see that a numerous *priesthood* will prove only a burden and a curse, and overthrow the liberties of a country', Ferris concluded. Other Hicksites agreed. 'That lust of power which has ever distinguished the ecclesiastics of all times and countries, is not without its influence in inflaming the zeal of modern professors', one wrote. 'We conceive that the accumulation of immense wealth, drawn from the people under specious pretences, and placed almost exclusively under the control of the clergy, to be ominous of sinister designs...incompatible with the freedom of the people'. Such fears continued to be common well into the 1860s among Hicksites.¹¹

This fear of reform and humanitarian movements as plots by evangelical ministers was central to the bitter divisions among Friends in the 1840s and 1850s over the anti-slavery movement in the United States. All Hicksite Friends opposed slavery, of course, but they differed about whether it was right for Friends to join 'mixed' anti-slavery societies that embraced non-Quakers. Many Hicksites saw such groups as being just as dangerous as older evangelical enterprises. Some Friends in New York summarized this fear in 1840: such groups 'may draw Friends to associate with the people of the world, and even with the clergy; and may lead to the violation of some of our important testimonies, particularly that against a hireling ministry'. One Friend in 1839, for example, characterized the abolitionist movement as 'a mercenary priesthood endeavouring to extend its influence'. Others equated salaried abolitionist lecturers with 'hireling ministers'. Especially outspoken was the New York City minister George F. White, who in 1841 told his daughters 'he had rather they would go to the theater than to go hear Angelina Grimke', the well-known abolitionist, speak. When another Friend asked the reason, he responded that Grimke was 'laying waste the most precious testimonies of the Society...the testimony against the hireling ministry'. Many Friends agreed with the Hicksite Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1843, when it urged its members not to attend lectures by paid agents.¹²

Abolitionist Friends could not deny that they worked with paid ministers and agents, so they responded variously to such attacks. Phebe Post Willis, a New York Friend, opined hopefully in 1838, that anti-slavery, by bringing 'Preasts [*sic*] and people' together, 'would have a tendency to dethrown [*sic*] Priestly influence'. Charles Marriott, another prominent New York Hicksite who was also a

director of the American Anti-Slavery Society, concluded that ‘in regard to our associating with others in Anti Slavery societies, I am apprehensive that many of us might insensibly lose ground by so doing, unless more watchfully attentive to our best guide, than I fear we should be’. But for Marriott, the solution was obvious: ‘But if we were *so attentive*, & felt it to be our place to mingle, our lights would in my opinion be far more extensively useful than they are now’.¹³

Other abolitionist Friends were willing to go farther. A good example is Isaac Post of Rochester, New York. ‘For some cause I hate the Priest’s position’, he wrote in 1859. ‘I early formed the idea from reading Friends’ writings that they were the enemies of man, enemies of God, and I still feel as tho they stand in the way of progress’. Yet his contacts with fearless abolitionist clerics like Theodore Parker and Samuel J. May had softened his conviction: ‘I almost forget the minister’, he conceded. ‘Or when they are on the free platform pleading for humanity, for justice, I feel that I could almost take them to my heart’. Lucretia Mott went farther; she admired the Unitarian icon William Ellery Channing and in the British Isles in 1840 sampled Unitarian and even Roman Catholic services. Jonathan Thomas, an Ohio Hicksite, concluded that ‘there is to[o] much done by a great many of our Society to keep up the partition walls between us and others... I should like to know these [*sic*] walls enough broken down to receive good let it come from where it would’.¹⁴

The most radical position would be that of the Congregational or Progressive Friends, who separated from the Hicksite Yearly Meetings in the 1840s and 1850s to escape what they saw as intolerable limitations on their liberty of conscience in acting against slavery and other evils. They were free in comparing the clerks and elders of the older organization to ‘bishops and reverends’. Lucretia Mott noted approvingly that the new Congregational Yearly Meetings were established ‘on radical principles—doing away with select mgs, ordaining ministers’. But on the other hand, they were so committed to freedom of thought and speech that they embraced even paid ministers. One supporter wrote in 1852 that he would ‘allow any one to speak in meeting if he was a good man. I would allow a Methodist preacher... I go for the greatest liberty’. The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends welcomed Theodore Parker and a variety of other clergy.¹⁵

The Progressive Friends largely disintegrated after 1860, but they were better precursors of the future than the larger body of more traditionalist Hicksites. Increasingly, Hicksite Friends discarded the language of ‘hireling ministry’ when highlighting differences with other denominations. Striking was a minute of Genesee Yearly Meeting in 1866. In the previous decade, it yielded to no one in its ferocious scoring of ‘priestcraft’. But now it condemned ‘harsh denunciations or bitter anathemas’ aimed at ‘hirelings’, calling instead for a ‘spirit of charity’. Four years later, the *Friends’ Intelligencer* in Philadelphia noted that a growing number of Friends objected to the label ‘hireling’ as an unkind epithet. John J. Cornell, perhaps the most influential Hicksite minister at the end of the century, refused to denounce ministers of other denominations. He thought that the older vituperation aimed at ‘hirelings’ tended ‘to repel instead of to gather, to engender prejudice instead of making an open way for others’. In 1873, Lucretia Mott told

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that when Friends referred to ministers of other denominations, it should be as 'paid', not 'hireling'. The latter, she said, was 'an opprobrious term and unworthy of our elevated standard as a Society'. Louisa J. Roberts, another weighty Philadelphia Hicksite, agreed. She supported Mott, asserting that 'we had outgrown this', and that contacts with non-Quaker ministers had persuaded her that 'there were many earnest and excellent men among them'. Joshua Ross, a Friend from Chappaqua, New York, put the case a little differently a decade later. 'I believe there are many good men that take pay for their service and [are] not hirelings... Let us bear our testimony [*sic*] in favor of our principles and not condemn others that think different'. In 1885, in an article that would have been unthinkable thirty years earlier, a writer in the *Intelligencer* answered the question, 'Is a Paid Minister Necessarily a Hireling?' with a resounding 'no'.¹⁶

Between 1880 and 1900, Hicksites found unity on the question of a paid ministry. On the one hand, they firmly rejected it in their Meetings, although not without some surprising discussion, concluding that a 'free ministry' based on silent worship was an essential of Quakerism. This took place against a background of deep concern about the quality of ministry in Hicksite Meetings. As early as 1875, an Indiana Hicksite had worried that 'there is in both branches of Friends a growing sentiment in favor of a mercenary compensation for those who feel it their duty to minister', and at least one Meeting in upstate New York did explore the possibility of hiring a preacher. More stir came in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1882, when Samuel J. Levick, a minister, told Friends that their objection was not to ministers receiving pay, but to being taxed for it. This led to considerable debate. Hicksites generally agreed that while they probably needed to be more generous in defraying the expenses of ministers who felt called to travel, anything resembling a pastorate was 'diametrically and shockingly opposed to the views of early Friends'. On the other hand, Yearly Meetings took the final step in dropping discussions of 'hireling ministry' from their books of discipline. Philadelphia did so in 1894.¹⁷

Why did Hicksites adjust thus? My sense is that it reflects their growing ties with reformers of other denominations and with Protestant liberals, especially but not limited to Unitarians. An increasing sense of commonality hindered denunciation. There was also a sense that currents in the larger religious world were moving their way, that ministers of other denominations were increasingly embracing Quaker ideas about peace, equality, the ministry of women, and what Friends called 'the divine immanence'. Friends no longer felt called to score seekers whose spiritual quests seemed to lead them toward truths that Friends had long held.¹⁸

Very different was the experience of Orthodox Friends after the Separation. By 1900, they would be sundered into pastoral and unprogrammed groups, and most American Friends would have started down a road very different from that taken by Quakers in the British Isles. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a clear majority of American Friends worshiped under pastoral leadership. In the British Isles, after debate, anything resembling a pastoral system had been rejected. This is

a complicated story to tell, one that requires us to move back and forth across the Atlantic.

As we have seen, one of the fears of Hicksite Friends in the 1820s was that their opponents were forming ties with non-Quakers that compromised the testimony against hirelings. For the most part, Orthodox Friends ignored this particular Hicksite attack. When pressed, they did name their testimony against 'a hireling ministry' as one of the things that distinguished Friends from other Protestants.¹⁹

Such ties emerged as an issue in the 1830s and 1840s, in England in what became known as the Beaconite controversy and in the United States as Wilburite separations. I will begin with Beaconism. The basic facts are clear. A group of weighty, strongly evangelical Friends became convinced that traditional Quakerism did not place enough emphasis on salvation through the Atonement and came to question the Scriptural basis for the doctrine of the Inward Light. One of them, Isaac Crewdson, summarized their views in a book entitled *A Beacon to the Society of Friends*. The ensuing controversy brought intervention by London Yearly Meeting and the resignations of Crewdson and a number of sympathizers. But the response also included a stronger emphasis on evangelical doctrine, especially the necessity of a definite conversion experience and the authority of Scripture.²⁰

The question of paid preaching was originally tangential; Crewdson said little about it. But one of the pointed critics was Henry Martin, a birthright Friend from Manchester who had resigned his membership but produced a steady stream of pamphlets that attacked 'Beaconism'. For Joseph John Gurney, who sympathized with Crewdson but ultimately broke with him, Martin's defense of Quakerism savored of 'Hicksism'. One of Gurney's criticisms was that Martin was too severe in his censures of ministers of other denominations. Martin responded with a long compilation of seventeenth-century Friends at their most vehement in attacking 'hirelings' as 'robbers of the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the orphan, oppressors, deceivers, greedy dumb dogs, men-eaters, scripture sellers, hirelings, hypocrites', and concluded that Christian charity did not require Friends to acknowledge 'hirelings and deceivers' as 'ministers of the Gospel'.²¹

Gurney, of course, was Exhibit A for any Friend who feared the influence of association with outsiders on the Society of Friends. He had studied in Oxford, and was an intimate of some of the leading Evangelicals in the Church of England, working actively in causes such as Bible distribution, prison reform, and anti-slavery. One critic described Gurney and like-minded Friends as being simply 'the Quaker branch of the sect of Clapham'. Gurney, to be sure, could be critical of 'hirelings'; among his publications was a fierce attack on the Tractarian movement. But the dominant note in Gurney's life and ministry was to emphasize the essential unity of Friends with non-Quaker Evangelicals on what he saw as the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. For example, he ended a long defense of the Quaker conception of ministry and refusal to pay tithes with an acknowledgment that he knew 'of few persons who are more generally free from useless prejudices, more zealous in the cause of religion, and more ready for every good word and work, than many serious and devoted ministers of the Anglican church'.²²

Such attitudes gave some English Friends cause for deep concern. Most eloquent was the minister Thomas Shillitoe, who shortly before his death in 1836 declared that Gurney's writings embraced 'not sound Quaker principles but Episcopalian ones, and they have done great mischief in our Society... I declare the author is an Episcopalian, not a Quaker'. Gurney's critics were a minority in London Yearly Meeting; they could not force a condemnation of his writings. But they were articulate and persistent, and they continued to voice fears about the erosion of Friends' testimony against a paid ministry. They found an organ in the *British Friend*, which began publication in 1843 and saw itself as the voice of an embattled traditional Quakerism resisting innovations. One such fear was too much charity toward hirelings. 'The more fair-seeming and goodly the preachers trained up in this false system are, the greater is the danger to our own members, and especially to our ministers of an intimate friendship and cooperation with them in private life, and in works of public utility and Christian benevolence', wrote one concerned Friend in 1848. 'For witnessing their amiable and virtuous conduct—having a common feeling in the benevolent plans in which they are engaged—we may allow these feelings an undue influence in judging of such as a minister'.²³

These critics proved a minority in the British Isles. Friends there between 1830 and 1860 moved steadily in the direction of accepting ties with clerics of other denominations, even as they showed little interest in developing any kind of pastoral or paid Quaker ministry. Quaker journals with evangelical sympathies, such as the *Yorkshireman*, or the *London Friend*, which also began publication in 1843, published sympathetic reviews of books by or about paid ministers and their families, especially missionaries. In 1860 the latter fittingly noted that 'A pious and zealous clergyman of the "Established Church", Edward Edwards of Lynn, was instrumental in imbuing the minds of the late J.J. Gurney and several others of the family, "with a clearer comprehension of the fundamental principles of New Testament doctrine than they possessed before", and there can be no doubt that his labours were largely blessed'. But doubters remained.²⁴

In North America, developments among Orthodox Friends were culturally similar, but structurally took different forms. A revealing story involves Christopher Healy, a minister of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting visiting England in the 1830s. Calling at a Friend's home, he was told that she was out, attending a Bible society meeting. Healy saw danger: 'Bible society, missionary society, temperance society, and—out of Society!' For him, such collaboration with non-Friends led away from real Quakerism. Certainly, such Friends saw considerable reason for worry between 1830 and 1860.²⁵

Elsewhere I have written about how most Orthodox Friends in the United States moved closer to the dominant evangelical culture in these years. One sees it in Quaker periodicals, as they saluted the work of such organizations as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society and endorsed the works of such American and British evangelical authors, most of them ordained ministers, as Joseph Butler, Philip Schaff, Albert Barnes, Thomas Erskine, and Adam Clarke. A prime example is found in the diary of Ann T. Updegraff, a young Friend of

Mount Pleasant, Ohio, whose brother David will loom large later. Her reading included the *Oberlin Evangelist*, a biography of the English missionary Henry Martyn, and works by a variety of non-Quaker evangelical ministers. Charles G. Finney, perhaps the most influential evangelical minister in the United States between 1820 and 1850, was a family friend. Hearing a Friend in Meeting warn against attending services of other churches, she responded in her diary: 'Christians will be united in Heaven, why should they so separate on Earth?' Ann Updegraff spoke for many Orthodox Friends in finding the lives and works of those conservatives regarded as 'hirelings' as in fact inspired and inspiring, part of a common Christian cause in which sectarianism was sinful.²⁶

This movement was part of a larger intellectual ferment that saw a growing interest in higher education. Orthodox Friends concluded that ignorance had been one source of 'Hicksism', so after 1830 they put new energy into opening boarding schools in places where they had not existed before: North Carolina, Ohio, Indiana. Even more significant was openness to higher education. Previously Friends had associated colleges with the production of 'hireling priests'. Now, Friends began to venture to Yale, Amherst, Bowdoin, Oberlin, and Antioch, leading some Orthodox Friends to fear that if Friends did not open their own institutions that a generation would be lost. So in 1856 Haverford became the first Quaker college in the United States, with Earlham following in 1859.²⁷

Some Orthodox Friends looked askance at this intellectual ferment, seeing in it 'creaturely activity' and the pursuit of 'head learning' at the expense of spiritual growth. They were critical specifically of the ministry and writings of Joseph John Gurney, particularly his views on salvation and holiness, but more generally they feared contact with the 'world's people', even in good causes, as detrimental to the peculiarity that God commanded for Friends. Typical was Ohio minister Joseph Edgerton. Traveling in upstate New York in 1843, he noted that 'many Friends' had 'become excited on the subject of abolition, temperance, etc., and thus running in the activity of the creature, into the mixture with other people, so that genuine Quakerism seems likely to be eaten up'. Central to this conservative Orthodox critique of reform activism was the same view that many Hicksites were advancing—such activity was, as one critic put it, 'the great struggle of priestcraft to sustain itself'. So they warned against worshiping with non-Friends or reading books written by their ministers. Ultimately, the tensions proved too great. Separations came in several Orthodox Yearly Meetings, particularly New England and Ohio, and Philadelphia preserved its unity only by cutting off correspondence with other Yearly Meetings. Those with a more expansive view became known as Gurneyites, their opponents as Wilburites, from the New England minister John Wilbur, one of Gurney's most articulate critics.²⁸

In the United States, a new generation of young American Gurneyites was raising questions about the Quaker future by 1860. I label them a 'Renewal movement'. They were convinced that the fundamentals of Quakerism were sound, but that archaic accretions needed to be pared away. Thus, they upheld unprogrammed worship, but called for more careful Bible study and education by ministers and an end to the singsong tone that had characterized Quaker ministry

for a century. They urged a relaxation of the rules against marriage out of Meeting. By 1860, they were coming into positions of leadership.²⁹

We will never know what might have come of this movement, since the Civil War deflected and absorbed its energies. Friends found themselves responding to crisis—winning exemptions from military service, working among the freed people, and trying to counter a broad movement of young Quaker men into the Union army. The war left many leading Friends with a sense that far too many Friends did not understand what it meant to be a Quaker.³⁰

The response in Indiana Yearly Meeting, which was by this time the largest in the world, was to launch a series of General Meetings. Such Meetings brought together Yearly Meeting leaders, especially ministers, for both worship and education, to explain Quaker faith both to members and outsiders. The response there was encouraging, so that by 1870 other Gurneyite Yearly Meetings were following the Indiana model. For some Friends, however, this was inadequate. As the most uncompromising of them, David B. Updegraff of Mount Pleasant, Ohio, wrote:

Many could not see that the blessing of God rested upon an attempt to convey to perishing sinners 'accurate *information*' about our 'distinctive *tenets*'. I was one of that number and joined with others in imploring that the 'the dead' might be left to 'bury the dead', and that we might unite in preaching the gospel and getting converts to *Jesus*. In the providence of God such counsel prevailed, and then it was that our General Meetings became 'Revival Meetings'.

And by 1875 it had become a revival by any standard, as music, the mourner's bench, and claims of instantaneous salvation and sanctification swept Friends' Meetings from upstate New York to the west coast.³¹

Why did it happen? Here we have to go back a generation. By the 1840s, most Orthodox Friends, led by Gurney, were beginning to see salvation in a revolutionary way. For at least a century before, Friends had understood that humans achieved salvation, or justification in the eyes of God, gradually. Through baptisms of suffering and mortification, through obedience to the Light Within, and through separation from the world as evinced by plainness, Friends would gradually be purged of their sinful natures. Thus, they would achieve holiness, or sanctification, and through this sanctification they would be saved. Thus, in their view, justification and sanctification were inseparable. But Gurney, following the lead of non-Quaker Evangelicals, had challenged this view. He argued that salvation came instantaneously through faith in the efficacy of the Atoning Blood of Christ. Sanctification was a second, gradual experience. And the Inward Light was almost irrelevant. By the 1860s this had become the dominant outlook of American and British Gurneyite Friends.³²

The revivalists were almost without exception advocates of a different conception. Inspired by the largely Wesleyan Holiness movement that was extremely influential in the second half of the nineteenth century, they argued that sanctification was a second, instantaneous experience, achieved, like salvation, through faith in the efficacy of the Blood of Christ. In their system, all one had to do was

claim this experience, not wait for it. And since most saw holiness as the baptism with the Holy Spirit, they dismissed nearly all of the traditional system of Quaker peculiarity and distinctiveness. Instead, they redefined Quaker community to be not 'Our Society', but as the brotherhood and sisterhood of sanctified Christians. Indeed, in their eyes, most traditional Quaker practices were at best hindrances to effective soul saving, at worst 'dead works' that endangered those who embraced them. By 1880, they were triumphant in nearly all of the Gurneyite Yearly Meetings in North America—only Baltimore, the smallest, remained entirely aloof.³³

This is not the place to outline how profoundly the revival changed most of American Quakerism. But one of its most important effects was to demolish the two hundred year-old testimony against a paid ministry. The ministers who led the revival were, by the late 1870s, devoting nearly all of their time to religious work. Some had personal resources, while others depended on donations from supporters. Both they, and sympathetic Friends, began to ask whether it was God's will that men and women with such evident gifts not devote themselves entirely to ministry. This was not in itself a radical break from past practice. When Friends had traveled in the ministry under divine call, it was the responsibility of other Friends to see to it that their needs were met.³⁴

What did move Friends toward a regular pastoral ministry was a second concern. The early years of the revival, before 1875, had been inward looking, as revivalists undertook to be sure that Friends were soundly converted and sanctified, or to reclaim former members who had been disowned for minor offenses. After 1875, the movement became evangelistic, as the revivalists tried to reach out to the unchurched generally. The result was a steady growth of membership and expansion into new areas, especially in the Midwest. Indiana Yearly Meeting, for example, had by 1890 established two quarterly Meetings with over one thousand members in areas where less than a dozen Friends had lived in 1875. An English Friend traveling in Iowa in 1888 found many Meetings without a single birthright member.³⁵

What many Friends concluded, however, was that many, perhaps most, of these new Friends would be lost without settled, consistent pastoral care. One Indiana Friend noted how converts found regular Meetings for Worship, sometimes entirely silent, 'dull and uninteresting' in comparison with revivals, which 'were so full of life and enjoyment'. Regular preaching was a necessity. And converts had other needs. 'Every analogy of nature teaches us that when life is produced it must be nourished, and if life of the higher order it is a crime not to do it', wrote a Michigan minister. 'Better that life should not be produced than that it should be neglected'. To many supporters of the revival, the conclusion was clear—those who had a talent for preaching and care of souls should devote themselves entirely to it. Some went to great lengths to insist that such ministry was very different from that of the 'hirelings' early Friends had denounced. Still others asserted that times had changed, and Friends needed to keep up with them. As John Henry Douglas, a leading supporter, put it: 'The pastoral work is the turning point and pivotal point, and upon its right use depends the perpetuity of our church'.³⁶

By the late 1870s, several Meetings in Iowa, Indiana, New York, and Ohio had made informal agreements with ministers for support while the minister lived among them. In 1886, Iowa Yearly Meeting became the first Yearly Meeting to formalize the pastoral system. By 1900, all of the Gurneyite Yearly Meetings except Baltimore, embracing a majority of American Friends, had accepted it. Wilmington Yearly Meeting stated the majority view that year: 'There is not one meeting within our borders but needs the rightly directed care and labor of an earnest consecrated pastor'.³⁷

This change came in the face of considerable opposition. By the early 1880s, separations had taken place in Indiana, Western, Kansas, and Iowa Yearly Meetings, as conservative Friends who could not stomach the revivals and the changes they brought left to worship in the older ways. But there remained behind in the Gurneyite Yearly Meetings an articulate and influential group of moderate Friends who welcomed new life, but wanted reform, not revolution. Influential especially in New York, New England, Baltimore, Indiana, and Western Yearly Meetings, they offered a pointed critique of the rise of the pastoral system, disputing nearly every premise for its support. They agreed that new converts needed pastoral care, but argued that it was more effective, and in keeping with Quaker practice, for elders and overseers and committees to take responsibility. Even if one conceded this need, the disadvantages they saw far outweighed any benefits. A pastoral system, they argued, would end the traditional traveling ministry, would lead to bargaining and competition, would marginalize women ministers, would effectively silence other recorded ministers in the congregation, and would lead the pastor to preach regardless of whether he or she felt led by the Holy Spirit. Concentrating leadership in one person would, as a Baltimore Friend concluded, 'entrust the main interests of the church to a rather inferior class of men...and eliminate the influence of the Sober Earnest spiritual minded Friends of an older period'. The end result would be 'a distinctly marked *clerical class*, with authority, privileges and support like those awarded to the clergy of other denominations'. And this, argued the *Friends' Review*, was 'radically unsuited to the Society of Friends, and will tend either to its rapid dissolution or its entire transformation'.³⁸

Not surprisingly, Wilburites and Conservative Friends generally saw the pastoral system as the final affirmation of everything that was wrong in Gurneyism. 'A man who accepts a salary on the condition he is to deliver a sermon on each meeting day, is not the less a "hireling minister" because he bears the name of Friend', editorialized the *Philadelphia Friend*. 'If other sects maintain the pastoral system, as the best that is practicable in the present state of mankind, we need not oppose them', wrote another critic in 1896. 'But to admit that "it has fastened its teeth into our body and cannot well be removed", is to admit that the days of our high standard of Divine communion and of ministry are numbered'.³⁹

This revolution did not go unnoticed in the British Isles. Friends in Dublin and London Yearly Meetings watched intently. Ultimately, they concluded to take a different course, but not without considerable discussion and debate, and not without embarking on experiments similar to those American Friends undertook.

We now need to shift back across the Atlantic to London Yearly Meeting in the 1850s. As Thomas Kennedy has persuasively argued, it perceived a crisis. Ministry was deeply evangelical, but it was an Evangelicalism still joined with what some saw as draconian restrictions on marriage and amusements and preaching that was often dry if not non-existent. And at a time when the population was growing and vast numbers were unchurched, attendance at Meetings was stagnant. The most famous fruit was the 1859 competition to diagnose 'The Causes of the Decline in the Society of Friends'. The winner, John Stephenson Rowntree of York, urged improving ministry, relaxation of the Discipline, and, as Kennedy summarizes it: 'more knowledge of the wider world, deeper comprehension of the Bible as a guide to living in that world, and stronger appreciation of the necessity for liberty of thought and action'. In the early 1860s, such suggestions began to yield fruit, as the Discipline was relaxed on matters of marriage, plainness, and amusements.⁴⁰

At first glance, one sees considerable similarity between British and American Friends in the 1860s and 1870s. Like American Friends, many members of London Yearly Meeting were concerned about what they saw as stagnant membership and attendance, with a ministry that often failed to inspire, and about lack of pastoral care for members and evangelistic outreach to others. One Friend noted in 1882 that in the past century, London Yearly Meeting had closed 196 Meeting Houses, while opening only 73 new ones, and that a third of local Meetings had less than 20 members. Moved by such concerns, Friends looked in new directions.⁴¹

One such manifestation was organization of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association in 1868. This was the outgrowth of an older impulse. As early as 1829 and 1830 some Friends had argued that Anglican missionaries were not hirelings. In 1860, the Meeting for Sufferings asked the Yearly Meeting 'whether means might not be found by which the members of our religious Society might take a more decided part in efforts towards the spreading of the knowledge of the Gospel in heathen countries, and amongst the unenlightened in our own land, without compromising our religious principles'. By 1867, Henry Stanley Newman, who would become perhaps the most articulate advocate of foreign missions in the Yearly Meeting, was arguing for Friends to follow the model of other denominations. 'God has certainly guided our sister churches in the establishment of their Missionary Societies', he wrote. It would be a break with long-standing practice, but, he concluded, 'it was not yielding to precedent that created Quakerism. We should never have been a people if we had not laid aside the traditions of men, and risen at the call of our Lord to follow his footsteps'. With such inspiration, Friends began work in Africa and India.⁴²

A second, and more important manifestation of this impulse was the Adult School and Home Mission movement in London Yearly Meeting. As Kennedy describes them, 'the concept of Adult Schools was simple and the aims modest: a Sunday morning Meeting to teach reading and Christianity to the unlettered working classes using the bible as primer'. By 1870, as Kennedy notes, over one thousand adult school teachers were teaching over 15,000 pupils, outnumbering the Yearly Meeting's membership. One Friend happily concluded in 1871 that,

'in the Home Mission field much has quietly been accomplished by us during the last twenty years. First-Day Schools, Bible Classes, Reading Meetings, Sewing Schools, Mothers' Meetings, and various other agencies for relieving the spiritual and temporal wants of those around us, have been carried on successfully by many of our more zealous members'. One Friend told the Yearly Meeting in 1877 that, 'when a Mission Meeting comes to be connected with each of our meetings, we shall feel then ever the blessedness which rests on spreading the Gospel to all around us'. In 1883, the Yearly Meeting formed a Home Mission Committee. Significantly, such schools and Meetings usually included singing and Bible reading, very different from regular Meetings for Worship.⁴³

In 1875, the Yearly Meeting appointed a Committee on General Meetings, modeled on the American practice. Dublin Yearly Meeting had begun experimenting with them a year earlier. Advocates praised them as an opportunity to 'show brotherhood with Christians of other denominations' by minimizing 'sectarian' views. American revivalists visiting England, such as Dougan Clark, Rufus P. King, and Caroline E. Talbot, took part. One of the most vivid accounts we have is of a General Meeting at Leiston in 1876: 'The Lord wonderfully owned and blessed the efforts put forth... Strong men bowed before [God], and shook as aspens; depraved sinners listened eagerly to and drank in the glad tidings'. People of all ages left 'feeling that they had been washed in the precious blood of the Lamb'.⁴⁴

The American revival impulse found considerable support in London, although, as we will see, this was often in response to ferocious criticism. In 1871, the London *Friend* praised the 'quickenning effect which so constantly attends on earnest care and self-denying efforts on behalf of others' as seen in the General Meetings in America. Another writer endorsed singing, mourner's benches, and any other practice that led to conversion. When critics pointed to excesses, supporters such as Richard Littleboy and William Scarnell Lean pleaded for charity. Newman concluded that while 'the desire for quick results has often led to unwise teaching, and to much that has endangered the depth and stability of work undertaken in the name of the Lord', nevertheless there was 'a true and most earnest desire to advance the kingdom of God and to save souls from being lost far more in accordance with the spirit which actuated George Fox and his companions than is that dread of ever out-stepping the lines of Quakerly procedure'.⁴⁵

The final parallel is the lamentation that so few of those who attended the Adult Schools and Mission Meetings ever joined Friends. In 1878 a Carlisle Friend who was an admirer of the American evangelist Dwight L. Moody struck this note. 'If we do not shepherd and feed the sheep that have been gathered by our ministerial labour, but leave them to the care of other shepherds to invite them into other folds, we seem to be abrogating the duties of a distinctive church', the Friend complained. A few years later a Sheffield Friend agreed, telling the Home Mission Conference: 'Well, if they held mission services as members of the Society, and draw people from the world through the influence of the Gospel, and then send them off to other places of worship to become members there, he

did not see how they were likely to increase'. As American Friends were concluding, converts needed pastoral care.⁴⁶

By the early 1870s, such concerns were leading at least some members of London Yearly Meeting to conclude that Friends needed a new understanding of the ministry and its support. Isaac Brown, a strongly evangelical Friend, said in Yearly Meeting in 1872: 'We could not prevent the world from going forward, and arrangements that were once made in the wisdom of God, and by the direction of the Holy Spirit, might, in our altered circumstances, be out of place'. Foreign missionaries in particular seemed to justify an exception to the rule against financial support for ministers, since the nature of their ministry ruled out secular work. In 1872, a Friend identified only as D.T. made an extended argument in the *Friend* for change. 'Is the practice of the Society in reference to the support of ministers and their families, in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament?' the Friend asked. 'I have long felt that it is not'. He began with an argument that Quaker policy led 'to the Roman Catholic and unscriptural doctrine of priestly celibacy', since young men who felt a call to ministry would choose not to marry out of concern that they could not support their families. It was, moreover, inconsistent: 'When a Friend feels himself called to labour in distant foreign lands for months or years, the Society, at a very great expense, cheerfully provides for his wants all the while he is from home', but if that Friend wanted to give the same time to local ministry, there would be no support. The Friend concluded that when anyone 'feels it right to settle himself in a particular meeting, and to labour all his time for the edification of its members and for its increase', then he should receive support. By 1883, Newman sensed a movement in that direction, 'The tendency in our own Society has been of late to regards its practice as to the non-support of ministers, except when *travelling* in the service of their Master, as arising from too narrow an interpretation of the teaching of our Lord and Master', he wrote. 'It has been openly advocated that those well-qualified for evangelistic labour should devote themselves wholly to the work, the Church meanwhile maintaining them and their families, that they may be free from undue care'. And by the late 1880s the Home Mission Committee was paying the salaries of a number of full-time religious workers in the Adult Schools and Mission Meetings. Such devoted workers could not be considered 'hirelings', supporters insisted. And some observers saw them as harbingers of dramatic change. A non-Quaker reporter observing a conference in Reading in 1880 wrote of 'a very great and deep revolution which is passing over the methods of the Society of Friends.'⁴⁷

This movement received powerful intellectual support in 1876, with the publication of Robert Barclay's magisterial *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*. Barclay, an intensely evangelical minister from Reigate, had as early as 1873 urged the need for 'a well-trained ministry and pastors' among Friends. His book was a reinterpretation of the origins of Quakerism that laid the foundations for modern Quaker historical study. Its relevance here is that Barclay concluded that George Fox had created 'a system of circuit, or itinerant preaching...nearly as complete as that of the Wesleyans', and that ministers were

supported by a common fund. Ministers, moreover, exercised pastoral authority. The closest contemporaries to Fox and the early Friends in the 1870s were, Barclay argued, the American evangelists Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey.⁴⁸

In short, the stage seemed to be set for a transformation in the British Isles similar to that among American Gurneyites. But, as we all know, that did not happen. Why not?

The simple answer is that the pastoral system did not come to London Yearly Meeting because London Yearly Meeting never experienced a revival. The General Meetings were kept carefully separate from regular Meetings for Worship, just as the regular Meetings for Worship were kept separate from the Adult Schools and Mission Meetings. This separation damped pressures that might have made for more radical change.

Why was this the case? I see five reasons: a reluctance, perhaps class-based, to take in large numbers of new members; the relative weakness of the holiness movement among British Friends; articulate and principled resistance to revivalism from both traditionalist and modernist Friends; an engrained opposition to anything suggesting a paid ministry even among Friends who were sympathetic to evangelism otherwise; and a widespread reluctance to push for radical changes that might endanger the unity of the Yearly Meeting.

We know relatively little about the comparative social status of British and American Friends in the late nineteenth century, but Stanley Pumphrey, an English Friend who traveled widely in the United States, saw a profound difference. Ninety percent of English Friends, he said, were involved in commerce, while ninety percent of American Friends were farmers. Few American Friends outside the eastern cities had much wealth. West of the Appalachian Mountains, Pumphrey noted, he stayed with only one Quaker family who regularly employed servants. This was very different from England, where Friends in general were relatively well to do. American Friends were reaching out to people not much different economically or in class from themselves. Indeed, Americans did not understand why English Friends did not try to bring the students from Adult Schools into their Meetings *en masse*.⁴⁹

English Friends, while they did admit some attenders of the Adult Schools to full membership, certainly did not embrace them *en masse*. Some Friends bemoaned what they saw as 'pride of class and of birth' and 'aloofness' among Friends that alienated potential working-class members. One Friend told the story of a Birmingham man who had long attended the Adult School. 'Why don't you apply for membership?' the teacher asked. The student answered: 'It's all right; I'm saving up: I've nearly L40'. His impression was that this was the price of admission. And some Friends apparently worried that an influx of impoverished members would make financial demands on Meeting resources. The fears of some Evangelicals that Friends wanted to remain a 'little circle' had some justification. Consider, for example, an anonymous Friend writing to the *British Friend* in 1878. 'Hitherto, owing to the homogeneous character impressed upon the members of the Society, by their education together in the Society's Schools, and by their general intelligence and social communion, a large measure of harmony and

unanimity has been preserved', he concluded. 'But a very different and unpleasant result may be anticipated if the ranks of membership are to be hastily swelled by persons entirely lacking in the early training of Friends'. William Tallack, a weighty London Friend and prison reformer, agreed: 'If we introduced these foreign and heterogeneous elements, we should...drive the ship of our Society on the rocks'. Another Friend said that the lower classes should be left to groups like the Wesleyans and the Salvation Army, who were better suited to evangelizing them: 'It was not our mission to cut out the rough masses of stone, but rather to raise the polished shafts'.⁵⁰

Second-experience holiness was the driving force of the American Quaker revival. But it was a movement that never achieved the same power among British Friends. There was some interest in it in the 1870s, largely because of the work of the American Friends Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith. Yet the doctrine apparently held little appeal for Friends in London and Dublin Yearly Meetings. More conservative Friends saw the results of the American Quaker revivals as anything but holy or sanctified, and even more sympathetic Friends held to the older Gurneyite formulation of sanctification as a second but gradual experience. The great engine of the American revival found little fuel among British Friends.⁵¹

As we noted earlier, British Friends were interested observers of the American revival, and many were supporters of it. The weighty Friends who dominated London and Dublin Yearly Meetings insisted on recognizing the revived bodies as legitimate Yearly Meetings when separations took place, and hailed what they saw as an advance of the Kingdom. But a determined group of more traditionalist Friends were unrelenting in their criticism: Daniel Pickard, William Irwin, Charles Thompson, Joseph Armfield, and William Graham, the editors of the *British Friend*, as well as some unexpected allies like Tallack. As early as 1873, Graham commented, with atypical restraint, that: 'He should be glad if American Friends could sober down'. As the revivalists advocated the pastoral system, the attacks became more heated. Consider, for example, Thompson: 'It seems to me high time this "conspiracy of silence" on the part of English Friends was abandoned, and that we should cease to hold official intercourse with those American Yearly Meetings in which such practices are encouraged and testify against them', he wrote in 1890. 'This may be the only method now left to us of protesting against a return to those pre-arranged, formal, man-ordained systems of public worship OUT OF WHICH our forefathers were led'. But by the 1880s conservatives were finding support from the rising generation of modernist Friends. William Pollard and Francis Frith, co-authors of the modernist manifesto, *A Reasonable Faith*, were equally pointed in criticizing the movement of American Friends toward a professional ministry. And in the 1890s they were joined by young liberal Friends such as John Wilhelm Rowntree and John William Graham.⁵²

But such doubts did not come just from the two extremes, but from the evangelical center of London Yearly Meeting. Listen, for example, to Henry Hipsley, a fervently evangelical minister who led the offensive against David Duncan and the Manchester Liberals in the 1870s and who in the 1880s worried that young

Friends were losing their salutary fear of hell fire. Yet when the Iowa Yearly Meeting epistle, rejoicing in the progress of its pastoral system, was read in the Yearly Meeting in 1888, he was mournful. If Methodists had done the work described, he said, 'he should have rejoiced'. But Friends were not Methodists, and so 'he could not but feel grief at a departure in America, not from merely conventional usage in our Society, but from that founded upon an intelligent conception of principle'. Equally pointed was Isaac Sharp, another leading evangelical: 'The one-man element, so far as Friends are concerned, appears to me to be alien to the headship of Christ, and to the genius of New Testament Quakerism'. Even that most evangelical of Friends, Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, was by 1892 deeply worried about the direction of American Friends, and singled out pastors as his central concern.⁵³

Such tensions had led to separation in the United States. Yet these, and other tensions over theology, did not have the same effect in London or Dublin Yearly Meetings. Why not? One has a sense at times that Friends on this side of the Atlantic regarded their American brothers and sisters as negative exemplars. Daniel Pickard, for example, was a 'conservative stalwart' who sympathized with revival opponents. Nevertheless, he told London Yearly Meeting in 1878: 'Our brethren in America...had an instinctive capacity for organization'—by organization he clearly intended *reorganization* through separation. He thought that American Friends too 'apt to run to that vain remedy'. Joseph Bevan Braithwaite agreed. 'How could we, in England, part with Friends who, though they may not agree with everything they see or hear, yet are nevertheless a great help to our body?' he asked at the same session. 'We are constantly helped by the forbearance, deep exercise, and conscientiousness which some of these dear Friends exert in our midst'. He concluded: 'Not a little of the strength, unity, and stability of the Society in this country, was because we are not in the habit of constantly flying off at a tangent'. This was also the judgment of Fielden Thorp, the Bootham School headmaster. 'The spirit of love and forbearance so largely prevalent in our Yearly Meeting will, I trust, obviate any further divisions among us... There is room in the Society of Friends for minds of very different orders'. David Duncan might have seen it differently, but it is clear that Friends here saw more latitude than one found in North America.⁵⁴

In the 1890s, of course, British Friends took a decisive turn in a different direction. Evangelical Quakerism began to give way before a new generation of young liberal Friends, and the methods of the Adult Schools and Mission Meetings did not become those of regular Meetings for Worship. In one of the ironies of Quaker history, the Manchester Conference of 1895, one of the defining events in the growth of liberal, unprogrammed Quakerism, was first projected by the Yearly Meeting's Home Mission Committee.⁵⁵

I have told a long, complicated story this evening. It has been a story of division, divisions that grew greater over time. By 1900 Friends were permanently divided into Hicksite, Wilburite, and Gurneyite strains, divisions that remain with us down to the present day. Most striking, a majority of American Friends (and

Americans were most of the world's Quakers in 1900), had embraced a pastoral system of ministry, despite its seeming discontinuity with historic Quakerism. And that, in turn, would determine the course of most Quaker growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America down to the present day. But even Friends who held to what they called a 'free ministry' had given up the use of the term 'hireling ministry', with all of its implications. The ancient landmarks had not been merely chipped away, but largely thrown down.

NOTES

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‘CHOOSE LIFE!’ QUAKER METAPHOR AND MODERNITY

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ABSTRACT

In 2003, Grace Jantzen presented the George Richardson Lecture, the annual international lecture in Quaker studies, entitled ‘Choose Life! Early Quaker Women and Violence in Modernity’, which was published in *Quaker Studies*. It was part of her ongoing work on the preoccupation of modernity with death and violence. In the lecture she argued that Margaret Fell and most other early Quaker women encouraged a choice of life over a preoccupation with death, while most male Friends (as Quakers are also called) maintained the violent imagery of the Lamb’s War, the spiritual warfare that would usher in the kingdom. While both men and women developed what became the Quaker ‘peace testimony’ (the witness against war and outward violence), the language used by male and female Friends differed in its description of the inward spiritual life and its consequences and mission. Thus, Grace argued that these women Friends were choosing a language counter to modernity, while the male apocalyptic was indeed counter-cultural but still within the frame of modernity. In this article, we take Grace’s basic thesis, that a female ‘Choose Life!’ imagery may be set against a male ‘Lamb’s War’ metaphor, and apply it to four sets of Quaker data in other geographic and temporal locations, to explore the extent to which the arguments she sets out can usefully illuminate the nature of Quakerism. This four-fold approach highlights the complexity of the history of Quaker discourse, as well as the continually shifting cultural and social contexts in which Quakers necessarily found themselves embedded. It also brings to the fore how useful an analytical tool Grace has given us and not only in situations where we come to agree with her conclusions.

KEYWORDS

Grace Jantzen; Alexander Jaffray; Liliás Skene; Hannah Kilham; suffrage; Quaker Faith and Practice

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Grace Jantzen presented the George Richardson Lecture, the annual international lecture in Quaker studies, entitled ‘Choose Life! Early Quaker Women and Violence in Modernity’, which was published in *Quaker Studies*

(Jantzen 2005). It was part of her ongoing work on the preoccupation of modernity with death and violence.¹ In the lecture she argued that Margaret Fell² and most other early Quaker women encouraged a choice of life over a preoccupation with death, while most male Friends maintained the violent imagery of the Lamb's War, the spiritual warfare that would usher in the kingdom. While both men and women developed what became the Quaker 'peace testimony' (the witness against war and outward violence), the language used by male and female Friends differed in their description of the inward spiritual life and its consequences and mission. Thus, Grace argued that these women Friends were choosing a language counter to modernity, while the male apocalyptic was indeed counter-cultural but still within the frame of modernity. The Quaker women's emphasis on 'Life' was at odds with modernity's emphasis on death and violence. It led to an alternative mode within the Quaker communities in terms of gender relations and the spiritual equality of the sexes, which extended to the whole range of social testimony and witness (Jantzen 2005).

This thesis in itself raises many questions and requires further research. Sally Bruyneel Padgett's work on Margaret Fell's eschatology (Padgett 2003) does not support Grace's thesis that Margaret Fell had a distinctive approach. Grace was herself clear that not all women Friends fitted her characterisation, and we can point, for instance, to the apocalyptic invectives of Dorothy White (another seventeenth-century English Quaker from the south of England) as a good counter example (Dandelion 2005: 42). However, Catie Gill's recent book on seventeenth-century Quaker women's collective authorship argues that female expression was distinctive in style within the Quaker movement and was particularly characterised by prophecy in the 1650s, and personal testimony in the 1680s (2005: 2). Christine Trevett (2001) has shown that English and Welsh women's prophetic writings were particularly silenced by the actions of Second Day's Morning Meeting³ after 1672; and Phyllis Mack suggests that women Friends placed themselves in a limited and subordinated role in this later period, while at the same time creating a self-affirming literary style that was 'recognizably and consistently female' (Mack 1992: 311). By the late 1700s English Quakers were not using the Lamb's War imagery and their testimony against outward fighting had become part of normative Quakerism. Nikki Coffey Tousley's (2008) work clearly shows how this second generation of Quakers marginalised the eschatological vision or omitted it altogether from their accounts. Their spiritual epistemology seemed less secure and they no longer placed their personal salvation at the heart of a global eschatological picture.

In this article, we take Grace's basic thesis (a female 'Choose Life!' imagery set against a male 'Lamb's War' metaphor) and apply it to four sets of Quaker data in other geographic and temporal locations, to explore the extent to which the arguments she sets out can usefully illuminate the nature of Quakerism. From Grace's lecture we have identified four features around which we explore our material:

- a) the overturning of social symbolism;
- b) the desire to reclaim the world for God in the here and now, with an emphasis on Life and the potential for 'newness and creative change';

- c) God seen in terms of immanence—Life and the Divine is within;
- d) the scope for an ecological approach to life, rather than one of domination and exploitation (as characterised by modernity).⁴

We have deliberately worked collaboratively, following Grace's own research ethos, while each writing the sections closest to our own research specialisms. Betty Hagglund looks at the works of Alexander Jaffray and Lilius Skene, seventeenth-century Aberdeen Friends, to explore whether a Scottish location makes a difference to the gendered division identified by Grace in relation to English Friends, and identifies a public/private dichotomy in writing styles. Edwina Newman extends the study into the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and focuses on Hannah Kilham, whose links with early Methodism, and position as an unusual and late convert to Quakerism, highlight the problem of trying to disentangle a specifically Quaker outlook from a wider historical context. In addition, her involvement in Africa brings into sharp relief some of the most glaring issues of modernity's characteristics of exploitation and domination. Pam Lunn explores the public discourse among early twentieth-century British Friends concerning the militant phase of the campaign for women's suffrage. She shows that in this period, while a gendered discourse may be identified, it does not map neatly onto actual men and women. Pink Dandelion charts the nature of twentieth-century liberal British Quakerism, using the changes in framing the historic Quaker opposition to war as a case study. He analyses the language of the 1995 British Quaker book of discipline⁵ to explore how far it can be argued that the whole Yearly Meeting⁶ is now 'Choosing Life' rather than evoking images of victory or destruction. What does the dominant narrative say about the nature of the Yearly Meeting in terms of how gendered its theology is and how it sits within modernity?

This four-fold approach highlights the complexity of the history of Quaker discourse, as well as the continually shifting cultural and social contexts in which Quakers necessarily found themselves embedded. It also brings to the fore how useful an analytical tool Grace has given us, and not only in situations where we come to agree with her conclusions.

I. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRIENDS IN ABERDEEN: GENDERED DIVISIONS?

Looking at texts by English Quakers written between 1649 and 1700, Grace Jantzen found distinct differences in the writings of men and women. The development of Quakerism in Scotland followed a similar but not identical path to that of English Quakerism and therefore forms a good test case for seeing whether Grace's argument holds true for other geographical and temporal locations. It was not until the English Quaker, William Dewsbury, visited Aberdeen in 1662 that the first documented conversions in that city took place. While English Friends withdrew from public apocalyptic pronouncements after the James Nayler scandal⁷ in 1656 and the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Friends in Aberdeen continued to publish prophetic statements and warnings, preach publicly,

disrupt church services and act out 'signs'⁸ until well into the 1680s and beyond. Despite the fact that many of the early Aberdeen converts were well-connected and prominent citizens, and despite being subjected to severe persecutions and repeated imprisonments, Aberdeen Friends did not move to a more inward-looking position until after the persecutions had stopped.

The public actions were carried out by both women and men. Both, for example, wrote apocalyptic letters addressed to magistrates and inhabitants of Aberdeen, warning that if the persecutions did not cease, God, who was on the side of the Quakers, would destroy the persecutors; and as late as 1698 a woman is recorded as disrupting a church service, crying 'Do not believe that deceiver' and warning that God was about to destroy all idolatry and will-worship⁹ (Wilson 1822: 138).

An examination of memoirs, poems and letters by Aberdeen Friends underlines the difficulty of separating an individual's written style from their wider and personal contexts; it also demonstrates the need to consider the intended audience as part of the analysis. In order to test Grace's hypothesis, we look first at the writings of a male Friend, to see if the 'Choose Life' imagery, identified by Grace as particularly likely to be found in women's texts, is present; and, conversely, if the Lamb's War imagery, linked by Grace to texts by men, is equally present; we then look for similar features in a set of texts by a contemporaneous woman Friend.

Alexander Jaffray, one of the first Aberdeen converts, was born in 1614 into a wealthy merchant's family. He became a prominent Covenanter¹⁰ and supporter of Cromwell, and represented Aberdeen in parliament between 1644 and 1650. He gradually moved from Presbyterianism to an Independent church position, organising a separatist church in 1652. From 1661 he found himself increasingly drawn to Quakers, although he did not become a Quaker until Dewsbury's 1662 visit (DesBrisay 2000; Jaffray 1833 [1661]).

Jaffray wrote a memoir of his life, covering the period from 1614 to 1661. Although the memoir ends before his conversion, the final chapters explore his responses to Quaker ideas. He writes of an indwelling Christ, manifested in but separate from outward creation and spiritual practices:

He is to be seen in his works of creation, in his works of providence, and by the judgments that he executes and in the Scriptures there is much of him to be seen and learned by a diligent perusal of them; but *no life* is to be found [merely] by what may be learned from *any* or *all* of *these*... My life, then, being *only* to be found in Christ, and no where else, in prayer, preaching, nor Scriptures;—where is he to be found? Though Christ may be said to be, and truly is, *every where*, and every where to be found; yet not to the particular end for which he is sought, namely, for mortifying and subduing sin,—*but as enthroned in the heart* (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 162–63 [original italics]).

He also speaks of the Vine and the running sap, and the infilling of the light, further metaphors of inwardness:

It is his words *in you*, it is the hearing of them *thus*, as they are spoken in you, that will be profitable for you and bring salvation. The branch, by being in the Vine, has sap flowing constantly to it from the root;—so will ye feel *that*, if ye abide in Him;

even as the woman, who felt virtue coming from Jesus... Be...very careful to keep open *this eye*, the light that is in thee, as Christ there calls *that*, the eye of the mind; which being kept open, all the body is full of light (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 167 [original italics]).

We find, too, a desire to overturn the social order and to reclaim the world for God in the here and now:

And, in order to a desire, put up for direction in this case, I fell to read that excellent place, Rom. xii. 2, 'Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may *prove* what is that good; and acceptable, and perfect will of God'... No conformity to the world...*there's much in that*. The mind is to be renewed, so as even to have it transformed. Old things, then pass away,—all things, to such, become new; new knowledge also,—for they know *more and in another manner* than before. These new creatures know what the 'new commandment' means, and in what sense it is new. *Their love* is not now bounded by an external, outward conformity...but now, it is enlarged *far beyond that* (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 170-71 [original italics]).

His emphasis is repeatedly on light and life, and on passive receiving rather than active striving:

First, to mind the light, as it *begins* to appear and dawn in the conscience; for accordingly as this is done, the day dawns, and the day-star (that is, Christ himself) arises; first, as the bright and morning Star, Rev. xxii. 16, whereby, 'the Day-spring from on high' visits such as 'sit in darkness', Luke, i, 78, 79; and at last, 'the Sun of righteousness' itself arises, Mal. iv. 2, and abides with them. Secondly, The next thing to that of minding the light, is, to wait and stand still from self-willing and acting...the way then to receive the light, and strength by and from it, is, to stand still, in a sober frame of spirit... And thus it is, that the Lord communicates strength; *not all at once*, but *by degrees*, as the light is attended to and patiently waited for; *not by willing and running*, but *by sitting still*... Thus, may I see and behold him, so as even to say or do *nothing* without him, and—may it not be added—by 'beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord', be 'changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. 2 Cor. iii. 18, 17 (Jaffray 1833 [1661]: 150-51, 174 [original italics]).

Jaffray's language and imagery in his private writings about his spiritual life, therefore, conform to the 'Choose Life' model, associated by Grace with women's writings.

We find, however, a different picture if we look at those of Jaffray's writings which are addressed to the persecutors outside the movement. Here we find fierce and oppositional statements, warning them of the doom to come if they do not stop their attacks on Quakers:

O fear, fear to be found any more in that guiltiness, which (if persisted in) may make you to be shut out for ever: And let none so look on themselves, as to suppose they are past this hazard, if so be they yet continue, neglecting, opposing, and persecuting, or approving of them who persecute, the growing light of this day, as its come and coming forth with power and great glory (Jaffray 1664: 1).

Consider, if something of the same snare and tentation¹¹ be not on you, as was on them who so zealously contended for Moses and the Prophets; the same was their plea, and upon the same grounds did they go on, to the rejecting and crucifying of Christ, as yee (some of you ignorantly and others more perversely) are in the way to do at this day (Jaffray 1664: 3).

Let therefore the dread and terror of the Lord seize upon all, especially the professing people of this Generation...dreadful is the judgment that is to be met with by such (Jaffray 1664: 4).

Dear Friends, as yee love your peace and safety beware of this, for it borders too near that guiltiness that will not be forgiven (Jaffray 1664: 5).

This belief that God would avenge his people, the Quakers, and destroy their enemies in the same way that he had destroyed the enemies of the Old Testament Israelites is, as suggested above, common to both male- and female-authored open letters by Aberdeen Quakers of this period. Lilius Skene, for example, a woman Friend from a similar religious and socio-economic background to Jaffray, warned the magistrates and inhabitants of Aberdeen that the Lord would 'rise up against Babylon...a destroying Wind' and that the 'Hills and Mountains will not cover you' from the coming wrath of God since 'assuredly the Lord will not hold you guiltless' (Skene 1753 [1677]). Unlike Jaffray, Skene also used imagery connected with battle and warfare in her private writings, when writing about the persecution of Quakers (Jaffray's diary ends before the persecutions began). In a poem written in 1677, she wrote that the Lord

...for his spiritual warfare hath trained bands
 And their provision keeps in his own hands
 A house of Magazine well furnished where
 For every soldier he hath weapons there
 For some a battle axe, a sword, a bow
 As he hath service, weapons he'll bestow
 With some he'll bend the bow with others fill it
 By some he'll wound the beast, by others kill it

and called on Quakers to join in the Lamb's War:

Come all ye mighty men bring forth your shield
 Yee valiant ones appear now in the field
 All ye expect in war gird on your thigh
 Your swords, so as in readiness ye be
 Yea breast plate buckler, helmet & a shield
 That none unharmed¹² may go to the field
 ...
 The Lord will bath his sword in Edoms blood
 And vengeance recompense on all her brood
 Who have engaged in this holy war
 And followers of the Lamb accounted are (Skene 1665–96: 25–26).

It is not until the persecutions cease that language towards non-Quakers becomes more temperate among Aberdeen Quakers, and at that time both men's and women's public writings change in similar ways.¹³

The writings of Alexander Jaffray and Lilius Skene demonstrate the need to consider intended audience and subject matter when analysing early Quaker writings using Grace's model. Both male and female writers may use life-affirming language and imagery when writing private or semi-private texts or when writing to others within the Society of Friends. The same writers may use images and language of guilt, blame, war and destruction when writing to or about those they see as enemies of the fledgling movement.

II. HANNAH KILHAM AND QUAKER WOMEN OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

So far we have looked at Grace's hypothesis only in the context of 'early' Quakerism, the enthusiastic manifestations of the movement in the later seventeenth century. But how well does it help inform our understanding of later periods, especially those marked by the dramatic social and economic change of the Industrial Revolution, and by the rise of the Evangelical movement? From the eighteenth century, Quakers tried to hold aloof from wider society, and tended to form a close-knit community bound by ties of kinship as well as belief. A centralised, largely male control of the Society had been established, but as well as continuing opportunities for Quaker women to minister, there were also separate women's meetings which gave Quakers a level of gender equality that was unknown in other denominations. A thriving manuscript culture existed among Quaker women, and women oversaw the education of Quaker girls very carefully, reading with them and encouraging them in the 'nuances and ways of reading Quaker language and spirit' (Tarter 2005: 186). There were, therefore, networks by which a feminised Quaker theology could be sustained.

However, there are problems in trying to extend Grace's hypothesis into the different contexts of later periods, not least in identifying what might be regarded as specifically or exclusively Quaker. The Society was never entirely isolated from wider social influences, and in the course of notable campaigns from the later eighteenth century, for the abolition of slavery and for penal reform, it became more involved in ecumenical and political activity. Recent scholarship has shown that the insularity of members of the Society has almost certainly been exaggerated and that it is surprisingly difficult to define a typical Quaker in the period (Dixon 2006; Jennings 2006). Moreover, published Quaker literature of the period was rather different from that of the seventeenth century: there was no new prophetic or exhortatory work being published, and edited journals and memoirs had come to predominate. Printed testimonies showed how God was seen to be working in individual lives, and served as useful exemplars to other Quakers. Those outside the Society could buy and read these works, but their purpose was not primarily evangelical as early Quakers' public writings had been. Women no longer had the public voice that they had claimed in the earlier period, and male dominated publishing networks determined which of their writings were worthy of a wider readership.

For a variety of reasons, then, it is difficult to establish the extent to which a distinctively feminised Quaker literary style might be said to have persisted. This section of our study explores some of the developments of this period by focussing on the *Memoir* of one individual, Hannah Kilham. At first glance Kilham might appear to be representative of Quaker women of the period, and she was certainly an inspirational figure for Quakers at the time and subsequently, but a brief biography shows up some difficulties of definition here. Hannah (née Spurr), was born in 1774 of Anglican parents but, after hearing John Wesley preach, she became a Methodist. When the Methodist preacher, Alexander Kilham, broke away from the Wesleyans and formed his own connection, she joined his congregation and eventually married him. Five years after his death in December 1798, Hannah joined the Religious Society of Friends.¹⁴ From her early life she proved herself very adept at challenging social symbolism and gender stereotypes. Her passionate interest in languages at school was considered improper for a girl; her attraction to Methodism at this time would also have had the power to shock. The very act of leaving the Kilhamite Connection after her husband's death was seen as an affront to the respect and obedience due to his memory. Her life thereafter, as one of active mission in Britain and Africa, was not unique but was still highly unusual for the time, as was her decision to support her family by working in the schools she established (Fyfe 2004). Quaker influence in all this can be seen only as marginal at best.

Hannah moved between an increasingly influential, mainstream Evangelicalism and the comparatively enclosed world of Quakers, so it is instructive to trace the development of her perceptions, and to explore these in relation to Grace's 'Choose Life!' metaphor. After going through a fairly typical evangelical conversion experience, she was watched over assiduously by the members of her Methodist band meeting. The focus of Evangelicals was Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross, and their imagery was soaked in the blood of the Lamb. For Hannah, her new-found faith was clearly a struggle. She wrote that she was 'too much given to a kind of lightness' and had not yet 'got the better of my natural disposition' (Kilham 1837: 18). Her husband-to-be wrote to her of the need to 'look for crosses daily'; 'it is our duty to endure hardships as good soldiers of Christ' (1837: 36, 50). Throughout her life, Hannah had cause to remind herself that 'her natural inclination' needed to be 'crucified' (1837: 7, 370). There can have been few more driven missionaries than she, and yet she balked at excessive self-sacrifice, and hinted that it was a notably male attribute (1837: 276).

So there is a distinct strand in the imagery of the *Memoir* which derived from her experience of Evangelicalism, but there was another strand too, which she was never able or willing to suppress, and which eventually led her to find a spiritual home among Quakers. In the face of personal loss, she seemed always able to find God in the here and now. On the death of her husband, she wrote not in terms of the rewards of an afterlife, but of the 'blessings which yet remain', a feeling perhaps occasioned by her pregnancy at the time. At the end of 1799, a few months before attending her first Quaker meeting, she wrote:

I found in my own spirit a degree of sincerity and love, and it was a conviction more evident, more striking to the mind, than what is brought through reasoning, which convinced me that truth and love had their source in God... I loved Him first because He had given me life; and I felt my existence delightful (Kilham 1837: 66).

From her first Quaker meeting she felt 'as an infant whose opening powers experienced all that could at present be conceived as desirable or delightful in being near its parent' (Kilham 1837: 76). With the death of her daughter in 1802 she found herself unable to pray for a time, but 'afterwards, this prayer was breathed into my heart... "let God live in me"' (1837: 89-90).

The imagery she used was frequently that of colour, light and life. 'Life' was a word she used often, and seemed to mean it in the sense of a divine immanence. 'Oh! That the members of this establishment may be brought to dwell under the feeling of life', she wrote of one school in Sierra Leone, the 'solid feeling which acknowledges the controlling sense of the presence of the Most High' (Kilham 1837: 251). This was clearly a deeply sustaining force in her daily existence. On the other hand, when she spent time in the company of Evangelicals, as she tended to do, for example, when engaged on missionary work for Africa, she was much more likely to revert to the imagery of the battle to usher in God's kingdom. On returning to London from Africa in 1825, for instance, and obviously in a state of considerable inner turmoil, she described how a meeting with 'Dr S.' 'brought powerfully before me the great sacrifice by which comfort is brought to the Lord's people, and through which the warfare must be accomplished' (1837: 265-66). Such imagery appeared to owe more to the crucicentric Methodism she had espoused in her youth than to ideas of the Lamb's War, and, unlike seventeenth-century Quakers, she was silent on the dire consequences that might befall those who failed to heed the call.

It has been noted by other researchers of nineteenth-century European missionary activity in Africa that, while the motives of the missionaries themselves were often conservative, in that they resisted modernity in the context of their own homelands, when once in Africa, their actions inevitably contributed to an agenda that was politically and economically modernising (Meyer 1996).¹⁵ Thus, at home, Hannah Kilham urged the need to avoid the lure of modernity, taking up a concern common among Friends at this time, to live simply, a 'state of affluence' being 'not consistent with our principles' (Kilham 1837: 268).

Hannah was familiar with the writings of John Woolman,¹⁶ and echoed his words in warning against seeking after the world's wealth, urging the need to nurture all creation and 'be stewards of our heavenly father's bounty' (Kilham 1837: 422, 126). Here we see the scope for an ecological approach to life, rather than one of domination and exploitation, as Grace mentioned in her lecture. However, there was a strong paternalistic streak in her approach and she saw her role as that of a shepherd managing a flock. She was entirely sincere in her motives for working for social justice and doing what she could for 'for the present best' (1837: 126). But that was bound up with essentially millennial evangelical notions of conversion and missionary activity, and a belief in *progress*,

developing what she saw as God-given opportunities. To help the poor, something that she argued might once have been 'renounced as visionary and impractical', was now respectable. It need not be considered 'time lost even to the pursuit of business' and would 'afford the most general stimulus to trade at large' (1837: 126-27).

Her emphasis on progress became more pronounced once she was in Africa where she shared the assumptions of many European missionaries that the region was simply part of the 'heathen lands' where 'much darkness dwells' (Kilham 1837: 183). She appeared to regard the very anxiety that had called her and other missionaries to work in Africa as evidence that Africans were in need of knowing about the redemption Christ had won for them in order to be saved. Africans were therefore 'susceptible of improvement' but still 'very remote from a state of civilisation' (1837: 178, 184).

She did not appear to feel that the notion of an internalised spirituality, especially one stripped of outward forms, would be readily understood in Africa (Kilham 1837: 188), and on more than one occasion she debated the necessity of using hymns, devotional readings and sermonising in her schools (1837: 291-92). Her sustained work to ensure that African children had lessons in their own languages was indeed creative. But the use of those languages to transmit a quite narrowly defined biblical Christianity, coupled with her support for the development of cash crops and trade with Europe in manufactured goods, reflected the widely held belief that Africa needed to be 'civilised' (1837: 190, 208). Her work therefore has to be seen as an integral part of European efforts to dominate Africa. In spite of herself, then, Hannah Kilham may be regarded as an agent of modernity.

It is clear from Hannah's journal that Quakers were not united in a concern for missionary work in Africa (Kilham 1837: 342-43), there being a profound unease about such ventures, occasioned not least by the absence of paid ministry in the Society which might have supplied the personnel to undertake such long-term ventures. Nevertheless, her pioneering missionary work was influential on the Society's subsequent direction, which eventually took up 'foreign mission'.¹⁷

So, in the example of Hannah Kilham at least, it cannot be argued that Quaker women were acting within a belief system that was counter cultural. Her example alerts us to considerable methodological difficulties in trying to extend Grace's hypothesis. Hannah Kilham was a Quaker woman, but she was neither born nor brought up a Quaker, did not appear to have the kind of female Quaker networks that were important in maintaining particular values and was very open to the influence of the wider Evangelical movement at a time when many in the Society were just beginning to change their theological perspective. Her writings do not present a consistent picture, shifts occurring in relation to the company and context in which she found herself. She certainly played an important role in furthering the cause of gender equality. Her emphasis on life did at times challenge much of a prevailing religious imagery of death and spiritual warfare, and it was her creative and life-affirming spirituality that seems to have attracted her to Quakers. But her long-term participation in the endeavours of the

Evangelical movement prevented these insights from flourishing into any sort of alternative cultural ethos within the communities in which she worked.

However, there is much in Grace's hypothesis that points us to identify a distinctive spirituality and literary style that *is* clearly reflected in Hannah Kilham even if it is not always consistently expressed. Moreover, Grace's 2003 lecture encourages us to consider the ways in which Quakers choose to construct their own narratives. It is perhaps significant that in the current book of discipline (analysed in more detail below), Quakers choose to remember Hannah Kilham in the following lines, written on one of her sea voyages: 'It is "life" only that can lead to life, and no forms are availing without it. Seek the life in all things, and cherish it by all authorized means' (Kilham 1837: 386; *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 21.26).

III. POLITICISED DEBATE ABOUT GENDER IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Turning now to the very early years of the twentieth century, we take as a case study the involvement of Quakers in the militant phase of the women's suffrage movement in Britain (1906–1914).¹⁸ This episode is of particular interest since the women's suffrage campaign as a whole spurred a public debate about the nature of gender differences, and the militant campaign added to this a wide-ranging discussion of gender and violence. Among British Quakers, both men and women participated in public debate about women's suffrage *per se* and about militant tactics. There were both men and women on each side of the debate.

We have used as sources the views expressed by Friends in the public domain. Thus we consider articles and correspondence in *The Friend*, *The British Friend* and *The Friends' Quarterly Examiner*; and other publications (pamphlets and tracts) by individual Quakers. We compare published statements by men and women at different stages of the militant campaign. This topic was not, for most of this period, a major focus of attention in these journals, so the pace of the public debate here may appear rather surprisingly leisurely.

Comment did not appear in Quaker publications in the immediate aftermath of the formation by the Pankhursts of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1906, but in 1907 a male correspondent wrote:

We should be very sorry that it should appear that our sympathy in this important question needed stimulating by these violent measures, for we have never understood how anyone brought up in Quaker traditions could be other than a supporter of women's suffrage; but we recognise that the heroic self-sacrifice of some of those women who have gone to prison for the cause they have so much at heart must be an increased stimulus to all who believe their cause to be just (*The British Friend* 16 [1907]: 73).

And in 1908 Sarah Tanner, a well-known Quaker woman, had an article published in *The Friends' Quarterly Examiner*:

If we believe in the equality of men and women in spiritual things, we can hardly deny their equality before human law, because the greater includes the less... In

these days when controversy is raging...we do well to remember that the movement began with calm philosophic reasoning, and that it stands based on logic and the principles of justice and truth (Tanner 1908: 401).

In both these extracts we see an assumption that the idea of 'equality' should be automatically accepted among Quakers; and in both, a clear contrast between the 'violence' or 'controversy' attendant upon the campaign at large, and the presumed 'heart' of the matter—justice and truth. Interestingly, it is the man who uses the term 'heroic' for the women who were, by then, going to prison for their cause.

As the militant campaign progressed, the debate became sharper, and the concerns about the violence greater. A man wrote:

The unruly and violent conduct of these women appears unfortunately to find so large an amount of feminine support, and to be so seldom unreservedly condemned by those who strictly confine their own action within constitutional lines, that I regard these distressing occurrences as sufficiently symptomatic of a wide-spread lack of mental balance, to form a serious factor in the question (*The British Friend* 18 [1909]: 260).

And a woman:

The great spiritual power behind the Suffrage movement is not the desire for the vote as an *asset* or a *right*, but the intense earnest longing of thousands of women for a share in the responsibility of framing the national laws, by which they, with men, are governed, and some of which at present are so hopelessly unjust to women... Friends in the past have been in the front of many a moral fight, but there is an apathy, and even intolerance on the part of many men Friends regarding the present demands of women, which is very difficult to understand... (*The Friend* 50 [1910]: 210 [original emphasis]).

So here we start to see some contrast between a man's anxiety about the 'violence', and the failure he perceives in others to condemn it; and the woman's restating of the principles of the whole campaign. This letter was the first instance of direct comment about gendered attitudes to this issue within the Religious Society of Friends.

As well as correspondence and articles in the journals, there were pamphlets published, to be distributed at public meetings. A substantial (23 pages) tract was written by Gulielma Crosfield (who subsequently became president of the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage) entitled *Friends and the Women's Movement*. It is closely argued, with the author opposing all violent methods, on the grounds that if 'women have anything to give to our generation, it is because we claim a higher plane of service than of force' (Crosfield 1911: 15).

A tract of similar length was published by Philip Bellows two years later, when the controversy over violent actions was raging even more strongly:

Possibly the Quaker way of non-resistance is the better way, but the militant spirit of self-sacrifice is incomparably a more beautiful thing than our present day Quaker spirit, which seems to have lost the power to do anything but...join the mob, the Government, and the Press, in the infliction of cruel sufferings upon the most unselfish women in the land (Bellows 1913: 20).

So here, in different ways, a man and a woman both assert the high moral ground for the suffrage campaign, but the passion is stronger in the man's words—he, of course, was less likely than a woman to be accused of mental instability for displaying his passion.

Throughout the debate among Quakers, the issue of the militants' violence took up far more space than the underlying question of women's suffrage. In 1913 and 1914 there was pained correspondence from both men and women, deploring the violence. Isabella Sharp, for instance, wrote:

Many members of our Society have been looking in vain in our periodicals for a protest from our leading Women Suffragists against the wild actions of the militant party in destroying property and endangering human life. Are we to conjecture from this silence that many of our friends are more in sympathy with the militant law-breakers than we had hoped was the case?... Many of us...who would gladly have joined...in reasonable methods of agitation, are now so scandalised with the action of the militant party, as to be ready to forgo the desired privilege rather than appear even to countenance such action (*The Friend* 53 [1913]: 158).

An alternative way of thinking about the violence was proposed in a letter from Lucy Gardner:

It is very inconvenient to have our letters destroyed and to feel a sense of insecurity with regard to our property; it is distressing to read of women who are rightly and suitably punished for making war upon our material possessions, having so little sense of the justice of their punishment that they prefer to starve rather than submit... But what if, in some sense, they are right? What if they see more deeply into the heart of things than those of us who are content to give—not ourselves—but what we can spare easily from our normal life? What if they are the prophets and have a vision of a world redeemed by suffering and selflessness that we have not? (*The Friend* 53 [1913]: 573).

Here we have women holding two opposing views, and the second has more in common with those men who wrote of the campaign in terms of heroism and self-sacrifice. What Lucy Gardner adds here is a strong religious overtone in her choice of language, especially in the last sentence, thus implicitly laying claim to spiritual authority for the campaign.

In the following year the concern about violence was still uppermost. A man wrote:

I understand that members of our Society support the propaganda of the Suffragettes by purse and person. They march in their processions; they attend their meetings; they do not deny having sent them money. One lady Friend, a most charming young married woman, assured me that she had not the courage to break windows herself, but honoured and envied those who did... It is evident to me that the Pankhursts and not Millicent Fawcett are the true and trusted leaders of the movement to which the Society of Friends has now...been in a way committed... The example of their leaders, though fortunately not imitated to the full, has, if I may say so, measurably tintured the behaviour of their followers... I doubt if the Woman's Question will regain a fair hearing until all symptoms of the feverish and lawless methods prevalent today have died down, and respectable women have ceased to palliate crime, whilst professing to deprecate it (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 115).

There is here an echo of the 1909 male correspondent who wrote of 'lack of mental balance', as well as a tone of condescending superiority.

Shortly after this, a male correspondent (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 206) asserted that there was a Friend suspected of arson, and deplored hearing militancy condemned purely on tactical, rather than moral, grounds. In the same issue a Quaker militant finally declared herself: Ethel Impey wrote to explain her position, that constitutional methods had been exhausted and she, like other militants, now felt compelled by conscience to act: 'We do not support the militant party for amusement nor out of contrariness, but because conscience bids us, and it is a most serious thing to find one's judgement at variance with many of those one most esteems' (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 207).

The claiming of 'conscience' has been a powerful and resonant theme among Quakers since the earliest days, so the use of this word at this stage of the debate sends a powerful spiritual signal, in contrast with the constrained legalism of some other contributions.¹⁹ A week later a slightly shocked man responded:

One is already too sadly aware of the increasing spirit of violence and lawlessness, which is characteristic of the present time, but one was not prepared to have it openly defended by a woman 'Friend' in your last week's issue... How is it possible to reconcile [the advices to Friends] with the acts of militancy, which are being conducted almost daily—to the injury and loss of many innocent people?... If our Society owes a duty at all at the present juncture, rather than raise 'its united voice' against the sufferings of women now in prison for their own acts, and who have the remedy for forcible feeding in their own hands, should it not record its solemn protest against their commission of such crimes, and express its sympathy with the innocent victims? (*The Friend* 54 [1914]: 222).

After this date there was no further significant correspondence on the suffrage question. Internal procedural matters (about women's place in the governance of the Society of Friends) became prominent and then, with the outbreak of war, suffrage campaigning was suspended and many Quakers (women and men) turned their attention to war relief work.

So, from this representative selection of extracts, can we draw any clear distinction between the style of discourse of the men and the women? It seems to us that the distinction is more between those broadly supportive of women's suffrage, both men and women, who viewed militant tactics in the broader context of a just and necessary outcome; and those who were neutral or opposed in relation to the outcome, both men and women, who straightforwardly deplored militancy and were condescending about women in general.²⁰ The difference is not so much between discourses of life and death, as between energy and passion for justice and equality,²¹ over against constraint, legalism and support for the *status quo*. There is, of course, an argument that these latter characteristics may be mapped, respectively, onto the larger categories of natality and necrophilia. Grace Jantzen, in her article with which this paper is in dialogue, hints at this. She writes: 'It is my contention that modernity takes its shape from the choices that were made [in the seventeenth century]: choices to construe the

divine as other-worldly, to rank people...into hierarchies of domination and exploitation' (Jantzen 2005: 153).

Those Quakers who were passionate about the cause of women's suffrage—and who wrote of it in terms of heroism, justice, truth, self-sacrifice, prophecy and redemptive suffering—were both laying claim to and actively creating an immanent, engaged spirituality; they were locating the divine in the mess and conflict of real-world politics. Overall, there were more Quaker women than men who embodied this position, but the men were not absent. A gendered trope does not map exactly on to actual men and women.

IV. BRITISH LIBERAL QUAKERISM: CHOOSING LIFE

Moving now to the present day: British Quakerism in the twenty-first century is technically described as 'Liberal'. Its fundamental values and perspectives are rooted in a Quaker version of Liberal Christianity, an attempt at a rational form of faith developed at the end of the nineteenth century. This was a Quakerism enjoying full citizenship for the first time after 1870²² and seeing itself as part of a robust non-conformity that was a participant in civil and world affairs. It was this kind of Quakerism which debated the suffragette issues in the terms we have just explored.

Liberal Quakerism was set up at the end of the nineteenth century on four guiding principles. These both tied Quakerism back to its distinctive seventeenth-century heritage and also symbolised a sense of moving into a new century. The first principle was that spiritual experience was considered to be primary in terms of religious authority. This was a traditional Quaker position but one that had been threatened by evangelical influences in the nineteenth century. Unlike seventeenth-century Friends, Liberal twentieth-century Quakers did not claim that Scripture would necessarily confirm revelation. Experience was deemed sufficient. The second principle was that faith needed to be relevant to the age. These Quakers wanted to be 'of their time' and able to adapt, rather than being constrained by anachronistic practices such as the earlier traditions of wearing only 'plain' clothes and using 'plain speech'. The third principle was that Quakers needed to be open to theological innovation. The fourth, linked to this, was that more of God was known in each age, the doctrine of 'progressivism', which set up a temporal authority to revelation. Quakers in a decade's time would necessarily be better informed than those of a decade past.

Taken together, these principles offered a Quakerism which outwardly appeared similar to the original (the style of worship was not altered, for example), and yet was radically innovative in the freedoms it afforded for Friends to abandon tradition altogether in the name of fresh revelation or 'new Light'. The rational underpinning of Liberal Quakerism gradually created resistance to explicit corporate theology, and theology increasingly became an exercise in individual interpretation.

British Friends freed themselves from the theological constraint of any text or tradition, and increasingly through the twentieth century, they used the Bible for devotional purposes rather than as a book of authority. Their main textual authority was and is the 'book of discipline'. First published in 1783, and revised every generation or so, this is a book of extracts chosen to nurture Quaker faith and guide the individual Quaker in their daily life. Until the twentieth century, committees selected the extracts and produced a prescriptive book. In the twentieth century, in line with the changed culture of the movement, the process, and hence the content, became democratised. British Friends, then corporately named 'London Yearly Meeting',²³ replaced the section on 'Christian Doctrine' with 'Illustrative Spiritual Experiences of Friends' in their 1921 revision of the book. As early as 1930, the question was aired as to whether a Quaker needed to be a Christian. Quakers were allowing themselves to become a diverse religious group for the first time. When it came to producing a version of the book of discipline in the late twentieth century, a large committee, explicitly diverse in its theology, spent nine years requesting and selecting extracts, and consulting on the final selection. The book was adopted in 1994 and published in 1995 as *Quaker Faith and Practice*. The book of discipline always has reflected Quaker orthodoxy (Dandelion 1996: 19), by indicating both its 'centre of gravity' and the extent of its 'circumference'; but the 1995 book gives us a perspective on British Quakerism generated by a greater proportion of Quakers than previous editions. Given the increasing diversity within the Yearly Meeting and the emphasis on spiritual experience, it is not surprising that this book is longer than previous editions. Additionally, it is descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Quaker attitudes to war and outward violence, as represented in the book of discipline, provide a useful touchstone to explore Grace's model against modern British Quakerism. Jung Jiseok, building on the unpublished work of Elaine Bishop, has carefully articulated four key shifts in the way Quakers reinvented their historic opposition to war in the early part of the twentieth century. First, they renamed their 'testimony against war'²⁴ as 'the peace testimony'. Second, the basis of the testimony moved from being purely Christian to being Christian *and* non-Christian *and* non-religious. Thirdly, it moved from being part of a prescriptive Quakerism to one option within a permissive Quakerism. Fourthly, the focus shifted from being 'against' war to being 'for peace', from a narrow focus to a broad and diffuse field of involvement (Jiseok 2006: 32). To explore twentieth-century British Quakerism in relation to 'Choose Life!' theology, we take these four shifts in war/peace testimony and link them to an analysis of the 1995 book of discipline.²⁵

Part of Grace's argument was that even within an ostensibly pacifist group, the language of warfare (such as the Lamb's War), tied the Quakers who used it to a modernist mindset rooted in violence and the death of beauty. The renaming of the testimony against war in the twentieth century connotes, then, a shift away from such preoccupations towards a more positive and life-giving approach. 'War' appears far less often than 'peace' in the 1995 book of discipline and when it does appear, it has a wholly negative connotation. This absence of 'war imagery' is

connected with the shift to theological pluralism within British Quakerism. Quaker Christianity has been replaced by a broader range of theological interpretations. Specifically Christian ideas such as the 'Lamb's War' do not appear in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. They have not been selected because they no longer resonate with the sensibility of the majority of British Friends.

At the same time as there was a shift away from a normative Quaker Christianity, Quaker theology became not only pluralistic but also marginal to Quaker identity (Dandelion 1996). Survey results give varying accounts of the numbers of Quakers who state that they believe in God, but it is clear that late modern Quakers describe God in many and various ways. In a 2003 survey, 73% affirmed a belief in God and 15.8% claimed that God was 'best not described' (Rutherford 2003). Individual authors debate how far God is 'beyond' (Dandelion 2004: Chapter 4; Wildwood 1999) but attributes of God, other than benevolence and the ability to guide, are not explicit within the current book of discipline. However, in line with developments in popular liberal theology, it is clear that Quakers in the twentieth century have moved away from notions of God being 'out there and up there' (Dandelion 2004). Immanence is a more popular motif, though also rarely stated in explicit terms. In line with Grace's analysis, modern British Quakers are increasingly choosing a more subjective and inward spirituality over the outward and transcendent. The following extract, written autobiographically, but in the third person, epitomises the continuing centrality of the Quaker sense of inward encounter:

Without visions or the sound of speech or human mediation, in exceptionally wide-awake consciousness, she experienced the great releasing inward wonder. It was as if the 'empty shell' burst. All the weight and agony, all the feeling of unreality dropped away. She perceived living goodness, joy, light like a clear, irradiating, uplifting, enfolding, unequivocal reality from deep inside.

The first words which came to her—although they took a long time to come—were, 'This is the great Mercifulness. This is God. Nothing else is so *real* as this.' The child who had cried out in anguish and been silenced had now come inside the gates of Light. She had been delivered by a love that is greater than any human love (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 26.05).

At the same time, the historic opposition to what is 'outward' has relaxed—for early Quakers the 'world' was a pejorative term which referred to anything 'not-Quaker'. As Creasey (1962) and Bauman (1983) have shown, a central part of early Quaker theology was that the Light of Christ operated inwardly and that communion, and the experience of the unfolding Second Coming, was interior. The outward was 'worldly' and apostate, and the place of authenticity was inward. This influenced the Quaker approach to liturgy and the sacraments as well as to speech and silence. The location of the workings of Divine agency in the 'inward parts' (after Jer. 31:31–34²⁶) was common to all early Friends.

Part of the declaration of testimony against war to Charles II, made in 1661 on behalf of the Quaker movement, clearly makes the distinction between the outward and the inward, and is retained in the 1995 selection:

Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and

welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 24.04).

The following 1908 extract, written by Quaker doctor Hilda Clark, also connects the 'outward' with the 'worldly' but—in the spirit of the new liberal theology becoming dominant in British Quakerism at the time—is less critical of the material world and seeks to work with it: 'Justice is of the Spirit, not of the outside world—but our understanding is so wrapped up in outward things that we can only grow spiritually by applying spiritual things to material ones—therefore we must be just though Nature is not' (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 26.07). A 1987 extract, also written by a woman, also speaks of balancing inward and outward:

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. Uncomfortably we stand with one foot in the kingdom of this world and with the other in the Eternal Kingdom. Seldom can we keep the inward and outward working of love in balance, let alone the consciousness of living both in time and in eternity, in timelessness. Let us not be beguiled into thinking that political action is all that is asked of us, nor that our personal relationship with God excuses us from actively confronting the evil in this world. The political and social struggles must be waged, but a person is more and needs more than politics, else we are in danger of gaining the whole world but losing our souls (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.04).

Thus, 'outward' is no longer linked either to the wholly apostate or the wholly transcendent. Inward and inner are still the motifs of spiritual authenticity, but the outward is a context within which the faithful work, rather than being seen as something to be conquered or destroyed. The testimony *for peace*, in terms of Quaker opposition to war, is open to individual interpretation as well as rejection. It is no longer prescribed although it still symbolises a counter-cultural Quakerism, reinvigorated by a century of passionate opposition to war.

The term 'victory' is used in four extracts, three of them written before 1920. Similar to the use of the term 'victory', the term 'won' is used in its military sense only in historical passages, such as this from 1900:

...the staunchness of early Friends and others to their conscientious convictions in the seventeenth century won the battle of religious freedom for England. We covet a like faithful witness against war from Christians today (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 24.07).

These historical passages are still 'alive' for British Friends because they transmit values and create a Quaker identity, while not binding present-day Quakerism. Indeed, the shift of focus from 'war' to 'peace' has broadened the interpretation of the testimony, not just in relation to the meaning of a refusal to fight, but also in relation to the meaning of 'peace' itself. 'Peace' has been extended beyond the opposition to war to accommodate a wide variety of 'Choose Life!' positions, including vegetarianism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, concern for the environment, fairtrade and anti-capitalism. While this allows some Quakers to pick and choose the consequences of their Quaker life, it is nevertheless a powerful system of mutual reinforcement and value transmission. In terms of Grace's analysis, these can all be seen as present-day modes of the overturning of social symbolism and the desire to reclaim the world for God (or 'God') in the here and now, with an emphasis on Life and the potential for 'newness and creative change'.²⁷

In summary, there is a total lack of imagery in *Quaker Faith and Practice* relating to spiritual warfare or spiritual victory over and against an apostate world. Rather, present-day British Friends, of both sexes, inhabit the 'Choose Life!' theology attributed by Grace Jantzen to the founding mothers of Quakerism. In Liberal Quakerism's selective reinterpretation of its founding heritage, it has privileged the experiential, the centrality of love and grace and a social gospel of equality and justice. Theology is plural and marginal. God is perceived as immanent and/ or unknowable. In reinterpreting the testimony *against* war to a wider testimony *for* peace, these Quakers have in place a mechanism which both affirms and accommodates numerous aspects of a 'Choose Life!' theology.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, we argue that Grace's analysis of the very first Quaker writings along gendered lines does not necessarily carry over into other geographical and temporal settings. In the 1670s, we find Alexander Jaffray using 'Choose Life' language for his private writings and Lilius Skene writing to Friends' persecutors with a message of guilt and destruction. By the early nineteenth century, the writings of female Quaker convert Hannah Kilham do not fit into Grace's counter-cultural template. Kilham's work, like the earlier public writings of Jaffray and Skene, tends to conform to the dominant dualistic cultural model, which Grace ascribed only to Quaker men in seventeenth-century England. It also alerts us to the need to consider how different theological discourses came to influence Quakers. The categories of the public debate among Friends over women's suffrage at the start of the twentieth century cannot simply be mapped on gendered lines. In these ways, we find a less straightforward division of gender and theological language as we move from the seventeenth century, as explored by Grace, to the early twentieth century. However, in the late twentieth century, we find British Friends, in their most authoritative text, immersed, across the gender binary, in the language of natality and life.

Considering the examples used by Grace in her analysis, this current stance follows the witness and writings of the early women Friends more than those of the early men. This may imply a feminising of modern British Quakerism and its expression. It certainly is counter-cultural and, purely within the dichotomy of 'Life' versus 'death and violence' which Grace set up, places British Quakerism as counter-modern. The movement's preoccupation is not at all with death and violence, exploitation and domination, but is concerned with respecting the integrity of all creation, and working for the realisation of that ideal in wider society. Bryan Wilson labelled twentieth-century British Quakers a 'perfectionist' sect, in that their salvific goal, insofar as any remains, is to change the consciences of those around them (Wilson 1970). These Quakers have opted to focus on the early Friends' metaphors of 'Love' and 'the Light in their consciences' (Moore 2000), rather than those of 'the Lamb's War'. They have, as the title of Grace's lecture puts it, chosen Life!

NOTES

1. Including Jantzen 2004.
2. Margaret Fell (1614–1702) was a gentry convert to Quakerism in June 1652. She became one of the key leaders of the movement and carried out an extensive correspondence with Quakers everywhere, including many she had never met. Her pastoral skills were matched by her theological and administrative ones. Her husband, Judge Thomas Fell, never became a Quaker but helped protect the movement.
3. Second Day Morning Meeting was a publications committee set up in 1672. Only works passed by the committee could be published in the name of Quakers. 'Second Day' referred to the fact it met on a Monday, second day in Quaker parlance, where days and months were numbered rather than named to avoid the use of pagan nomenclature.
4. This last concept is least elaborated here, as lack of space prohibits the necessary examination of it in an historical context.
5. The 'book of discipline' is an authoritative book of extracts, revised every generation or so, which seeks to convey the current thinking of the Quakers. In Britain, the first book was published in 1783, the latest in 1995.
6. The 'Yearly Meeting' is the name given to the Quaker organisation, in this case, in Britain.
7. James Nayler (1618–1661) was a leading Quaker, along with George Fox and Margaret Fell. In 1656 he both fell out with George Fox and enacted a 'sign' (see n. 8) of Christ coming again by riding into Wells, Glastonbury and Bristol on a horse, with other Quakers waving branches before him. Enacting signs was not unusual but the public disagreement with Fox gave his actions an air of defiance. In Wells and Glastonbury, his action passed unnoticed but in Bristol, the authorities were looking to undermine the burgeoning Quaker movement. Nayler was accused of believing he was Christ and was tried for blasphemy. He narrowly escaped with his life but was sentenced to flogging, branding, the boring of his tongue and imprisonment. The case was a fragile and divisive moment for the early Quaker movement.
8. A 'public performance of shocking, dramatic actions, intended to convey, by nonverbal means, an expression of moral reproof and/or prophecy' (Bauman 1983: 84).
9. Worship according to one's own will or fancy, or imposed by human will, without divine authority.

10. A Scottish Presbyterian who supported either of two agreements, the National Covenant of 1638 or the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, intended to defend and extend Presbyterianism

11. Temptation.

12. *The Scottish National Dictionary* (1974) gives ‘unharnish’ as the Scottish form of English ‘unharness’.

13. This may reflect a response to the cessation of persecution; it may equally be the result of the passage of time, with the writings of the second generation of Aberdeen Friends coming to the fore.

14. According to Rose (2005: 644), Hannah was ‘a former Quaker who returned to the Society of Friends after his [Alexander’s] death’. However, this information is not repeated in the biographical accounts of Hannah herself, and given that her parents were Anglican, it seems unlikely that she would have omitted to mention in her Journal a connection with Quakers before her move to Methodism.

15. This is a study of the influence of the German Pietist *Norddeutsch Mission* among the Ewe in West Africa.

16. John Woolman (1720–1772) was a Quaker from New Jersey, USA. He is best known for his campaigning against slavery, but this extended into what would now be termed ecological concerns, focussing attention, for example, on the environmental damage caused by the dyeing industry.

17. Friends’ Foreign Mission Association came into being in 1868 but, according to Punshon, was carrying out concerns ‘in advance of the thinking of Yearly Meeting’ (1984: 216). It was not formally acknowledged by the Society until 1873, and did not submit its first report to Yearly Meeting until 1881.

18. For a full historical discussion, see Lunn 1997.

19. Indeed, setting ‘conscience’ in opposition to obedience to the authority of the state dates back to the earliest days of Quakerism, for both women and men. Edward Burroughs, for example, writing in 1661: ‘For conscience sake to God...we must be obedient [to the law of the land]...but...if anything be commanded of us by the present authority, which is not according to equity, justice and a good conscience towards God...we must in such cases obey God only...and patiently suffer what is inflicted upon us for such disobedience to men’ (quoted in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.86). This is the first of 17 extracts in *Quaker Faith and Practice* under the heading ‘Friends and State Authority’. The extracts range from 1661 to 1987; six are written by individual men, three by individual women and the remaining eight are corporate statements.

20. There were Quaker women, as well as men, who believed that it was inappropriate for women, due to their weaker nature, to vote and be involved in public decisions.

21. Lack of space prevents a full discussion of this point—there was considerable concern among the upper-class Quaker women suffragists about the plight of poor women; the suffrage campaign was, in their view, about justice in relation to social class and economic status, as well as gender.

22. Non-conformists could enter the professions and Universities of their choice after this date without compromising their faith.

23. London Yearly Meeting was renamed as Britain Yearly Meeting in 1995.

24. ‘Testimony’, in Quaker parlance, refers to a tradition of collective witness.

25. An electronic word search was used for key terms: ‘war’, ‘peace’, ‘victory’, ‘winning’, ‘inward’, ‘inner’, ‘outward’, ‘Life’ and ‘death’.

26. These verses speak of the new covenant being written on people’s hearts.

27. ‘Life’ as a theological category is rarely used by present-day British Friends. Only one extract uses it explicitly, quoting Scripture in much the same way as did the early women Friends instanced by Grace in her analysis: ‘From the earliest days of Friends, we have known

that safety cannot be defended in our own strength, but only in God's... And we don't have to do it with tools of our own fashioning, ever more elaborate technological juggling acts, ever more devastatingly destructive bombs... [We can] learn to lay down carnal weapons, practising with weapons of the spirit: love, truthsaying, nonviolence, the good news of God's birth and rebirth among us, imagination, vision, and laughter... It's messy, muddily and sometimes painful—but the other way, the search for some kind of mechanical invulnerability, for some kind of scientific guarantee against physical death, that way I am sure lies the death of the Spirit. We know the choice—we've known it all along—and we make it every day... "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live (Deut 30:19)." (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 23.55) Elsewhere, 'life' is used in a descriptive sense; similarly 'death'. These are no longer regularly used motifs of dualistic theology. However, it is clear that 'Choose Life' theology is embedded within *Quaker Faith and Practice* and can be considered normative.

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‘THERE’S DEATH IN THE POT!’*
THE BRITISH FREE PRODUCE MOVEMENT
AND THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE
NORTH-EAST OF ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

Ethical consumerism was one of the strategies used during the protracted struggle against slavery and was especially popular with Friends. From simple abstention from slave-grown produce to the promotion of alternative goods, it provided a means to bridge the distance between the consumer and the enslaved. This paper surveys the background to the mid-nineteenth-century British Free Produce Movement and explores the problems and opposition its supporters encountered. The reasons for the inability of the movement to develop mass appeal even amongst abolitionists, or for it to have any noticeable impact on the outcome of anti-slavery campaigning, are examined, as is its role in revitalising abolitionism at a time when interest had diminished. Particular emphasis is placed on ethical consumerism in the north-east anti-slavery movement, including the coordination of the Free Produce Movement from about 1846 to 1854, by Newcastle Quakers Henry and Anna Richardson.

KEYWORDS

abolition; free produce; Newcastle upon Tyne; abstention; free trade; sugar

INTRODUCTION

The waves of anti-slavery activism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be described collectively as the first mass pressure group campaign, deploying a range of tactics which are still familiar today. Josiah Wedgwood’s iconic ‘Am I Not A Man and A Brother?’ medallion and the engraving of the *Brooke* slave ship, for example, supplied slogans and logos which helped to foster anti-slavery sentiment. Ethical consumerism, another tactic with modern associations, was also utilised, to establish a direct connection between consumers and the context in which goods were produced, thus identifying them as moral agents, individually

responsible for the persistence of slavery. Beginning with the sugar boycott of the 1790s and developing into a sustained attempt to promote a 'free produce' alternative to goods produced through slave labour, ethical consumerism periodically re-emerged as a campaigning device until the American Declaration of Emancipation in 1864. Throughout the period, the Religious Society of Friends was closely identified with this tactic, as exemplified in the title of Ruth Ketring Nuernberger's book, *The Free Produce Movement: A Quaker Protest Against Slavery*.¹

However, despite the many and widespread attempts to encourage and sustain ethical consumerism in the battle against slavery, most historians agree that it had little impact in the drive towards abolition. For this reason, there have been few thorough explorations of the tactic. Nuernberger's book, for example, was published over sixty years ago, yet remains the only serious study of the American Free Produce Movement, with just a single chapter dedicated to the movement on the other side of the Atlantic. It is over thirty years since C. Duncan Rice and Louis Billington wrote about British abolitionism and ethical consumerism, the former with a specific focus on the Free Produce Movement.² Although a number of studies have been made of the 1790s sugar boycott, the Free Produce Movement has been comparatively neglected.³ Whilst Lawrence B. Glickman and E.C. Wilkinson have published articles about the movement in America, there has not been a new work on its counterpart in this country despite the outpouring of academic research into virtually all aspects of the anti-slavery movement during the bicentenary of the abolition of British involvement in the slave trade in 2007.⁴

This article attempts to redress the balance by furnishing an overview of the phases of ethical consumerism in Britain throughout the period, with an emphasis on the role of Quakers in the Free Produce Movement between about 1846 and 1854. Because this tactic was not always pursued through a co-ordinated national campaign, but often by individuals or short-lived local groups, the evidence can be frustratingly thin and patchy. Although the article highlights activities in the north-east of England, these have been supplemented and enlarged by evidence drawn from a wider area, in order to present a meaningful framework for the debates surrounding the device. The importance of close transatlantic networks to the Free Produce Movement is illustrated, fatefully linking its viability to schisms within American abolitionism. Disagreements between those who urged trade sanctions against slave-grown goods and the many Friends who supported free trade, especially in the 1840s, are also explored. Finally, some conclusions are offered about the effectiveness of ethical consumerism in the struggle to emancipate the enslaved.

FROM BOYCOTT TO FREE PRODUCE: THE EARLY PHASES OF ETHICAL CONSUMERISM

Abstention from slave-produced goods was first practised in the second half of the eighteenth century by individuals, mostly Quakers, on both sides of the Atlantic. John Woolman, for example, argued that the consumption of such goods was as morally bad as slaveholding itself, since it not only gave economic succour to the

institution, but supplied its very motive, expressed in the slogan, 'the receiver is as bad as the thief!'⁵ This analysis continued to permeate the ideology of ethical consumerism. In 1814, the question posed by Elias Hicks: 'By what class of the people is the slavery of the Africans and their descendants supported and encouraged?' prompted the reply, 'Principally by the purchasers and consumers of the produce of the slaves' labour'. 'If we purchase the commodity, we participate in the crime', he continued. 'The slave dealer, the slave holder, and the slave driver are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him, to procure the commodity'.⁶ The motto of *The Non-Slaveholder*, launched on 4 January 1846 to publicise the Free Produce Movement—'Whoso gives the motive, makes his brother's sin his own'—was an analysis which placed consumers at the heart of the ethical debate, bringing home to them their personal involvement in slavery.⁷

In 1791, the Baptist William Fox published his pamphlet 'On the Propriety of Abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum' in which he argued that if one family using five pounds of sugar per week abstained for twenty-one months, the enslavement and murder of one negro would be prevented.⁸ Such calculations forged an intimate connection between the actions of the consumer and the fate of the enslaved. Anti-slavery literature also sought to arouse disgust through images of cannibalism and pollution, as shown in an anonymous poem, published in 1788: 'Are drops of blood the horrible manure that fills with luscious juice the teeming cane?'⁹ The bodily fluids of the slaves became indistinguishable from the product, sugar, so the British tea-drinker was literally consuming their blood. Fox's pamphlet became hugely popular when the campaigners against British involvement in the slave trade urged abstention from slave-grown sugar in reaction to the failure to advance their cause in Parliament. Thomas Clarkson claimed that 300,000 gave up the use of West India sugar, making their 'sacrifice to virtue' at this time, including the astonished correspondent 'Humanus', writing to the *Newcastle Courant* in 1792:

Happening lately to be sometime from home, the females in my family had in my absence perused a pamphlet, entitled 'An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum'. On my return, I was surprised to find that they had entirely left off the use of Sugar, and banished it from the tea table.¹⁰

This was the first evidence of anti-slavery activity in Newcastle by women, following the establishment of the men's abolition society there in 1791. East India sugar, promoted as a non-slave alternative, is known to have been available from a grocer's in Sunderland.¹¹

The abstention campaign enjoyed widespread publicity, becoming a fashionable statement of morality and a means to display one's virtuous credentials. The domestic nature of the protest has been acknowledged as crucial to the construction of a widespread culture of anti-slavery sentiment.¹² The Dublin Quaker, Mary Birkett, dedicated her 1792 *Poem on the African Slave Trade* to her own sex, imploring them to boycott slave-produced goods:

How little think the giddy and the gay
 While sipping o'er the sweets of charming tea,
 How oft with grief they pierce the manly breast,
 How oft their lux'ry robs the wretch of rest,
 And that to gain the plant we idly waste
 Th'extreme of human mis'ry they must taste!¹³

Sugar bowls labelled 'East India Sugar not made by Slaves'—and indeed entire tea-sets—were manufactured to purvey the anti-slavery message.¹⁴ Although the 1790s campaign was relatively short-lived, many people continued to abstain from sugar and other slave-grown products, especially Friends, who were 'accustomed to emphasising their distinctiveness by a self-denying lifestyle'.¹⁵ Quaker parents were warned to avoid the 'evil consequences...from the mistaken conduct of pampering the appetite, and indulging the pleasures of the palate in childhood', so it is little wonder that children were also expected to practice abstinence.¹⁶ Anna Lloyd of Birmingham, born in 1837, recalled how, at 'an early age we gave up the use of sugar in tea and coffee', while her grandmother, Rachel Lloyd, had such a 'fear of using slave grown cotton' that she had 'a great objection to any material which had an admixture of cotton, and confined [herself] to worsted and silk'.¹⁷ It was inevitable that Friends should be in the vanguard whenever the tactic re-emerged into the mainstream of the anti-slavery movement.

The 1820s saw a resurgence of anti-slavery activity, including the promotion of ethical consumerism.¹⁸ A new abolition society was formed in Newcastle upon Tyne; its first report commented on the need to revive abolitionism, as 'the country at large seemed to settle into a state of indifference on the subject of negro slavery'.¹⁹ After the ending of British involvement in the slave trade in 1807, it had been assumed that planters would behave more humanely, leading to an amelioration of conditions and even, some fervently hoped, emancipation itself. Moreover, most abolitionists were from the urban middle-classes, and their evangelical drive towards a true moral order intermingled with an equally strong commitment to free trade. 'The arguments against the use of sugar address themselves equally to our interests and our feelings', reported the *Newcastle Chronicle* in 1791.²⁰ As Adam Smith had argued:

a person who can acquire no property can have no other interest but to eat as much, and to labour as little as possible. Whatever work he does beyond that which is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own.²¹

Slave labour was therefore not only wicked but also economically inefficient and wasteful, and its opponents used the ideas of political economy as well as humanitarian appeals to gain support. The removal of the high tariffs on foreign, that is, non-West Indian sugar, which protected the planters from competition would, they argued, ultimately prove the superiority of free labour, by making its produce cheaper. 'If it were not for the duties laid upon other sugar to *protect that grown by slave holders*, you would buy *all* sugars at least, one penny per pound *cheaper* than you now do', asserted one pamphlet in 1825.²² Alternatives to slave-grown sugar

included that produced in East India or the experimental colony for freed slaves in Sierra Leone, as well as the development of maple, beet and even birch substitutes for cane sugar. The focus of this phase of ethical consumerism, which occurred on both sides of the Atlantic, was not just the boycott of slavery's commodities, but also the active promotion of these 'free labour' alternatives. In the United States this led to the development of the Free Produce Movement, with its own stores, newspapers and network of local societies; in Britain to the campaign to equalise sugar duties, to deprive West Indian planters of their unfair market advantage.

Abstention from slave-grown produce and the commitment to finding free labour alternatives continued throughout the 1830s, although with a lower profile in the anti-slavery movement as a whole, as emancipation and the apprenticeship system preoccupied activists and called for different tactics. By the end of the 1830s, following the emancipation of West Indian slaves, the issue of protecting Caribbean sugar came to the fore once again. This time many abolitionists had apparently switched sides. In the 1820s it was possible to combine free-trade inclinations with humanitarian impulses, during the (unsuccessful) campaign to equalise East and West Indian sugar duties. But after emancipation, West Indian sugar was technically grown by free labour, whose greater efficiencies should, according to this reasoning, have resulted in much higher productivity. In reality, productivity declined after emancipation, with Jamaican sugar exports, for example, down by almost half.²³ The principles of economic liberalism demanded the removal of all protective tariffs, but West Indian planters continued to enjoy mercantile manipulation of sugar prices. At the beginning of the 1840s, for example, the duty on West Indian sugar was only 24 shillings per hundredweight, while the rate for Latin American sugar was 63 shillings.²⁴ The Parliamentary battle to abolish sugar tariffs altogether in the mid-1840s, however, led the Quaker abolitionist and political radical Joseph Sturge of Birmingham to argue in opposition that it was too soon to move to unfettered economic liberalism. A system which privileged all free-labour sugar, whether colonial or foreign, over that grown by slaves was called for, giving an economic motive for emancipation and creating the conditions for universally free markets.²⁵ For this reason, many abolitionists reluctantly supported their erstwhile enemies, the West Indian planters, who now 'held the humanitarian torch' in their efforts to maintain protectionism.²⁶ Others deplored this unholy alliance, especially committed free-traders, who argued that the 'distinction between free-grown and slave-grown products was a principle for individual agency, not a rule which could direct international commerce'.²⁷

The anti-slavery movement was also under attack in the press for seemingly privileging well-fed freedmen in the Caribbean over half-starved workers at home. *The Times*, in 1838, had wondered at the concern for slaves of Joseph Pease, the Darlington Quaker abolitionist, over the fate of 'the wretched little beings who are toiling from morning to night among the wheels of his own machinery'.²⁸ Drescher states that, '[t]he 1840s was the first decade in half a century in which a united anti-slavery front could no longer produce mass mobilization to influence public policy'.²⁹

'THE ABSENCE OF A DEFINITE OBJECT':³⁰ DEVELOPMENT OF THE
BRITISH FREE PRODUCE MOVEMENT, 1845 TO 1854

As well as disagreements about protection for free-labour sugar, the intention to abolish universal slavery widened the geographical scope of the movement, diminishing its ability to realise its goals. As a consequence, active support for anti-slavery organisations fell away in the 1840s.³¹ This was the context in which ethical consumerism came to the fore once again.

In February 1850, the Ladies' Negro Friends and Emancipation Society for Newcastle upon Tyne resolved that, as the Society had not met for three years, members should henceforth focus their energies on the encouragement of the Free Produce Movement.³² In fact, the Newcastle Free Produce Association had been established a few years earlier by Friends Anna and Henry Richardson, who became interested in the issue through their association with the Peace Movement and the American peace campaigner Elihu Burritt.³³ Burritt, of Connecticut (1810–1879) was known as the 'Learned Blacksmith' and claimed to speak forty languages. He arrived in England in 1846 to promote his League of Universal Brotherhood, a peace organisation, and saw the Free Produce Movement as part of the campaign for worldwide peace. Henry and Anna Richardson were enthusiastic supporters of the Peace Movement, attending the Paris Peace Convention in 1849. Anna edited a peace annual for children, *The Olive Leaf*, and was also Secretary of Newcastle Olive Leaf Circle, a female branch of Burritt's organisation.³⁴ By 1850 there were about 150 of these circles, mostly made up of young Quaker women and forming a ready-made network of consumers for free labour goods.³⁵ Realising that the Free Produce Movement could help to reinvigorate anti-slavery activities at a time when interest in the issue was flagging, a flurry of free-labour publications was issued from the printing presses of Newcastle between the late 1840s and early 1850s. Anna reported in April 1848 that 'four anti-slavery tracts and several papers have already been published in Newcastle', as well as a 'sheet of *Monthly Illustrations of American Slavery*...issued since the beginning of 1847, for the special use of newspaper editors, to nearly one hundred of whom it is forwarded monthly by permission'.³⁶

Henry Richardson was a member of the well-known Quaker tanning family which dominated Newcastle Monthly Meeting in the nineteenth century, with branches in North Shields and Sunderland, as well as Newcastle.³⁷ His father, George, was a grocer in Newcastle's Flesh Market and a noted Quaker minister and philanthropist. Anna, Henry's wife, had been brought up by her widowed mother in Oxfordshire, and she remembered her mother refusing to use slave-grown sugar and insisting that black beggars must never be turned away because they might be runaway slaves.³⁸ The couple met at the Friends' school at Ackworth and married in the year of the Emancipation Act, 1833. Henry worked in his father's grocery business but the couple chiefly devoted themselves to good causes, including the Bible Society, Temperance, prison visiting, as well as anti-slavery and peace campaigning. Their home in the Summerhill 'Quaker enclave'

in the west end of the city hosted visits from leading abolitionists, including, most notably, Frederick Douglass, whose freedom they purchased in 1846.³⁹ Because Henry's health was frequently poor, Anna often took the lead in their activities.

Their pamphlets emphasised humanitarian rather than economic arguments in favour of free labour and sought to make the link between producer and consumer a tangible one, however geographically remote from each other: 'Were the misery we thus occasion only brought to our doors, we should start from it aghast, horrified and self-condemned!'⁴⁰ There had been no point abolishing slavery in the West Indies, they argued, if people simply transferred their custom to Cuba or Brazil, encouraging the continuation of the traffic in human beings and abandoning the enslaved to the 'tender mercies of Spanish slave-drivers'.⁴¹ Abstention from slave labour produce was urged as a 'self-cleansing measure from voluntary participation in the crime of slavery'.⁴² Cotton rather than sugar production was now at the forefront of the campaign; by 1850, cotton imports were even more vital to the British economy than revenue from the sugar colonies had been in the late eighteenth century.⁴³

A pamphlet by H. Richardson entitled *A Revolution of Spindles for the Overthrow of American Slavery* was published, and George Richardson spoke on behalf of his son and daughter-in-law at London Yearly Meeting in May 1849, asking Friends to support the British Free Produce Movement.⁴⁴ Articles and letters were published in the British Quaker press, and free labour goods advertised.⁴⁵ By now the coordination of the movement had shifted from London, where it had been within the remit of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) secretary, to Newcastle.⁴⁶

The Newcastle Ladies Committee was visited on 16 April 1850 by the black abolitionist James W.C. Pennington, for whom a tea party was held the following week. Born Jim Pembroke, a slave, in Maryland c. 1807, Pennington escaped aged about 20 and went on to become a minister of the Congregational Church. He met leading American abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, in the 1830s and soon became a prominent figure in the abolitionist movement. In 1843 he represented Connecticut at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London and also attended the 1849 Paris Peace Convention.⁴⁷ At the Newcastle tea party, Pennington made 'a truly impressive and convincing address clearly showing the dependency of the system of American slavery on the support of the British consumers of cotton', and was asked to hold a public meeting in Brunswick Place Chapel after his forthcoming visit to Scotland. In August, Henry Highland Garnet, also a black abolitionist and former slave, was designated the Travelling Agent of Newcastle Ladies' Emancipation Society. Garnet, born in 1815, had escaped with ten other family members in 1824. In 1843 he became a Presbyterian minister, by which time he was already speaking for the anti-slavery movement.⁴⁸ The Richardsons clearly understood how important the involvement of these former slaves would be to the success of their enterprise, providing 'colourful and out of the ordinary experiences that would attract audiences to their meetings and provoke reports in the press'.⁴⁹

In May 1851, it was resolved 'to make a subscription to defray the expenses of H. Garnet's family being brought to this country'.⁵⁰ On their arrival, a soiree was held to welcome them to the north-east, with four hundred tickets issued at sixpence each.⁵¹ Garnet's brief was to raise the profile of free produce, and by September 1850 he was holding meetings all over the region, urging audiences to abstain from slave-grown products, and reminding them of earlier consumer boycotts:

A former generation gave up, for the sake of the negro, the use of slave-grown sugar; and this was done when free labour sugar was not to be had. A less sacrifice was now demanded... It was simply asked of them to prefer free-labour to slave-labour sugar, coffee, cotton, rice etc.⁵²

Britain was the 'main prop and stay of slavery... [which] could best be struck down by the withdrawal of British custom'. '[I]f slaves sold well in America', he argued, 'you might be sure that cotton was high in Liverpool, and vice versa'.⁵³ He besought women 'to take it into their hands', to create the demand for free produce: 'Let there be a demand for free-labour produce, and the cause would cease; let the public move first, and all the great firms who supplied the country must follow as a matter of course'.⁵⁴

This message was reinforced by a display of free-labour cottons and cotton prints, and information as to where they might be bought in Newcastle and Gateshead.⁵⁵ In the pamphlet *Conscience versus Cotton*, the Richardsons made practical suggestions to improve the marketing of free-labour goods, including setting up a network of commercial travellers, offering merchants the opportunity to become agents for free produce and ensuring goods were displayed attractively: 'leave handsome labels, to be placed conspicuously in shops, in order to excite attention...'⁵⁶ Elsewhere, they both anticipated and reiterated Garnet's appeal to women:

A path for showing mercy is open to us, if we will but walk in it; a path peculiarly appropriate to us, the Women of Great Britain, who have the furnishing of the wardrobes and the tables of our households.⁵⁷

Women, one and all, in tears must acknowledge that if ever any social reform demanded **their** attention, **their** exertions, **their** prayers, it is the utter overthrow of slavery.⁵⁸

A list of commodities was published, entitled 'The Free Man or the Slave, Which Shall Supply Your Table?' underlining their assertion that, 'it may be you do not know that it is *slave-grown*, but this is no excuse; you *ought* to know'.⁵⁹

Yet another former slave, William Wells Brown, was touring the north of England at this time, and the local press, reporting on his appearance at Blaydon's Wesleyan chapel, were in 'no doubt that his lecture will have given a powerful impetus to the free-labour movement in Blaydon'.⁶⁰ The high profile of the Free Produce Movement was such that a small handful of Free Labour Associations quickly grew to twenty-six, thirteen of which were in the north-east of England, each probably started up on the tide of enthusiasm following Garnet's meetings.⁶¹

To spread the message far and wide, the Richardsons produced a penny sheet entitled *The Slave: His Wrongs and Their Remedy*, with a circulation of 2500 to 3000 per month. A successful Free Produce Movement appeared to be taking shape, with various depots opening to distribute free-labour goods, and great efforts made to secure adequate supplies of free-labour cotton and to persuade manufacturers to use it for their cloth. There was even a cooperative of up to 200 handloom weavers in Carlisle who produced gingham from free-labour yarn, although poor demand meant that the Cumberland Free Labour Gingham Company was short-lived.⁶²

‘EXPOSING OUR OWN INCONSISTENCY’:⁶³ OBJECTIONS TO THE FREE
PRODUCE MOVEMENT FROM BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

From the outset, ethical consumerism as a means to abolish slavery and the slave trade attracted criticism. The most vociferous attacks came from those whose financial interests were threatened, but even amongst those who supported abolition, doubts were voiced as to the effectiveness of the tactic. Concerns were also expressed about its compatibility with another great crusade of the second quarter of the nineteenth century: the free trade movement. Quakerism, being closely identified with both free trade and abolitionism, faced a moral dilemma when it came to the question as to whether slave-grown produce should be deliberately excluded from Britain. Moreover, since it seemed almost impossible to avoid the produce of slavery completely, their ‘hands could not be said to be clean’, so to campaign against the importation of slave produce would be ‘exposing [their] own inconsistency’.⁶⁴ The close association of the British anti-slavery movement and the Religious Society of Friends on both sides of the Atlantic also had an impact on support for the free produce association.

Before slavery was abolished in the West Indies, plantation owners and their supporters in Britain claimed that the campaign to abstain from slave-grown sugar would ruin the entire British economy. Abstainers were attacked in Parliament, the press and through political cartoons, as their motives, priorities and the extent of their support were questioned and ridiculed. An 1825 pamphlet belonging to Sunderland Quakers highlighted the objections made by West Indian planters to the proposal to remove duties on sugar originating in East India: ‘The loss of wealth, commerce, manufactures, and naval strength...are set out in battle array before the consumer of East India sugar, as the necessary consequence of his decreasing its growth in the West’.⁶⁵ In 1826 the political cartoonist Robert Cruikshank offered a detailed satirical comment on the campaign, incorporating a number of the principal objections to abstentionism. The cartoon implied, for example, that the organiser of a petition against tariffs was in the pay of the East India Company, while those queuing up to sign it were mere children. An advertisement for a play to promote the cause was by a ‘Signor Bamboozle’ and identified as a ‘Farce’, and the presence of a white beggar suggested that the abolitionists were ignoring suffering closer to home. In comparison, on a nearby

island, the slaves could be seen living an idyllic life.⁶⁶ But at least in this period the abolitionists themselves could present a united front about the removal of the tariffs, since free trade and abolitionism did not appear to be at odds with each other. This unity would be under increasing attack in the years ahead.

Turley notes the 'myth' of cohesion amongst abolitionists in Britain, especially after the emancipation of West Indian slaves in the late 1830s, when tensions between provincial groups and the central body (by then the BFASS, established in 1839) became stronger. By the 1840s, the pressure to remove discriminatory tariffs from West Indian sugar produced further strains within the antislavery movement. This campaign, writes Isichei, 'divided the Anti-Slavery Society to the point of schism'.⁶⁷ Dedicated free traders argued that the well-being of West Indian freedmen must be balanced against the suffering of the labouring population at home. Removal of sugar tariffs would result in lower prices and an increased standard of living for all; their continuance would 'deprive the greater part of Her Majesty's subjects in the United Kingdom using enough of sugar: the poorer class from not using it at all'.⁶⁸ The 'zeal for Free Trade' of Quaker M.P. John Bright 'turned him into something very like an apologist for slavery'.⁶⁹ In 1877, he looked back at the benefits which the abolition of all sugar duties in 1846 had brought:

The quantity imported has been enormously increased and the price has been to an extraordinary degree diminished... [I]t has been so cheap that it must have added greatly to the comfort of families and to the ease with which many other things, fruit and so on, are made palatable, especially to children in families.⁷⁰

Lower prices were not the only consequences; free trade in sugar had led to an increase in exports, which in turn produced greater opportunities for employment and higher wages. Brazil constituted a 'vast potential market' for British cotton goods if Brazilian sugar could be freely imported.⁷¹ Nor were the anticipated benefits of free trade confined purely to the financial; Samuel Neave, of Gosport, wrote in *The British Friend* in 1845 of the 'tendency of commercial freedom to the preservation of the peace of the world', attacking the 'impolicy and wickedness of our restrictive laws'.⁷² For many Friends, free trade was no less a moral crusade than anti-slavery, as a means to 'usher in the millennial age of peace, prosperity and good government'.⁷³

To give special protection to 'free labour' sugar, as proposed by abolitionists like Joseph Sturge, would, opponents argued, have a deleterious impact on the whole economy, as slave societies imposed their own retaliatory tariffs on British manufactured goods: 'we injure our shipping interests in the carrying trade, we injure our manufacturing interests by limiting the demand in foreign markets and we impose a heavy additional tax by increased prices on the whole population'. If slave-produced sugar were to be prohibited, then for consistency's sake so should 'the importation of Cotton Wool, Tobacco, Coffee, Rice, Hides, tallow, Copper Ore, Dyewoods, from the United States of America and from Cuba, Porto Rico and Brazil'.⁷⁴ Moreover, there was, as reported in the *Newcastle Guardian* in May 1846, a 'Scarcity of Sugar!'⁷⁵ With supplies falling far short of demand, prices had

greatly increased. Special protection for 'free-labour' sugar could only make the situation worse, as supplies, at approximately 8000 tons in 1845 out of a total consumption of 240,000 tons, were clearly insufficient. In any case, it was claimed, East India sugar, the type promoted most vigorously by the Free Produce Movement, 'enjoys no favour with consumers'.⁷⁶

These arguments were strongly attacked by those who viewed slave produce as 'stolen goods', and therefore wanted to continue imposing high tariffs on slave-grown sugar. Rice argues that the willingness of some anti-slavery activists to put aside their free trade principles and align themselves with the planters is clear evidence that abolitionism was not primarily driven by economic self-interest.⁷⁷ Ultimately, the free traders won the day with the 1846 Sugar Act, and voluntary abstention remained the only way to avoid giving economic succour to slave societies. However, at Yearly Meeting in 1847, discussions continued, as speakers deplored the 'lamentable fact that the opening of the British ports to the slave sugars of Brazil and Cuba had largely increased the price of slaves, the price of lands, and the African slave trade'.⁷⁸ A 'spirit of bitterness' developed between the Anti-Corn Law League and parts of the anti-slavery movement as a result of this disagreement, despite a close corollary between the personnel of the Anti-Corn Law League and Anti-Slavery Societies, many of whom were Quakers.⁷⁹

Burritt was aware of how divisive this issue was, and attempted to diffuse tensions, asserting that abstinence from slave-labour produce would 'not trench upon any principle of free trade', since it 'involves nothing but the free, voluntary legislation of the individual conscience upon articles of household or personal consumption'. Abstention, he continued, 'is no more opposed to the fullest development of free trade than is the exercise of individual taste or fancy in supplying the table or wardrobe'.⁸⁰ A letter to *The British Friend* in 1850 argued that it was not inconsistent for free-traders to impose 'some kind of discriminating duties on slave production' because it would be 'but a small recompense to this generation of negroes', referring to the former West Indian slaves who had received no compensation upon emancipation and who were still being unjustly treated by their erstwhile masters.⁸¹ But despite such arguments, these disputes contributed to the fragmentation of abolitionism in the 1840s, seriously threatening the future of the movement, and reducing the ability of the Free Produce Movement to attract more than minority support.

Intense links with American reformers exacerbated tensions within British anti-slavery still further, when the abolitionist movement in the United States suffered an acrimonious split in the 1840s.⁸² The free produce campaign fell victim to this division, as abolitionists took up policy positions according to whether they defined themselves as for or against the controversial American abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison was committed to 'moral suasion' or non-resistance as a means to end slavery, rejecting political action and attacking the American Constitution as 'pro-slavery'. Some viewed his followers as dangerous extremists because of their alignment with various radical causes, including women's rights, and their association with unconventional religious views.⁸³

In his anti-slavery paper *The Liberator* in 1831, Garrison had written a hearty endorsement of the principle of free labour: 'Once bring free into competition with slave labor and the present system will be speedily overthrown'.⁸⁴ The tactic of ethical consumerism was firmly in the mainstream of abolitionism in America until about 1847, when Garrison launched an attack against the Free Produce Movement as being a distraction from more effective measures to combat slavery. Those who abstained from slave-grown produce, he argued, exhausted themselves trying to secure supplies of free-labour goods. They adopted an offensively self-righteous tone in their publications, and were concerned only with outward style—being fashionably anti-fashion and ostentatiously self-denying. Moreover, they denounced slave produce but accepted goods made by the oppressed industrial working classes.⁸⁵ His son Wendell P. Garrison, writing in 1868, ridiculed the enthusiasts of ethical consumerism, mocking John Woolman's 'Quaker slyness' and 'morbidly sensitive conscience'. 'The free-produce doctrines were never adopted by the Abolitionists as a body', he asserted, calling the champions of the movement 'sentimentalists' who 'flattered themselves that they could escape using the technical fruits of slave labour, [but] they never could escape dependence on oppression in some form or another'.⁸⁷ As his father had done in the 1840s, he controversially claimed for abolitionists the 'right above all others to wear the product of [slaves'] blood and travail'.⁸⁸

Support for the British Free Produce Movement was seriously undermined by the rifts within the United States abolitionist movement. After Anna Richardson assumed its leadership in the late 1840s, she was strongly criticised by British Garrisonians. The Bristol Unitarian John Bishop Estlin of Bristol, for example, wrote in 1852 of his 'duty to oppose' what he called 'Mrs Richardson's slave trade'. 'The Quakers were never more bitter against WLG than they are now', he continued. 'Mrs R as far as we have the means of judging, always fanning the flame of opposition to him (Spite?)'.⁸⁹ He mocked the 'nonsense about freeing the slaves by the quaker ladies giving up the use of dresses made with American cotton'.⁹⁰ Like Garrison, he regarded the Free Produce Movement as an impractical distraction from more important issues; however, the strength of the attacks on Anna Richardson may have had more to do with her allegiance to the anti-Garrisonian BFASS and a fear that her success in building up the Free Produce Movement in the early 1850s was diverting funds from Garrison's campaign. Andrew Paton, writing to Garrison in 1851, reported that the Edinburgh Ladies' Antislavery Society was withholding contributions for the pro-Garrison Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaar, and recommending support for the free labour movement, 'at the instigation of Anna H. Richardson of Newcastle who is related to the Wighams'.⁹¹

Not only were their funds in jeopardy, but there was a real danger that 'star' black abolitionists were being lured away by the opposition. While Henry Highland Garnet and J.C. Pennington were regarded as hostile to Garrison, William Wells Brown was undoubtedly the leading Garrisonian African American abolitionist, so the suggestion that he had shared a platform with Garnet and

Pennington during their tour to promote the Free Produce Movement provoked deep alarm.⁹² Blackett argues that black abolitionists, whose support was sought by all factions, were generally willing to cooperate with anyone who promoted the anti-slavery cause, whatever their own personal allegiance. This explains the shared platform of Pennington and Garnet, who stood on opposite sides in the colonisation debate.⁹³ Harriet Beecher Stowe's advocacy for free produce during her tour of Britain in 1853 was another blow to those who opposed the tactic.⁹⁴ She had stayed at Joseph Sturge's Birmingham home in April that year, where she met Elihu Burritt, who was anxious to harness the anti-slavery feelings aroused by the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the service of the Free Produce Movement. Stowe found Sturge to be 'very confident' about the prospects of bringing about the end of slavery through 'combinations for the encouragement for free in the place of slave grown produce'. She was particularly impressed that although Sturge undoubtedly practiced what he preached, his household nevertheless enjoyed 'abundance and variety of all that is comfortable and desirable'. During the same visit to Britain, Harriet and her husband stayed with members of the Richardson family in Newcastle, and another tract was published in Newcastle to capitalise further on the popularity of Stowe's book: *Who Are the Slaveholders? A Moral Drawn from 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'*.⁹⁵

'ONE OF A THOUSAND CORDS':⁹⁶ AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION
OF ETHICAL CONSUMERISM TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The direct role of ethical consumerism in the fight against slavery was, it is generally agreed, marginal. Its supporters were neither able to 'prove' the economic superiority of free labour, nor did they drive any slave-holders to financial ruin. Although the initial 1790s sugar boycott attracted wide support, long-term voluntary self-denial was unlikely to appeal to the masses, and could only realistically be expected from the conscientious few. An acknowledgement of the difficulty in maintaining interest in abstention, the Free Produce Movement was developed to provide consumers with an ethical alternative to slave-grown produce. However, the movement never enjoyed widespread support, even amongst abolitionists, and there is 'little evidence that slaveholders or their political representatives paid much attention to the movement, or that it had much economic impact on them'.⁹⁷

Throughout its existence, the movement suffered from practical difficulties. There were massive problems sourcing free-labour goods, especially cotton, and even at the height of the Free Produce Movement, in the early 1850s, only a few hundred bales of free-labour cotton were imported into Britain—at a time when imports of raw cotton from the American slave states numbered between 1 and 2 million bales a year.⁹⁸ The movement also proved unable to produce goods whose quality matched slave-made commercial alternatives. East India rice sold by a Manchester merchant was described in 1852 as 'very poor, dark and dirty', and there were problems with contamination of free-labour sugar from poor packing or defective processing.⁹⁹ Not only was there a lack of variety in cloth manufactured with free-labour cotton, but it was more expensive and of a decidedly

inferior quality: 'Free labour calicoes [are] coarser, less durable and more faily than other prints', observed one retailer in America, while the prominent American abolitionist Lucretia Mott wrote:

Unfortunately, free sugar was not always as free from other taints as from that of slavery; and free calicos could seldom be called handsome, even by the most enthusiastic; free umbrellas were hideous to look upon, and free candies, an abomination.¹⁰⁰

The movement also suffered from unscrupulous traders trying to sell goods advertised as free labour under false pretences, making consumers unwilling to trust the labelling.¹⁰¹

There were few financial resources to develop and market free-labour goods, and even Quaker manufacturers were unwilling to risk tying up their capital in products they may not be able to sell, despite efforts to secure firm commitments to buy from their customers.¹⁰² The movement also lacked high-profile leadership. Elihu Burritt and Joseph Sturge lent their energies to the Free Produce Movement at different times, but both were involved in so many other reform activities they were unable to provide consistent support.¹⁰³ The illness of Henry Richardson in 1854, forcing Anna to withdraw from her role as coordinator of the movement, meant the loss of its 'prime propagandists', and although Burritt took over the editorship of *The Slave*, his other interests prevented him from giving it his full attention.¹⁰⁴ Tensions within the anti-slavery movement on either side of the Atlantic also had a negative impact on the movement's chances of success.

However, the tactic of ethical consumerism need not be regarded as an utter failure. Sussman claims that the antislavery abstention movements were 'more culturally important than their immediate political effects' might suggest, citing the way in which the rhetoric employed, conjuring images of bodily fluids and pollution, created a direct relationship between the producer and the consumer and showed how a commodity (sugar) physically connected them.¹⁰⁵ Turley sees the tactic as allowing a link between private motives and public consequences to be asserted in a period when there was anxiety about the perceived dislocation between morality and economic development.¹⁰⁶ It also gave a voice to those excluded from the formal political process, especially women, allowing them a new and crucial place in the political arena.¹⁰⁷ Midgley argues that the 1790s sugar boycott was a vital element in creating an anti-slavery culture with strong female support and deep domestic roots.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, she links the campaign to the development of immediatism, a more radical anti-slavery position than male-dominated tactics which centred on Parliamentary lobbying and petitions, and advocated gradual progress towards emancipation so as not to alienate support. The female stress on private morality, she argues, was aimed at destroying the slave system altogether and rejected the reliance on governmental action of their male counterparts.¹⁰⁹

The tactic also played a vital role in sustaining interest in the anti-slavery movement in Britain, especially after the emancipation of West Indian slaves, when it was part of a national push to gain wider support for American abolitionists.¹¹⁰

'British abolitionists who felt powerless to assist the American anti-slavery movement', explains Billington, 'could demonstrate their continued opposition to slavery by buying free labour cotton goods'.¹¹¹ It is no coincidence that the Newcastle Ladies' Emancipation Society resolved that their 'efforts at the present moment be especially turned to encouraging the consumption of Free-Labour Produce', following a three-year lull in their activities.¹¹² The movement gave British abolitionists the means to express their continued opposition to slavery and was extolled by Burritt's as:

a mode of anti-slavery action in which every man, woman, and child may take a part every day, at every meal, in every article of dress they wear and enjoy... [T]his silent, daily testimony would tend to keep their anti-slavery sentiments active, outspoken, and ever working in their spheres of influence.¹¹³

Abstinence, 'far from being a substitute for any other anti-slavery efforts, would increase their number and variety, and give them all a point and power which they now lack'.¹¹⁴ Nor were the supporters of the campaign mere politically naive idealists. Although total rejection of slave produce may be impossible, ethical consumerism could still have an impact: 'We may not succeed in starving the monster to death, but we may reduce his strength, and render him less formidable'.¹¹⁵ As one amongst a range of tactics, it could only benefit the struggle against slavery:

The Free-Labour effort may be but one of the thousand cords that in the ordering of a superintending Providence, may have its commission to assist in pulling down the monster, Slaver; but that cord is a strong one, and if it could be twisted into ropes of seven-fold strength, and those ropes could be pulled by thousands or tens of thousands of energetic hands, who is to say that the hideous monster, which has stood unblushing for centuries, might not be dragged from his shameless position, and amid the execrations of the whole world, be consigned to speedy and entire destruction!¹¹⁶

The Richardsons also hoped that the revival of the tactic would help to foster unity in the abolitionist movement: 'The time has arrived, the hour is come, when past dissensions should be forgotten and forgiven...[to] merge all differences of opinion as to the merits of this abolitionist, or of that'.¹¹⁷ It should also be remembered that many Friends, especially older, more conservative members, were wary of overt political activity, even through the media of philanthropic organisations. In 1846, for example, Edward Pease of Darlington expressed concern about the 'various meetings now taking place for the advancement of Christian Brotherhood, total abstinence, peace meetings, anti-slavery meetings, Bible meetings'. '[A]ll of which may be said to have the semblance and surface of good in them, and some deeper than that', he continued:

yet my fear is that among my dear junior friends, and some older, there is more of a resting in doing good in this way than in taking up a daily cross to all that is of creaturely activity, in place of pious cooperation with divine grace.¹¹⁸

The emphasis on individual conscience of ethical consumerism could go some way to allay such anxieties and enabled supporters to oppose slavery actively without

becoming embroiled in direct political campaigning.¹¹⁹ Billington sees the Free Produce Movement as 'quietist' and 'part of non-militant abolitionism', and the pamphlets published by Henry and Anna Richardson were able to promote the tactic as 'entirely Christian in its character, thoroughly peaceful in its operation, and strictly just in its moral theory'.¹²⁰ The importance of individual agency in the campaign was powerfully expressed at a Free Labour meeting held in London in May 1857: 'a sweet and powerful incentive to engage in this department of Anti-Slavery action is derived from the Saviour's words: "She hath done what she could."' ¹²¹

CONCLUSION

The British Free Produce Movement, like its American counterpart, was unable to pose a serious challenge to the institution of slavery. Neither the foodstuffs nor the textiles it promoted proved sufficiently attractive to rival slave produce. Its failure can be attributed to a number of factors, including the many practical difficulties in securing adequate, good quality and reasonably priced supplies of free-labour-produced goods. The major obstacles to its developing a higher profile within general abolitionism, however, sprang from strategic, ideological and personal controversies. Anna Richardson's belief that, '[a]nother happy feature of this great movement, is its entire independence of the strife of party', was, unfortunately, unfounded; disagreements within abolitionism on both sides of the Atlantic impeded its viability.¹²² Undoubtedly, it could never be the only, or even the main, tactic in the struggle against slavery; its supporters, however, never claimed that it could. Instead, it was a tool which could be brought forth at strategic moments in the long history of anti-slavery campaigning, to re-energise and re-focus flagging support, so that, in the words of Samuel Rhoads, 'our sympathies would no longer run to waste, but would be perpetually exercised in a wholesome and practical direction'.¹²³ It also provided a means to personalise the connection between slaves in distant countries and the British consumer, making the plight of the former more vivid.

The Free Produce Movement foreshadowed the Fairtrade movement today; indeed, many of the nineteenth-century objections to the Free Produce Movement have been levelled against Fairtrade, including arguments favouring unfettered trade, as well as complaints about quality. Now, as then, members of the Religious Society of Friends are at the forefront of trying to establish fairness in global markets.¹²⁴ By a curious coincidence, the north-east of England has also been in the vanguard of this contemporary form of ethical consumerism, as it was in the mid-nineteenth century; Traidcraft, which has been working in the fair trade area since 1979, was established in, and is still run from, the region.¹²⁵ The question remains, 'Can consumer power change lives?'¹²⁶ Taking the example of coffee, five million people in Africa, Latin America and Asia benefit from the production of products for the Fairtrade market in general, but of the 70 million cups of coffee drunk in Britain daily, only 4.3 million are Fairtrade, a paltry 6% of the total. Despite this, it can be argued that Fairtrade has 'rattled' the 'Big Five'

coffee corporations (Nestle, Kraft, Proctor and Gamble, Sara Lee and Tchibo which together control at least 50% of the global market in coffee) to such an extent that even they are ‘trying to get in on the act [although] the quantities are fatuously small’. ‘[I]t is not the final answer’, acknowledges one supporter, unconsciously echoing earlier free-produce rhetoric, ‘but it is a beginning. It brings the words “fair” and “trade” into the minds of people who wouldn’t get involved in the issue’.¹²⁷

NOTES

* *There’s Death in the Pot!* Newcastle upon Tyne, n.d. Pamphlet supposed to have been written c. 1850 by Anna Henry Richardson of Newcastle upon Tyne. A version of this paper was delivered to the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle upon Tyne on 12 September 2007, as part of the Remembering Slavery 2007 programme in the north-east of England.

1. Nuernberger, R.K., *The Free Produce Movement: A Quaker Protest Against Slavery*, New York: AMS Press, 1942.

2. Rice, C.D., ‘Humanity Sold For Sugar! The British Abolitionist Response to Free Trade in Slave-Grown Sugar’, *The Historical Journal* 13.3 (1970), pp. 402-18; Billington, L., ‘British Humanitarians and American Cotton, 1840-1860’, *American Studies* 11.3 (1978), pp. 313-34.

3. See, for example, Sussman, C., *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender, and British Slavery, 1713-1833*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000; Midgley, C., ‘Sugar Slave Boycotts, Female Activism and the Domestic Base of British Anti-Slavery Culture’, *Slavery and Abolition* 17.3 (1996), pp. 137-62.

4. Glickman, L.B., “‘Buy for the Sake of the Slave’”: Abolitionism and the Origins of American Consumer Activism’, *American Quarterly* 56.4 (2004), pp. 889-912; Wilkinson, E.C., “‘Touch Not, Taste Not, Handle Not’”: The Abolitionist Debate over the Free Produce Movement’, *Columbia Historical Review* 2 (2002), pp. 2-14.

5. Nuernberger, *The Free Produce Movement*, p. 4.

6. Hicks, E., *Observations on the Slavery of the Africans and Their Descendants, and on the use of the Produce of their Labour. Recommended to the Serious Perusal, and Impartial Consideration of the Citizens of the United States of America, and Other Concerned*, New York (1814), pp. 15-16.

7. Quoted in Wilkinson, “‘Touch Not, Taste Not, Handle Not’”, p. 6.

8. Fox, W., *An Address to the People of Great-Britain, on the propriety of Abstaining from West-India Sugar and Rum*, London, 1791, quoted in Nuernberger, *The Free Produce Movement*, p. 10.

9. Quoted in Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties*, p. 15.

10. Clarkson, T., *History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade*, quoted in Garrison, W.P., ‘Free Produce Among the Quakers’, *Atlantic Monthly* 22.132 (1868), p. 487. ‘Humanus’ letter quoted in Midgley, C., ‘Women Anti-Slavery Campaigners, with Special Reference to the North East’, *North-East Labour History Bulletin* 29 (1995), pp. 20-21.

11. Sharp, G., ‘Report on the Parliamentary discussion of the abolition of the slave trade’, London (1795), Du 1/60/8 23: Durham County Records Office [DCRO].

12. Midgley, ‘Sugar Slave Boycotts’, p. 143.

13. Birkett, M., *A Poem on the African Slave Trade: Addressed to her own sex. Part 1* (1792), online: www.brycchancarey.com/slavery/mbc1.htm. Mary Birkett (1774-1817) was the niece of George Harrison, one of the six Quakers who set up the first anti-slave trade committee in England in 1783. The publication of her poem probably coincided with the passage of the 1792 Abolition Bill through the Houses of Parliament, as Part II contains an address to the House of Lords.

14. Midgley, ‘Sugar Slave Boycotts’, p. 144.

15. Midgley, ‘Sugar Slave Boycotts’, p. 142.

16. Mott, J., *Observations on the Education of Children; and Hints to Young People, on the Duties of Civil Life*, York, 1819, p. 32.
17. Lloyd, A., *A Memoir. With Extracts from her Letters*, London: Cayme Press, 1928, pp. 25, 16.
18. Turley, D., *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780–1860*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 31.
19. *The First Report of the Committee of Newcastle upon Tyne Society for promoting the Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions* (Newcastle, 1825).
20. Cutting from *Newcastle Chronicle*, 31[?] December 1791, SANT/PR/05/08/368, Northumberland County Record Office.
21. Smith, A., *Wealth of Nations*, quoted in Drescher, S., *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 21. See Searle, G.R., *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, pp. 48–67, for a fuller discussion of the connection between economic liberalism and the anti-slavery movement.
22. *To the Consumers of Sugar* (24 March 1825), anonymous pamphlet belonging to the Society of Friends, Sunderland (Durham University Library [DUL], Sunderland Friends 1255/10).
23. Searle, *Morality and the Market*, p. 57.
24. Rice, 'Humanity Sold for Sugar!', p. 407.
25. Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery*, p. 129. By 1846, the argument had been lost, with the Sugar Act removing all import duties of foreign-grown sugar, making the influx of slave-grown produce impossible to control by fiscal means. Thus, the 'only course of action left for Sturge and his supporters was personal abstention from slave-grown produce' (Isichei, E., *Victorian Quakers*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 233).
26. Williams, E., *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (1944), p. 175.
27. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, pp. 165–66.
28. Quoted in Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 231.
29. Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, pp. 162, 173.
30. From the report of a visit by Samuel Rhoads of Philadelphia to promote free produce, in which he acknowledged that the anti-slavery movement in Britain needed a new focus if it was to be reinvigorated for the attack on American slavery. *The British Friend*, 10th month, 1847, p. 273.
31. Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery*, pp. 57–59.
32. *Minute Book of the Ladies' Negro Friends and Emancipation Society for Newcastle upon Tyne*, 27th of 2nd month, 1850 (Tyne and Wear Archives Service, 3744/389).
33. Billington, 'British Humanitarians and American Cotton', pp. 320–21.
34. Pumphrey, T., and E.R. Pumphrey, *Henry and Anna Richardson: In Memoriam*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1892, p. 21.
35. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 324.
36. *The British Friend*, 4th month, 1848, p. 105.
37. For a full account of the role of the Richardson family within Newcastle Monthly Meeting at this time, see O'Donnell, E.A., 'Woman's Rights and Woman's Duties: Quaker Women in the Nineteenth Century, with Specific Reference to Newcastle Monthly Meeting of Women Friends', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sunderland, 2000.
38. Pumphrey and Pumphrey, *Henry and Anna Richardson*, p. 11.
39. McFeely, W.S., *Frederick Douglass*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991, pp. 143–44. The Richardsons also purchased the freedom of William Wells Brown in 1854, allowing both Douglass and Brown to return to the United States without fear of re-enslavement.
40. *The Beloved Crime, or, The North and the South at Issue. A Friendly Address to the Americans. Also, Some Remarks on the Duty of Encouraging Free Labour Produce*, n.p.n.d., p. 34.

41. *There's Death in the Pot!*, p. 2.
42. *Conscience versus Cotton; or, the Preference of Free-Labour-Produced*. No. 3, Newcastle upon Tyne, n.d., c. 1851, p. 3.
43. Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment*, p. 199.
44. Richardson, H., *A Revolution of Spindles for the Overthrow of American Slavery*, n.p.n.d. This pamphlet is extensively quoted in *The Beloved Crime*, pp. 38-39. *The Friend*, 6th month, 1849, p. 117, gives an account of a Free Produce meeting at Gracechurch Street on 31 May, presided over by George Richardson, with Elihu Burritt present.
45. See, for example, *The Friend* 8 (April/June 1849), pp. 76, 117.
46. Midgley, 'Women Anti-Slavery Campaigners', pp. 321-22.
47. Biographical information about Pennington from the *Exploring Amistad* website, online: www.academic.sun.ac.za/.../history/msp/bio_penn.htm (accessed 12 October 2007).
48. Garnet's life story is told online: www.africawithin.com/bios/henry_garnet.htm (accessed 12 October 2007).
49. Pickering, P.A., and Tyrell, A., *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League*, London: Leicester University Press, 2000, p. 200. Pickering and Tyrell illustrate how the Anti-Corn Law League had learnt this crucial lesson from the anti-slavery movement.
50. Ladies Minute Book, 15th of 5th month, 1851.
51. Ladies Minute Book, 8th month, 1851. Any profits were to be presented to Mrs Garnet.
52. *Gateshead Observer*, 2 September 1850.
53. *Gateshead Observer*, 28 September 1850. Pennington joined Garnet on the podium for this anti-slavery meeting in Newcastle, presumably after his visit to Scotland as arranged.
54. *Anti-Slave Reporter*, 1 January 1851.
55. *Gateshead Observer*, 2 September 1850.
56. *Conscience versus Cotton*, p. 9.
57. Richardson, Anna H., 'To the Friends of the Slave in Great Britain', in *The British Friend*, 4th month, 1848, p. 103.
58. *The Beloved Crime*, p. 9 (emphasis original).
59. *The Beloved Crime*, pp. 37, 35.
60. *Gateshead Observer*, 7 December 1850.
61. *Conscience versus Cotton*, pp. 5-6. The 13 north-east groups were: Alnwick, Blaydon, Berwick, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, North and South Shields, Sunderland, Stockton and Winlaton.
62. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', pp. 327-29.
63. *The British Friend*, 5th month, 1848, p. 135. From a report of Yearly Meeting in which the proposal to petition Parliament against the introduction of slave-grown sugar was discussed.
64. *The British Friend*, 5th month, 1848, p. 135.
65. *To the Consumers of Sugar*.
66. Cruikshank, R., *John Bull Taking a Clear View of the Negro Slavery Question!!* London: G. Humphrey, 1826, online: <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/campaignforabolition/sources/proslavery/johnbullcartoon/cartoonjbull.html> (accessed 12 October 2007) The alleged hypocrisy of those who promoted East India sugar as part of their anti-slavery activities and yet had a financial interest in its sales is highlighted in Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*. For example, Zachery Macaulay had shares in the East India Company and the prominent Quaker abolitionist James Cropper was the greatest importer of East India sugar into Liverpool. (Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 186).
67. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 232.
68. 'The Effect of Importing Free Labor Sugar the Produce of Foreign Countries and the Exclusion of Slave Labor, as bearing upon the discouragement of Slavery and upon British Trade to the Slave Producing Sugar Countries'. DUL, GRE/B149 (c. 1842).
69. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 231.

70. Speech given in Rochdale, 2 January 1877. From: Bright, J., *Selected Speeches of the Rt. Hon. John Bright M.P. On Public Questions*, introduction by Joseph Sturge (London: J.M.Dent and Co., 1907), online: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1658/50313> (accessed 14 September 2007).

71. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, p. 231.

72. *The British Friend*, 1845, p. 108. The title of his letter was 'Free Trade the Cause of Peace'.

73. Pickering and Tyrell, *The People's Bread*, p. 22.

74. 'The Effect of Importing Free Labor Sugar'.

75. *Newcastle Guardian*, 9 May 1846, p. 3.

76. *Newcastle Guardian*, 9 May 1846, p. 3.

77. Rice, 'Humanity Sold for Sugar!', pp. 403-404.

78. *The British Friend*, 9th month, 1847, p. 235.

79. Pickering and Tyrell, *The People's Bread*, p. 110; Rice, 'Humanity Sold for Sugar!', pp. 406-407.

80. Burritt, E. *Twenty Reasons for Total Abstinence from Slave-Labour Produce*, London (n.d. but post-1852), p. 1.

81. *The British Friend*, 8th month, 1850, pp. 202-203.

82. Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery*, pp. 90, 100.

83. Midgley, 'Women Anti-Slavery Campaigners', p. 24.

84. Quoted in Nuernberger, *The Free Produce Movement*, p. 102.

85. Wilkinson, 'Touch Not, Taste Not, Handle Not', p. 9.

86. Garrison, 'Free Produce Among the Quakers', p. 490.

87. Garrison, 'Free Produce Among the Quakers', pp. 486, 493.

88. Garrison, 'Free Produce Among the Quakers', p. 490.

89. Letter from J.B. Estlin to Maria Weston Chapman, Bristol, December 1852, in Taylor, C. (ed.), *British and American Abolitionists: An Episode in Transatlantic Understanding*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1974, p. 392.

90. Letter from Estlin to Weston, March 1851, in Blackett, R.J.M., *Building an Anti-Slavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983, p. 122.

91. Letter from Andrew Paton to William Lloyd Garrison, Glasgow, 7 February 1851, in Taylor, *British and American Abolitionists*, p. 362. The Edinburgh Wigham family was originally from Coanwood in Northumberland. Jane Wigham had married Edward Richardson, Henry's cousin, in 1830, and lived next door to Henry and Anna. In the late 1840s Jane had been authorised to receive, on behalf of the Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society, contributions to a 'Box of Ladies' work' to be sent to the Anti-Slavery Bazaars in Boston, USA, online: <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/benjaminbeckwigham.html> (accessed 30 October 2007).

92. Blackett, *Building an Anti-Slavery Wall*, p. 127.

93. Blackett, *Building an Anti-Slavery Wall*, p. 43.

94. Stowe, C.E., *Life of Harriet Beech Stowe, Compiled From Her Letters and Journals*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889. Project Gutenberg Ebook #6702 (accessed 10 September 2007).

95. *Who Are the Slaveholders? A moral Drawn from 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', Respectfully Submitted to the Readers of the work*, Newcastle Anti-Slavery Series no. 1, n.d.

96. From an article written in Newcastle upon Tyne, entitled, 'Free-Labour Movement' in *The Friend*, 4th month, 1849, p. 75.

97. Glickman, 'Buy for the Sake of the Slave', pp. 902-903.

98. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 315. He notes that US cotton exports to Britain trebled between 1840 and 1860, and that it was never less than 80% of Britain's raw cotton supply.

99. Nuernberger, *The Free Produce Movement*, pp. 93, 95.

100. Quoted in Nuernberger, *The Free Produce Movement*, pp. 71, 99.
101. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 316.
102. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', pp. 318, 322.
103. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 320.
104. Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery*, p. 79.
105. Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties*, pp. 2, 14, 17.
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111. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 318.
112. Ladies' Minute Book, 27th of 2nd month, 1850.
113. Burrirt, *Twenty Reasons for Total Abstinence from Slave-Labour Produce*, p. 1.
114. Burrirt, *Twenty Reasons for Total Abstinence from Slave-Labour Produce*, p. 1.
115. *The Beloved Crime*, p. 38.
116. *The British Friend*, 4th month, 1849, p. 75. Article written 3rd month, Newcastle upon Tyne.
117. *The Beloved Crime*, p. 23.
118. A.E. Pease (ed.), *The Diaries of Edward Pease*, London, 1907, p. 233.
119. Nuernberger argues that this unifying aspect of the Free Produce Movement was even more significant in the United States, where existing tensions within the Society of Friends had already resulted in divisions in the earlier nineteenth century (p. 4).
120. Billington, 'British Humanitarians', p. 334; *Conscience versus Cotton*, p. 3.
121. *The British Friend*, 7th month, 1857, p. 294.
122. *The British Friend*, 4th month, 1848, p. 103.
123. Anna H. Richardson, 'To the Friends of the Slave in Great Britain', *The British Friend*, 10th month, 1847, p. 273.
124. A questionnaire in May 2006 by the Quaker Fairtrade steering group found that 60% of meetings were committed to, or were willing to be committed to, Fairtrade church status. In addition, many members have been in the forefront of achieving Fairtrade status for their home town or city. *Better World Economics. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Economic Issues Programme*, (Autumn 2007), p. 3, online: http://www.quaker.org.uk/shared_asp_files/GFSR.asp?NodeID=127312 (accessed 3 February 2008).
125. Online: <http://www.traidcraft.co.uk> (accessed 3 February 2008).
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THE PROBLEM OF QUAKER IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The paper constitutes a summary of my attempts, during the past 15 years, to understand contemporary Quakers and Quakerism. The issue on which I focus is the difficulty in representing Quaker identity given the heterogeneity of Quaker belief. During the last decade I have found three approaches useful in analysing this problem. In the first place, I found that Quaker identity is revealed through their talk in and around Meeting. Although each individual friend has a unique biographical trajectory, this talk tends to be both storied and thematic. Furthermore, such narrative discourse is coloured by one particularly pervasive character of canonic Quakerism: the plain. Quakers have always preferred the plain to the embellished or ornamented—both in their theology, their speech and in their material culture. I extend my earlier work on plaining here by reference to the work of Webb Keane and Bruno Latour. Third, and finally, I describe how the work of Pierre Bourdieu and especially his work on habitus and practice theory has contributed to the way in which I understand the enduring character of the Quaker Meeting.

KEYWORDS

Quakerism; narrative; identity; plaining

INTRODUCTION

‘What is a Quaker?’ This is the apparently simple question that I have been trying to answer for over a decade. It is a question which I believe requires a multi-perspectival approach. Quakerism is a subtle and complex process, one that cannot be determined either by individual or social agency. Furthermore, I assume from the outset that in order to understand Quakerism it is necessary to understand Quaker faith *and* practice and this is only possible in terms of the individuality of particular Quakers. As Tony Cohen avers in a different context, how can we possibly understand the social (Quakerism) if we make no effort to understand the individual (Quaker) (Cohen 1994)? How, indeed?

The issue of Quaker identity is problematic in two senses. On the one hand it would appear to be a problem, a *practical* problem one might say, for Quakers themselves. This is so because of the heterogeneity of Quaker belief. Indeed,

Quakers seem often to see the problem as a solution or in any case as a cause for celebration (Dandelion 1996). It is a celebration with distinctly postmodern overtones in that a creedless Quakerism allows considerable scope for variation in belief and practice. With its explicit avowal of the importance of individuality, Quakerism would seem to be a religion for today. Quaker identity is, furthermore, sociologically problematic. Given that the Religious Society of Friends has sustained its identity for 350 years, how has this been possible? How can a voluntary organisation like the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) sustain a coherent identity without charter or creed—without an overt, unifying ideology? In this article I revisit three perspectives that I have myself developed during the past ten years or so: ‘narrative’, ‘plaining’ and ‘habitus’. Together, these quite different means of interpretation when brought together result in a synergy that helps us further understand Quaker identity and may illuminate religious identity more generally.

MEETING NARRATIVES

During ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in a Quaker Meeting in the north of England (given the pseudonym ‘Dibdenshaw’) I was struck, at first, by the irony of the sheer quantity of talk at Meeting. I later described this talk in typically anthropological terms, as a tripartite event comprising a ‘before’, a ‘during’ and an ‘after’, each relating to the ‘fixed point’ of worship itself (Collins 1994). The quantity of talk was both intriguing and, from a fieldworker’s point of view, alarming. How to make sense of it? After many months of fieldwork, it was clear that the talk was neither heterogeneous (i.e. not entirely random) nor homogeneous (i.e. determined by some narrow purpose, e.g. spiritual development). The idea eventually dawned on me that that the talk was purposeful and orderly: the Meeting was, I found, alive (and enlivened) with stories. I argued for the first time (Collins 1994) that however else one might characterise the Quaker Meeting, narrative is at least partially constitutive of it. In other words, without stories the Quaker Meeting (and necessarily therefore, Quakerism) is nothing. I sketched out nine ‘threads’ (it is interesting how often the metaphor of weaving is used in presenting narrative analyses). However, I further noticed that while talk tended to be about straightforwardly substantive topics (music, Meeting, ‘business’, football, gardening, family, travel, and so forth) they could be more interestingly characterised in terms of certain tensions: inward/outward, inclusive/exclusive, sacred/profane, faith/practice, unity/diversity, individuality/corporate, tradition/change, equality/hierarchy, unity/diversity (Collins 1994: 416). All talk, I argued, could be characterised as an exploration or attempt to resolve these tensions. I argue, further, that these particular tensions have characterised Quaker faith and practice since the beginning of the movement in the 1650s. Although talk may have varied as to precise subject matter, Quakers have *always* been talking these tensions and it is that, above all else, which determines their identity as Quakers. Quakers are less interested in resolving these tensions than they are in exploring them—they constitute what is centrally important to Quakers as Quakers. At the

time I imagined that I was mapping the foundations of Quakerism but realise now that this, despite its analytical 'looseness', is still too deterministic. My theory was that all religions might be characterised by the 'tensions' their talk exposed. This may be true but would take considerable comparative work to prove.

In my first published paper (1996a) I attempted to develop further the idea that Meeting is constituted primarily in and through narrative. Although I discovered that the Quaker Meeting could be modelled in a variety of more or less fruitful ways, narrative seemed increasingly to be that which bore the greatest verisimilitude to Meeting as I experienced it as a participant observer. Developed as a strategy for understanding texts in literary criticism, narrative analysis had become, during the 1980s and 1990s, an increasingly widely used means of social analysis; for instance, in sociology (Franzosi 1998), history (White 1987), psychology (Sarbin 1986), psychiatry and psychotherapy (Spence 1983; Schaefer 1992), law (Jackson 1990), political theory (Roberts 2004), economics (McCloskey 1990) and organisation theory (Roe 1994). One characteristic shared by these disciplines, however, is their focus on written texts. In each case, it was a matter of merely applying a mode of analysis common in interpreting novels to other forms of printed texts. Extending this mode of analysis to talk was a relatively straightforward second step to take.

Indeed, in my initial analysis I took what can now be seen as a rather conservative view of narrative form, placing it entirely in talk, conversation and spoken dialogue. As I continued to rake through my fieldwork notes, I saw that narrative threads were sustained through the material culture of the Meeting House. I realise that this is not, at first, at all easy to understand and that empirical examples are more likely to convince. For example, the narrative 'pacifism' was communicated not only through discussions of the annual peace vigil and related issues, but also through the peace vigil itself, in which 'pacifism' as discourse was embodied by those Quakers who processed from the Meeting House to the steps of the town hall where they lined up alongside one another and behind banners. I might add here (after Cohen 1986) that this was indeed a vernacular narrative as it presented itself to onlookers and also to those in the procession—in the case of the latter, in particular, there were just as many prototypical narratives as there were individuals—in other words, there is demonstrated an external homogeneity (the message of pacifism) and simultaneously, an internal heterogeneity—though some individual narratives would be bound to overlap. The story of pacifism was further narrated through posters around the Meeting House (one including a quote from Martin Luther King) and from leaflets and flyers deriving from organisations like QPS (Quaker Peace and Service), CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade). I have already written in rather more detail about the pacifism narrative as developed during the weeks preceding Remembrance Sunday—indicating how the three narrative levels come together, both substantively and analytically (Collins 2003: 257–58). Each of these elements contributes, constructs, reconstructs the narrative 'pacifism'—a single instantiation can be plotted on the model, indicating the extent to which it is individual, vernacular or canonic.

These narratives, spun with varying degrees of vigour and creativity by all participants in Meeting, were not, however, 'free-floating'. They were threads which no sooner spun were woven into the social fabric of the Meeting and of Quakerism more generally. They are woven (either by the narrator or audience, and most often by both) into the fabric of Quakerism, into the testimonies—those fundamental narratives which are grounded in the faith and practice of the first Quakers and rehearsed in innumerable ways since then throughout the Quaker movement. I became increasingly interested in what appeared to be different 'levels' of narrative. Clearly the stories I heard were presented by individuals, either alone, or in consort—family members, for instance, might present an almost choral performance telling of a holiday in Spain. Then there were those stories which seemed already to exist, or rather which formed an existing context into which the narratives of individuals were embedded. These contexts were, I argue, of two kinds—the local and the national—although I feel it is rather misleading to base them on crude spatial co-ordinates. This is the primary reason for calling them 'vernacular' and 'canonic' in that these terms speak more of 'reach', 'status', 'authority' and 'power'. Local or vernacular narratives include 'Oak House' (a Quaker nursing home situated not far from the Meeting House), 'the old Meeting House' (out of which the Meeting moved in the 1960s), 'Meeting history' and so forth. National or canonic narratives coincide approximately with the 'testimonies'—a moral code including 'pacifism' and 'social justice', for example. These narratives are codified in texts legitimated by the group as a whole. I have outlined the ways in which these stories (and 'story levels') are articulated—and would argue that they have been, and indeed are, brought together under one religio-moral roof—an important issue which I return to below.

Although I suggested earlier that Quaker narratives might be understood in terms of their 'distribution', it took me some time to work out how to plot these 'levels'. I came eventually to plot Quaker discourse within a space bounded by three points, each representing a 'level' of discourse: the canonic, the vernacular and the prototypical (or individual). This model was helpful in that it pointed to a means of transcending the individual/social dichotomy which has always plagued sociology and anthropology. In this model, each narrative spun by an individual Quaker is always and already a part of a vernacular and canonic narrative (Collins (2002a, 2003, 2004). The point in this triangular space at which a narrative is plotted is inevitably approximate, and indeed different agents might plot each narrative differently. In any case, each narrative is necessarily prototypical, vernacular and canonic—and what is more, has in every case the potential to become more or less any of these. At the same time, it is true that the model is misleadingly static. It is the work carried out constantly by Quakers that provides for and ensures the vernacular and canonic character of the narratives generated by individuals.

Let me provide an ethnographic example. An established Quaker testimony related to the 'right use' of the world's resources: this is a canonic narrative. One way in which this is so is its presentation and development in the text *Quaker Faith and Practice* (QFP). Crucially, then, this means that the discourse of 'sustain-

ability' is a component part of *QFP*. It has been legitimated (given authority) at Yearly Meeting, that is, at the highest tier of Quaker decision making, and is therefore incorporated into *QFP* which commits to writing what might be seen as 'essential Quakerism'. The text, substantially revised every 25 years or so, comprises texts extracted from a variety of Quaker sources, including minuted decisions and comments recorded during Business Meetings, passages from the writing of individual Friends and so forth. *QFP* is distributed both to Quaker Meetings and to individuals—most often when they are accepted into membership. In the current edition, Chapter 25 is entitled 'Unity of Creation' and deals especially with environment or 'green' concerns. For instance, the first extract is from the works of John Woolman (a noted eighteenth-century Quaker), who wrote in 1772: 'The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an inquiry to the succeeding age' (*QFP* 1995: 25.01).

During the course of my fieldwork, discourse relating to the right use of resources (green issues) was being generated through a number of initiatives. For instance, several Friends persuaded the Meeting to establish a 'wild garden' at the rear of the Meeting House. This involved a good deal of discussion both within and outwith formal Business Meetings. Reference was made both to Quaker testimonies (primarily as presented in *QFP*) and also to local agencies involved in sustainability issues. Before very long, an idea mooted by an individual participant had become a local or vernacular narrative. Further threads woven into this narrative was the decision to replace all bulbs in the Meeting house with 'long-life' bulbs which, it was agreed, were less objectionable than the existing high-wattage bulbs. During the same period, reports were given to preparative Meeting relating to green issues discussed at various Quaker Meetings, conferences and workshops. In this way, the individual's stories and those of the Quaker movement as a whole are mediated (and sometimes metamorphosed) by the Meeting, that is, at the level of the vernacular.

PLAINING: FROM PRODUCT TO PROCESS

Although I believe that the creation and exchange of stories is a key element of Quaker faith and practice, I suspect that there is something more, something which patterns these narrative threads so that each derives from and contributes to the more or less coherent discourse called Quakerism. The pattern is 'plain'. Quakers have always exhorted one another to be 'plain' and others have often characterised Quakerism in terms of the plain. Indeed, the proscriptions multiplied to such an extent in the late seventeenth century as to stir Margaret Fell/Fox to rail against the whole shebang. And, certainly, the plain (or simple) is well represented in the key canonic text. For instance, the 41st of the current *Advices and Queries*:

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep

yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment? (*QFP* 1995)

Let us focus on the first sentence, which urges the reader to ‘Try and live simply’. Clearly, this calls for an extraordinary interpretive effort on the part of individual Quakers, given the steady growth of consumer capitalism at least since 1900. The question is whether it is possible in any absolute sense to live simply in the Britain of the twenty-first century. Is it possible, nowadays, engulfed as we are by consumer culture, to make consistent choices between the plain and not plain any more: do we have the cognitive powers to make the millions of choices necessary to fulfil properly our obligation to ‘live simply’? There seems little doubt that early Friends believed they were up to the task—with a little help from their Friends. It must have been a help to individuals to be told which commodities could be acquired without blighting one’s attempt to live the simple life. Even so, predominantly middle-class Quakers were left to make innumerable choices. Up until now, it seems that we are clearly dealing with particular products—with individual items (from coats with cross-pockets to umbrellas, from the use of certain pronouns to playing the flute) that are deemed ‘prohibited’!

This is a claim built on empirical grounds and is hardly controversial. The common-sense view would have it that the world comprises two types of thing: the plain and the not-plain. This resolutely objectivist view holds that it is the world (comprising complete and clearly delineated ‘things’) that imposes itself on the individual. There is a disturbing inevitability about characterising Quakers in this way. One becomes a Quaker and is then taught or told which bits of the world are plain and therefore acceptable. In this view, Quakers are almost entirely passive individuals, except that they need to identify and set aside those things which are intrinsically ‘not-plain’. The corporate character of Quakerism must once have been of practical help here, at least up until the mid-nineteenth century. There then came a point at which Business Meetings could no longer name the not-plain on a case-by-case basis: is gaslight plain or not? And what about bicycles, automobiles, patios, aubergines and cameras? Given the rapid increase in the number and variety of consumer goods, naming the not-plain on a one-by-one basis became an impossible task.

After the mid-nineteenth century, what had been implicit was necessarily made explicit: the centrality of ‘the plain’ to Quaker faith and practice gave rise to the associated *process*, that is, *plaining*. Plaining is a learned and cognitive tendency to classify the world in terms of the distinction plain/not-plain. Quakers, as they mature, become more or less conscious of practising such discrimination. I remember a long conversation between Friends after one Meeting for Worship in 2003 which was explicitly about the pros and cons of various cars. I have time here only to note that the comments could only be understood in the context of the Quaker tendency to plain. The fact that each Friend involved in the conversation preferred a different car in no way weakens my argument: plaining is a process which enables Quakers to justify the choices they make. For instance, a commodity which might seem far from plain to one Friend can be justified as

plain in terms of its good safety record, because of the savings it will generate in the long run or because of the employment its manufacture provides. The criteria used to define the plain or not-plain are neither fixed nor essential. There is nothing necessary about, or inherent in, those things which are perceived to be plain. Things are constructed as plain by Friends.

I have tried to show the relevance of this idea to our understanding of Quaker identity in two ways—by giving empirical examples, that is, by presenting examples of plaining in action as it were; and by showing how Quaker plaining meshes with processes that have been identified as more all-embracing. I will present three examples of theories which seem to lend plausibility to my idea of plaining, two of which (the work of Peter Auksi and Wolfgang Welsch) I have presented before (2001), while the third (drawing on the work of Bruno Latour and Webb Keane) is presented here for the first time.

It was something of a revelation to come across Peter Auksi's brilliant *Christian Plain Style: The Evolution of a Spiritual Ideal* (Auksi 1995). In this book, Auksi places 'the plain' in its historical context, arguing that the plain and not-plain (elaborate, ornamented) have been implicated in struggles between people ever since the Ancient Greeks, and especially in religious disputes. Auksi supports my claim that 'the plain' is more usefully reconstituted as a process, that the term is better conceived as a verb rather than a noun.

A second connection with modern social theory occurs at the point at which we realise that plaining is not merely a pragmatic response to the complexity of modern life but can also be regarded as spiritual, moral and ethical. Furthermore, plaining provides a singular opportunity for Quakers to stand in the vanguard of those who are able to critique one of the more damaging consequences of modernity: aestheticisation (Collins 2001). Aestheticisation is the glossing of our environment with the thinnest veneer of 'the beautiful'—a gloss so pervasive that the German philosopher Welsch has argued that it blinds us to the difference between the beautiful and the ugly (and probably between 'the good' and 'the bad') (1997). I argue that the propensity to plain might provide Quakers with the means to see through this process and avoid the an-aestheticization that is its harmful result.

I shall go on, now, to introduce a third contextualisation. The French sociologist, Bruno Latour, argues that the term 'modern' (used to describe life in the West since around 1750) designates two very different sorts of practice: first, *translation* creates mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture; second, the set of practices he calls *purification* creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: human beings on the one hand and nonhumans on the other (1993). Purification and translation, so long as they are kept separate, define what it is to be modern. In this section I draw out the parallels between what Latour calls purification and what I call plaining.

Webb Keane, an American anthropologist, argues that a key question that we moderns have had to consider is 'What beings have agency?' (2007), a question which can only be answered by sorting out the proper relations among words, things and subjects. This sorting out is fraught with moral implications and

involves the work of purification. The paradigmatic case is the antiritualism of Reformation Protestantism, though such reform movements have taken place in all major world religions. Such reformers aim to purify religion by replacing ritual with beliefs and the resulting reforms are identified with modernity itself. Several groups helped to complete the Protestant Reformation through their explicit rejection of ritual (or liturgy). Quakers purified the practice of worship through denying the possibility of the eucharist and of the sacraments in general. It was primarily the fetishistic elements of the eucharist, the principle of 'real presence' or transubstantiation, which Friends objected to: material things (Kantian 'things-in-themselves') are just that, *they cannot also be God*, no matter how this is couched, theologically. Things cannot be agents and it is the possibility of this (awful) misconception that drove some protestants, Zwinglians and Salvationists as well as Quakers, to deny the capacity of things to bear the weight of the sacred. In Quakerism, ritual is replaced, from the outset, primarily by practice ('let your lives speak').

Keane goes on to make two important points: first, that the assertion of purification can never be entirely successful. He refers to Latour, who observes that even while moderns are trying to separate things, hybrids are proliferating, things that mix nature and culture, things and humans: psychotropic drugs, hybrid corn and frozen embryos, for example. But Latour tells us little about why this is happening. Keane suggests that both the ubiquity of so-called hybrids and the sense of scandal they can generate have sources beyond the history of science and technology and can be traced, ultimately, to the religious sphere. Signs terminate in things after all. The materiality of semiotic form cannot be entirely eradicated and to the extent to which it mediates even inner subjectivity, it renders full purification impossible. Things endure and plaining requires such things in order to make them symbols of less material qualities.

Keane's second point is that there is a significant moral element to Latour's characterisation of modernity, specifically, that purification is driven by 'the sense that there is something scandalous or threatening about the mixing of humans and things, culture and nature' (Keane 2007: 23). Modernity, he argues, is often represented as the outcome of a story of moral redemption (as in Quaker plaining). Latour, in focusing on the role of science in the creation of modernity, largely ignores (according to Keane) the significance of religion by assuming that it is just one more thing affected by purification. God, he observes, is eliminated from the public scene and exiled to the individual's heart ('the light within' in Quaker terms). Keane argues that if we place the work of purification within the context of the Reformation attack on certain aspects of semiotic form (of Catholic faith and practice, for example), we may recognise a major source of its moral impetus. It is not only the sociologist and anthropologist who position themselves where roles, actions and abilities are distributed, those that make it possible to define one entity as animal or material and another as a free and conscious agent—this is also the task of the religious reformer, of George Fox and his proseletyzing supporters, for example, who, perceiving themselves as standing on the religious frontier, set about making these distinctions. In doing so, they make

some of the core assumptions of their Euro-American world visible and reveal some of the moral imperatives and anxieties these entail. And in struggling with the proper place of objects in the lives of individuals, with the possibilities and limits of human agency and with what is ethically acceptable, or even simply believable, they take on problems which lie at the heart of modernity.

At the time of the Reformation, if words were bodily forms for meanings, they were nonetheless superior to nonlinguistic forms—ritual, for instance. It became a major issue to understand the nature of words and their distinction from concepts and from things. However, in considering the Quaker case we must further consider the belief that there is that which is beyond words. The proper treatment of language called for purification, which in the Quaker case meant its eradication—at least up to a point. Language cannot be suppressed entirely and in Quaker liturgy (for there are vestiges of liturgy remaining) language forces its way back in through spoken ministry. Here we glimpse, at very close range, the parallels between what I call plaining and what Keane (after Latour) calls purification.

However, the Reformation churches had the creed, a paradigm for subjective agency. By taking the textual form, the creed makes religion highly portable across contexts (it relies far less on material context). Although Quakers eschewed creeds, they generated other forms of textualisation, including minutes of Business Meeting, advices and queries and testimonies. The point is, however, that Quakers, like other contemporary believers, opted for codification (Collins 2002d). Whereas Keane talks of the ‘creed paradigm’, we may talk of ‘the codification paradigm’—which is, in the same way, a part of the purification process identified by Latour. But the work of purification goes well beyond the content of doctrines. Creeds, or if we wish to include Quakerism here, codification, make beliefs available in the foreground. To put it bluntly, codification (along with socialisation) serves to operationalise belief.

The view accorded to transcendence in traditions like Calvinism encouraged efforts at abstraction, to play the materiality of semiotic form in order to arrive at a disembodied spirit, a pure idea or an unsullied faith. This goal, however, cannot reproduce itself without generating new semiotic forms. Latour says that the work of purification inadvertently produces new hybrids. But why should that be? Well, once semiotic forms are introduced into a social world, they become available as materials for experience on which further work is carried out. They can become objects of reflection, sources of disciplinary practice, points of contention or sources of anxiety. In ‘doing away with’ the material aspects of religion, the reformers could not help but produce new forms—creeds, sermons, hymns, houses of worship—even clerical garb. Such forms could never be fully confined to their original contexts or definitively subordinated to their ‘true’ immaterial meanings. They risked being fetishised, producing new hybrids. So, while purification contributed to the creation of the modern world, it can never, as Latour argues, entirely succeed. The impossibility of attaining complete purification lies precisely in the materiality of semiotic form—note the continual attempts to achieve religious purification by the religions ‘of the book’. The efforts of reformers, such as Fox, to ‘strip away superstitions, instrumental reason, idolatry,

and fetishism' (Keane 2007) are justified in the name of greater spirituality on the part of individuals. Even the most mystical of religions are bound to involve some semiotic medium; in the case of Quakerism, the very denial of words begins as a response to words and includes various ways of displaying that denial. Semiotic form requires material instantiation and even though purification can never fully succeed, it continues to appear. This helps us understand why plaining is necessarily a process—it is a project than can never reach completion.

MEETING/HABITUS

Quaker identity is learned and the learning process continues for as long as the individual wishes it to. Some are, of course, more eager and diligent learners than others. Having convinced at least myself that it was the economy of narrative grounded in an obligation to plain that best characterised Quakers and Quakerism, I began to wonder increasingly about the details, and especially the details relating to the social processes through which these things are learned. In recent years, the term 'socialization' has fallen out of favour among sociologists. The reason for this, most probably, is the rise and rise of Bourdieu's influence on the discipline. In elaborating his theory of practice, Bourdieu wrote prolifically on a wide variety of subjects (education, elites, photography, TV, suffering, art, social stratification—to name just a few) but in doing so always drew on the same small group of analytical constructs or 'tools' as he preferred to call them: habitus, practice, capital and doxa. Habitus is not easy to define, and Bourdieu's often dense, sometimes obtuse, prose does not help. He explores the idea in considerable detail in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). Here he writes :

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus (Bourdieu 1977: 78).

Given that Bourdieu specifically endows the habitus (and not the individual) with agency, those who criticize the concept for its determinism would seem to have a point. His attempt to transcend unhelpful dichotomies which have stymied progress in social theory, such as those generally abbreviated as objective/subjective and agency/structure, ultimately fails. However, there is much in his development of the notion of habitus which is thought-provoking and helpful. Probably the most significant strength of the habitus as a means of representing the process of socialisation is the fact that it is embodied, and that Bourdieu, himself, paid a great deal of attention to this particular characteristic. Secondly, the habitus is clearly established partly through interactions with the (built) environment. In relation to the Quaker Meeting and its participants these are extremely useful insights. In relation to Meeting for Worship, the epitome of what Dandelion (1996) economically calls 'Quaker time', both body and environment play a significant part, in both the generation of stories and in acts of plaining. This mode of analysis

(focusing on the habitus) confirms my earlier argument underlining the role of nondiscursive interaction in and around the Meeting House. One's habitus is itself embodied (one carries it around in one's head, as it were), but is embodied in a more complete and convincing sense: Bourdieu introduces a second term *hexis* to fix this aspect of embodiment. In the following passage he relates the embodiment of the habitus directly to socialisation:

The child imitates not 'models' but other people's actions. Body *hexis* speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, because linked to a whole subsystem of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values: in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eye, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult—a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience (Bourdieu 1977: 87).

Let me comment on this extremely provocative account. First, much of this rings true in relation to my fieldwork among Quakers. I would substitute 'newcomers' (or some such term) for children in that everyone new to Meeting embarks on what is colloquially known as a 'steep learning curve'. Although, it is possible that *hexis* may on occasion be a motor function purely and simply, that need not always be the case. It is apparent in Meeting for Worship that participants observe one another, sometimes cautiously but on other occasions boldly—children may jump down from their chair, walk across to another (adult) participant and stare at them, quite unselfconsciously. Which raises another point—the degree to which *hexis* is assimilated consciously. During Meeting for Worship, Quakers sit in a circle—the chairs or benches prearranged thus. *Hexis* (orientation of body in this case) is 'given' and is adopted largely unconsciously by all but newcomers. My field-notes suggest that the process cannot be entirely unconscious at least. It is possible for a participant to be 'disciplined' (spoken to by another, usually senior, Member) if they transgress the norms of behaviour during Meeting for Worship. Having said that, it is equally possible that one's posture in Meeting, after attending for several years say, may well be adopted unconsciously on each occasion. The point is that I think we must at least allow for the possibility of the conscious assimilation of *hexis* by Quakers in Meeting. Clearly, *hexis* is a means of not only representing but of constructing one's identity whether as a Quaker, a Sikh, Muslim or Shaker. In each case, the bodily disposition of the adept (at least during worship) speaks of one's belongingness to this or that community.

An interesting coda to this argument relates to Dandelion's interesting argument that the unity of Quakerism depends not so much on an overt, unifying theology but on a behavioural creed. It is an argument that chimes strongly with Bourdieu's idea of an embodied habitus. Dandelion is quite correct in pointing out that Quakers appear to be doing the same thing (in Meeting for Worship) so long as he acknowledges that participants in Meeting are *not* doing the same thing, and perhaps not even the same kind of thing. Participants in Meeting for Worship

at Dibdenshaw claimed to be praying, worrying, drawing up shopping lists, reading, breathing evenly, meditating, puzzling things out and so on. Whatever can be said about them, they are not doing the same thing, despite appearances to the contrary. Dandelion's own fieldwork bears this out (see, for example, Dandelion 1996, 111; see also the booklet produced by Newcastle Meeting in 1998).

Bourdieu establishes a close link between the embodiment of habitus and the built environment:

But it is in the dialectical relationship between the body and a space structured according to the mythico-religious oppositions that one finds the form par excellence of the structural apprenticeship which leads to the em-bodying of the world (1977: 89).

The extent and depth of socialisation processes would be far greater in the case of the Kabyle among whom Bourdieu conducted fieldwork; however, the processes described by Bourdieu are present in the Quaker case though less explicit. Practically speaking, the Quaker habitus is at its most overt on Sunday mornings. And although Quakers remain Quakers when they leave the Meeting House, the habitus is reduced: they may be the only Quaker in their family, they may work in a place where membership of any religious group is derided. Historically, however, the Quaker habitus would probably have been as all-embracing and homogeneous at the Kabyle during the first 150 years of the movement.

I have written a good deal on the topic of the Meeting House and I do not intend to repeat those arguments and observations here (Coleman and Collins 1996, 2006; Collins 1996a, 2006). I have tried to show how the narratives of Meeting are manifested in the very fabric and furnishings of the Meeting House itself—as I have already argued briefly above. The Meeting House concretises the identity of Quakers. Habitus, as presented by Bourdieu, manifests both strengths and weaknesses when applied to actually existing communities but it is far too monolithic to account entirely for individual identity in the twenty-first century (Collins 2008a).

CONCLUDING REMARKS: UNDERSTANDING QUAKER IDENTITY

In Dandelion's terms (Dandelion 2008), plaining, habitus, narrative or heterotopia, for that matter (Pilgrim 2008) may be relatively stable tropes manifested by Quakers across the centuries and I believe that there is plenty of evidence to suggest that they are. However, the point I wish to emphasise here is that there can be no single overarching interpretation by which we can come to understand Quaker identity. The research undertaken by Simon Best (Best 2008) on adolescent Quakers and by Giselle Vincett on 'Quagans (Vincett 2008) is of particular interest here. The practice of adolescent Friends and Quaker Pagans seems in various ways to confound any attempt to generalise about Quakers. Understanding or even describing the identity of individuals in the first years of the twenty-first century is a difficult, perhaps impossible task. Nevertheless, this is the project in which I have primarily engaged during the last decade. It just so happens that in

my case, it was the Quaker Meeting and its participants that sparked this interest and which provides my starting point for each new excursion into identity. Quaker identity is sustained primarily through the generation and regeneration of stories, primarily in and around the Meeting House but also elsewhere: these stories, it should be remembered, are presented not only through the spoken and written word, but through many other media: the body, the built environment, clothing and other consumables, leisure pursuits and so on. It is just *this* concatenation of stories which comprise the Quaker Meeting and which lends an individual their Quaker identity, their Quaker self. While Quakers live in the world and interact both with those who are Quakers and those who are not Quakers, this does not mean that Quaker narratives are suspended away from the Meeting. However, when presented they are more implicit than they once were and are therefore far less likely, nowadays, to be acknowledged and regenerated, restored, rejuvenated, revitalised. In the seventeenth century, Friends manifested Quakerism very explicitly; to wear the Quaker grey, to eschew the standard greetings, to refuse to doff one's hat, to thee and thou everyone one met regardless of their social status, was to allude to narratives which were widely recognised, and more often than not, condemned. The response of the non-Quaker, though sometimes violent, was often equally overt and necessarily served to regenerate those narratives. Nowadays, religious faith and practice is primarily private: the stories that are woven are primarily for the consumption of the group itself, and are legitimated by further stories, by those drawn from the canon, which are, of course, also generated from within the group. Whatever the advantages and disadvantages of this process are for Quakers, fewer and fewer people find it fulfilling, and membership has been in decline since the 1960s. Meeting narratives have always been, at least to some extent, interwoven with those threads spun in the context of wider society. Writing both as social scientist and Quaker, I believe that it will be this process which, if sustained, may yet revitalise what remains an extraordinary group.

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QUAGANS: FUSING QUAKERISM WITH CONTEMPORARY PAGANISM

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ABSTRACT

Quaker Pagans are a relatively new phenomenon. Since no detailed description of the spirituality of Quaker Pagans has yet been done, to make a modest beginning this paper situates Quaker Pagans within the contexts of British Quakerism and contemporary paganism. It extends Pink Dandelion's concept of a 'behavioural creed' (1996) by arguing that Quaker Pagans have a 'practical belief' system and a performative theology, and outlines how Quaker Pagans hold together their dual religious identity. Building upon Peter Collins' (2008) work on Quaker narratives, the paper looks particularly at the way in which Quaker Pagans utilise story and metaphor. Finally, it draws parallels between the emphasis on experiential seeking in both Quaker and Pagan ritual.

KEYWORDS

Quaker Pagans; paganism; religious identity; belief system; narratives; ritual

There is a vital and growing practice of Quaker Pagans made up of Pagans of various traditions who have found a second home within the Religious Society of Friends, and of Quakers who have found the same within the Pagan movement. Because those who are drawn to Quaker Paganism tend to be drawn to simplicity and silence in their spiritual practices, their presence in both the Pagan and Quaker community can be overlooked (Cat Chapin-Bishop, www.quakerpagan.org, accessed 20 July 2006).¹

INTRODUCTION

The Quaker dislike of creeds and formal doctrine has opened the door, in the Liberal Quaker tradition (both in North America and in Britain), to the fusing of contemporary paganism with Quakerism. Though there are no formal statistics, my own research based upon interviews and observation of web-based resources is that Quaker Pagans or *Quagans*,² as they sometimes (tongue-in-cheek) call themselves, are a growing phenomenon. In this paper I situate Quaker Pagans in

the context of British Quakerism and contemporary paganism,³ I extend Pink Dandelion's theory of a Quaker 'behavioural creed' (1996), and I outline how my Quaker Pagan informants creatively hold together their two religious identities, particularly looking at the Quagan use of story, metaphor, and ritual.

My research is based upon 50 semi-structured interviews with Christian and pagan women (specifically, Goddess Feminists⁴), as well as participant observation of two ritual groups (one Christian, one Goddess Feminist), participant observation of feminist Christian and Goddess activities (conferences, festivals, and public rituals), and monitoring of the literatures associated with both these groups (insider generated and academic). Participants were scattered throughout England, Wales, and the Isle of Man.⁵ During interviews and fieldwork it became clear that the Christian and pagan groups were not discrete and that there was a significant portion of participants who to a greater or lesser degree straddled the boundaries between groups.⁶ This group of people I call *Fusers*, and I subdivide them into *Fusers proper* and *Quagans*. This paper will deal solely with my Quagan findings. I interviewed four Quaker Pagans, and observed two Quaker Pagan email lists and several Quagan blogs.⁷ The Quaker Pagans whom I interviewed were white women in their mid-40s to 60s with middle-class backgrounds; as such, they fall into a category of people who, whilst they are disaffected by traditional religion, are searching for spirituality and meaning, a category predominately female (Berger *et al.* 1974; Roof 1993; Heelas *et al.* 2005).⁸

QUAGAN PROFILE

Gay Pilgrim has written of three different types of British Quaker: Exclusivists, Inclusivists, and Syncretists (2003, 2004, 2008). Pilgrim's description of Quaker Syncretists loosely fits Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead's description of self or holistic spiritualities (Heelas *et al.* 2005). She writes that Syncretists have a 'personal spiritual quest', are disconnected from 'traditional sources of meaning', 'sceptical about fixed systems of belief', and 'seek and value comfort, healing and hope' (2003: 153).⁹ Whilst my Quagan participants tended to seek these qualities, they were also emphatic that their Goddess Feminism was not 'just sweetness and light', but a spirituality that 'recognises the dark and the painful' (Elise).¹⁰ Further, participants emphasised that Goddess Feminism was for them 'quite solid and grounded, and hard work, but very inspiring as well' (Alison).

The emphasis Pilgrim finds on 'healing' amongst Syncretists may partly be attributable to gender.¹¹ Susan Starr Sered found in her study of women's religions that healing was a key theme (1994). Linda Woodhead argues that women in holistic spiritualities search for healing as both a way of helping them cope with the stresses of life and in particular, the 'second shift' which many women find themselves working,¹² and as reflective of women's emphasis on relationality (healing always being part of the greater wholes of body, mind and spirit, *and* community and world) (2008). For example, consider what Alison said of what the goddess Aphrodite means to her. Aphrodite is love, but that

is not some waffly thing that says 'oh I love you'. It is something very strong and basic and fundamental, and it is to do with sweat, and it is to do with dirt, and it is to do with the stuff of life that if you love your child you wipe its snotty nose and you wipe its messy bum and this is love. This is how love is... So that Aphrodite is something very sort of basic, and incredibly strong.

Whilst women in holistic and alternative spiritualities *may* be seeking 'escape' from 'the routines of everyday life' as Pilgrim suggests (2004: 220), Goddess Feminists tend to emphasise that their spirituality empowers them to cope with and fight against that which is 'oppressive, soulless, ethically and morally unsatisfying' (2008: 61). Pilgrim suggests that Syncretists belong to what Hamilton and others have characterised as 'pick-and-mix religion' (in Pilgrim 2004: 222).¹³ The 'dominant discourse', as Aupers and Houtman call it (2006: 201), within the sociology of religion on 'self-spiritualites' (Heelas 1996) is that they are so individualised that they lack any coherency (Bruce 2002): 'Luckmann emphasises that such personal meaning systems remain strictly private: by their very nature and unlike church-based Christian religion in the past, they lack wider social significance' (Aupers and Houtman 2006: 202). Several scholars have begun to challenge these assumptions (Heelas 1996; Hanegraaf 1996; Heelas *et al.* 2005; Aupers and Houtman 2006, 2008).

Quagans are, in Pilgrim's terms, syncretistic, but the supposition that their syncretism is either superficial or without coherence is unfounded. As one Quaker pagan blogger recently wrote online: 'I am syncretistic, not because I'm picking and choosing from the smorgasbord of spirituality, but because I'm *not*'. That is, she has not consciously chosen two paths, but feels she has been 'drawn' to each. As she wrote, 'Something without a name called me so powerfully I could not do anything but follow' (Cat Chapin-Bishop, <http://quakerpagan.blogspot.com>, accessed 29 August 2006). Chapin-Bishop refers to an inward experience of an immanent divine which leads her. In my observation of Quaker Pagan email lists and blogs, the use of Quaker language and theology to authorise fusing is common.

There is a well-known phrase which contemporary pagans use to describe coming to paganism: 'coming home' (Eller 1993; Harvey 1997; Rowntree 2004). It refers to the sense that participants have, not of conversion, but of finding a name or group for what they always were. As one pagan said to me, 'I think I was born this way'. Similarly, Alison said, of both Quakerism and paganism, that she knew immediately 'this was my stuff'. This recognition involves more than an attraction to 'lifestyle' (Pilgrim 2004: 221), although the importance of that cannot be underestimated, but also an attraction to ritual style, theo/theologies, symbolism, and other belief systems. Quagans demonstrate long-term commitment to *both* Quakerism and paganism for all of these reasons; these are no passing fancies to be dropped in favour of something new tomorrow, nor are they identities which are picked up in a facile manner. If a substantial number of British Quakers are 'post-Christian', as Dandelion argues (1996), the two traditions being fused here (Quakerism and paganism) are not necessarily 'logically opposed to one another' (Pilgrim 2004: 222).

Pilgrim admits that there is some ‘overlap’ between Inclusivists and Syncretists, but argues that Inclusivists adhere to Dandelion’s ‘behavioural creed’ (and that Syncretists, by implication, do *not*) (2004: 220, 221). By this definition, my Quaker Pagan informants would appear to be on the ‘overlap’ between types, as it is quite clear from my data that Quagans take the behavioural creed very seriously, both as the term is used by Dandelion *and* as I extend it below.

PRACTICAL BELIEF

An email from one of my research participants announced the formation of the ‘Quaker Goddess Network’ in Britain: ‘for people whose spiritual journeys overlap two paths: a love for goddess spirituality, stories and ritual, and the practice of silent Quaker worship together with the disciplined Quaker way of making decisions’.¹⁴ The logo for this new network is revealing: a large Q, in the middle of which is a picture of the ‘Venus of Laussel’.¹⁵ In this logo, the Q of Quakerism surrounds a figure representative of my participants’ Goddess Feminism. That is, their Goddess Feminism is shaped by and enclosed within their commitment to the Religious Society of Friends.

Pilgrim claims Syncretists ‘are drawn by a lifestyle but not a religion’ (2004: 221), but it is clear to me that for Quaker Pagans, Quaker lifestyle cannot be separated out from religion. That is, Quaker practice *enacts* (often unexpressed) Quaker belief systems, including theology. Dandelion has demonstrated that what Quakers say they do *not* do, ‘can also be a shorthand way of identifying features’ (1996: 302). For example, the Quaker opposition to creeds is long-standing. When Quakers object to creeds, they do so often on theological grounds:¹⁶ Friends object to the stasis of revelation implied by formal adoption of creeds (*Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995: 27.23). Divine revelation is ongoing for Quakers and undergirds the unprogrammed liturgy of British Quakers who wait silently for the promptings of Spirit. Ongoing revelation is one reason Elise reported (unlike the Christian women in my research sample): ‘I’m quite comfortable with the idea of...a Goddess that is constantly changing’. It is also another reason why Quagans find it easy to exist in the Quaker context. As Alison said of Quaker Meeting for Worship:

Out of the silence people speak when the spirit moves them...it is what the spirit is telling you *now*. And so if you have that basic frame of reference in relation to the worship of the divine, to your spiritual practice in relation to the divine, um then how the divine is going about its business of relating to *you* is really your own affair.

The emphasis Alison placed on ‘now’, which Molly also stressed (‘the now is very important to me, the *power* of now’), also stems, I argue, from the Quaker concept of on-going revelation, and is indicative of Liberal Quaker belief in limited, contextual revelation; that is, the claim that the divine reveals itself in many ways to many people at different times. As Alison put it, ‘we all need different things from our gods and goddesses...that is, different individuals need to relate to the divine in different ways’. As an entry in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (QFP) stresses,

Quakers adopt ‘not so much a set of propositions [as in a Creed], as the discipline of working out in one’s life and experience the consequences of the truth one has espoused. The value of the beliefs lies solely in their outworking’ (1995: 27.25).¹⁷

When Dandelion writes of a Quaker ‘behavioural creed’ (1996), he refers to the corporate form of Quaker Meeting for Worship and Quaker Business Meetings. The quotation from *QFP* is very clear that the form of Quakerism extends to the whole fabric of one’s life. My participants confirmed this. As Alison said, ‘being a Quaker is really *how* you are, rather than what you believe in. Um...and I think that is pretty widely accepted’. As Dandelion (2008) relates, in the Swarthmore Lecture of 1980 given by Janet Scott, she answered the question “‘Are Quakers Christian?’” by saying that it does not matter. What matters to Quakers is not the label by which we are called or call ourselves, but the life’ (Scott 1980: 70). The ‘how’ of Quakerism, insist my informants, extends to

- how Friends interact with others (which for Quaker Pagans includes other-than-human-beings¹⁸),
- the Quaker emphasis on ‘justice’ (Gwen),
- on ‘being active’ (Molly), by which she meant what would be called pastoral ministry in other contexts,
- social, eco-justice, and peace ‘activism’ (Gwen).¹⁹

This way-of-life behavioural creed is informed by Quaker tradition, particularly the Testimonies which *QFP* states ‘are not abstract qualities, but vital principles of life...[and] ways of action’ (1995: 19, preamble)²⁰. Thus what Quakers, and by extension Quaker Pagans, *do and do not do* are highly important to their belief systems.

This behavioural creed does not simply encode ideology (e.g., pacificism), it encodes or *performs* theo/theology.²¹ Participants repeatedly stated, ‘Goddess is not into power over, but power with’. Quaker Pagan social and eco-justice activism and their feminism reflects their notion of a divine that is non-hierarchical, shares creative and other powers, and is (self) limited in power. ‘Power with’ may also imply a divine which is revealed in on-going participation with Creation (although many of my informants would not use this particular word).

Peter Collins argues that there are certain ‘narratives’ canonical within Quakerism:

[these narratives] were threads which no sooner were spun were woven into the social fabric of the meeting and of Quakerism more generally. They are woven... into the testimonies—those fundamental narratives which are grounded in the faith and practice of the first Quakers and rehearsed in innumerable ways since then throughout the Quaker movement (2008: 41).

Collins points to ‘plaining’, which he argues undergirds all of these narratives, and which he says is ultimately “‘a verb’”: a tendency to approach the world in a particular way’ (2008: 44). Similarly, Jackie Leach Scully (2008) uses virtue ethics to demonstrate how Friends perform through embodied behaviour their ethical beliefs and thus their Quakerism.

Edward Schieffelin points out that in the West, people tend to interpret *performance* to mean acting or illusion (2005: 131), with the implication that a performance is not *real* or *true*. As Schieffelin writes, performance ‘embodies the expressive dimension of the strategic articulation of practice’ (2005: 130, emphasis in original).²² When Quaker Pagans attend Meeting for Worship or participate in social justice activism, they *perform* Quakerism. When they participate in Goddess Feminist rituals, or tell a Goddess story, they perform their Goddess Feminism and they create new meanings of and improvise female becoming. Performing Quakerism and Goddess Feminism for Quaker Pagans creates and reinforces certain ‘embodied dispositions’ (Coleman and Collins 2000: 318) or ways of being in the world.

FUSING QUAKERISM WITH GODDESS FEMINISM: COMING TO GODDESS FEMINISM

All of my Quaker Pagan participants found a home in Quakerism, but as Elise said, ‘I don’t find that Goddess Feminism is a rejection of Quakerism, but Quakerism cannot do everything, and I was searching for something that the Friends could not provide’. In the same way, Alison wrote, ‘As a spiritual person I had found my spiritual community among the Quakers, but as a worshipful person I had nothing to worship’ (Leonard 2003: 11). The paganism of participants thus specifically turns their Quaker way of life into a Quaker Pagan (enacted) theology.

The women’s peace camp at Greenham Common during the 1980s was formative for several participants. For Molly, Greenham was an entrée into Quakerism, ‘women’s spirituality’, and feminism. It was a powerful experience that changed her world:

I can remember going up to women who were clearly not the little wife at home, who were in touch with much bigger things than the female space I’d squeezed myself into before. And they were talking about the feminine principle in the divine. I felt something was really moving for me... It was like a freeing up... After that I became *the* feminist at school—I taught for 13 years. My marriage was foundering then, everything was shifting.

Feminism, women’s spirituality, and the introduction to new kinds of ritualising at Greenham were all confirmations that Quakerism could not provide informants’ spiritual answers *in toto*. Below I explore some reasons why these particular issues shift everything for Quagan participants.

Though Quakers have traditionally rejected ritual as empty (Alison, Elise), Dandelion has argued eloquently that Meeting for Worship, though silent, is still ritual (2005). Further, while many Goddess Feminists of Christian backgrounds find Goddess Feminism affirming because it heals the pain of feeling other to the divine, Quakerism is founded on the notion of ‘that of God in everyone’.²³ British Quakers have no priesthood, but practice (like most feminist Wiccans or Goddess Feminists) a priesthood of all believers (Starhawk 1999: 21; Dandelion 2005: 28, 29; Alison). Indeed, as Elise related, ‘I’ve found that questions are encouraged in

Quakerism. And women are very present and strong in Quakerism'. That said, Molly implied that Goddess Feminism provides non-traditional models of being a woman which Quakerism does not necessarily model. Despite the egalitarianism of Quakerism, Goddess Feminism showed Molly new ways of enacting femaleness.

For Alison, her attraction to Goddess Feminism came first through its bodiliness, its affirmation of embodied life (especially the *female* body) and its sensuality. As she has written, '...rediscovering the childish pleasure of skinny-dipping in lakes and streams, [I] found it was a spiritual pleasure too' (2003: 17). So despite the positive role for women in Quakerism, I read Alison's story as discovering that the emphasis on Spirit in the Friends meant a lack of celebration of embodiment, which she finds in Goddess Feminism and through participation in Goddess Feminist rituals.

Quaker participants find in Goddess Feminism a religion which mirrors many of their ethics. First, Goddess Feminists and contemporary pagans are always keen to emphasise that there are many routes to the divine. Second, pagans would also generally ascribe to the idea of the divine in everyone (here this would extend beyond humans) (see, for example, the website of the UK's Pagan Federation, <http://www.paganfed.org/paganism.php>, accessed 12 October 2007), which for Goddess Feminists is also based upon the broader feminist concern for social justice and egalitarian structures and methods (e.g. in decision making or ritual). Third, the Wiccan teaching 'Do what you will, if it harms none'²⁴ has been read by many (the American activist feminist witch Starhawk being probably the most influential of these) as an injunction against violence, and a call to working for social and eco-justice.

Above I situated Quaker Pagans in the differing contexts of their dual identities; below I give a few examples of how Quagans explore Goddess Feminism in a particularly Quaker fashion.

STORY AND METAPHOR

As a writer, Alison is drawn to story. Indeed, story for Alison is substantive. That is, story is a way of calling things into being. Story is thus *real* for Alison, and she spoke of 'the truth of story'.²⁵ In this she reflects the Quaker approach to the voicing of spirit in ministry during Meeting for Worship, and the way Quakers make real canonical narratives or practices through their enactment. However, it was the *many* stories of Goddess Feminism that was a big draw for Alison, as it was also for Elise. Dandelion has written that one consequence of the 'culture of silence' (1996: 238) that exists within the Religious Society of Friends is that Quakers rarely have opportunities to discuss with each other what they really believe. Alison said, '[in ministry] I might refer to something that has happened in my sort of—in the Goddess arena, but it is much more likely that it would come out in a way that didn't have any particular frame of reference at all'. The post-Christian context of Liberal British Quakerism is such that the stories which originally undergirded the group (i.e. the Bible) are rarely read in many Meetings

for Worship now (Dandelion 1996 cites that 36.7% of his respondents never ‘feel moved to pick up the Bible’ during Meeting for Worship). Although Alison’s approach to story reflected her Quakerism, Goddess Feminism provides a way to develop and celebrate story in a way not possible in the Friends. For example, Alison pointed to the ‘fluidity’ of goddess story, the ‘magic’ in them, and their use of symbolism.

Story also images—indeed it invokes and shapes images—and several Quagan informants pointed to the emphasis on (a diversity of) imagery as being an important attraction for them to Goddess Feminism and paganism. Quakerism has traditionally been anti-imagery (Elise),²⁶ not wanting to limit the divine in any way. But the openness of Liberal Quakerism, and the multiplicity of images of the divine in Goddess Feminism result in a similar acceptance of diversity.

In Goddess Feminism, there is considerable diversity between what is meant by the term *Goddess(es)* (Long 1997). The most important issue for this discussion is whether Goddess is metaphor or real. However, even for those for whom Goddess is metaphor point to the real effects that metaphor has on the lives of women (Culpepper 1987, 1997; Morton 1989; Long 1997). Two Quaker Pagan informants (Alison and Molly) claimed that goddesses are ‘metaphor’ (Molly) for them, that they ‘don’t really experience them um as an active force in my life’, but as ‘powerful stories which influence my thinking’ (Alison).²⁷ Molly and Alison’s use of the word metaphor to describe goddesses reflected their Quaker dislike of anything which seems to *define* or limit the divine. However, both experience metaphor in a real way. For example, Molly’s use of ‘the void’ as image and metaphor for the divine is lived and embodied; she experiences the void in meditation when the divine ‘mystery’ ‘comes up through me’.

I asked Alison whether story and writing were invocation and ritual for her, and she said, ‘I think it is becoming the case, and I think in some way it has always been the case without my recognising it’. I suggested above that story for Alison is a way of calling things into being; in this way, Alison participates in the creative action of the divine, or rather, as she has written, ‘It often seems to me that my job as a writer is not to “create” as such. It’s to keep that channel clean and clear... If my channel is clear, then the mystery will flow through it and down it’ (1995: 90). In Meeting for Worship she is aware of ‘waiting in the void, waiting in the light’ (1995: 88), and she writes that the *process* of beginning to write is also a process of ‘wait[ing] patiently in discipline’ (1995: 92). Alison, then, has conflated the form of her Quakerism with the form of writing, and experiences the creative action of writing as the creativity of the divine working through her. That is, Alison experiences writing in charismatic Quaker terms. Story and metaphor become for Alison real expressions of the divine.

In this context, goddesses may be metaphor, but their stories are also channels for experience of the divine, and in that sense they are real. Like Molly’s experience of the void, goddesses and their stories become lived and embodied. Story is not simply a mental experience for Alison, but is something she experiences in an embodied way. Furthermore, like the Quaker ‘narratives’ identified by Collins (2008: 27), Goddess Feminist stories impel participants to live in a certain way.

Let me give an example. The cauldron of Cerridwen was referred to by all of the Quagan participants²⁸ and is an important lived metaphor for the divine. Alison described Cerridwen's cauldron as 'this great pot of life'. And participants emphasised that Cerridwen's cauldron contained 'everything stirred up together' (Molly), the hard parts of life included (Alison, Elise). Alison related the cauldron back to the earth by saying it is 'a symbol of this amazing sort of composting thing'. Cerridwen, then, is 'an agent of transformation' (Elise), and the cauldron her main *instrument* of transformation. It is a polyvalent metaphor because it represents the physical spaces of the earth and the ritual circle (in which Goddess Feminists ritualise transformation), and the mental or cognitive space of transformation or change. Participants embody and enact the metaphor of the cauldron by applying it to the life-cycle of 'menopause', 'healing' (Elise²⁹), and to the process of inspiration in writing (Alison).

CONTACT WITH THE DIVINE

Molly suggested there is 'energy' in effective metaphors, and that Cerridwen's cauldron is 'about knowing the mystery'. 'Mystery' for Molly is a way of referring to the divine. The fundamental possibility that, as Molly put it, the divine can 'come up through me', of 'being a channel for the divine', is something that is common to both Quakerism and Goddess Feminism. For example, some Goddess Feminists ritualise embodying the Goddess(es), though they would usually balk at the word 'channelling' because of its implied passivity.³⁰ Gwen also said that one of the reasons she originally became a Quaker was that she was interested in 'the mystical aspect of Quakerism'.

Contemporary paganism is often described as a 'nature religion' because it places great stress on humanity being part of (and dependent upon) the natural world (Harvey 2007: 4). The earth, as well as elements of the natural world such as rocks and trees, is seen as sacred and often as a personal divinity.³¹ This outlook was particularly evident during my interviews with Gwen and Molly, both of whom spoke of having communication with other-than-human-beings. For Gwen, these contacts were relearned in adulthood, but experienced spontaneously in childhood. She recounted of her childhood in Australia,

In the bush, there's a plant—it's like a tall tree fern with a large velvety spike, like a bulrush... And I remember one of those bowed to me, or waved, anyway it made contact with me. I assumed this kind of relationship with living things was normal at first. I also remember having contact with Golden Mimosa—it's the spirits of these plants that make contact with me.

I asked Gwen if these were 'simply spirits, or would you call them deities?', to which she replied, 'Yes, yes! All I know is that I have contact', but she later confirmed that she considered them 'divine'. Rather than define these spirits, Gwen wanted to emphasise 'the inner transformations that result from making contact'. She stressed that contact with the sacred pushed her into 'activism' on the part of the natural world, but also that it brought 'compassion, and clarity into

my everyday life'. For Gwen, it was necessary to ground her experiences of the sacred in living them out and she pointed out that this active spirituality tied in with her Quakerism.

Although the Quaker practice of waiting silently on the divine to speak through them places Friends (potentially) on the charismatic end of the religious spectrum, the 'culture of silence' militates against charismatic testimony such as is found in Pentecostal churches (Dandelion 1996). So whilst Gwen and Molly's experiences of communicating with nature spirits may be acceptable in Quaker terms as the divine speaking through them, these experiences are not likely to be vocalised in Meeting for Worship. As Pilgrim writes, 'those who [speak] of [unmediated experiences of God] as real [are] likely to be misheard and misunderstood, if not (politely) ignored' (2004: 206). The reticence I found amongst my Christian feminist participants toward this kind of religious experience (even, or especially, amongst those who had had such experiences whilst in charismatic denominations) is not present amongst Quagan participants for whom the practice of 'waiting upon God' is familiar.³²

RITUAL

Probably the most striking difference between unprogrammed Quakerism and (other) Christian churches, the silent Meeting for Worship, is also the most striking difference between Quagans and contemporary paganism. For whilst many Christians and pagans alike may practice silent worship individually (alternatively expressed as meditation, prayer, contemplative prayer, etc.), collective worship tends to be verbally expressed. The communal nature of the silent Meeting for Worship is emphasised by Dandelion: 'The silence is the very medium through which the group approaches God... This emphasis on collectivity is critical to both orthodox Quaker theology and to the limitation of individualism within the worship process' (2005: 3). Silent worship is not simply an absence of words, but the silence is experienced as spatial and as a location of the divine. As Molly put it, 'God is "I am", the void'. In the silent space of worship is the presence of the divine; silence for Friends facilitates experience of the divine presence (Dandelion 2005: 31). As Molly elaborated: 'Quakerism for me is about letting spirit speak to me, about being receptive, and about letting go of my expectations and getting in touch with the void'. The Quaker 'void' is communal: a space and a divine which are not static (participants several times referred to the Goddess chant 'She Changes'³³), and though it is silent and empty, it does not signal the absence of the divine, and it may be approached communally.

Dandelion writes, 'the theology behind [Friends] holding worship at any time and in any place is not about a constancy of sacramentality as much as a constant potential for it' (2005: 114). Such a viewpoint shifts the way an adherent sees and interacts with the world. The constant potential for unmediated experience of the divine potentially widens a participant's conception of what is, or might be a sacred place/being ('that of God in everyone'), and/or leads to a state of 'receptivity' (Molly) for experience of the divine. Perhaps this is why Quagans are

drawn to and have various forms of direct experience of the divine (trance, dreams, visions, spirit communication).

Molly spoke of a Quagan ritual she had attended at an ancient stone circle. Ritualising in such a place is certainly not a traditionally Quaker thing to do, but her experience of the ritual was bound up with being a Quaker, and is revealing of Quaker sacred space, Quagan theology, and the Quaker sense of silent communal religious experience:

I am particularly drawn to stones, like at Avebury. There's an energy that comes through them. Once with some friends of mine from the Quaker women's group, and one man...we went to a stone circle and we stood inside the circle and held hands...and time shifted inside there. There's a real sense of energy and divine connection that they have. And there was a sense of something happening in the silence; it was to do with us as Quakers, but it was also about the stones. There was a sense of power, and energy. There were six of us, but it was really strange, when I shut my eyes, there was [*sic*] seven. I felt very 'in touch' and beyond space and time, or rather, it was all time and space in that circle. I think it is important that they are stone *circles*, because in a circle it is hard to find an end and a beginning... And Quakers sit in *circles*.

This notion that there are places where the divine is particularly easy to experience is a strong pagan belief. But as Alison put it, for Quakers 'the thought of [one place] being more sacred than anywhere else um is—is actually anathema to me... I don't have any time for—for that'. However, her pagan experience of sacred places modifies her Quaker belief in the sacred being accessible anywhere and everywhere: 'I mean clearly there are sacred places...and you can feel a concentration of spiritual energy there, but there are many, many, many of them'. Like Alison, Molly stressed that stone circles are not more sacred than other places, but have a strong 'connection' with the divine. She equated Quaker Meeting for Worship with the liminality of the stone circles, suggesting that the same liminality is produced in both, and that it is partly the *communal* delineation of sacred space/time that is responsible for the possibility of experience of the divine within that space.

Many Quakers describe what they do in Meeting for Worship as 'listening'.³⁴ But as most Meetings only have a few short spoken contributions (Alison), what a Friend mainly listens to/for in ritual is the silence and silent presence of the divine. Such a regular practice helps to explain both why Gwen (who has always heard the voices of spirits in the natural world) was originally attracted to the Friends, and why in the Quagan ritual described above, Molly is sensitive to the 'energy' of the stones. It is the practice of and possibility of communication with/from the divine that is primary: silent worship 'is the means to the experience, central to the Liberal Quaker project' (2008: 29).

Molly emphasised that it is important that this site is a stone circle, and she referred to Quakers sitting in circles during Meeting for Worship. This has not always been the case, but most Meetings for Worship now use chairs placed in a circle (Collins 1996: 320). This arrangement symbolically affirms various dominant Quaker beliefs: non-hierarchy, priesthood of all believers, etc. (1996: 320). Molly

also pointed to circles having no beginning or end, which she related to the sense she got of being in a time out of time in the stone circle. She suggested that the ritual and symbolic space of a circle contains *and contributes to* the ‘energy’ of the ritual. This is consistent with contemporary pagan belief (see Salomonsen 2002: 177; Rowntree 2004: 149); the majority of practitioners also ritualise in a circle.

It is largely the potential for experience of the divine (and the lack of dogma) in the Friends and paganism that makes ritual central to both. For unprogrammed Friends, ritual may seem ‘invisible’ (Dandelion 2005: 2), but one thing that makes unprogrammed Quakers unique is their adherence to a ritual of silent (potential) communal experience of the divine.³⁵ The Quaker emphasis on experience means that Friends ‘argue that the validity of worship lies not in its form but in its power’ (Dandelion 2005: 71), a description which certainly fits the ritualisation of Goddess Feminists also. One reason the ritual which Molly related above was so affective, was ‘the sense of power and energy’ she had of it. In both cases, ‘power’ refers to what the participant experiences during ritual, in the ritual space, and what she carries with her from the ritual: deep experience of the divine, a divine which is active, relational and immanent, and communal connection.³⁶

LISTENING TO THE DIVINE AND OTHERS

I am struck by the number of voices that are in the transcripts of my interviews with Quagan participants, and by the amount of listening implied for the hearers. These are the voices of the spirits which Gwen hears, but also the voice of the divine which spoke to Molly (‘I am’) which was a confirmation for her of the universal immanence of God, the ‘voices’ of the river and trees which Molly also hears, the ‘voices’ of the goddesses which Alison hears through their stories, and even the voices of the characters in her own stories. The emphasis here is on the hearer, or more accurately, on the *hearing*: on listening as spiritual act and experience. Elise, for example, spoke of how ‘listening to’ (by which she means sensing) other peoples’ needs was an act ‘supported by Goddess’, and how she ‘couldn’t hear the guidance [of the divine] in the Christian framework’. Elise also found it important to highlight that ‘my prayer is usually a chat—I talk, but I also *listen*’. Goddess then, opens Elise up to hearing the divine, but I argue that it is the Quaker *framework* which has nourished both the prominence of Quagans listening for the divine and the notion that this is a spiritual act in itself.

The listening that Quagans do underlines the theme of relationality which runs throughout the spectrum of my participants. As Molly put it, ‘the sacred is relational’. For Quagans, the relational implies the possibility of change. That is, in listening to the other, or in listening to the divine, one opens oneself up to the possibility that one’s own beliefs/position may change through relation. Perhaps inevitably as Quagans fuse two spiritual traditions, this group of my participants spoke of their spirituality as a ‘process’, a ‘journey’ (Alison), or an ‘exploration’ (Gwen). Quaker Pagan personal spirituality cannot be divorced from relationality and indeed it is *because* Quagans listen to the Other (divine, human, other-than-human) that they must define their spirituality as a journey or process.

CONCLUSION

Since academic study of Quaker Pagans is in its infancy,³⁷ my aim in this article has been to begin the process of situating and explicating what appears to be a rapidly growing segment of both Quakerism and paganism. Clearly, further work needs to be done and my hope is that larger-scale studies of Quaker Pagans will deepen our understanding of this grouping in the near future. In this study, I have shown that Pilgrim's category of Syncretist Quakers (2003, 2004, 2008) is insufficient, and partly inaccurate, to describe Quaker Pagans. I have shown that certain 'canonical narratives' (Collins 2008: 41) in Quakerism, and particularly my notion of an extended behavioural creed, provide an underlying framework for Quaker Pagans as they develop the theo/theology and practice of their dual identity. I have emphasised that the syncretism of Quaker Pagans is based upon a behavioural creed that is a way of being in the world and a *performative* religiosity. As Molly put it, Quaker Paganism is about 'blurred boundaries'. Quagans thus inhabit an unusual space: a space that holds together difference, and the crossing-over point(s) between differences. My informants are not Quakers *and* pagans, as if the two identities could be held separate and the individual could oscillate between the two. Instead, they are Quaker Pagans, the identities cannot be separated out from each other but create something *sui generis*, a third thing entirely—Quagans.

NOTES

1. Although this website is American, where the community of Quaker Pagans appears to be larger and longer established (personal communication with American Quagans), it is relevant for the growing community in Britain, especially as the bloggers are from the upprogrammed branch of US Quakerism.

2. I first heard this term in 2001 when it was used by a participant in my MA research, an American Quaker-Pagan.

3. It is notoriously difficult to define contemporary paganism, as the term itself is a catch-all phrase that includes many and varied traditions. Despite the diversity between pagans, several researchers have shown (for example, Harvey 1997 and 2007, Berger *et al.* 2003) that paganism does have cohering themes and concerns, some of which I will discuss below.

4. Goddess Feminists are a subset of pagans who work primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) with the Goddess or goddesses. As with other contemporary pagans, there is no one form of Goddess Feminism nor is there a unifying institutional structure. That is not to say that one cannot speak meaningfully of Goddess Feminism as a coherent term.

5. Except where participants are public figures already (for example, writers who have published work on their spirituality), all names have been changed and identifying details obscured.

6. It is difficult to quantify this group as it depends on how one defines what constitutes 'fusing'. According to the way I have defined 'fusing' (see Vincett 2008), there are 12 interview participants who show evidence of fusing.

7. Other web-based resources include: observations from other researchers on a Pagan scholars email list, Quagan generated on-line articles, and flyers and invitations circulated on the web. Taken together, the two Quagan email lists consist of over one hundred members.

8. As with other mainline liberal British churches, British Friends are predominantly white. Brierley (2007: 5:19) includes the Religious Society of Friends in his 'smaller denominations' category, in which 6% are non-white. Goddess Feminists also tend to be mainly white. The ethnic profile of Goddess Feminism has been both criticised and rationalised by insiders and outsiders. Cynthia Eller (1993) presents some good reasons why Goddess Feminism tends to be white. For example, (a) in the United States at least, the needs of women of colour may be being met elsewhere (for example, in the rise of voodoo and African traditional religions), and (b) the different emphases between feminists, *Mujeristas*, and *Womanists* may mean that women of colour are not attracted to a religion which styles itself as feminist. Similarly, whilst my call for participants asked for feminist women, this may have precluded women of colour who define themselves differently, from responding.

9. Dandelion argues that British Friends have a 'prescription of seeking' (2008: 33), and the questions raised by Dandelion (1996) about the extent to which Quakers of the liberal British tradition can be called Christian and Mellor (2008) about the way British Quakers define 'Christian' indicate that there may be many Quakers who value a 'personal spiritual quest' and are disconnected from 'traditional sources of meaning' regardless of whether or not they are Quaker Pagans.

10. When Quagans argue that Goddess Feminism is not all 'sweetness and light', there is a subtext which they are keen to point out. As Peter Collins writes, 'the dominant symbol of Quakerism is "the Inner Light"' (1996: 285). This is a symbol which Quagans question because 'light has dark in it, surely; dark has light—they need each other... For me, the dark is fruitful and juicy and alive. We need the cycle of both... We need to untie the notion that dark is evil and wrong' (Gwen). However, the theology behind the concept of the inner light is part and parcel of Quagan beliefs. Similarly, Goddess Feminists are careful to differentiate themselves (and pagans in general) from the New Age emphasis on light (Heelas 1996; Harvey 1997) for the same reasons.

11. It would be interesting to know what the gender split is in Pilgrim's work, but her analysis is not 'gendered'.

12. The 'second shift' refers to women's unpaid work in the home which is on top of their paid occupation. Such work includes both material and emotional work, the majority of which still falls to women in most households (Hochschild 1989; Brannen and Moss 1991).

13. Though the term 'spiritual supermarket' was coined by Lyon, Luckmann used a similar phrase as far back as 1967 when he called it a 'market of ultimate significance'. Aupers and Houtman have recently done a good job tracing and challenging this discourse (2006).

14. This is a closed email group to which one must apply to join, but a website is planned and more information may be obtained by emailing postfriend@quakergoddessnetwork.org.uk.

15. The Venus of Laussel is a carving of a woman of generous proportions from the entrance to a cave in France. She holds a curved horn inscribed with thirteen lines. Paleolithic 'Venus figurines' such as this one have been used by Goddess Feminists to point to (a) evidence for ancient Goddess worship, (b) as images of 'the Goddess' or goddesses, (c) as positive images of the female body and its cycles.

16. See Dandelion (2008: 25, 26) for a comprehensive list and analysis of the reasons Quakers object to 'belief creeds'.

17. Note that the author of this entry does not capitalise 'truth', and uses 'one' not 'we', implying that truth is neither static, nor universal. Again, to me this is consistent with Liberal Quaker belief.

18. Other-than-human-beings would include animals, but also trees, rivers, rocks, etc.

19. Pilgrim (2004) argues that 'the utopian vision quest of Quakerism with regard to peace, justice and social equality has become mainstream within the wider society' (2004: 212). I find this difficult to believe. To take but one example, regardless of thirty years of equality legislation in the UK (the Equal Pay Act came into force in 1975), the gender wage gap

remains significant, the average difference being 17.1% (or median 12.6%) according to the government Women and Equality Unit report (2007: 12).

20. Not all Quakers are as active as this may imply, but these testimonies were certainly stressed by my Quagan participants.

21. Theology is discourse on the female divine, as used by Goddess Feminists.

22. Shieffelin builds here on Bourdieu's 'practices' (1977) which also influence Collins's thought (2008), and the differing approaches to 'performance' of theorists such as Schechner (1982) and Goffman (1959).

23. Dandelion shows how the interpretation of this phrase, especially what is meant by 'God', is diverse within contemporary British Quakerism and is a move away from the traditional Christian notion of God of previous generations of Friends (1996: 162, 268).

24. One of the main influences of Goddess Feminism is Wicca, especially feminist forms of Wicca.

25. For two interesting takes on how this can work in paganism, see Salomonsen 2002: 138-42 on re-membling Tiamat in feminist Wicca, and Griffin 2000: 73-88 on embodied narrative in Goddess spirituality.

26. This may be one reason why Catholic defectors do not seem drawn to Quakerism, unlike former members of protestant denominations (Rutherford 2003, unpublished research).

27. The other women I interviewed (Elise and Gwen) have a much more personal relationship with goddesses and spirits.

28. This is an ancient Celtic myth about the goddess Cerridwen who brews the potion of knowledge and inspiration in her cauldron. She is a shape-shifter, a transformer.

29. Elise works with health professionals, so healing and transformation are very much lived experiences in her professional life.

30. I remember a great deal of (feminist) negativity to the word expressed on one Goddess Feminist e-list to which I belong. I suspect the word 'channel' (used by two Quaker Pagan participants) is language inherited from Quakerism. Certainly, it is a concept that early Quakers used, for whom 'their bodies and lives were merely sites and channels to communicate the word of God, the living Christ, to others' (Dandelion 2005: 4).

31. I use the singular here, but pagan polytheists are common (see, e.g., the Association of Polytheist Traditions website at www.manygods.org.uk, accessed 12 October 2007 or <http://www.paganfed.org/paganism.php>, accessed 12 October 2007).

32. This phrase is one amongst many that were first used by early Friends and preserved in successive editions of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, so that they are 'stock' Quaker phrases. This particular phrase occurs in the current edition of *Quaker Faith and Practice* in seven entries, three of which date from the seventeenth century (1995: 2.41, 21.03, 28.02).

33. This chant, originally written by Starhawk, is possibly the most widely known and sung pagan chant, and is endlessly improvised upon.

34. Of Dandelion's sample, 53.8 per cent claimed that 'listening' was the best way to describe what they do in Meeting for Worship (1996: 111).

35. I am aware that both Dandelion's and Pilgrim's research indicates that not all Quakers use Meeting for Worship in this way, but what is key here is that my participants *do*.

36. And in the Goddess Feminist/Quagan context, 'power' must also be read as 'empowerment'.

37. Though there has recently been much web-based 'chatter' about Quaker Pagans by scholars studying contemporary paganism, I am not aware of any other academic publications resulting from the study of this form of spirituality.

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COMPARING TWO SURVEYS OF BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING: 1990 AND 2003

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ABSTRACT

Comparison of postal surveys of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting in 1990 and 2003 showed modest differences for reported self-descriptions and beliefs. Quakers in 2003 appear to be less pacifist, somewhat less likely to describe God as 'Spirit', 'Inward Light', or 'Love' in absolute percentages, and less likely to describe Jesus as 'containing that of God within as we all do'. Meeting for Worship was described less as 'Seeking God's will', and more as 'Listening'. The largest changes were an increase in reported levels of education and a 13-year increase in median age across the 13-year period. The change in sampling methodology between the two surveys did not appear substantially to affect the results.

KEYWORDS

Quakers; religious belief; aging; educational attainment; Britain Yearly Meeting

INTRODUCTION

This report compares the results of two similar surveys of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) conducted in 1990 by Pink Dandelion (Dandelion 1996) and in 2003 by Rosie Rutherford (reported in Cary and Dandelion 2007). The 2003 study was intended to repeat much of the material of the 1990 study, but with a better sampling methodology.

The two surveys differ in numerous ways including (1) different sampling methods of Meetings, (2) different methods for distributing the surveys, (3) different response rates, and (4) while there were many identical questions, others had minor wording changes or changes in response alternatives. Thus, in comparing the results from the two surveys, any changes might be due to the factors above rather than a change in beliefs or behaviors across the 13-year period between them.

The samples for the two studies were drawn differently. For the 1990 data, the sample was a quota sample, with Meetings classified into three dimensions: (1) urban–rural, (2) north–south with the dividing line being at the latitude of Chester in Britain, and (3) large–small, with more than 50 members being large. This factorial design generated eight separate groups. Four Meetings from each group were chosen in an unspecified manner, for a total of 32 meetings. A letter was sent to the Clerk of each meeting to ask for permission to circulate the survey and subsequently to interview some of the participants and to estimate how many survey forms would be required if everyone took one. The Clerk was asked to set out the copies of the questionnaires, which came with a ‘freepost’ (free postal) envelope, at the Meeting for anyone present to pick up and complete. Five Meetings did not reply. The overall response rate relative to the number of questionnaires dispatched was about 58%. Some questionnaires were picked up and completed by visitors from other Meetings and mailed back. Thus, the final sample consisted of 483 responses from 27 Meetings primarily, with a scattering of others from various Meetings.

Britain Yearly Meeting has about 500 monthly meetings in total, thus the sampling fraction was about five percent of the Meetings. In addition, the sample was augmented with samples from the Meeting for Sufferings, a standing representative body entrusted with the care of the business of the Britain Yearly Meeting through the year, and from a gathering of ‘Young Friends Central Committee’, the standing organisation of 18–35 year old Quakers. For this analysis, we did not use these two augmented samples in order to be as consistent as possible with the 2003 survey.

The 2003 data are from a mail survey of 48 meetings in BYM using a more formal sampling method. These Meetings were classified into six groups based on size, with eight randomly chosen from each group, except the smallest, which had ten selected. Of the 50 meetings, 48 participated. The surveys were sent to the Meetings and twenty-two persons from each Meeting were selected by giving everyone a number and using a table of random numbers. Where Meetings were smaller than 22, all participants were used. Respondents mailed back their survey using a freepost address. The final sample was 600 responses, with an overall response rate of 75%, substantially higher than in the first survey.

The two questionnaires were similar, with many identical or highly similar questions. However, the response lists often changed somewhat and the order of questions was different. Thus, the second survey was not an exact repeat of the first.

METHOD

Because of the multiple differences between the two studies, we judged that we could not conform the samples by any obvious procedure to make them more similar, other than by deleting the supplementary sample of Young Friends and the sample from Meeting for Sufferings. Instead, we take the view that these two

samples represent different methods of measuring some similar constructs and they will be compared directly using both statistical and qualitative methods.

The 2003 survey had a well-defined sampling plan that allows us to compare the variance of the estimates computed using a simple random sample compared to a stratified cluster sample. Using SAS 9.1 survey procedures (SAS Institute 2006), we estimated the standard errors of the percentages using both a simple random sample and the more elaborate method of a clustered sample within the strata (i.e. the six levels of Meeting size). At times, a stratified sample can increase the precision of the estimates. However, our results showed little difference between the two methods on key variables. For example, 64.3% of the 2003 respondents were female, margin of error of ± 3.8 percentage points (i.e. the 95% confidence interval). The unadjusted margin of error was ± 3.9 , a very similar result. We could not generate a clustered estimate for the 1990 survey because the size of the clusters was not known and the Meetings were not chosen completely at random. Thus, we make our comparisons using the tests for simple random samples, an approximation to the correct tests.

A second issue in making comparisons between the two samples is the problem of multiple tests. A significance level of $p=.01$ means that about 1% of the time the difference could be due to chance alone, not to a real underlying difference. Thus, when making multiple comparisons, about 1 in 100 of the statistically significant results will be due to chance alone. There are many methods to correct for multiple tests; the most conservative is to multiply the significance by the number of tests. Thus, a significance test of $p=.001$ would be treated as $p=.06$ when making about 60 tests, as we are doing. In this paper, we interpret only those results near the $p<.001$ level but present the uncorrected significance levels in the table.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the comparisons between the two surveys. The significance levels presented are chi-square tests for simple random samples with the significance level uncorrected. The wording of the questions is listed when it varied across the two studies. We are presenting differences between belief and attitude variables in the surveys but not all of the variables, such as whether the respondent had ever been appointed to a Yearly Meeting position.

In demographics, there was no change in the percentage of females, but educational levels and age increased from 1990 to 2003. The age in 1990 was reported as a category, while the age in 2003 was the current age in years. Thus, to compare the two, the age in 2003 was classified into the same categories as in 1990. The effect for age was pronounced. In 2003 almost 4 in 10 reported being over age 70, while just over 2 in 10 were that old in 1990. The median (middle value) age as estimated from the categories increased from 51 years to 64 years, a 13-year increase across the 13-year period between the two surveys. Educational attainment also increased somewhat, possibly consistent with increasing educational attainment as respondents aged.

Table 1. Comparison of 1990 and 2003 Results

Variable	1990 Data %	2003 Data %	Chi-square(df), p value
Respondent is a Female (1990 'Sex', 2003 'Gender')	64.8	64.3	.03(1), p=.86

Educational attainment¹			
None	12.6	3.0	48.3(5), p<.0001
CSE/O/GCSE	13.2	8.2	
A/Higher	16.2	20.8	
Degree	41.4	44.9	
Masters	11.1	14.7	
Doctorate	5.5	8.4	

Age			
Over 70	22.9	38.8	122.0(6), p<.0001
60-69	13.7	22.5	
50-59	16.6	22.0	
40-49	25.0	9.8	
30-39	12.1	4.7	
20-29	6.2	2.0	
Under 20	3.5	0.2	
Estimated median age (years)	51.0	64.0	
Mean age (years)	not available	63.9	

Describe self	Would you describe yourself as any of the following?	Do you think of yourself as	
Quaker	82.4	86.1	2.8(1), p=.09
Christian	51.5	45.5	3.7(1), p=.05
Pacifist	57.6	37.7	41.7, p<.0001
Universalist	22.5	18.8	2.2(1), p=.14

Do you believe in God?			
Yes	74.8	73.5	6.7(2), p=.03
No	3.4	7.0	
Not sure	21.8	19.5	

Which of the following best describes God for you (allowed to tick multiple boxes)			Chi-square(df), p value
A father/mother/person figure	14.1	8.2	9.7(1),p=.002
A spirit	52.7	39.9	17.1(1), p<.0001

A process	19.1	14.3	4.4(1), p=.04
A being	13.3	10.9	1.5(1), p=.22
The Inward Light	58.0	42.9	23.9(1), p<.0001
Best not described	18.9	15.8	1.7(1), p=.19
Love	46.4	39.5	10.3(1), p=.001

Best describes your view of Jesus (multiple boxes allowed)			
Christ, the Son of God	15.3	15.6	.02(1), p=.89
Containing that of God within as we all do	63.3	49.1	21.5(1), p<.0001
an ethical teacher	46.9	42.1	2.4(1), p=.12
a spiritual teacher	69.9	66.1	1.7(1), p=.19
Christ, inward light	25.3	19.3	5.4(1), p=.02
God made human	19.2	17.1	.8(1), p=.38

Best describes what Prayer is for you (multiple boxes allowed)			
Talking to/listening to God	42.5	36.3	4.1(1), p=.04
Asking God to change things	12.6	8.0	5.9(1), p=.02
Seeking communion with the divine	32.2	25.5	5.7(1), p=.02
Seeking enlightenment/guidance	60.6	50.4	10.7(1), p=.001
Meditating	35.0	32.9	.4(1), p=.48
Daily life	22.0	22.7	.1(1), p=.78
Still and silent waiting	51.1	49.5	.3(1), p=.61
Praise	23.8	19.4	2.9(1), p=.09
Confession	22.9	14.8	11.4(1), p=.0007
Recollection	11.7	10.6	.3(1), p=.56
Seeking healing	31.7	23.8	8.3(1), p=.004
Thanksgiving	48.9	44.3	2.2(1), p=.14
Opening to the Spirit	53.5	50.5	.9(1), p=.33

Activities that best describes what do in Meeting for Worship (multiple boxes allowed)	Are doing	Usually do	Chi-square(df), p value
Praying	35.4	34.0	.2(1), p=.64
Praising	12.2	13.7	.5(1), p=.48
Meditating	42.8	46.9	1.8(1), p=.19
Listening	52.6	65.9	19.5(1), p<.0001
Communing	27.8	24.1	1.9(1), p=.17
Seeking God's will	32.6	25.0	7.7(1), p=.006
Seeking union with the	20.2	20.3	.01(1), p=.99

Divine			
Sleeping	5.8	7.3	0.9(1), p=.33
Worshipping God	17.0	17.3	.01(1), p=.90
Thinking	64.1	57.2	5.3(1), p=.02
Opening up to the Spirit	59.5	66.8	6.0(1), p=.01

Agreement with statements (on a 5-point scale recoded as 5=firmly agree, 1=firmly disagree)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t-test, t(df), p value
'Moral standards can survive without religion'	2.50(1.20)	2.29(1.20)	2.83(1036), p=.005
'In certain circumstances, breaking the law can be justified'	1.91(1.08)	2.03(1.11)	-1.76(1050), p=.08
'In certain circumstances, violence can be morally justified'	3.70(1.32)	3.84(1.22)	-1.89(1035), p=.06

Reason for being attracted (multiple boxes allowed)	What were the main attractions of Friends?	What initially attracted you to Quakerism?	Chi-square(df), p value
Peace and social testimonies/political viewpoint	51.4	43.7	6.0(1), p=.01
Form of worship	73.7	62.0	15.5(1), p=.0001
Quaker way of life	41.2	43.1	.4(1), p=.54
Lack of religious dogma	73.0	62.8	11.3(1), p=.0008
Position of women within the group	17.8	18.4	.1(1), p=.77
Position of gays and lesbians within the group	7.9	5.2	2.9(1), p=.09
Quaker structure/lack of hierarchy	33.7	30.9	.9(1), p=.34
Company and friendship	24.6	23.5	.2(1), p=.67
Your own curiosity	14.8	17.6	1.2(1), p=.25
A feeling of coming home	40.2	35.6	2.2(1), p=.14
Quaker writings	13.9	13.7	.01(1), p=.94
The idea of the inward light	36.1	30.9	3.0(1), p=.08

¹ 'CSE/O/GCSE' refers to examinations taken in high school at age 15/16. 'A/Higher' refers to the examinations taken two years later.

Respondents described themselves in about the same percentages as Quaker, Christian, and Universalist, but Pacifists decreased from 58% to 38%.

The percentage saying 'yes' to 'Do you believe in God?' remained the same, at 75% in 1990 and 74% in 2003. When describing God, the percentages for 'A person/father/mother figure', 'A process', 'A being', and 'Best not described' decreased slightly. However, descriptions of God as 'Spirit' (53% in 1990 vs. 40%

in 2003), 'The Inward Light' (58% vs. 43%), and 'Love' (46% vs. 40%) were statistically less. These decreases may be partly due to differences in the number of questionnaire response categories between the two surveys. In both 1990 and 2003, these three terms were the most common ways to describe God even though the absolute percentages decreased over time. Thus, despite decreases in percentages, the rank order remained about the same.

When describing Jesus, the two surveys differed on only one out of the six items. Jesus was 'containing that of God within as we all do' for 63% in 1990 and for 49% in 2003. Similarly, descriptions for prayer were strongly different for only 3 out of 13 items. In 2003, prayer was less likely to be described as 'Enlightenment', 'Confession', or 'Seeking Healing'.

Activities performed in Meeting for Worship differed strongly for only 2 in 11 items. 'Seeking God's Will' declined from 33% to 25%, while 'Listening' increased from 53% to 66%.

Friends in 2003 were less likely to agree with the statement that 'Moral standards can survive without religion'.

The reasons for being initially attracted to Friends are difficult to interpret because the wording of the question changed from 1990 to 2003. However, only 2 out of 12 items showed much change. Both 'Worship' and 'Lack of Dogma' were cited less as a reason for being attracted to Friends, but remained the most cited reasons; that is, their rank did not change relative to the other items.

DISCUSSION

The differences between the 1990 and 2003 surveys were rather modest for reported self-descriptions and beliefs. Because the changes that did occur are often for only a few items within a longer list, it is likely that these changes represent true change. Thus, Quakers in 2003 appear to be less pacifist, somewhat less likely to describe God as 'Spirit', 'Inward Light', or 'Love' in absolute percentages, and less likely to describe Jesus as 'containing that of God within as we all do'. Meeting for Worship was described less as 'Seeking God's will', and more as 'Listening'.

The largest changes have been in age and education. Friends appear to be 'aging in place'. The increase in the median age of 13 years over the 13 years between surveys suggests that BYM Friends are either recruiting older new members or simply not recruiting younger members. The educational increases could be due either to replacement of members with better-educated ones of the same age, to persons receiving more degrees as they age, or even to differences in the sample and design. However, if this age trend continues, BYM Friends will lose roughly half of their current membership in the next 20 years.

The relatively small change in beliefs between the two samples over the 13 years is consistent with a relatively static membership. It is also consistent with a view that the methodology in 1990, although differing in many respects from 2003, produced similar results. Thus, the results for 2003 provide evidence that the 1990 results were not biased by the sampling method in any dramatic way that would qualitatively affect the analyses that were performed on those data.

NOTES

The 1990 survey data from Dandelion's work are available from the ESRC Data Archive. The 2003 data are available for the use of other scholars by application to Pink Dandelion. We thank Anita L. Weber for comments on the draft.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ALLEN, R.C., *Quaker Communities in Early Modern Wales: From Resistance to Respectability* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), pp. xiv + 314. ISBN 978-0-7083-2077-8, Hardback, £45.

At last! This well-documented and cogently written study of the history of Quakers in Wales is to be welcomed. There is a dearth of monographs on Quakerism in that country, one of the ‘dark corners of the land’ in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, perhaps because of the relative scarcity of sources for many parts of it and the small numbers of Quakers concerned. Richard Allen addresses the cultural and social impact of Quakerism there, engaging with the evidence about its origins, development, and decline. The seven chapters cover beginnings (1653), numbers and social composition in the movement, organisation, persecution and toleration, the Friends’ discipline, the role of women Friends, and finally the decline of the Welsh Quaker communities. This work brings together and extends much of the scholarship about the subject.

Quaker communities would have been broadly similar, the author assumes. He has had to extrapolate, given that sometimes—and for many decades at a time—there may be a scarcity of evidence about them in one part of Wales or another. While analysing minutely the more abundant evidence from certain counties he has used what exists from elsewhere ‘to test typicality’ (p. 3), at times including analogous information from bordering English counties. South East Wales provided a fuller store of primary source material and Richard Allen has used Monmouthshire Friends as a case study of the distribution and social composition of Quakers (pp. 34–59) and also as illustrative of the organisation of the group. The scope is as widely encompassing as possible, however, utilising records of surviving Quarterly, Monthly, Yearly, and Half-Yearly Meetings (the former instituted in Wales in 1682 and ceasing in 1797), Women’s Meeting minutes and a variety of correspondence and official records from Cardiganshire to Monmouthshire, Glamorgan to the North of the country.

It proves to be a difficult task to build a picture of numbers and the social composition of Quakers among dissenting communities in Wales. The author offers pertinent comparisons with the demography of Quakerism elsewhere and acknowledges both difficulties in non-Quaker records (which make it hard to identify numbers of

Quaker dissenters with certainty) and the inadequacies of Quakers' own record keeping. He constructs an overview of the Monmouthshire situation, bolstered by tables of statistics for the Friends' births, marriages, and deaths in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, comparative data for the Roman Catholics in the region, and evidence for occupational status as compared with Gloucestershire/Wiltshire Quakers. The impression that 'yoeman and craftsman' (and a few of the gentry) dominated Welsh Quakerism is borne out by this chapter. Yet 'The numerical strength of the Quaker community was, in comparison to the fear they aroused, rather small', he observes (p. 47).

Wales was not a monoglot country. Allen does not dissent from those who have seen Quakerism as something 'never fully Welsh', imperfectly integrated with the national life and character. It was led (from England) by those who did not grasp that Wales was different. Very little Quaker literature was produced in Welsh (though some English writings were translated into it) and in this study twelve (primary and secondary source) items appear in Welsh in the extensive (37pp.) bibliography. I did not find reference to the sometimes negative role of the London-based Second Day Morning Meeting where writings by Welsh Friends in English were concerned. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it did not, for example, further the publication of work by Barbara Bevan Jr (of Pennsylvania, thereafter returned to Tref y Rhyg) or of Prudence Davies (disinherited daughter of the Quaker-hating vicar Rondl Davies?), albeit at least the important *Journal* (if not other writings) of Richard Davies survived its processes to aid the historian of Welsh Quakerism.

In the chapter on discipline, schooling, the employment of the young, dress and demeanour, disorder, disagreements, disownment, and more figure. The Welsh tardiness in establishing Women's Meetings was considered in the preceding chapter, along with many disciplinary matters concerning women Friends in particular. A good deal of ground is covered in these two chapters. Finally the decline of Quakerism in Wales is addressed.

Only twenty-four Quaker congregations were registered there by 1715 and the last chapter takes the reader into statistics for the nineteenth century also. Evidence from ecclesiastical returns points to the demise of many Quaker communities in the eighteenth century and the author considers possible causes for this decline. Emigration to Pennsylvania as part of William Penn's experiment was indeed a pivotal factor in parts of Wales. In the emigration of some two thousand Quakers in fewer than two decades many of the most active and gifted of Welsh Friends were lost. This alone did not account for its demise in many places, however. Quite apart from Quaker rigour not sitting well with Welsh popular culture, the Welsh preference for spirited preaching and song (available in other non-conforming traditions) was perhaps another cause. The conclusion emerges that Quakerism had failed to 'breach the communication divide' between itself and the people of Wales (p. 191).

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BESSE, J., *Sufferings of Early Quakers* (York: Sessions Book Trust). *East Anglia and East Midlands* (2007), ISBN 978-1-85072-367-7, Paperback, £12; *West Midlands* (2008), ISBN 978-1-85072-357-2, Paperback, £12.

Two more volumes in the Sessions Book Trust series of regional facsimiles are now available, taking the volumes produced so far to nine. *East Anglia and East Midlands* was published in 2007; *West Midlands* in 2008. As with the early volumes, these are well-produced and clearly printed facsimiles, to which new indexes have been added.

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BUTLER, D., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Friends Historical Committee, 2004), pp. 256. ISBN 0 9519870 6 2, Hardback, €18.

What to do after one has systematically described every Meeting House in Britain? Well, move onto Ireland of course. Although this book is complete in itself it can also be thought of as Volume Three of David Butler's work on the Quaker Meeting Houses of the British Isles (for my review of *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, Vols. 1 and 2 see QS 5/1 [2000], pp. 85-88). The first thing that struck me in leafing through this volume is the unchanged format—no need to fix something that already works perfectly well. The text is pithy and the plans and drawings meticulous. Similarly, Butler takes little time to get down to business and after a brief introduction we arrive in Connaught Province. Each province is dealt with in turn, and is structured similarly: an introduction to the province, a list of courses especially relevant to that province, a map showing the location of all Quaker sites, followed by accounts of each Meeting House (and Meeting) in the province. This simple organisation, supplemented by a complete index, works very well.

But let us return to Connaught... Apart from the typically concise accounts of buildings and their development, Butler provides plenty of interesting material on the organisation of Quakerism in the Republic. After reading in the first sentence that 'Quakers were neither numerous nor strong enough in Connaught to manage their own province Meeting', I am stopped in my tracks and begin to ponder why this might be the case—perhaps the region is especially thinly populated, or maybe in the seventeenth century Catholicism was unusually combative in preventing the growth of this new English horror? And if Quakerism did not find a foothold in Connaught why should *any* Meetings have been established? These kinds of fascinating questions always arise when I consult Butler. This book, like the earlier volumes, includes just enough information on each Meeting to provoke one's interest. The few Meetings founded in Connaught each represent a unique story. For example, on p. 18 we read that Letterfrack Meeting was established by James and Mary Ellis, two wealthy Bradford Friends who emigrated to Ireland in order to provide gainful employment

for those who had suffered due to the potato famine. During their seven-year stay they built a model farm, including a house for themselves, a teacher's cottage, a dispensary, and a two-storey schoolhouse which served also as a Meeting House where the Ellises and visiting guests met for worship. There was no resident Irish population and Letterfrack, Butler informs us, never became a recognised Meeting.

Don't be fooled then by this book's apparent modesty: Butler is interested in Quaker buildings of course—indeed, he likely always to be the leading authority on the subject—but the reach and significance of these narratives is both wider and deeper in that they speak of Quakerism itself, as both faith and practice. After reading this book (from cover to cover—not the best way to do it) I can confirm that this is a book full of such stories. Apart from accounts of Irish Meetings and Meeting Houses, Butler includes no less than 17 appendices, all relevant and all including useful information and ranging from a brief history of Quakerism in Ireland, to 'The Womens' Meeting Room and its Shutters'. We should congratulate the Irish Friends Historical Committee for publishing this wonderful book and Kelso Graphics for the quality of its production. If you can, please ask your library to obtain a copy of all three volumes of what is the definitive account of Quaker Meeting Houses of the British Isles.

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DANDELION, P., *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 142. ISBN 0-521-60088-X, Hardback, £45; Paperback, £14.99 and *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. xvi + 277. ISBN 978-0-19-920679-7, Paperback, £7.99.

Prolific author and editor Pink Dandelion published two introductions to Quakers and Quakerism in short order: one in Oxford University Press's ... *Very Short Introduction* series, the other with Cambridge University Press. Such a pairing of commissions might seem like a heaven-sent gift: presenting the opportunity to use the same research base and the same material. However, the challenge here is to avoid making one, in this case the ... *Very Short*... one look like a précis of the longer work. Readers who start with one might feel cheated if they found too much of a cross-over, and as for reviewers...

Naturally, in terms of subject matter, at the outset it is clear that similar things would be discussed—history, forms of worship, the great separation, and so on—and of course they all feature in both works. However, although the word 'introduction' is used in both titles, the similarity largely ends there. The very short book is laid out in a straightforward manner with the brief chapters starting with 'Who are the Quakers?' before then turning to an historical approach, and following up with explorations of worship, beliefs, and so on. The longer work is divided into two main sections, the larger of them examining in far more depth the history, nature, and development of Quaker theology and the second looking at Quakerism in the modern world.

In both books the histories begin with the young George Fox and the travels which became as much an inward spiritual journey as a religious progress through revolutionary Britain. Dandelion is careful to point out that Fox was not alone, either in his early journeys but also in progressing along a spiritual path. Other prominent figures especially, like the Fells from the northwest, but also midlanders like Fox himself and Elizabeth Hooton who made the dangerous journey into the intolerant and oppressive puritan heartlands of north America, feature to greater or lesser degrees. Nevertheless, Fox and his experience remained crucial, for his personal revelation formed the core of Quaker belief and practice. Dandelion points out that this was no especial or restricted revelation on a road to Damascus. Instead the 'Road from Bradford' brought a revelation that was actually available to all. Of course the Protestant Church of post-Reformation England was believed by its founders to require an educated ministry with degrees that only could be awarded in England at Oxford and Cambridge, but to Fox this was missing God's point: there had to be a further step away from the strictures and structures of the Roman Church. Quakers were not alone in holding this belief in a need to move beyond the sixteenth-century Reformation—mid-century Britain and Ireland was replete with seekers (small 's') but most of the children of the revolution, from the incredibly formalised Presbyterians through to the Muggletonians, still 'sought after teachers' as Gerard Winstanley would have it. Even the most radical groups had leaders. Fox and the Quakers were different as the only authority—earthly and spiritually—was God. Communion was personal and with Him and not mediated by anyone else. Universal communion, enabled through this personal relationship, also promised Universal Salvation. Crucially, as Dandelion would have it this equality led to breaking from the trap of double predestination.

Usefully for such a book, *An Introduction...* contains a good deal of analysis and scholarly intervention. An especially useful part is a study of the period from the later seventeenth century to the early nineteenth, which has great value in itself. Dandelion argues that the period requires more attention, but suggests that the Great Separation, among other things, has left the period under-researched and in need of work. It is currently and historically unpopular, he says, with both scholars and other Quakers alike. The later parts of the book lead the reader through the nineteenth century into the work of Quakers in the modern world, with all-too-brief explorations of current activity across the globe.

These books can be used together for anyone with a focussed interest: one text can lead to another, with a straight reading of the very short one leading to an exploration of the second. However, the readings can be less linear with themes being explored from one to the other. For academics looking at Quakerism with students, either approach could work, especially where time is limited. Dandelion did not fall into any of the traps such a serendipitous dual commission could have led him into and has produced two works which stand alone, yet can be used together.

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DAY, A. (ed.), *Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 214. ISBN 978-0-7546-6122-1, Cloth, £50.

This is the fifth volume of edited papers in the Ashgate BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group series, each one growing out of an international gathering organised by the British Sociological Association. Previous volumes have proved an interesting and stimulating read; this one is no exception.

The theme of the gathering, which was attended primarily by psychologists and sociologists of religion, was 'Religion and the Individual', and the papers and discussions focussed on four questions: What does 'belief' mean to the individual? What are the different ways in which people are religious in practice? What are the different meanings that people attach to religion, and the social expressions of their personal understandings? How does religion shape and reflect the ways in which people see themselves?

Of the thirteen papers included in the volume, only one has specific relevance to Quaker studies. Peter Collins, writing as an anthropologist, considers two apparently opposite modes of being in religious contexts—individuality and sociality. He then introduces what he describes as a complicating factor, the concept of 'secular discourse', to show how the terms 'religious' and 'secular' represent a second dichotomy which may contribute fundamentally to a misunderstanding of religious contexts. Drawing on observations of social interaction among members of a Quaker Meeting in the North of England and analysing those interactions by using narrative theory, Collins argues that, for Quakers at least, discourse is not 'secular' without being 'religious' and vice versa.

Other essays which may be of particular interest to those working in Quaker Studies include Douglas Davies' examination of the place of the individual in sociological studies of religion; Sylvia Collins-Mayo's exploration of the nature and meaning of prayer in young people's daily lives in the UK; a multi-authored essay on Muslim and Christian peacemakers; and David Bell's attempt to develop a theoretical framework for measuring religious identity.

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DENNEHY, C.A. (ed.), *Restoration Ireland: Always Settling and Never Settled* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp. xv + 202. ISBN 978-0-7546-5887-0, Hardback, £55.

As Coleman A. Dennehy explains in the Preface to this volume, 'Restoration Ireland sits between two watersheds in Irish history...the 1640s and 1650s on one side and the Jacobite wars and subsequent Williamite period on the other (p. vii), leading it to have been somewhat neglected in studies of early modern Irish history. This book aims to remedy that neglect.

Those coming to the study of Restoration Ireland from a background in English and/or Scottish Restoration studies will find Tim Harris's introductory essay and Toby Barnard's concluding essay particularly useful in coming to understand the specific features of this period in Irish history. There are essays in the book on land settlement, historiography, political history, Irish Restoration drama, and Irish Catholics. The chapter likely to be of most interest, however, to readers of this journal is Sandra Maria Hynes's 'Changing Their Path: Quaker Adaptations to the Challenge of Restoration, 1660–1680'.

This is a positive contribution to the growing interest in the history of Quakerism outside of London and Northern England, alongside Richard Allen's *Quaker Communities in Wales* (2007) and David Butler's *The Meeting Houses of Ireland* (2004), both reviewed elsewhere in this issue, and Paul Burton's *A Social History of Quakers in Scotland* (2007, reviewed QS 13/1 [2008], pp. 118–20). It is also likely to be a useful resource for those with a specific interest in the experience of Quaker women. The central documents on which this article is based are two corporate epistles from English Women's Meetings received by the Women's Meeting in Dublin in 1674 and 1677, and an epistle sent by Margaret Fell's daughter, Isabel Yeamans, to Ireland in 1676. While the first two epistles were not sent exclusively to Ireland, Hynes provides a good analytical and contextual framework in which to read and understand them. The discussion of the second epistle, sent from the Lancashire Women's Meeting, is particularly helpful; there are only two known copies of this epistle outside Ireland, one in Nottingham and one in Philadelphia. Hynes has also drawn on the Women's Meeting Records held in the Friends' Historical Library, Dublin, and the minutes of the Women's Meeting in Waterford, to explore the ways in which Irish Quaker women responded to the demands made in the epistles, particularly around issues of child rearing, marriage, tithes, and misbehaviour. She looks more briefly at Irish written epistles, including one from the Men's Half-yearly Meeting in 1677 and one sent to London by the first Irish Women's Yearly Meeting in 1679.

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SEARL, S., *The Meanings of Silence in Quaker Worship* (Ceredigion: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), pp. 252. ISBN 0-7734-5853-0, Hardback, £69.95, \$109.95.

In several ways this is an interesting book but as John Punshon warns us in his Preface, 'It is not an easy read' (p. vi). The problem is not so much the content or the structure of the book, though there are problems with both, but the writing style of the author. In places, the writing is poor and the entire text should have been proof-read and corrected for poor grammar, typographical errors, and repetition—what is the point of duplicating references at the end of each chapter and at the end

of the book, for example? Having said that, Searl has some original and provocative things to say about Quaker worship and his book is worth the effort.

Why? In the first instance, what he has to say is, for the most part, grounded in the words of Quakers themselves and that is refreshing. Searl carried out 47 semi-structured interviews with members of the Society, living either in the United States or United Kingdom, and in all but two cases members of non-programmed Meetings—that is, primarily silent Meetings not led by a pastor. Secondly, he engages seriously (in one chapter at least) with feminist discourse, a novel and bold strategy for a man. Finally, he has uncovered a number of useful theses which this reader at least had not encountered previously.

After a brief introduction there are five chapters and a Conclusion. In the Introduction we read that Searl carried out his research under the ‘official Research Oversight Committee’ of his local Monthly Meeting—an intriguing strategy both in terms of ethics and methodology which he could have described in greater detail. Indeed, the underdevelopment of ideas is a signal feature of the book which makes it, at times, a frustrating read. After introducing a good idea or a scholar whose work is not usually associated with Quaker Studies, Searl tends to rush on all too soon to the next good idea—typified in the Introduction by his brief dallying with Lakoff and Johnson on metaphor. Despite the emphasis on the word ‘meaning’ in the title, in Chapter 1 Searl surprisingly foregrounds the experience of Friends. This is a novel perspective and as such very promising and I was disappointed, once again, that it was not developed further. Chapter 2 (‘The Worship Silence and its Meanings’) is sprawling and would have been easier to follow had the author introduced subheadings (there is one, 44 pages in). The chapter itself is a miscellany of information, some original, some gleaned from other works. Searl goes on to consider ‘Worship and Issues of Community’. Given the centrality of ‘community’ to Friends in the UK at least, I was surprised that the chapter failed to tackle definitional problems in this case. ‘Community’ is one of those ‘feel good’ terms that needs unwrapping in each instance—it is not helpful simply to assume that readers will read the word in the same way.

In Chapter 3, Searl turns his attention to Feminist accounts of religious faith and practice. He draws on established scholars such as Phyllis Mack and Liz Stanley and (this is particularly useful) the theses of less well-known scholars—who among you have read Gwendolyn Alker’s work *Silent Subjectivities: Performance, Religiosity and the Phenomenon of Silence* (2003)? It would be unfair to say that the chapter reads a little like a short literature review, but the authors considered do tend to come and go with alarming regularity. The ploy is to take a couple of male authors (Taber, Kelly, Gorman) and subject them to a feminist critique with fairly unsurprising results. Typically, male Quaker authors tend to reflect the ambient sexism of the culture in which they wrote (and write?). For me, the final chapter ‘Unresolved Dilemmas in Quakerism’ is the most coherently written and by far the most engaging. The reason for this is quite simple—it is in this chapter that Searl foregrounds the talk of his Quaker interviewees. The one thing which comes across most strongly is the wonderful individuality (*not* individualism) of Searl’s research participants. They are

thoughtful, good humoured, and always inciteful—and Searl is to be congratulated on his sound interviewing technique. Searl concludes, sensibly, with a brief overview of the book's strengths, also pointing to areas of research that he would like to see developed, including comparative research on programmed and unprogrammed worship.

The author is himself a Quaker and occasionally slips awkwardly and probably unintentionally into an 'insider' mode of expression. I am not quite sure which audience this book is aimed at. Lay readers (Quaker or not) will probably find the prose daunting. Perhaps it would sit most comfortably in Religious Studies. The price of the book ensures that it will only be purchased by libraries. This is an interdisciplinary and somewhat quirky account of (unprogrammed) Quaker worship that, despite its several flaws, is worthy of the attention of Quaker Studies scholars.

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