

"LIBERATING OURSELVES": UTOPIAN COMMUNALISM IN THE
NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses Charles Tilly's definition of social movements and considers examples from three nineteenth century communal societies, and three from the twentieth century to argue that Utopian communalism is a social movement, not a series of related phenomena. This movement is a fabric of Utopian threads representing the sharing of ideas, methods and members woven together laterally between communities contemporary to each other and longitudinally across time from the past to the present and into the future.

The six Utopian communities include Nashoba, Harmony Society and Modern Times in the nineteenth century and the Diggers, Peoples Temple and Kerista in the late twentieth century. This dissertation examines the six communities in relation to their attempts to resolve social problems of race, gender, and economic inequality. These questions illuminate the continuities in goals, methods, and struggles to overcome socially conditioned attitudes about race, gender and class. The author used published and archival memoirs, letters, community publications, sermons, visitor's accounts, legal and business records and interviews to illustrate the arguments. This dissertation concludes that Utopian communities have struggled to achieve their Utopian goals of gender, race and economic equality often because they proved unable to let go of social institutions and attitudes that perpetuate these inequalities. Nonetheless the striving for Utopia is in itself worthwhile and offers lessons for society at large in how to create a better world.

DEDICATION

For Frances.

You always believed in me.

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CHAPTER I

SEEKING A NEW WAY

Utopianism persists throughout the history of the United States, from the Puritan "City on the Hill" to the modern ecovillage. Threads of Utopian ideology and historical consciousness stretch across this long trajectory. They provide precedents for ongoing critiques of society and plans to rectify our failures in living up to the Founding Fathers' ideals of liberty and equality for all Americans. There is a collage on the cover of the 1993 Spring/Summer issue of *Communities: Journal of Cooperative Living* that depicts the images of two dozen historical visionary leaders. The cover illustrates the influence that past communities and thinkers hold for modern Utopian communalists, and the ongoing relevance of their ideas.

The 1980s Kerista Commune wrote of their debt to Robert Owen. "Robert Owen, a Utopian Socialist (1771-1858) said that the greatest inhibitors to the advancement of social justice were: private property, the family and Christianity...The fundamental precept of the Utopian Socialists was that capitalists would voluntarily surrender their wealth...[for] a quality of life unattainable outside the network of democratic communities in which all live at the same standard of living."¹ Kerista viewed themselves as Scientific Utopians, an improvement on Owen, offering a system in which

¹ "Why is SEX a Tool of the New Grassroots Political Ideology?" undated publication [penciled date April 1985], 1, Kerista KISS Books, Box 1, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

capitalists only donated surplus wealth to create a more equitable society for all. Countering Marx's criticism of the Utopian Socialists that the threat or use of force would be necessary to coerce capitalists to give up their wealth, Kerista offered an incentive. "What is the prize that could motivate the formation of a grassroots confederation of people engaged in creative collective philanthropy of their surplus income? SEX!"²

While this response might elicit a laugh or a raised eyebrow, it nonetheless illustrates that modern Utopian communities are aware of their predecessors and consider these examples as opportunities for learning. These historical examples, regardless of their goals or outcomes, offer real world lessons that can be analyzed and built upon to develop new Utopian projects. These threads stretched both forward in time and laterally between communities, weaving the tapestry of the communalism movement. A tapestry or fabric is woven of threads that move from point A to point B. Some of these threads are aligned longitudinally to create the warp of the fabric, while others move horizontally, passing over and under the warp to create the weft. Both sets of threads contribute to the strength of the fabric. This differs from a web where there are multiple connections to a single point. Communalism is a fabric of Utopian threads representing the sharing of ideas, methods and members woven together laterally between communities contemporary to each other and longitudinally across time from the past to the present and into the future.

² "Why is SEX a Tool?" 1.

Communities also learned from their contemporaries, sharing ideas, members and projects. An example of this with negative outcomes would be Jim Jones' use of techniques he learned from his contemporaries at Synanon and the Unification Church (Moonies) to increase his control over his followers.³ This work argues that these Utopian threads not only exist but are significant to the ongoing critiques of society and the solutions devised to address them. Scholars have completed little work thus far tracing the Utopian threads over time in historical Utopian communities. By considering the connections not only to contemporary events and projects but also over the decades throughout the Utopian history of the United States this project will establish that not only were twentieth century communards not anti-intellectual, but that they actively sought out and examined the work of past Utopians as a tool to create better communities.⁴

Many historians of communal societies express a recurring concern about the lack of awareness both among students and scholars of the pervasive existence of communes or intentional communities throughout United States history. Historians' attention has largely focused on the 1960s/70s or on the nineteenth century's "Big

³ Debbie Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 65. Synanon began as a drug rehabilitation program and evolved into a commune between 1958 and 1991. The Unification Church began in South Korea in 1954 as an alternate religious movement and grew to worldwide significance in the 1970s with over a million followers. Both communities were branded as cults and received considerable criticism in the 1970s for their oppressive methods.

⁴ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 38; Allen J. Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 278 [although Matusow acknowledges Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death* as the exception];

Three”, Oneida, Shakers, and early Mormons. Yet, the Utopian impulse among some to isolate themselves in the hopes of creating a better way of life, to experiment with alternatives to the state and mainstream institutions, or to provide a model for the rest of society has long roots. Communal scholar Timothy Miller has identified over 13,000 intentional communities from the beginnings of the United States to the present day and catalogued descriptions of them.⁵ This Utopian impulse clearly has lasting relevance, not merely as an historical phenomenon but as a vibrant and active ongoing lifestyle choice that can inform mainstream choices about how to live a better life or create a more egalitarian, sustainable, and healthier society.

The literature uses the terms commune, communal society, and Utopian community interchangeably. Most recently, modern groups have adopted “intentional community” or “ecovillages” to distance themselves from the stigma associated with 1960s communes. According to noted communal studies scholar, Timothy Miller, “The group in question must be gathered on the basis of some kind of purpose or vision, and see itself as set apart from mainstream society to some degree... The group in question must live together on property that has some kind of clear physical commonality to it... The group must have some kind of financial or material sharing, some kind of economic commonality. That does not mean that all income and assets must be pooled... The group must have a membership of at least five adults, not all of whom are related by

⁵ Timothy Miller, *The Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities* (Binghamton, NY: Richard Couper Press, 2013). I use Miller's work because it represents the only holistic longitudinal cataloguing of American communalism. Other scholars have considered aspects of the topic but not with Miller's comprehensive approach.

blood or marriage, who have chosen voluntarily to join in common cause.”⁶ Elaborating on that definition, the modern term intentional community adds the implication of not just voluntarism but a shared intention. These are not random collectives but rather, people who have chosen to live together to pursue a set of goals or ideals whether philosophical, religious, or pragmatic. This attempt to create a better life for oneself or an improved model for society is often described as Utopian.

Utopianism is a highly-contested term, partly because it is used both for literary and historical groups and also because “Utopian” became a pejorative term for projects deemed idealistic or in particular, too socialist. Scholar of both Utopian literature and radical social movements, Gregory Claeys, argues that “Utopias operate in three fields: community, ideology and literature. In this [first] context Utopias have to be realisable, and thus the Utopia must be socially realistic. This requires a vision of Utopia which is not perfectionist: there must be room for change, development, disagreement.”⁷ He views Utopia as something scholars and the public should consider seriously as an expressed desire for social change and critique of the status quo, rather than an aberration to be marginalized as an eccentricity. This work reiterates Claeys's view that Utopia is a goal to strive for, that conceiving of Utopia, is inherently a worthwhile aim.

⁶ Timothy Miller, "A Matter of Definition: Just What Is an Intentional Community," *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association* 30, no. 1 (2010): 6-7. Miller's definition reflects his consideration of the definitions offered by historians and sociologists over the past century.

⁷ Greg Claeys, host, "Utopia: A Question of Definition," Backdoor Broadcasting Company Academic Podcasts, *Backdoor Broadcasting Company*, March 1, 2011.

Traditional narratives, including some recent works, of communalism tend to follow a pattern: they focus on a few over-studied groups (Mormons, Shakers, Oneida);⁸ they characterize communal groups as misguided or idealistic dreamers;⁹ they either fail to contextualize communalism as a movement within events of their time or within the broader picture of social protest and Utopianism;¹⁰ or they make sweeping generalizations about intentional communities.¹¹ There are exceptions to this critique, including Carl Guarneri's study of Fourierism and John Harrison's work on the American Owenites, both of which contextualize their subject within nineteenth century reform.¹² Historiographically, this corresponds to a political trend to label the latter half of the 1960s and its counterculture as the cause of social ills lasting into the 1970s and 80s, such as drug use, rising divorce rates, declining morality, and increasing secularism. Because communes, regardless of their time period, are associated in the public memory

⁸ Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: 3 American Communal Experiments of the 19th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community and the Mormons* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991). These are just 2 examples of comparative studies of these three groups. There are also numerous single group studies focusing on Oneida, Shakers or early Mormons.

⁹ Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America 1680-1880* (New York: Literary Publishers, 1951); W.J. Rorabaugh, *American Hippies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁰ Constance Noyes Robertson, *Oneida Community: The Breakup, 1876-1881* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972); Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968).

¹¹ Brian J.L. Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments: Communal Havens from Long-Term Crises* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 1992); Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).

¹² Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); John F. C. Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral Order: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (New York: Scribner, 1969).

with the 1960s/70s the focus in much of the historiography has been on stigmatizing this as anti-social and deviant behavior rather than viewing it as a search for a Utopian solution to the social problems of race, gender, and economic inequality.¹³ In doing so, these historians ignore the validity of the critiques presented by Utopian communal groups regarding institutions, hierarchies and patriarchy, the relationship of the state to the people, and the potential these groups offer for moving Utopia from the abstract into reality.

Communalism has been an adjunct to American society since its beginnings. From the early Puritan communities through modern ecovillages, some Americans have chosen to reject aspects of mainstream society and attempted to create a new model for better living. According to communal scholar, Yaacov Oved, "in modern times the United States is the only place where voluntary communes have existed continuously for 250 years."¹⁴ While communards form a minority group, they reveal critiques of mainstream society that reverberated so strongly for them that they felt they could no longer live within it. We all have concerns about our world, and there are aspects of society we wish were different; however most of us are comfortable staying where we are. For most of us, whether we actively work to better society, or just gripe about social ills to our friends, we remain a part of the mainstream we criticize. Making that break

¹³ Robert C. Cottrell, *Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll: The Rise of America's 1960's Counterculture* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Anderson, *The Movement*; Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis, 1944), v.

¹⁴ Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), xiv.

with institutions, family, work and other aspects of our daily lives represents a huge step into the unknown. While some historians, such as Daniel Boorstin, have portrayed radicals, including Communists, anarchists and religious innovators, as extremists beyond the pale of American normalcy, this is an overly simplistic consensus tool to stigmatize non-conformists and devalue their contributions to history and society.¹⁵ Understanding why people take that step requires that we examine the historical context, and consider individual voices. Utopian communities and their members are not homogeneous in their motives and goals.

This work contends that Utopian communalism represents not simply a series of isolated phenomena but an interconnected movement of individuals using different models with varied success to seek a variety of solutions to the societal problems of race, gender and economic inequality. America, from its revolutionary beginnings, has promoted itself as a nation grounded in a belief in liberty, justice, equality for all. Sadly, the United States has struggled to live up to the rhetoric of its Founding Fathers resulting in social critiques and social movements stepping in to address these concerns. Historians have similarly debated whether reform movements in the nineteenth century represent a movement or related phenomena. Historians of social movements, particularly those who study nineteenth century reform, disagree on whether we should consider reform a movement or whether instead it represented a cluster of interrelated reform groups. Scholars such as Ronald Walters, Alice Felt Tyler, Bruce Dorsey and

¹⁵ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Decline of Radicalism: Reflections on America Today* (New York: Vintage, 1970), 121-134.

Richard Hofstadter considered reform as a series of overlapping but not coherent movements that they nonetheless grouped under the umbrellas of antebellum or Progressive reform;¹⁶ while others, such as Lori Ginzberg, and Gregory Garvey, took the view that reform groups shared similarities in such things as membership, approach and general goals significant enough to constitute a broad social movement for change.¹⁷

Similarly, historians also debate the question of whether communalism is cohesive enough to describe it as a movement or as stand-alone phenomena that share attributes. For example, Robert Houriet asserted that contemporaneously (1960s/70s) outsiders viewed communes as "a gut reaction of a generation" but over time came to see them as part of a movement.¹⁸ John Curl somewhat differently described communalism as a recurring movement in American history, acknowledging the cyclical pattern of communal activity.¹⁹ Laurence Veysey recognized communalism as a movement within the larger radical tradition, a stance that contextualizes communalism historically and

¹⁶ Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 12; Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment*; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 3-4; Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 8.

¹⁷ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the 19th Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 8; T. Gregory Garvey, *Creating the Culture of Reform in Antebellum America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 1; Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 21.

¹⁸ Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Avon, 1971), xiii.

¹⁹ John Curl, *For All the People: Uncovering the Hidden History of Cooperation. Cooperative Movements and Communalism in America* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2009), 279.

ideologically by connecting it to both its predecessors and its contemporaries.²⁰ Timothy Miller describes communalism as "a continuous, if not entirely seamless...fabric that stretches back for more than three centuries, expressing its deliberately constructed interconnected nature."²¹ Others such as Yaacov Oved, Charles Erasmus and Edward Spann view communalism as a series of related phenomena within a larger context of social critique.²² This work adds to that conversation by considering specific communities as support for the more general argument posed by other scholars to further develop the understanding of how a communal movement functions in real life.

Utopian communalism presents a somewhat atypical example of a social movement in that it walks a line between the public and private, criticizing mainstream society and institutions implicitly and offering a model for change without necessarily demanding that the rest of society act on it. Sociologist Charles Tilly created what is perhaps the definitive, or at least most widely accepted, understanding of social movements.²³ Tilly wrote extensively about social movements, and created a more

²⁰ Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in 20th Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 457.

²¹ Timothy Miller, *Quest for Utopia in Twentieth Century America, Vol. 1 1900-1960* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1994), xiv.

²² Oved, *Two Hundred Years*, 243; Charles J. Erasmus, *In Search of the Common Good: Utopian Experiments Past and Future* (New York: The Free Press, 1977); Edward K. Spann, *Brotherly Tomorrows: Movements for a Cooperative Society in America, 1820-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 1.

²³ Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 3-4 [This is Tilly's description of his theoretical framework.] Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds, *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 3; Gerald F. Davis et al, eds, *Social Movements and Organization Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Charles Kurzman, "Meaning-Making in Social Movements," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2008): 9.

specific and defined understanding of these phenomena than have other sociologists. His definitions allow this work to identify the ways that Utopian communities interact with each other and how this constitutes a social movement. This work will use Tilly's definition to support the argument that Utopian communalism is a social movement rather than a series of related phenomena. According to Tilly social movements use the tools of: campaign, WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment) displays and political action.²⁴ Looking at Utopian communalism we can see that while typically they did not lobby or petition the government or march in protests, actions that are commonly associated with social movements, they did use the tools Tilly describes. Campaign, by Tilly's definition, is "sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target audiences,"²⁵ In relation to communalism, these groups created throughout their existence a campaign in the form of presenting an alternative to the contemporary economic, gender and institutional situation arguing, at least implicitly although in some cases directly, that they had created a better way. Although not typically contentious, choosing instead to establish an alternative model in parallel to the status quo, these Utopian communities challenged, by their very existence, mainstream society. While many did not directly appeal to political leadership to acknowledge and accept their alternative, they did offer their ideas and practices to the public.

²⁴ Tilly, *Social Movements*, 3.

²⁵ Tilly, *Social Movements*, 3.

Tilly's second characteristic, WUNC, also applies to Utopian communities. Each of these groups presented their Utopian ideals to the public with the goal of being taken seriously. These groups earnestly believed in their missions and the significance of society's problems for the future of themselves and America; they trusted that they were worthy of consideration as an alternate to the status quo. As communities, these Utopians inherently demonstrated unity, in several cases over the long term. Unity does not mean that there was not dissent or contention within the group, but rather that they persisted and adapted to work through these conflicts. While Utopian communities demonstrate a range of numbers in terms of their size, in this they resemble other types of social movements such as protests and reform groups. All of the examples in this study maintained a critical mass of members who accepted the ideals and practices of their community over time. They were neither ephemeral nor unstable; the final part of WUNC, commitment, is a necessary characteristic of Utopian communities.

Tilly's third characteristic, political action, manifests in a variety of ways in communalism. For example, Harmony Society made numerous demands on politicians relating to respect for their First Amendment rights as a religious group,²⁶ Peoples Temple actively challenged the government on First Amendment rights for protesters.²⁷ The Diggers took issue in court with demands that they comply with a variety of local

²⁶ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 376.

²⁷ *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXX, Issue 6, February 10, 1973; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXXI, Issue 25, June 22, 1974.

laws including regulation of the use of public spaces, and petitioned City Hall to change the way they regulated food distribution and living spaces.²⁸ Despite living in isolation to varying degrees and despite their rejection of mainstream society, Utopian communalists nonetheless cared about the outside world and challenged politicians to improve it.

By Tilly's definition each of these groups qualifies as a social movement, but does communalism as a broader whole fit this characterization? Much like the reform movement of the nineteenth century, communalism is a movement of overlapping and interconnected projects.²⁹ As discussed in this work, communalists drew on a pool of dedicated Utopians working on a variety of social projects and critiques. As with the reform movement, individuals moved horizontally between communities bringing with them an expanding perspective and experience of utopia in both theory and practice. Communities, further, communicated with each other, sharing achievements and challenges, seeking advice and information to advance their goals. As communities collapsed, their members moved on to other groups and projects, continuing their pursuit of Utopia through different methods and approaches. Looking longitudinally, groups sought inspiration and practical learning by turning to the writings and history of past Utopians. This study uses Tilly's definition of a social movement as a basis to illustrate

²⁸ Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (New York: Citadel, 1990), 364-365, 465.

²⁹ Historian Ronald Walters described a reform movement as any collective organized effort to improve society or individuals by achieving some well-articulated goal. This description applies well to Utopian communalism drawing under the umbrella of reform. (Walters, *American Reformers*, xiv.)

how communalism functions as a social movement of interconnected projects rather than as intentional communities in isolation from each other.

There are, as Miller describes, thousands of communal societies to choose from as examples to support these arguments. This work examines six Utopian communities as examples to understand communalism as a movement and how it fits into the context of reform and radicalism in their time. Three of these communities existed during the nineteenth century: Nashoba in the antebellum period, Modern Times mid-century, and Harmony Society spanning the entire nineteenth century. Each of these communities represents a different model of approaches to Utopianism.

Radical Frances Wright created the interracial Nashoba as a pilot project to demonstrate to plantation owners a viable and economically sound path to emancipation and assimilation of their slaves. The scandal that enveloped Nashoba provides a look at the antebellum response to miscegenation and free love and to women transgressing their domestic role. Nashoba was unusual in that a woman conceived it and led the project, and because of the direct way it sought to intervene in American race relations and the economic and social structures of slavery. Wright left a considerable body of documentation of her understanding of race, education, slavery, gender and class issues. A limitation of the sources for this community are that the voices of the enslaved members of Nashoba were filtered through the writings of its white leadership. Because Wright intended Nashoba to act as an example for Southern planters, it is significant that we also have documentation of their response to Wright and her project.

Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews strove to create an alternative model to the market revolution and industrial capitalism in America. Their work expressed their concerns with the treatment of the worker within these systems and the limitations put on worker's autonomy. Josiah Warren's experimentation with labor notes and the Time Store system fit into the context of market revolution critiques in America. Modern Times also dealt with its own free love scandal but on different terms and in a later context than Nashoba. Modern Times offers the opportunity to consider the viability of anarchism as an organization model for an intentional community as Warren insisted on the absolute right of members to live their lives on their own terms without coercion. Archival resources for this community include the personal correspondence and writings of numerous members, although there is less than desirable available documentation from the women at Modern Times.

George Rapp brought hundreds of his followers from Germany to Pennsylvania at the beginning of the nineteenth century to escape religious persecution. Harmony Society endured for a century as an isolated, German alternative to mainstream Christianity. The multiple generations of Harmony Society illustrate the evolution of the group from immigrants to Americans, choosing to live their lives away from broader societal currents and according to their own beliefs. Decisions and events within the community document the shifting understanding of the members in regards to communalism, celibacy and governance. Rapp's authoritarian leadership provided stability to the Harmonists and his adopted son Frederick's business acumen helped the community establish a capitalist empire that operated according to its own rules

regarding ownership and the treatment of workers. Harmony Society left extensive archival documentation of their business dealings, their interactions with the courts, and their religious beliefs and practices. There are fewer documents that illustrate their personal lives, feelings and opinions. As a result, this work will derive its understanding of these through interpretation of more formal sources.

The remaining three communities existed in the mid to late twentieth century. Peoples Temple began in Indianapolis as a Disciples of Christ congregation in 1954. They became communal after their move to Ukiah, California. Jim Jones organized his community around goals of race, gender and economic equality, for which Peoples Temple received considerable public accolades before their tragic finale at Jonestown in Guyana in November 1978. Peoples Temple offers the opportunity to examine a community with quasi-religious authoritarian leadership and the ways in which this both contributed to and undermined the stability of the community. The vast quantities of personal accounts from Peoples Temple also provide the means to contrast the vision of the group with the execution of its goals, and to tease apart the intersectional differences in lived experiences. Intersectionality in this work refers to the ways in which individuals experience events and situations differently depending on the overlap of their race/ethnicity, gender, class, age and sexuality identities.³⁰ For example, a young, white, middle-class educated, nonreligious woman such as Laura Johnston experienced life in

³⁰ This definition is based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (Volume 1989, Issue 1, Article 8)

Peoples Temple very differently than an elderly, religious, lower income, less educated black woman like Hyacinth Thrush. This study uses personal accounts where they exist to illustrate intersectional differences while recognizing that this was not always possible in other communities due to the lack of personal accounts, particularly from women and people of color. These personal sources nonetheless require care in interpretation as they reflect the biases produced by the level of commitment of the individual to the community at the time of writing. Those who had defected from the community tend to reflect not only a rejection of Jones' teachings and practices but also a desire to make the outside world aware of the abuses within the community. Those who stayed tend to struggle to reconcile their commitment to ideals they still believed in with acceptance of, or refusal to acknowledge, deeply flawed practices.

Peoples Temple is perhaps in some ways a controversial inclusion in a discussion of Utopian societies. This community faced considerable criticism as a cult even before Jonestown. Popular understanding of Peoples Temple focuses on the tragedy at Jonestown and Jim Jones' personal failings. This work uses the word alternative religious movement rather than cult because, as noted by religious studies scholar Timothy Miller among others, cult is a pejorative term not a descriptive.³¹ The designation of a religious movement as a cult depends more on the designator's feelings about the beliefs and practices of the movement than any objective or quantifiable description. The choice to include Peoples Temple in this work was based in the Utopian

³¹ Tim Miller, "'Cults' and Intentional Communities: Working Through Some Complicated Issues," *Communities Directory: The Guide to Intentional Communities and Cooperative Living* (Federation for Intentional Communities, 2016): 29.

goals that the community set for itself and the belief of the members that they were in fact working to create a better society. The intent to create a better world, not the goals or methods, qualifies Peoples Temple as a Utopian society.

Kerista similarly focused on race, gender, and economic equality in their free love commune in San Francisco in the 1970s and 80s. Leader Jud Presmont claimed to have received ideas for an alternative religion through an inspired vision. Keristans created successful businesses that they reconciled with an internal structure of income and resource sharing. Kerista has left a substantial archive of printed material describing their community ideals, beliefs, projects and lifestyle. These include interviews and panel discussions, promotional material for their community and its projects, and art work. There are also videos and individual accounts of life experiences in the community and articles written by members to teach others about life in Kerista. As with Peoples Temple, it is important to separate rhetoric from reality and consider the perspective of the writer in relation to their commitment to Kerista at the time of production. Kerista presents opportunities in this work to examine free love in the late twentieth century, authoritarian religious leadership, women's roles in community, and their attempt to reconcile entrepreneurial capitalism with communal property. There are no monographs about the history of Kerista at this time, although the community appears in some sociological and psychological studies.³²

³² Ayana Pines, *Romantic Jealousy: Causes, Symptoms, Cures* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Similarly, the final group, the San Francisco Diggers, receives frequent mentions in books on San Francisco in the late 1960s, but there is not yet a history of the group. Historian Timothy Hodgdon included the Diggers in his study of masculinity in the counterculture, but the broader history of the community fell outside the focus of his work.³³ The Diggers present a vivid example of a Utopian community that totally rejected capitalism and consumerism in favor of an economic model based on barter, sharing, and repurposing resources. They embodied the spirit of the Haight Ashbury counterculture of the late 1960s. The Diggers provide insights into Haight Ashbury at the height of the hippie movement and the context that this provided for mid-century communalism. They were front and center of counterculture critiques of economic, race, and gender inequality, and their writings and memoirs display the ways in which the Diggers lived their lives in search of their Utopian goals.

These six communities were chosen to bring attention to Utopians that have either been understudied or not written about for decades and because they offer the opportunity to examine a variety of approaches to leadership, organization, goals, and outcomes. The interaction of these groups with each other and with outside reform movements demonstrate the connective nature of communalism as a movement. Additionally, these groups left a body of documentation that allows for the study of these aspects of their lives. Because these documents vary widely in type and source they must be treated carefully with consideration of their authority, legitimacy, and bias. The

³³ Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counterculture Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

extant sources for some communities do not reflect the voices of all who participated. For some of these groups the majority of available voices are white, male, straight, and with some degree of power in their community. The perspectives of women and people of color are filtered through the lens of the men who describe their experiences. Outside sources such as newspapers, even those that interviewed members, are colored by the point of view of someone who did not belong to the community and did not subscribe to their ideals or practices. These perspectives are useful, however for considering the response to the Utopian model created by these communities. They also reflect the values rejected by these Utopians.

This study will use these six historical examples to assert that: Utopian communalism is a movement, that we can trace Utopian threads from modern intentional communities back to their historical predecessors and literary Utopians, and that Utopian communalism is not an aberration but rather a serious search to address real-world solutions to social critiques of racial, gender and economic inequality. This work will bring new awareness of understudied Utopian communities, including Nashoba, Harmony Society, Modern Times, Diggers, and Kerista and shift the focus on Peoples Temple away from the tragedy of Jonestown back to the communal lives and Utopian goals of its members. By connecting these groups along a trajectory of Utopian communalism this study will demonstrate that communes did not exist in isolation but form part of the larger picture of Utopianism, communalism, and social protest.

It is the goal of this work that the reader will come away with a better understanding of communalism as a historic and ongoing movement with real world applications for solving societal problems. By conceptualizing Utopian societies as the quest for a Utopian solution to social problems of race, gender and economic inequality, this work will re-situate them as serious attempts to create a better world, rather than as dismissible fringe eccentricities and reassert their value as models for social change. Our world faces many threats and challenges to living happily, healthfully, harmoniously and sustainably. Utopian communalism offers models and innovative alternatives to mainstream society that may provide the solutions to these problems. To quote communal scholar Donald Pitzer, "All the security, solidarity, and survival benefits, which have been the great appeal of communal living for millennia, are just as viable and vitally needed in the twenty-first century. Whether it be security from loneliness or a depressed economy, solidarity in the fellowship of trusted and like-minded friends, or survival from the threats from a warming planet or the pollution and exhaustion of energy sources, communal living in a multitude of forms is relevant to today's world."³⁴ Utopian communalism continues to be relevant by offering us opportunities to learn from the lessons of past and present communalists, if only we are open to them.

³⁴ Donald E. Pitzer, "Developmental Communalism: An Alternative Approach to Communal Studies," in *Utopian Thought and Communal Experience*, Dennis Hardy and Lorna Davison, eds. (Middlesex, England: Middlesex Polytechnic, 1989), 24.

CHAPTER II

BACK IN THE DAY: NINETEENTH CENTURY COMMUNALISM

Introduction

Utopian communalists had a choice of staying in society and being unhappy, changing it from within, forming an original religious movement or social group while still living in mainstream society, or finally and most extreme, cutting themselves off from the world and creating a commune. That decision was bound up in the world in which they lived and we must study it in that context. While many Utopian communities in the nineteenth century experimented, in the sense that their members were trying out different ways of conceptualizing and living as alternatives to the mainstream models, these groups also intended to create better lives for the people living there. Numerous communities such as Harmony Society, Bishop Hill, and Bettina offered opportunities for immigrants to create a fresh life for themselves in America without hierarchy, without religious persecution, with expanded access to land, and the benefits of pooled resources.¹ Other communities like Fruitlands, New Harmony and Brook Farm appealed to intellectuals seeking a venue to experiment with innovative ideas about education, economics and spirituality.² All of these shared the Utopian desire to solve what they

¹ Harmony Society will be discussed in depth in this work. Erik Janssen created Bishop Hill in 1846 as a communal haven for religious dissidents he had brought to Illinois from their native Sweden. The community endured until financial mismanagement following Janssen's murder resulted in its collapse in 1861. German nobles encouraged the establishment of German colonies in Texas in the mid-1800s. A group of mostly student anarchists created Bettina in the Texas Hill Country in 1848. It was short-lived as the members proved unwilling to commit to the hard work necessary to survive on the frontier.

² Transcendentalists Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane established Fruitlands near Boston in the 1840s as a Utopian agricultural project based on their ideals of communalism, vegetarianism, austere living and communing with nature. Members isolated themselves from the world to focus on their inner

viewed as the problems in American society in ways that would benefit the members firstly, and secondly serve as a model for outsiders. These Utopian threads connected contemporary communities with each other and in many cases extended into the past to older communities and to writers like Thomas More. Many of these groups communicated and visited with each other, seeking out opportunities to learn from other Utopian projects. This work contends that Utopian communalism represents not simply a series of isolated phenomena but an interconnected movement of individuals using different models to seek a variety of solutions to the social problems of race, gender and economic inequality.

This work considers three nineteenth century Utopian communities within the context of communalism in that period and the social, economic, legal and political changes that motivated the move to communal projects. America was in its infancy as a nation in the early nineteenth century. While founded on the principles of liberty and equality, as noted by historian Eric Foner, the history of the United States represents an ongoing struggle over who would gain access to those rights and who would remain

spiritual and physical development. It struggled to attain subsistence levels because the members lacked farming skills and the desire to take time away from their intellectual pursuits to maintain the farm. Scottish philanthropist Robert Owen advertised for innovative Utopians to join him at the New Harmony complex he purchased from Harmony Society in Southern Indiana in 1825. New Harmony also failed because of a lack of hard-working skilled membership. It formed more of a thinktank for reformers in a wide variety of fields than a cohesive Utopian community. George Ripley created Brook Farm in 1841 as a joint stock company (rather than communal property) based on Transcendental ideals. Members later shifted to a Fourierist structure during the peak of that movement's popularity. The underlying draw of communalism was that by sharing labor members would have more leisure time to pursue their intellectual and spiritual activities.

excluded.³ Utopian communities have traditionally offered alternatives to those who felt left out of racial, gender and economic equality whether through communal property or cooperative economies, democratic or anarchist organizations, or more egalitarian divisions of labor and gender relations. Beginning before the Revolution, the economic structure of America began to evolve, becoming more industrial, more urban, and on a larger scale of production and distribution. Changes in technology from steam power to transportation plus an influx of immigrant labor provided the nation with the necessary components to shift the population toward the cities, towards wage labor, and to de-skill the work needed for the expanding manufacturing sector.⁴ With these changes in American society came a concentration of wealth among the entrepreneurial class and a loss of control for wage laborers over their production. More women and children entered the workforce outside the home, contributing to the family income but placing them in vulnerable positions in terms of health and safety.⁵

Women's roles within the home also changed in the early Republic. The ideal of Republican motherhood held that women, because of their moral superiority, had a

³ Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), xv. In this Foner echoes the words of Carl Becker in *New Liberties for Old* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 3.

⁴ Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 43, 536-537, 539; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 389-390; Harry Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1990), 28-29, 194-195; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 3-6.

⁵ Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 23; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 546-547; Watson, *Liberty*, 31, 135; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 139-144; Bruce Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 143-144.

responsibility to the nation to mold the first generation of American youth to become hardworking, responsible citizens.⁶ This role officially limited women's influence to the domestic sphere, denying them an equal voice as citizens in a democracy, as peers in the legal system, as participants in public discourse.⁷ Historians such as Lori Ginzberg and Linda Kerber have challenged the ideology of separate spheres, arguing that women's lived experience differed from the rhetorical proscription.⁸ Some elite and middle class women found ways to introduce public concerns into private spheres or, less commonly, to risk censure by speaking publicly.⁹ For women who worked outside the home, the double day added the work of raising and educating their sons to housework and wage labor.¹⁰

During the Second Great Awakening, the growth of the evangelical movement encouraged individuals to take responsibility for their own improvement and salvation with many preachers linking progress and morality as necessities to bring about the

⁶ Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 6-8; Kerber, *Women*, 11-12.

⁷ Walters, *Reformers*, 104; Boylan, *Origins*, 6-7; Kerber, *Women*, 269, 153-154; Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 14; Laurie, *Beyond*, 96.

⁸ Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth Century United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 3; Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39.

⁹ Catherine Allgor, "Lady Will Have More Influence," in *Women and the Unstable State in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Alison M. Parker (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 50-52; Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 23-28.

¹⁰ Walters, *Reformers*, 103;

Kingdom of God.¹¹ Women increasingly found their voices, first among other women and then in a burgeoning network of reform projects from temperance to prison and asylum reform, to abolition and other projects.¹² Within these movements, women drew on their status as morally superior to provide legitimacy for their public efforts, and challenge their second-class citizen standing.¹³ American institutions further restricted the rights of women in terms of their economic control over their own wages and property and their access to education.¹⁴ Married women fell under the legal and economic control of their husbands, leading some early feminists to reject women's suffrage because it would give married men a second vote.¹⁵ Unhappily wed women in many states found it difficult to obtain a divorce even in cases of abuse or abandonment and risked losing their children if they could leave the marriage.¹⁶

Society denied African-American women the title of lady and with it the claim to moral legitimacy as reformers, further challenging their attempts to participate in public conversations about the needs for change, although they did work together through mutual aid societies and other projects including abolition.¹⁷ People of color

¹¹ Walters, *Reformers*, 26-27; Laurie, *Beyond*, 26, 40, 97; Sklar, *Rights*, 12-13.

¹² Boylan, *Origins*, 27-29; Ginzberg, *Women*, 37-44.

¹³ Boylan, *Origins*, 136-137; Ginzberg, *Women*, 24, 96.

¹⁴ Alison M. Parker, "'What Do We Expect the People Legislatively to Effect?' Frances Wright, Moral Reform, and State Legislation," in *Women*, ed. Parker, 65.

¹⁵ Parker, "Frances Wright," 66; Sklar, *Rights*, 146-147.

¹⁶ Kerber, *Women*, 159-161.

¹⁷ Boylan, *Origins*, 34-35, 137.

faced many challenges in the nineteenth century. American society largely excluded non-whites, whether enslaved or free, from the Constitution's liberties and equality. In the antebellum period responses to these limits evolved from colonization projects designed to remove the "problem" of emancipated blacks from white society, to free soil movements, to abolition, from gradual to immediate. Some whites argued for emancipation based on a Scriptural understanding of all people being equal in God's eyes, while Enlightenment ideas on the *tabula rasa* and natural rights influenced others.¹⁸ A combination of economic interests, fear and prejudice towards blacks, and animosity towards abolitionists discouraged the majority of Americans from pursuing emancipation as a solution to these moral concerns.¹⁹

These prejudices also affected other people of color. Only a tiny minority of white Americans including Catherine Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, protested the removal and mistreatment of American Indians, particularly during the Jackson presidency.²⁰ Nativists pushed for restrictions on immigration, particularly of Catholics, Asians and Eastern and Southern Europeans, who were viewed as alien, less white than Northern Europeans, and less desirable additions to the American population despite the necessary labor they provided.

¹⁸ Sklar, *Rights*, 35; Walters, *Reformers*, 24.; Foner, *Freedom*, 33, 40-41, 86.

¹⁹ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 5.

²⁰ Ginzberg, *Women*, 67; Sklar, *Rights*, 18; Foner, *Freedom*, 78.

Before delving into specific questions of race, gender and economic inequality, it is necessary to understand who these three groups, Nashoba, Harmony Society, and Modern Times were and how they came about. This chapter presents an overview of these three nineteenth century communities and the historical context in which they existed. This context is significant because it establishes that Utopian solutions do not arise in a vacuum and it will help us view the Utopian threads connecting nineteenth century communalism to its twentieth century incarnations.

Nashoba

When Frances Wright first came to the United States in 1821 it was with the idealistic belief that the land of “life, liberty, and happiness” would prove more egalitarian and compassionate to the sufferings of the unfortunate than her native Britain. Although her initial writings on America reflect this naïveté, it was not long before Wright came to recognize that Americans did not extend equal rights to all men, and certainly not to women. Disturbed by her encounters with slavery and by the apparent inability of Americans to redress this moral wrong, Wright developed her own plan for a pilot project to address the concerns of slaveholders regarding manumission.²¹ Her vision was that Nashoba would set an example of blacks and whites living harmoniously as equals and of the possibilities for uplifting slaves through education and better

²¹ Wright consulted with Robert Owen, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Andrew Jackson as she developed her ideas for a Utopian biracial commune near Memphis, Tennessee.

treatment.²² “Four years of extensive and minute observation, with deeper reflection, and more varied, as well as more reasoned experience, have convinced me that American negro slavery is but one form of the same evils which pervade the whole frame of human society,” Wright wrote in a lecture delivered in Cincinnati in 1828.²³

The influence of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Hume is evident in Wright's empiricism and skepticism, as are the works of Jeremy Bentham on her ideas on equality for women, divorce rights and anti-clericalism, and of Thomas Jefferson on Wright's devotion to equality and liberty. Wright took interest in the proto-feminist writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and wrote to her daughter, Mary Shelley, hoping unsuccessfully to interest her in joining Nashoba.²⁴ Wright is perhaps most associated with the Utopian reform movement of Robert Owen. While Owen certainly played a part in Wright's reform project, and she consulted him while preparing to establish Nashoba, Wright deserves credit for her independent thought. Wright also spent considerable time in Paris where she encountered Utopian writers Charles Fourier and Henri de Saint-Simon.²⁵ While Wright did not adopt their approaches, she learned from their ideas. Like

²² These two paragraphs will appear in Cheryl Coulthard, "Frances Wright's Nashoba: Seeking a Utopian Solution to the Problem of Slavery," *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association*, publication pending.

²³ Frances Wright D'Arusmont. *Life, Letters and Lectures*. (1829) Reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972, vi.

²⁴ Mary Shelley, Letters to Frances Wright, August 29, September 6 and September 15, 1827.

²⁵ French Utopian Charles Fourier inspired the most popular Utopian communalist movement of the 1840s. Acolyte Albert Brisbane translated and sanitized Fourier's work, removing its most sensational ideas on sexuality, and introduced it to Americans who avidly took up Fourier's challenge, creating joint-stock, voluntarist communes on Fourier's efficient labor model all over the United States. Henri Saint-Simon recognized the profound changes coming to the Western world as it grew more industrial and

Saint-Simon she considered equality of opportunity for the working class to be essential to the progress of civilization.²⁶ Unlike Fourier, Wright did not view communalism as the answer to all of society's problems, instead she turned to it as a tool to solve a specific problem, that of slavery. George Rapp's communities at Economie, PA and Harmonie, IN shaped the design for the communal labour project at Nashoba, although Wright did not share Rapp's apocalyptic or religious visions. His authoritarianism also conflicted with her libertarian style.²⁷

Wright found the approach of conventional abolitionists and the inaction of politicians dissatisfying. Wright's interest in slavery was as a libertarian. She tied equality for blacks into the larger fight for equality for all people regardless of race, color, sex or class. A close friend, Amos Gilbert, writes of her, "She did not free her slaves because they were black but because they were men and women."²⁸ For Wright, the issue was simply that all people should be free and equal. Her goal at Nashoba was an experiment on a small scale to demonstrate the viability of an economic and social plan to take slaves and educate and train them on a working profitable plantation side by

urban. His Utopian writing reconciled ideals of equality and brotherly love with science as a ruling principle.

²⁶ Keith Taylor, ed., transl. *Henri de Saint Simon, 1760-1825: Selected Writings on Science, Industry and Social Organization* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc, 1975), 158–161.

²⁷ Frances Wright D'Arusmont, *Biography, Notes and Political Letters of Frances Wright D'Arusmont No. 1* (from the 1st British Ed. New York: John Windt, 1844 in *Life, Letters and Lectures*.) (reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), 28.

²⁸ Gilbert, Amos. *Memoir of Frances Wright, the Pioneer Woman in the Cause of Human Rights* (Cincinnati: Longley Brothers, 1855), 30.

side in harmony with whites. Once the slaves had worked off the capital expenses of their purchase plus six percent interest (\$6000 per family) she would emancipate and settle them in freedom outside the slave laws of the United States. Wright considered California and the Mexican territory of Texas before deciding on Haiti as the site for colonization. Wright drew up a prospectus and published it in the Baltimore abolitionist paper of Benjamin Lundy, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, under the title *A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States Without the Danger of Loss to Citizens of the South*. Wright hoped to gain support both in the North and South for her experiment by demonstrating that she was rational and had considered the economic concerns of Southern slaveholders.²⁹ The prospectus included a detailed budget and provided for the experiment to continue indefinitely for as long as required. Wright believed that as emancipated slaves left the South free white labour would move in to replace them with no negative economic effect, noting that there was a supply of poor whites in need of employment.³⁰

As Owen had at New Harmony, Wright advertised for members; putting a notice of her plan in Lundy's paper and calling for like-minded reformers to come join her. Wright announced her project in Europe through a letter published in Paris.³¹ The white

²⁹ Frances Wright, *A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States Without the Danger of Loss to Citizens of the South* (Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, 1825) <http://antislavery.eserver.org/tracts/lundyplan/lundyplan.pdf> (Accessed June 30, 2016) [interestingly, Frances Wright is not credited online as the author]

³⁰ Ibid., 8; The preceding 2 paragraphs will appear in Cheryl Coulthard, "Frances Wright's Nashoba: Seeking a Utopian Solution to the Problem of Slavery," *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association*, publication pending, 6-8.

³¹ Frances Wright, Letter About Nashoba, *Le Globe*, Paris January 23, 1827. Wright had made numerous contacts in Paris while she lived there with the Marquis de Lafayette.

members of Nashoba came from reform and communal backgrounds.³² Wright had intrigued them with her radical and hopefully pragmatic plan to work towards making emancipation feasible and attractive in the South. While they all shared Wright's commitment to modelling a Utopian future, like the New Harmonists under Owen they lacked the commitment to the hard work necessary to build a new community on the Tennessee frontier.

Establishing Nashoba required skills and experience with independent living that these idealists also lacked. The other members of the community were slaves who Wright purchased or she received as donations from slaveholders who believed in her plan. At Nashoba the enslaved members gained skills and an education and worked on building the community until they worked off their purchase price. Once the slaves reached that point, Wright relocated them to Haiti to start their lives as freedmen. Wright's decision to include slaves rather than free blacks derived from both legal and ideological considerations. In Tennessee at this time the law required slave owners to petition the court to request permission to manumit their slaves. If granted, the government required the slave owner to post a bond of the amount set by the court to cover any damages the freed slave might cause.³³ Further, Wright's project entailed

³² English settlers Morris Birkbeck and George Flower founded Albion in 1818 as a Utopian alternative to the economic inequality and monarchist tyranny they experienced in Britain. Birkbeck and Flower both expressed radical political ideas in Britain, including anti-clericalism and abolition, resulting in persecution. Conflict between the two men over Flower's free love practices eventually destabilized the community. Wright's members included Flower, James Richardson, New Harmonist; Richeson Whitby, former Shaker and New Harmonist, and Wright's younger sister Camilla.

³³ 1826 *Statute of Laws of Tennessee*, Chapter 22: 1-3. There was a Manumission Society in Tennessee that encouraged slaveowners to free their slaves rather than push for broader emancipation. Interestingly, while there are plenty of records of the Society advocating for changes in slave laws and

demonstrating that slaves could work off their purchase price, thus not costing the plantation owners for their emancipation. She also desired to prove to Southerners that they could educate slaves and train them with skills necessary for the free labor market allowing them to integrate successfully into white society. Beginning with free blacks would not have had the desired result as these already possessed skills or trades and functioned in white society.

Abolitionism as a reform movement was in its nascent stage when Wright established Nashoba.³⁴ Colonization predominated as a plan for ending slavery in the South. The idea behind colonization was that it would be dangerous and untenable to simply free all the slaves as they outnumbered the white population in most of the South and Southerners feared reprisals. Further most whites believed that black people were inferior morally and intellectually and were therefore unfit for integration into white society. Colonization resolved these concerns by seeking to transport the free slaves to Africa or the Caribbean where they could establish a free black state. Of course, this plan ignored, or disregarded as unimportant, the historical fact that slaves in the United States no longer had ties to Africa and that they had no desire to return there. The importation of slaves into the United States had ended in 1807, and so the slave population was now

expressing their opinions about slavery, there do not appear to be any accounts of actual manumissions associated directly with its ten-year existence.

³⁴ In the 1830s abolitionism began to gather steam as a movement, bringing together previously scattered white and black voices protesting slavery. It was still a minority opinion and faced the challenge of the majority stance that freeing slaves would create chaos and undermine American institutions and social structures. A growing free black population in the North helped convince white reformers that abolition was both viable and moral. This benefitted from the growing interest in reform stemming from the Second Great Awakening's emphasis on individual responsibility and growth, and that all men were equal in God's eyes. (Paul Goodman, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 2-3.)

generations removed from Africa. It was not simply a matter of returning slaves to their homes, but rather a plan to transport them to a place they had never been.³⁵

The American Colonization Society (ACS) began in December 1816 out of concerns about how to Christianize Africa and how to remove free blacks from American society because the founders viewed blacks as unassimilable into white society. “From their condition and the unconquerable prejudices resulting from their colour, they could never amalgamate with the free whites of this country.”³⁶ Britain banned the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, and American leaders began thinking about the eventual demise of the peculiar institution. From the perspective of the founders, this was a best of all possible worlds’ solution, benevolent and practical. “It was not proposed to deliberate on, or consider at all, any question of emancipation, or that was connected with the abolition of slavery.”³⁷ These men viewed themselves as the inheritors of a Jeffersonian ideal of ending slavery in America, but with the belief that a post-slavery society offered no place for African-Americans.³⁸ The underlying reasoning for colonization denied freed blacks the possibility of uplift and personal growth through education and training. It seemed contradictory and hypocritical to claim that colonized blacks would serve a missionizing purpose to uplift African blacks as Christian

³⁶ American Colonization Society, *A view of exertions lately made for the purpose of colonizing the free people of colour, in the United States, in Africa, or elsewhere* (City of Washington, 1817), 5

³⁷ ACS, *A view of exertions*, 5.

³⁸ Matthew Spooner, “‘I Know This Scheme is from God:’ Toward a Reconsideration of the Origins of the American Colonization Society,” *Slavery & Abolition*, 35, no. 4 (December 2014), 564.

Americans, yet the Society deemed them unfit to remain in American society. The ACS and similar groups established colonies on the West coast of Africa beginning in 1822 including Cape Palmas and Fishtown; in 1846 Liberia would become an independent nation. By the time of the Civil War 13,000 freed slaves relocated to Liberia through colonization societies, peaking between 1848 and 1854.³⁹ The over-riding goal of these societies, while acknowledging that slavery represented a social ill, was to remove it from America and move the associated racial concerns elsewhere. In the early republic period contemporary to Nashoba, the ACS actively colonized slaves to Liberia, relocating 567 in that time alone.⁴⁰

Garrisonian-style radical abolitionism had not yet taken off. In 1825, Garrison was still a moderate. Garrison's objections came after an investigation into the work, writings, and private discourse of the ACS after which he concluded that he must expose them as "unchristian and anti-republican...that the great mass of its supporters at the north did not realise its dangerous tendency."⁴¹ Specifically, Garrison recognized that the ACS lacked an achievable plan despite their grandiose promises. Further, Garrison highlighted the ignored objections of free blacks to the colonization project, and the "stigmatization" of African-Americans by the ACS by equating them with Africans

³⁹ "Table of Emigrants Settled in Liberia by the American Colonization Society," in *The African Repository and Colonial Journal* Vol. 43, no. 4 (April 1867), 117.

⁴⁰ "Table of Emigrants," 109. This paragraph taken from Coulthard, "Frances Wright's Nashoba."

⁴¹ David W. Blight, "Garrison's Legacy for Our Time," in *William Lloyd Garrison at Two Hundred*, ed. James Brewer Stewart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008),10.

rather than American citizens.⁴² For radical abolitionists these represented unacceptable hypocrisies. Garrison viewed the colonizationists as little better than slaveowners in their views on white supremacy. If all men were created equal, argued Garrison, then they were entitled to equal rights and education, and society should treat all men as equals regardless of color. The belief of the ACS that slaves were incapable of assimilation into white society because they were inherently inferior flew in the face of this Biblical teaching.⁴³

This work differs from that of Gail Bederman in its conclusions about Wright in the context of early abolition movements.⁴⁴ While Bederman is critical of Wright because she chose colonization, this work argues that the question should be viewed with greater nuance. While ultimately Wright did choose to colonize the slaves from Nashoba, she did so with the understanding that it was the best solution available to her at the time. Her end goal was assimilation not colonization, and her understanding of the future of race relations differed from that of the ACS in that Wright believed in the potential of enslaved blacks to become equals in American society. Unlike the ACS she did not view slaves as the problem to be solved, but rather she saw slavery and white attitudes about slaves as the source of social disharmony.

⁴² Stewart, *Garrison*, 56.

⁴³ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization or, an impartial exhibition of the doctrines, principles and purposes of the American Colonization Society. Together with the resolutions, addresses and remonstrances of the free people of color* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1832), 71.

⁴⁴ Gail Bederman, "Revisiting Nashoba: Slavery, Utopia and Frances Wright in America, 1818-1826," *American Literary History* Vol. 17, Issue 3 (Fall 2005), 448.

Frances Wright did not belong to the ACS or to the mainstream radical abolition movement. She staked her own territory in the fight against slavery on a broader basis than the abolitionist, proclaiming equality for all humans regardless of race, or class, or gender and encouraging individual slaveowners to manumit their slaves rather than seeking a government solution. Wright presented her ideology in thousands of pamphlets, lectures and articles over her decades-long career, the earliest of which pre-date Garrison's *Liberator*, founded in 1831, by at least five years.⁴⁵ Benjamin Lundy, abolitionist and sometime collaborator with Garrison, initially supported Wright in his paper, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Lundy also explored the idea of colonizing emancipated slaves to Haiti,⁴⁶ but broke with Wright on miscegenation and her disdain for religion.

While Wright shared the goal of emancipation with Garrison and Lundy she differed in that she believed a gradual approach necessary for peaceful and successful assimilation. Unlike Garrison, Wright believed that she could move within the system by influencing the men who held the power in regards to slavery, both slaveowner and politician, to effect change. To an extent this reflected her privilege as a member of the educated elite, but as a woman she nonetheless carved out her own space to access the men in power.

⁴⁵ William Lloyd Garrison, *The Liberator*, 1, no.1 (January 1, 1831).

⁴⁶ Benjamin Lundy, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, (Baltimore), Vol. 1, Issue 38 (May 20, 1826), 302.

When Wright established Nashoba in 1825 on land purchased through Andrew Jackson in the wilderness of west Tennessee, now thirteen miles from Memphis, the site was entirely raw. Upon arrival, the new communards faced the daunting task of building a settlement on uncleared, swampy land. While the reformers were committed to Wright's vision, what they lacked, however, included carpentry, farming and management skills to actually create and run a working plantation with laborers. We must note, the laborers at Nashoba were both black and white, working side by side.⁴⁷ They had similar living conditions, and they raised and educated their children together. Although the white members treated the black slaves with more dignity and kindness and gave them more rights than slaves on most Southern plantations, these were still slaves. They did not have the freedom to leave. They were bound to Nashoba until they worked off their purchase price with interest.⁴⁸

The physical project proved too much for Wright and she succumbed to either malaria or dengue and left Nashoba to recuperate at New Harmony. During her stay, Wright decided to use a deed to place the decisions about Nashoba under the control of a board of trustees to protect the project in perpetuity in case of her death or disability.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ This was not a problem unique to Nashoba, other Utopian communities such as New Harmony and Brook Farm also lacked skilled labor.

⁴⁸ The preceding two paragraphs derive from Cheryl Coulthard, "Frances Wright's Nashoba: Seeking a Utopian Solution to the Problem of Slavery," *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association*, publication pending, 11.

⁴⁹ Frances Wright, *Deed of the Lands of Nashoba* (West Tennessee, Dec 17, 1826). Reprinted in *The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*, Vol. XVIII (July to September, 1828) 237-262. https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=_hsYAAAAYAAJ&rdid=book-_hsYAAAAYAAJ&rdot=1. [According to Frances Wright letter to William Gholson, original deed

Once she established the board, Wright felt it was safe for her to leave Nashoba in their hands and travelled to France with Owen's son, Robert Dale. She never again took up residence at Nashoba.

The Deed also made changes to the structure of Nashoba. The project moved towards an organization resembling Robert Owen's restructured New Harmony. Instead of all members sharing equally in the labor at Nashoba, the Deed shifted the burden of manual work to the enslaved members. With Wright away, the quotidian management of Nashoba fell to her overseer, James Richardson. This proved to be a fatal mistake for the project. Although Richardson's ideas on race were really no more radical than those of Wright, his decision to make them public in Benjamin Lundy's newspaper caused a scandal that forced Wright to take a stand that collapsed her support. Richardson's statement in Lundy's paper outlined his extramarital relationship with Josephine Prevot the fourteen-year-old mixed-race daughter of the commune's schoolteacher.⁵⁰ In her defense of Richardson, Wright criticized the institution of marriage as harmful to women's rights and defended miscegenation as the path for racially harmonizing society by removing the stigma of dark skin.⁵¹

burned in error, copy in Britain, undated. Letter 19, Folder 26, Gholson-Kittredge Papers MSS FG427 Box 6. Wright sent the deed to the *Oriental Herald* for publication, writing the introduction to the document.] The board included Lafayette, Robert Owen and his son Robert Dale, New Harmony educators Robert Jennings, Cadwalader Colden and William Maclure, and Nashoba members Camilla Wright, Richeson Whitby, George Flower and James Richardson.

⁵⁰ James Richardson, "Nashoba Book," entry Friday, June 21, 1828, published in *Genius of Universal Emancipation* (Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, July 28, 1827).

⁵¹ Frances Wright, "Explanatory Notes Respecting the Nature and Object of the Institution at Nashoba and of the Principles Upon Which it is Founded," (New York, printed for the purchasers, 1830).

After the scandal over miscegenation and free love many of Wright's friends shunned her and her financial backers pulled out. Exhausted physically and emotionally, lacking the resources to carry on with the experiment, Wright decided to end Nashoba. She contacted President Boyer of the new black republic of Haiti and arranged to colonize Nashoba's thirty-one slaves there.⁵² Wright sent occasional letters to Robert Dale Owen, her partner in publishing the *Free Enquirer*, and he published the updates.⁵³ One can glean from her reports that the trip took about a week and that the former slaves were successfully settled in Haiti under Boyer's "immediate protection." Benjamin Lundy briefly noted Wright's voyage in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, crediting her for freeing thirty slaves while asserting his disagreement with Wright on religion.⁵⁴

Harmony Society

While the records for Nashoba are uneven in terms of continuity and the recording of members' voices, Harmony Society left a substantial archival presence, although also favoring the memories of men over women, and business over personal.

⁵² Boyer had encouraged Americans interested in colonization of blacks to consider Haiti. President Boyer offered the new residents not only emancipation and equality but land and tools to help them establish their new life. (Robert Dale Owen, "An Earnest Sowing of Wild Oats," *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1874.)

⁵³ Frances Wright, "Letter to Robert Dale Owen, New Orleans, January 6, 1830" *Free Enquirer*, (New York, Jan 30, 1830), 125; Frances Wright, "To Our Friends," *Free Enquirer* (New York May 1, 1830), 216.

⁵⁴ Benjamin Lundy, "Frances Wright," *Genius of Universal Emancipation* No. 1, Vol. 1 (April 1830), 6. These accounts are undoubtedly as unsatisfying in their brevity to her readers as they are for historians today. There is no available record of what happened to the thirty slaves that Wright emancipated and colonized in Haiti.

George Rapp, a vinedresser from Iptigen in southern Germany, near Württemberg, acquired not only a reputation as a prophet and preacher but as a radical Pietist Separatist in the late eighteenth century. The town council demanded an accounting of his views in 1793 after they called Rapp before them.⁵⁵ The council put out a statement to the law enforcement agencies advising them, among other stipulations, to tolerate the Separatists provided that they limited their teachings and practices to the religious sphere, a demand that, given the nature of Württemberg institutions, proved impossible for Rapp and his followers.⁵⁶

In 1798, Rapp wrote up a statement of his beliefs and submitted them to the council.⁵⁷ These included Biblical justifications for his teachings. The council proved unmoved by Rapp's arguments and fined him and his followers for their civic offenses

⁵⁵ Rapp had accumulated a sizable number of followers by this time and their behavior concerned their neighbors and the council. Pietist beliefs were more mystical and fundamentalist than Lutheranism and challenged the authority of both church and state. Rapp and his followers did not attend Sunday services at their local church, instead Rapp preached to a private gathering. They did not baptize their children in the state Lutheran church. Historian Karl Arndt points out this decision had lifelong implications as without baptism the church would not confirm or marry a person. Further, without the legitimacy conferred by baptism, Separatists could not work for the state in positions from clerks to midwives as the authorities did not consider them loyal. (Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Separatists, 1700-1803. A Documentary History* (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), xxv.) The Rappites refused to send their children to town schools, fearing the corrupting influences. They also, and perhaps more worryingly to the council, refused to swear oaths or join the military. This was in the context of the intensifying Napoleonic Wars. Rapp's rejection of the teachings of the Lutheran church entwined with a rejection of the authority of the state.

⁵⁶ "Ihre Versammlungen Betrifft," November, 1803, reprinted in *George Rapp's Separatists, 1700-1803: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 391-2.

⁵⁷ "The Lomersheim Declaration of Faith of Rapp's Church of the Brethren," March 1, 1798, reprinted in *George Rapp's Separatists, 1700-1803: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980. 272-279.

and put greater restrictions on their gatherings.⁵⁸ As a result of what the Rappites believed to be unjust persecution, they considered immigration to Russia or Hungary. Rapp decided on the United States believing it more tolerant of religious differences, purchasing a tract of land near the small center of Pittsburgh in western Pennsylvania.⁵⁹ Friedrich Riechert (later Rapp) wrote to his adopted father during Rapp's scouting trip to America in 1803, warning Rapp that the Elector hated him and would have him killed if he returned to Germany.⁶⁰ In 1805, two shiploads carrying over five hundred Germans crossed the Atlantic to Pennsylvania, journeying on to what was then the frontier.⁶¹ Once in Butler County the Rappites assented to the Articles of Association that formally created the Harmony Society.⁶²

⁵⁸ Abraham Ruoff and G.F. Griesinger, officers of the Consistory of Stuttgart to Friedrich, Duke of Wurttemberg and Tek, Document reiterating the Rescript of June 20, 1792, Stuttgart, January 23, 1799, reprinted in *George Rapp's Separatists, 1700-1803: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980, 289-91.

⁵⁹ George Rapp, Letter to Frederick Rapp, Lancaster, PA, October, 12, 1803, reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 2.

⁶⁰ Johann Friedrich Reichert, Letter to George Rapp, Iptigen, Germany, February 25, 1804, reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 9.

⁶¹ Rapp published in the local papers letters of appreciation to the crews of the ships for their considerate treatment of his followers. (George Rapp, "Statement of Gratitude to the Captain of the Aurora," Baltimore: Federal Gazette, July 7, 1804 reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 15-16; George Rapp and Friedrich Rapp, "Philadelphia: Poulson's Daily Advertiser, September 17, 1804 reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 33-34.)

⁶² George Rapp, "Articles of Association, February 15, 1805, reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 80-91.

These articles included an agreement to donate all their assets to the Harmony Society, forfeiting them if they chose to leave, and to obey the decisions of George Rapp and his representatives. In return Rapp would provide all the necessities of life to his followers: shelter, clothing, food, employment, healthcare, childcare and spiritual guidance.⁶³ Communalism provided practical benefits to the group in that it allowed them to purchase land for their settlement and pooled the labor necessary for creating home, food, and income. Rapp justified the decision with reference to Saint Paul's writings in the book of Acts:

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.⁶⁴

Contemporaries to the Harmonists viewed communalism as a pragmatic choice for community economic survival rather than an ideological decision. "As individuals they need no money and fear no shortage."⁶⁵

⁶³ George Rapp, "Articles," 80-91.

⁶⁴ Acts 4: 32-35, *King James Bible*.

⁶⁵ Jonas Heinrich Gudehus, "Journey to America," transl. Larry Neff in *Publications of the Pennsylvania German Society*, Vol. 14 (Breinigsville, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1980), 288. Communalism proved less contentious an issue in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth when it took on political overtones during the suppression of socialists and the Cold War. In the preface to the memoir of the last Harmonist, John Duss, editor E. Gordon Alderfer assures, "Let us not be frightened by the use

The Harmonists believed in the imminent Second Coming of Jesus, therefore they focused their lives on preparing themselves for that event. These preparations ranged from perfecting themselves by leading (ideally) sinless lives, to the perhaps less obvious decision, celibacy. It is not unusual for Utopian communal groups to address marital relations and gender and family dynamics as they seek to create a better life for themselves.⁶⁶ Both conservative and progressive beliefs on gender drove these changes, both sharing the conviction that mainstream society had either moved to or adhered to institutions and practices that proved harmful. In some cases, pragmatic concerns also played a role. In the case of George Rapp's Harmony Society celibacy did not originally form part of their theology, but rather Rapp added the standard in 1807, two years after they made their immigrant movement into a communal society.

of the word 'communism.' I am sure that the author in no way has the slightest interest in or sympathy with modern communism as exemplified by the Communist Party..." (E. Gordon Alderfer, Preface to John Duss, *The Harmonists: A Personal History* (reprinted Ambridge, PA: The Harmonie Associates, Inc., 1970), xi) Harmonist scholar Karl Arndt similarly contrasted Rapp with Karl Marx as "the venerable old communist patriarch [Rapp] and the almost forty-year-old founder of the ruthless materialist religion that threatens the world today [Marx]..." ("The Indiana Decade of George Rapp's Harmony Society: 1814-1824." *Proceedings of The American Antiquarian Society* 80, no. 2 (1970), 299. Back in the day, writers did not hesitate to label the group as communist because it lacked the Marxist connotation. (Anna M. True, "A Communist Town," *The Sibyl* (Vol. XX, No. 1, November 1890), 41; Karl Arndt, "The Indiana Decade of George Rapp's Harmony Society: 1814-1824." *Proceedings of The American Antiquarian Society* 80, no. 2 (1970), 299; Charles Nordhoff, *Communitic Societies of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1875 reprinted Dover Publications: New York, 1966).) Tellingly, when John Humphrey Noyes of Oneida published the manuscript of A.J. MacDonald in 1870 he used the title *History of American Socialisms* but when Dover reprinted it in 1966 they changed the title to *Strange Cults and Utopias of 19th Century America* reflecting changing American attitudes on socialism.

⁶⁶ This decision resulted in a wide range of experiments from the complex marriage and stirpiculture of Oneida, to polygamy in early Mormonism, to miscegenation at Nashoba, free love in all its varieties and complexities, and at the opposite extreme to degrees of celibacy among the Shakers and the Zoar Separatists.

Rapp found his influence over his followers' sexuality waning as he aged and they entered a new generation. Many young men and women who had not moved to the United States with Rapp and did not share their parents' devotion to their prophet resented his interference in their personal lives. In 1832, issues of celibacy, communalism, and the power of the prophet came to a head with the entry on the scene of a confidence man, Bernhard Müller, calling himself Count Leon. Count Leon offered the Harmonists all that Rapp had denied them including marriage, sex, equality for women, an end to their asceticism, and even the philosopher's stone.⁶⁷ For those who were already questioning Rapp's authority and theology, Leon proved irresistible although they would later regret their fickleness.⁶⁸ The Schism marked the beginning of the decline of the Harmony Society. Two hundred and sixty-five members, one third of the population, left in spring of 1832 to follow Leon.⁶⁹ The Schism struck the Harmonists severely, not only due to the numbers who departed, but also because it marked a loss of highly skilled members including doctors and artisans. Without the crisis of religious persecution in Germany, or the challenge of establishing their first community in America, this generation found it less compelling to obey the authoritarian

⁶⁷ Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 471; Count Leon, "Proposals for Settlement," March 3, 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 726.

⁶⁸ Jacob Wagner, "Reminiscences of the Two Leaders and Their Societies," 77, reprinted in Eileen Aiken English, "The Life and Legacy of Count Leon: The Man Who Cleft the Harmonie," *Communal Societies* 33, no. 1 (2013), 81.

⁶⁹ English, "Road," 12.

dictates of an elderly man whose prophecies now appeared less believable.⁷⁰ While the original settlers who came from Germany with Rapp could be expected to retain Old World understandings about submission to authority as a natural part of the social order this did not prove the case for the second generation Harmonists. It would be a stretch to argue that celibacy was the cause of the 1832 Schism, the reality was far more complex.

Members lived in isolation from the outside world, and because of this, largely avoided direct conflict or confrontation with disapproving outsiders. Leaving Harmony Society was a huge step for members to take; few of them spoke English, they had no assets to take with them, they were unlikely to have outside relations or friends to turn to in the United States, and for many of them it was the only life they had never known. It took more than simply discontent to leave. It took courage and a deep unwillingness to continue in community. The defectors that left with Count Leon had a much easier decision. Rapp allowed them a monetary settlement of \$105,000 and they left as a group, with others they knew well and a new leader they believed in.⁷¹ Occasionally members

⁷⁰ They went so far as to petition the state of Pennsylvania to overturn the agreement they had made with Rapp, arguing that the state had an "imperative duty to protect her citizens from oppression and injustice," and that the economic success of the Harmonists under Rapp was no reason to ignore the violation of their individual liberty. ("Appeal to the Pennsylvania Legislature by the Anti-Rapp Minority," February 25, 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 712-715. Descriptions of the Rapps' problems are scattered throughout Arndt, *Economy*. English asserts in "The Life and Legacy" that she has found no evidence to support the allegations against Georg and Friedrich Rapp. This author concurs with English.)

⁷¹ Nordhoff, *Communitistic Societies*, 80; Philipp Passavant, "Letter to Detmar Basse regarding the Schism," May 11, 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 779.

did make the decision to depart, alone, with a prospective spouse, or with their family, but leaving was difficult and often ended badly.⁷² Some attempted to return, but with few exceptions they were rejected.⁷³ Presumably Rapp believed that allowing the barriers between membership and outsider to be fluid would be dangerous for group stability. If members could leave and return at will it would have been more difficult for Rapp to maintain control over them and would introduce outsider ideas and experiences into the closed society. When Rapp died in 1846, Harmony Society faced a potential crisis of leadership and faith.

Rapp was not just the social leader of the community, he was their prophet. His teachings that the Second Coming was imminent, that it would happen in his lifetime had clearly proved false. After his death Harmonists confronted the question of Rapp's fallibility and what that implied for their continued belief in his theology and the practices he enacted. Outsiders predicted the immediate and certain demise of Harmony Society after Rapp's death because his personality bound them together but also because celibacy doomed them to extinction.⁷⁴ No charismatic leader stepped up to replace Rapp,

⁷² Jacob Schieck, "Letter to George Rapp," July 4, 1814, reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 858-860.

⁷³ Rolandus and Berta Höhr, "Letter to George Rapp Requesting Aid for Defectors," September 14, 1831, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 600-601.

⁷⁴ Arndt, *Successors*, 19.

instead a council of trustees took his place as per the new community agreement.⁷⁵ These new leaders maintained Rapp's policies and focused their attention more on diversifying Economie's business interests.

As Harmony Society's members aged and new young members coming in failed to sufficiently replace them, the workforce of the community diminished. The new council shifted the bulk of the community's economy from manufacturing towards investments in new industries such as railroads and oil and gas exploration.⁷⁶ Further, they hired wage labor to replace Harmonists in the factories that they retained and, in their fields, to produce food for the community. Despite the transition in leadership, Harmony Society remained stable, although continuing its decline, because members remained committed to the Utopian ideals and practices laid down by Rapp until the eventual return of Christ.

George Rapp developed his ideology based on his own interpretation of the Bible and the influence of German Pietist mystics like Jakob Boehme, Jakob Spener, August Hermann Francke, and Gerhard Tersteegan.⁷⁷ While early Utopian thought seems not to have influenced Rapp, certainly there is evidence of interactions between Rapp and

⁷⁵ The council of nine men included Jacob Henrici, Jonathan Lenz and Romelius Baker, long-time members and business leaders in the community. "Article II, Agreement of Harmonist Community, Registered at Beaver County Courthouse August 13, 1847, reprinted in Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1972), 21.

⁷⁶ Arndt, *Successors*, 67.

⁷⁷ Victor Peters, "The German Pietists: Spiritual Mentors of the German Communal Settlements in America." *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association* 1 (Autumn 1981): 60-63.

contemporary Utopians. Beyond casual visitors, and businesspeople that spent time at Harmonie, New Harmony, and Economie, were the deliberate interactions with Utopians ranging from fellow alternative religious movements like Shakers, Oneidans and Zoarites to secular reformers like Robert Owen, Frances Wright and Josiah Warren.⁷⁸ These visitors shared ideas and often had enthusiastic debates with Rapp. Étienne Cabet of Icarian fame, Frances Wright and Robert Owen all looked to the example of Harmony Society when they developed their Utopian projects, although Rapp did not approve of their progressive ideals.⁷⁹

Wright specifically referenced Harmony Society in her plans for Nashoba, “It is distinctly from the inspection of the German colony of Harmonie, and afterward of Economie, that Frances Wright dates a first conception of the mode in which might be effected the gradual abolition of negro slavery in the Southern States; and equally the gradual reformation of civilized society.”⁸⁰ Rapp wrote of Owen's plan for New Harmony after they met before Owen bought New Harmony from Rapp. “I did not have

⁷⁸ Godfrey Haga, “Letter to George Rapp, June 5, 1805, reprinted in *Harmony on the Connoquenessing, 1803-1815: George Rapp's First American Harmony, a Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980, 93; Avery, “Visit,”; Arndt, *Successors*, 139. The Shakers, Oneida and Zoar were all alternative religious communities along similar lines to Harmony Society although they disagreed with Rapp on certain theological points. Owen, Wright and Warren, while all providing information about their projects interesting to Rapp, were ultimately rebuked by him for their lack of a religious guiding principle which he believed doomed their communities to failure.

⁷⁹ Arndt, *Connoquenessing*, 451.

⁸⁰ Frances Wright D’Arusmont, *Biography, Notes and Political Letters of Frances Wright D’Arusmont No. 1* (from the 1st British Ed. New York: John Windt, 1844 in *Life, Letters and Lectures*,) (reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), 28. [Note that this is Wright speaking about herself in her Autobiography using the third person.]

time to ask him about religious matters. It seems to me that he doesn't bother very much about them either. In such respect he is probably closer to the 'Shaker Quakers' than to us, but in matters of practical morality he is an extraordinarily active man."⁸¹ While not approving of Owen's secularism, Rapp could nonetheless appreciate Owen's work to create a better society. The writings of Shakers and Zoar Separatists describe many positive aspects of Harmonist life but express their disdain for Rapp's theology. Shaker Elder Giles Avery ended his description of his visit to Economy by observing "But, before I left Economy I did know, and feel that this people were pining for those Blessings which the Ministration of a Mother could supply." He contrasted this with his own community in which "we have found a mother in God."⁸² Rapp likewise rejected the approach of other religious communities after discussing their ideologies with them. In 1816 a Shaker delegation visited the Harmonists with the goal of blending their communities. Despite the many similarities in practices, Rapp proved unimpressed with the Shakers' beliefs and considered them "far behind them [the Harmonists] in religious knowledge."⁸³

Authoritarian religious leadership and commitment to a single ideology created long-term stability for Harmony Society, allowing them to outlast most of their

⁸¹ George Rapp, "Letter to Frederick Rapp," December 5, 1824, reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 316-317.

⁸² Giles Avery, "Visit to Economy by Shaker Elder Giles Avery of New Lebanon, New York in 1862," transcriber June Sprigg, Curator, Hancock Shaker Village; Amos Stewart, "Visit to Economy Village by Shaker Brother Amos Stewart in 1858," Transcriber June Sprigg, Curator, Hancock Shaker Village, 1-4.

⁸³ Arndt, *Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, 170.

nineteenth century contemporaries. Rapp brought the original Harmonists from Germany to escape persecution and establish a new life in America where they could prepare for the Second Coming in peace. Along the way, although it was not part of their original plan, the Harmonists established far-reaching and successful business ventures attracting the admiration and resentment of outsiders. Rapp kept careful control over the community, isolating his followers from the dangers of the greater world and only allowing a few trusted members to manage business interests. Within Harmony Society the vast majority of members committed to obey Rapp's rulings and live by the practices he established even such nonconforming ideas as communalism and celibacy. These members enjoyed a comfortable standard of living, support of a harmonious community and as a result they stayed within Harmony Society for the remainder of their lives. Later generations proved less committed to Rapp, resulting in a major Schism in 1832 that began the decline of Harmony. Rapp and the Harmonists represent an unusually long-lived and harmonious community that aside from their yearning for the Kingdom of God largely achieved their Utopian goals.

Modern Times

Robert Owen influenced several founders of Utopian communities besides Frances Wright. While New Harmony did not endure as a communal society it did provide a crucible for the development of radical ideas about education, economics, gender and politics that members took away with them to new projects. Josiah Warren stayed two years at New Harmony before leaving in disgust over Owen's commitment to

collectivism as the basis for social reorganization.⁸⁴ "It is in *Combination* or close connection, only, that compromise and conformity are required--Peace, harmony, ease, security, happiness will be found only in INDIVIDUALITY."⁸⁵ Warren instead viewed individualism as the key to a better world, later earning him the soubriquet of "America's first individualist anarchist" for his writings. After leaving New Harmony, Warren returned to Ohio to put his ideas on the labor theory of value into practice at the Time Store in Cincinnati, and the village of Utopia, before moving on to collaborate with radical Stephen Pearl Andrews in founding the Utopian community of Modern Times on Long Island in 1851.

Both Warren and Andrews came from a background of challenging the status quo on issues from personal liberty, to capitalism and wage labor, to abolition, and free love. Their personal styles could not have been more different. Warren was as introverted and pragmatic as Andrews was flamboyant and charismatic. Both men used their keen intellects to invent and to write about their solutions to social problems in America.⁸⁶ Warren believed that the state by its very existence imposed unnecessary restrictions on individual liberty. He targeted coercion as the inherent condition of living

⁸⁴ Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 17.

⁸⁵ Josiah Warren, *Peaceful Revolutionist*, 2 (May 1848): 3.

⁸⁶ Between New Harmony, where he served as the community's band leader and music teacher, and Modern Times where he taught music and ran a vocational school, Warren developed his ideas on individual sovereignty and cost the limit of price while in Ohio. While Warren initially published his *True Civilization* in 1846 it did not get much attention until edited and republished by Stephen Pearl Andrews in 1852. Anarchist Benjamin Tucker republished it in 1875, when it caught the notice of other anarchists and became a work of ongoing influence in the radical community.

under the state identifying it as inimical to freedom. Unlike Locke who defended a state chosen by the people as the proper replacement for the monarchical system, Warren viewed even representative government as oppressive.

Warren wrote in the context of the expansion of the market economy and industrialization in the antebellum period. He was concerned by the instability of free market capitalism, the boom and bust swings that troubled the economic life of the working class, the exploitation of artisans pushed into wage labor, and the regular financial crises of the new nation. He also seems to have considered the upheavals in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century as he developed his Utopian plan. "All the world is convulsed with revolution! LABOR has at last recoiled from the degradation, the starvation allotted to it, and claims its rights--Alas! What are they?"⁸⁷ He articulated a view of society in which men's and women's rights to individual sovereignty were upheld and they would cooperate voluntarily because it was in their interest to do so.

Although Warren had rejected Owen's reliance on communalism as a basis for society, he continued to respect both Owen as an individual and his goals.⁸⁸ Warren also built on Robert Owen's ideas about labor notes to develop his own ideas about equitable commerce. Warren worked in the context of mid-nineteenth century criticisms of

⁸⁷ Josiah Warren, *Peaceful Revolutionist* (Utopia, OH) Vol. 2, No. 1, May 1848, 12.

⁸⁸ He viewed his work as building upon that of Owen and improving on New Harmony. "I owe it to him that my life is of any value to myself or others. No creature ever heard me utter one word of disrespect towards Robert Owen of Lanark, and although it is with real pain that I undertake to disconnect his mistakes from that which was true in his illustrious career, I have a right to believe that no man would rejoice more at my success than Robert Owen himself." (Josiah Warren, Notebook, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan, Box 1, Folder 12.)

capitalism and monetary policy. John Stuart Mill, in his 1848 *Principles of Political Economy*, showed his willingness to consider the communist and socialist critiques of capitalism. Marx and Engels represented the theoretical face of a growing labor movement that challenged classical liberalism and the exploitation of the working class by industrial capitalists. After *Modern Times* had run its course, these protests increased with the Grange and populist movements of the Gilded Age.

At the Time Store Warren sought to offer an alternative to a capitalist industrial system that exploited workers and devalued artisan labor. Warren, not unlike Marx later, argued that workers must control their production. In *True Civilization*, Warren described as cannibalism the use of value, or demand, to set prices.⁸⁹ Even to the sale of land, his position was that land should be re-sold for the cost plus any labor required to improve it. He would observe that principle at *Modern Times*. Warren did not reject private property ownership, in fact, he viewed communal property as a significant factor in the failure of New Harmony. Interestingly, unlike many Utopian reformers in the nineteenth century, Warren did not envision a world without economic inequality. He accounted for individual differences such as desire or ability to work, and instead focused on making the playing field level so that everyone had equality of opportunity.

Stephen Pearl Andrews was a Fourierist, early feminist and abolitionist when he met Josiah Warren. The flamboyant Andrews traveled in New York's radical circles after

⁸⁹ Josiah Warren, *True Civilization: A Subject of Vital and Serious Interest to All People; but Most Immediately to the Men and Women of Labor and Sorrow*, Princeton, MA: Benjamin Tucker, 1875 (originally published by author, Cincinnati, 1842), 44.

the pro-slavery faction forcibly ran him out of Galveston for his abolition activities in 1843. In 1850 when Andrews first heard Warren lecture he was actively proselytizing Pitman shorthand and publishing a journal, *The Phonetic Propagandist*, to promote his ideas on Pitman, labor rights, women's rights and commerce.⁹⁰ Andrews was immediately taken by Warren's concept of equitable commerce, although as a Fourierist, he struggled more with individual sovereignty. In his own writing, particularly *The Science of Society*, Andrews tried to reconcile Warren with Fourier and in doing so gained a greater audience for Warren's work. Andrew became Warren's greatest propagandist, a role Warren willingly ceded to him as he was not constitutionally suited to the spotlight while Andrews actively sought it out.

Warren and Andrews, with the encouragement of Robert Owen and Frances Wright, determined to found a Utopian village near New York to test out these concepts in practice.⁹¹ The duo had for some time promoted Warren's philosophies in their journal *Free Enquirer*.⁹² Similarly, Warren addressed directly the readers of the *Free Enquirer* in his *Peaceful Revolutionist* to announce the founding of his Utopia village.⁹³ Warren

⁹⁰ Madeleine Stern, *The Pantarch: A Biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1968), 71.

⁹¹ James Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles Publisher, Inc., 1970), 25, 65. Martin does not provide any evidence to support this claim, and I have not been able to find corroborating documents, however, it does fit with Owen and Wright's interests at the time.

⁹² Frances Wright, "Wealth and Money," *Free Enquirer*, October 23, 1830.

⁹³ Josiah Warren, "To the Readers of the Free Enquirer," *Peaceful Revolutionist*, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 5, 1833, 16.

believed that it was necessary to site the village close to a major city to provide a source for selling labor and providing goods until the village could achieve the critical mass for self-sufficiency. Further, New York provided a source of like-minded reformers to support and nurture the project, or so Warren thought. Hard as it is for today's reader to imagine, in 1850 Long Island was a wilderness. Less than three thousand inhabitants lived in small villages along the coast, supporting themselves through farming, fishing, hunting and oyster gathering. Developers considered the island inappropriate for large scale industry or farming with poor access to markets and land that required too much expense and labor to make it viable. Historian Roger Wunderlich notes that Modern Times also differed from most Utopian communities in the nineteenth century in that it looked eastward for a new frontier rather than following the pack in westward expansion.⁹⁴ In doing so Warren and Andrews appealed to idealists without relying on the romance of Manifest Destiny or the western promise of adventure. The Long Island Railway had a stop in Islip and it was near that village that Andrews and Warren purchased seven hundred and fifty acres in 1851.

Adding to their incentive to choose this site was the willingness of the land seller to take a small down payment with the balance not due for five years. This allowed the duo, who had little cash to invest in the project, to buy the land upfront with hopes of selling it all before the note came due. They subdivided the land into one-acre plots laid

⁹⁴ Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 15. Wunderlich is the only historian to have produced a monograph about Modern Times. This work builds on Wunderlich's by connecting Modern Times with the Utopian currents of the times and including the community in the broader communalist movement.

out on wide streets with community wells in the alleys. Warren and Andrews sold the plots, no more than three to a purchaser, at cost of twenty dollars each.⁹⁵ The expense necessary to improve the land by clearing and chemical fertilizers tripled the cost to the buyer. Andrews and Warren advised prospective buyers of the purpose of the project and the concepts under which it was conceived but, did not require them to accept these ideals or promise to abide by them. "Collaboration of equals without coercion, authority or any arrangement except the kind that left 'every individual at all times at liberty to dispose of his or her person, time and property.'"⁹⁶ Warren and Andrews expected that the village, given its location and their promotion, would only appeal to the like-minded. Coercion to conform to a set of beliefs or by-laws contravened the concept of individual sovereignty. They assumed that members would be convinced and choose out of their own interest and beliefs to stay and participate.

Warren did not write in a vacuum, nor was *Modern Times* unique to its time in terms of its intentionality. Numerous contemporary writers addressed concerns about the power of the state over individuals, exploitation of workers in the market economy and women's rights. Interestingly, there seems to have been no awareness, or at least no mention of these parallels in many of the most prominent writers of the time. For example, Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau wrote

⁹⁵ "Triallville and Modern Times," *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, XVIII, December 18, 1852, 396.

⁹⁶ Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 3. Internal quote from Warren, *Practical Details*, 13.

extensively on liberty, the individual and the state,⁹⁷ yet they did not reference Warren, nor he them. Roger Wunderlich notes that while their circles of influence overlapped there is no indication they ever met.⁹⁸ Charles Codman observed, "I have found the following in the writing of Adam Smith, the celebrated Scotch writer on Political Economy: 'Labor is the real measure of exchangeable value of all commodities.' It may be the source of Mr. Warren's inspiration, though I am not sure."⁹⁹ We should note, Codman was writing years later and the quote he cited is from Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, decades before Warren wrote his *Equitable Commerce*. Again, there is no evidence that Warren had read Smith. While inventive and intelligent, Warren was largely self-educated, and possessed a small library. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote about Utopianism in this period, critically about the ideal village movement. They viewed Utopian communalism as too idealistic and unscientific, missing the necessity of revolution to overturn the social order.¹⁰⁰ Warren lacked faith in reform of existing institutions and believed individual action held the spark for

⁹⁷ Henry David Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government (Civil Disobedience)* (Boston, 1849), *Reform and the Reformers*, (Princeton University Press, 1973); Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance* (1841).

⁹⁸ Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 152.

⁹⁹ Charles Codman, "A Brief History of 'The City of Modern Times' Long Island, N.Y.--And a Glorification of Some of Its Saints," (Brentwood, NY, ca. 1905.) Transcribed to typed copy from pencil script by Suffolk County Historical Society, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything" (1843) reprinted in *Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978); Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 1, trans. Zodiac and Brian Baggins (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), accessed August 21, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>, 32; Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880) reprinted (Los Angeles: HardPress Publishing, 2013).

revolutionary change. It is entirely possible, although there is no direct evidence, that Warren became acquainted with these broader currents in social criticism and Enlightenment thought while he was resident in the intellectual community at New Harmony. It may be, although again there is no explicit evidence, that members brought to Modern Times ideals and experiences from other communities and intellectual circles. For example, Henry Fish and Sister Seaver from Hopedale, Quaker Isaac Gibson, Ellen Lazarus Allen of Brook Farm, and former Fourierists Andrews, Gove, and Nichols.¹⁰¹ All of these Utopian projects had attempted various solutions to resolve social problems including gender inequality and the economic and social consequences of industrial capitalism.

At the time Warren and Andrews established Modern Times, the United States had a long history of intentional communalism and there were numerous contemporary communities including Oneida, Shakers, Harmony Society, Bettina, and Hopedale. The recent collapse of several Fourierist phalanxes including Brook Farm, and other noted groups such as Fruitlands gave the duo hope that they could fill a gap left by this demise. These contemporaries explored different Utopian solutions to many of the same concerns in which Warren was interested. In general, these communities did not attack each other, although they might make occasional disparaging comments.¹⁰² Given the

¹⁰¹ Adin Ballou founded Hopedale in Massachusetts as a joint-stock commune in 1842 on principles including abolition, temperance and women's rights.

¹⁰² George Ripley of Brook Farm criticizing Warren and Andrews as unoriginal (George Ripley, "A Review: Equitable Commerce. A New Development of Principles, Proposed as Elements of a New Society, by Josiah Warren," *New York Tribune*, July 3, 1852,) or John Humphrey Noyes of Oneida

tendency of members to move from one community to another it is perhaps surprising that the leaders did not feel the need to compete. Then again, those who choose to live in Utopian communities tend to think and live cooperatively, weaving the movement's fabric of Utopian threads available for all to draw upon.

Modern Times differed from many of its contemporary Utopian communities in that Andrews actively sought out members with skills, artisans who felt disillusioned with industrial capitalism and could benefit from Warren's equitable commerce. This reflected Warren's nature as a pragmatic Utopian. Warren had become frustrated at New Harmony by the way that intellectuals relied on the labor of other members to support the community, and wanted to ensure that there were no freeloaders at Modern Times.¹⁰³ He noted particularly the dismal contrast to the prosperity of the community under George Rapp before Owen bought it. This lack of members who could do the work necessary to build a community on the frontier and maintain it as self-sustaining led to the demise of many nineteenth century intentional communities.¹⁰⁴ However, despite this concern many of the members depended for their livelihood on skills for which there was insufficient demand at Modern Times so they resorted to venturing into New York City to seek wage labor. Warren anticipated that this would be necessary in the

charging that Emerson and Hawthorne did not take their mission at Brook Farm seriously (Noyes, *History*, 107.)

¹⁰³ Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ New Harmony, Nashoba, Bettina, various Fourierist ventures, and others all suffered this fate as they learned the hard way that commitment to ideals was insufficient for a successful community in isolation.

beginning, hence the choice of site close to a major market. Convictions apparently outweighed economic opportunity as evidenced by members' refusal of an entrepreneur's offer to site his cigar factory at Modern Times based on their rejection of tobacco as unhealthy.¹⁰⁵

Modern Times initially grew quite rapidly. By 1853 the town was well-established with numerous houses of various types and boulevards planted with fruit trees for all to enjoy. Warren built himself a house, and a vocational school/workshop that became known as the Mechanical College.¹⁰⁶ In 1850 people who were concerned about the trajectory of American society or its institutions had numerous options for self-expression and social experimentation. While the government had restricted citizens from writing or speaking critically of the state or its officials in the early republic, the Alien and Sedition Acts had long since expired. The censorship enacted under the 1873 Comstock Act was still in the future. Mid-century Americans had considerable freedom of expression in terms of government legislation although there was still social stigma to being a radical. For those who felt merely expressing their concerns through writing or speaking was insufficient to create a difference, numerous social movements from abolition to early feminism to reform of institutions such as schools, prisons and asylums actively pushed for legislative and personal change. Perhaps, the most extreme option was to remove oneself from one's friends, family, workplace and familiar practices and

¹⁰⁵ Martin, *Men*, 80.

¹⁰⁶ Codman, "A Brief History," 4, 12.

institutions to create a separate alternative. For many of the members of these intentional communities breaking away provided an opportunity to make a better life for themselves, often without concern for how they would impact the rest of the nation.

While only a tiny fraction of Americans chose the Utopian alternative, many options for this path lay open to them. At Modern Times, certainly members sought a better life, but ideology proved the draw for a greater number.¹⁰⁷ Warren's Utopian ideas appealed to them and they were interested in participating in his experiment to put them into action. Although the intent of Utopians may not have been to change the rest of society, their movement between Utopian communities, and their activity in reform movements ensured that the ideals of Utopianism filtered out into the mainstream. Utopian communalism as a movement, intersected with reform and protest in terms of both membership and ideals.¹⁰⁸ This work adds to the existing literature on reform

¹⁰⁷ Codman describes the healthful environment on Long Island with piney breezes that purified the area and produced a calming effect. The draw of establishing a home in a country village while still practicing one's trade instead of living in a city tenement working in a factory undoubtedly also proved a draw.

¹⁰⁸ Joanne E. Passet. *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 2003); Kathryn Kish Sklar noted that Frances Wright's work on emancipation and women's rights attracted such attention that later critics tarred later activists, both men and women as "Fanny Wrightists," and as a result, later reformers both built upon and confronted her legacy. *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870* (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000), 22-23, 90, 135. Ronald Walters observed that Wright ruffled feathers among conservatives precisely because as a woman she challenged men's right to opine and criticize in public. Later abolitionists, labor, and women's rights activists while also condemned for this unwomanly behavior could look to Wright as an example of a successful orator. He further recognizes nineteenth century Utopian groups including Harmony Society for their widespread influence on thinking about community structures and leadership. *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 104, 139, 42-44. Walters however, dismissed the practices of Utopian communities, arguing that they (even including Modern Times) deprived members of "the family life and autonomy Americans values." Walters, *Reformers*, 74. This author would argue that the Americans who joined these experiments did not value mainstream family and gender structures, and in many cases were willing to sacrifice some degree of autonomy for a voluntary communal pursuit of Utopian goals.

movements and on Utopian communalism by connecting the two streams by examining the ways in which Utopian communalism was itself a social movement actively engaged in the work of reform, whether internally on the micro level, or externally on the macro level.

Indeed, the community at Modern Times drew heavily on those involved in various reform or alternative thought movements from abolition and feminism to phrenology and spiritualism.¹⁰⁹ It was association with such fringe ideologies that caused strife at Modern Times and condemnation from outsiders. Warren asserted often that individual sovereignty included the right to hold whatever beliefs one chose, religious or secular. It was not up to him to determine which of these were worthy. "True religion is *my* individual religion, and so with everyone else's. No two have precisely the same conception of it! The recognition of the inherent right of individuality is the only harmonizer."¹¹⁰ Some of the members were, in fact, former ministers of various sects who gave up their pulpit when they moved to Modern Times.¹¹¹ Modern Times tolerated, as a result, a wide range of views considered extreme or eccentric by the mainstream. In general, this did not present conflicts within the community.

The serious issues arose when outsiders reacted to what they were convinced were dangerous practices at Modern Times. Unfortunately, as at Nashoba, when one of

¹⁰⁹ Codman, "A Brief History," 10.

¹¹⁰ Warren, *Practical Details*, 82.

¹¹¹ Codman, "A Brief History," 16.

the founders of the community, in this case Stephen Pearl Andrews, espoused these ideas it inflamed criticism and created internal turmoil. The difficulty for Warren in this turmoil was that his individual sovereignty beliefs prevented him from enforcing those ideals. While he insisted that everyone must have the right to live and believe as they chose, that meant he could not condone expelling free love advocates Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Gove Nichols because of their refusal to conform to his ideal of tolerance. The Nicholse's choice to proclaim their beliefs on free love publicly with the claim that they represented the entire community of Modern Times brought these tensions to a head.¹¹² Warren clarified that people at Modern Times had freedom to live according to their principles but that there were not ruling ideologies governing the community.¹¹³ Ultimately, the Nicholse chose to move on but this problem was to raise its head again over the introduction of a Positivist apostle to the community. Henry Edger had visited Modern Times and admired the community enough to choose to move there in 1854. Oddly he arrived with the plan to proselytize for August Comte's Religion of Humanity, hoping to convert the village to the scientific humanist faith. In doing so he entirely misunderstood Warren's individual sovereignty by seeking to impose his faith on Modern Times as an official creed.¹¹⁴ Further, given Comte's restriction of women to traditional domestic roles, and restriction of sex to procreative purposes and only within

¹¹² Interestingly, although Nichols wrote about Modern Times, noting that it failed for economic reasons, he did not make a reference to his reasons for leaving. (Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life* (London: John Maxwell and Company, 1864), 38-42).

¹¹³ Josiah Warren, *Positions Defined*, Modern Times, August, 1853.

¹¹⁴ Codman, "A Brief History," 6-7.

marriage, it seems again that Edger was oblivious to the feminist, free love leanings of the community. Warren became frustrated at the attempt to impose what he viewed as an offensive, elitist, sexist, ideology on the village through coercion and in this Andrews and most of the community concurred. Edger only converted a handful of members and although he stayed at Modern Times for the remainder of his life, gave up on establishing his church.

Another way in which Modern Times lived up to its rhetoric was through its structure as an anarchist community. Firstly, Modern Times defied outsider expectations by not descending into chaos and violence. Contrary to the mainstream understanding of anarchism, Warren successfully demonstrated that a leaderless, consensus driven, voluntary community that defended individual sovereignty could be at least as harmonious as traditional society. Unlike many Utopian communities, because the members did not share their property in common, each individual was responsible for their own care and maintenance. The voluntary aspect of the community presented fewer challenges because it evaded the issue of freeloaders and resentment over being compelled to do undesirable work. Like any community, communalist or traditional, religious or secular, Modern Times faced the question of how to ensure that citizens behaved socially and responsibly. Modern Times however, did not rely on bylaws to compel conformity and obedience. Instead Warren relied on the conscience of the individual to act in the best interests of both themselves and the community. The shared vision of the members largely deserved credit for the level of success in this endeavor achieved at Modern Times.

Warren actually achieved what he set out to do in terms of individual sovereignty. He gritted his teeth and allowed all kinds of unusual behavior to pass without comment providing it did not impede the rights of others. Warren expressed his concern over these extremists, "One man began to advocate plurality of wives, and published a paper to support his views; another believed clothing to be a superfluity, and not only attempted to practise his Adamic theories in person, but inflicted his views upon his hapless children. A woman with an ungainly form displayed herself in public in men's attire, which gave rise to the newspaper comment that 'the women of Modern Times dressed in men's clothes and looked hideous.' Still another young woman had the diet mania so severely that after trying to live on beans without salt until reduced almost to a skeleton she died within a year."¹¹⁵ Warren's concern seems to stem from the outcome of their behavior rather than their unconventional beliefs. However, despite his disdain at their folly, he tried diligently to avoid imposing rules to rein them in. Charles Codman marveled how at Modern Times "every new and strange proposition was welcomed by a respectful hearing, and debated and considered."¹¹⁶

Typically, anarchist communities have been short-lived, largely because their lack of membership qualifications led to problems with cranks and troublemakers that they had no mechanism to expel and to problems with freeloaders who took advantage

¹¹⁵ William Bailie, *Josiah Warren: The First American Anarchist, A Sociological Study* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1906), 60-61. He is quoting Warren without citing the source, perhaps from *Practical Details* or *Peaceful Revolutionist*, although the author could not locate a specific reference in the surviving copies.

¹¹⁶ Codman, "A Brief History," 10.

of the non-coercive nature of the organization.¹¹⁷ While there were internal tensions caused by extremists trying to impose their will on the membership, the village of Modern Times protected individuality and people took responsibility for their own actions and needs. Modern Times stands out because it outlasted not only most anarchist communities but also most nineteenth century Utopian communities of all types. Particularly with anarchist societies, there is often a distinct gap between the group's stated rhetoric regarding their intentions and the lived experience of their members. This phenomenon is perhaps more prominent among anarchists than other intentional communities because of their commitment to eliminating mainstream institutions and ridding their Utopia of hierarchy and coercion. Ultimately most of these groups find that institutions, particularly patriarchy, linger; they devolve into paralysis unable to make decisions without leadership; or those members who live responsibly come to resent those who freeload off their efforts. These challenges limit severely the longevity of anarchist groups as they find they must either compromise their ideals or collapse into failure. Warren avoided taking the role of leader at Modern Times. Charles Codman criticized him for this, arguing that had Warren been a strong charismatic leader the community would not have lost its way.¹¹⁸ Although Warren disapproved of some of the

¹¹⁷ For example, Bettina in mid-nineteenth century Texas collapsed because members chose to study rather than produce crops to feed their community (Ernest G. Fischer, *Marxists and Utopians in Texas* (Burnet, TX: Eakin Press, 1980), 71) and 1960s Cold Mountain suffered a hepatitis outbreak because no one was willing to maintain essential sanitation and hygiene standards. (Cheryl Coulthard, "Vegans Gone Wild: The Failure of Militant Anarchist Communes in the Late 1960s," presented at Texas Tech HGSO Conference, January 2016, 7.)

¹¹⁸ Codman, "Brief History," 5.

behavior within Modern Times, and even made comments about it, he did not take action to control or coerce members into conforming with his ideals or preferences except, as in the case of Gove and Edger, when he felt they were trying to impose their will on others.

While men like newspaperman and reformer Horace Greeley, leader of Hopedale Community Adin Ballou, and social commentator Dr. John Ellis felt comfortable making sweeping criticisms of free love practices at Modern Times without ever setting foot in the community, others wanted to see for themselves. Visitors would take the Long Island Railroad out to try to catch a glimpse of nudists, free lovers or "unsexed" women and men (a reference to the unfashionable women's cropped hair and men's flowing locks). Accounts of these visits demonstrate the disdain of outsiders for the perceived practices and beliefs at Modern Times. Henry Edger took two visits and made references to Warren in an 1857 letter as "ignorant mechanic" engaged in "quackery" at Modern Times, before he contradictorily concluded by saying, "although I could see many difficulties I was ready to take them for granted...so I came down here, bought an acre of land."¹¹⁹ Apparently the quack was able to dispel Edger's doubts sufficiently for him to buy in to the community. Early Warren biographer, William Bailie recorded, "A minister of the gospel from Cincinnati visited the Colony to investigate, and was courteously treated. He returned home, and published in the *Gazette* a virulent attack upon the inhabitants of Modern Times. Of twenty-six statements therein purporting to be

¹¹⁹ Henry Edger, Letter [no addressee], February 16, 1857. Suffolk County Historical Society, Modern Times Collection.

facts, Warren declared that 'twenty-five were wholly or partly false and one was equivocal.'¹²⁰

In 1862, Josiah Warren decided to leave *Modern Times*. The Civil War created conflict within the community and internally for Warren. Warren objected to war as the ultimate example of state coercion of both conscripted men and the states that had seceded. While Warren viewed slavery as an abominable violation of individual sovereignty, he also respected the right of Southerners to their beliefs, their institutions and to secede if they did not want to live by those of the Union. The idea that the government should force men at *Modern Times* to fight or pay a substitute offended Warren to the core. Warren remained consistent on this point over decades, having made a similar argument in 1833 during the Nullification Crisis.¹²¹ However, fifteen members of *Modern Times* chose to fight for the Union.¹²² Not only did internal tensions lead Warren to depart but the economic boom after the war drove up land prices, and opened new jobs. Warren lacked the charisma to prevent members giving up equitable commerce for participation in industrial capitalism.¹²³ *Modern Times* became

¹²⁰ Bailie, *Josiah Warren*, 61.

¹²¹ Josiah Warren, "Of Our State Difficulties," *Peaceful Revolutionist*, Vol. 1, No. 2, February 5, 1833, 6.

¹²² Member and novelist Moncure Conway somewhat embellished his account of the village during this period, as historian Roger Wunderlich points out, but he concurs that the Civil War proved the crisis point for *Modern Times*. (Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 179.)

¹²³ Member Charles Codman bemoaned both Warren's lack of leadership and the members' lack of commitment. "The Fundamental mistake we made was in thinking that even a small percent of those who are clamorous and insistent for justice are in earnest. They are not, and with sadness I write it. They want to prate and shout for it, but are far from ready to practice it." (Codman, "A Brief History," 17.)

Brentwood, no longer a Utopian community but simply another Long Island village. From Modern Times, the members followed varied paths but many retained their commitment to reform or Utopianism.¹²⁴ As seems to be the case for most Utopian societies, there was a significant interconnection between members of Modern Times and other communities; with members either coming from or going to reform movements and intentional communities.

Modern Times, like Nashoba and Harmony Society demonstrates the interconnectedness of membership, ideas, goals that support the contention of this work that Utopian communalism is a movement. These groups did not arise or exist in isolation, but were closely tied to each other coherently, evidencing Charles Tilly's requirements for a social movement: campaign, WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment) displays and political action.¹²⁵ The Utopian threads in this period formed a weft of horizontal ties between communities communicating with each other and building off each other's work. They established foundations for threads to traverse to the future, leaving lessons for future utopians to build upon.

¹²⁴ Warren moved back to the Boston area and continued to work, although unsuccessfully, on the ideal village movement. Warren never again opened a Time Store or belonged to a Utopian community. Stephen Pearl Andrews expanded his commitment to free love and feminism, becoming a close associate (and even co-habiting with) Victoria Woodhull. He continued working to support workers' rights through American Workingmen's Association. His later writings attempted to reconcile Warren with Fourierism and Positivism. Various members, including Codman, who stayed in Modern Times ended not only their isolation from the market economy but also their non-participation in mainstream institutions.

¹²⁵ Tilly, *Social Movements*, 3.

CHAPTER III

BACK TO THE FUTURE: LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY COMMUNALISM

Introduction

Communalism continued to be a minority figure in the broader spectrum of social protest and reform throughout the twentieth century. Even in the 1960s and 70s when communes exploded in number, they remained a fringe approach to Utopian goals. The impact of communalism on American culture and the broader recognition of this type of social protest far outweigh the small proportion of the population who engaged in communal experimentation. The interconnectedness of Utopian communards with reform and protest movements and their legacy of social and cultural change marks the historical significance of late twentieth century communalism. This chapter introduces the three late twentieth century Utopian communities, Peoples Temple, Diggers and Kerista, that figure into this discussion of communalism as a movement, and Utopian threads linking past and present communalism.

While by the mid-twentieth century American society had certainly made great strides in terms of race, gender and economic inequality, many Americans, particularly those belonging to marginalized groups, believed that there was still much work to be done. Slavery no longer oppressed African Americans, but they still faced institutionalized racism and discrimination in their daily lives.¹ Women may have

¹ John Morton Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 254; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York:

gained the right to vote, and made dramatic strides in education and workplace equality, nonetheless feminism continued to struggle both politically and socially to achieve equality for women.² Society still expected men to confine themselves to traditional men's occupations, to provide for their families and repress their feelings.³ Certainly, not all men conformed with these standards and the way that men experienced the effects of patriarchal expectations varied based on their racial or ethnic, class and regional identity, and men increasingly challenged these standards beginning in the 1960s.⁴ The LGBTQ community began in mid-century to publicly identify themselves and organize to fight against discrimination.⁵ Although America after World War II had economically

Bantam, 1987), 245; William Appleman Williams, *The Great Evasion* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), 86; David R. Colburn and George E. Pozzetta, "Race, Ethnicity, and the Evolution of Political Legitimacy," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 121.

² Blum, *Years of Discord*, 274-5; Alice Echols, "Nothing Distant About it: Women's Liberation and Sixties Radicalism," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 151-2; John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 308-309; William H. Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 175.

³ Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (London: Pluto Press, 1983), 11-12. David Collinson and Jeff Hearn, "Naming Men as Men," in *The Masculinities Reader*, ed. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 146. Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 15, 427; Robert Brannon, "The Male Sex Role--And What It's Done for Us Lately?" in *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority* eds. Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), 5.

⁴ Arthur Brittan, "Masculinities and Masculinism" in *The Masculinities Reader*, eds. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 54; David S. Gutterman, "The Interrogation of Masculinity," in *The Masculinities Reader*, eds. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 59; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174-5; R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 36.

⁵ Timothy Miller, *The 60's Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 78; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 185; D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 320-322; Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 77.

recovered from the Depression of the 1930s and more Americans in this period achieved upward mobility and economic security, these benefits failed to reach all Americans.⁶ Many, particularly those belonging to marginalized groups, struggled to prosper. In this environment, Utopian communalism continued to provide an alternative to mainstream reform and protest movements and to experiment with creating a better and more equal world for its members.

Peoples Temple

In 1954 in Indianapolis, Jim Jones initiated the first stage of what would eventually become the Utopian communal society known as Peoples Temple. He formed his own church with a focus on interracial harmony and activism to encourage economic equality. From the beginning, Jones aimed at outreach to poor black communities, an unusual move for a white preacher in the 1950s. Yet even in that deeply divided period of American society, Jones succeeded in drawing in idealistic white followers who were committed to creating a better world for all.

Influenced by the success of the Father Divine mission on the East Coast, Jones decided to relocate his church to Ukiah, CA.⁷ Jones had had a vision that convinced him

⁶ Allan Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 62-64; C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 275-277; Williams, *The Great Evasion*, 161; Robert M. Collins, "Growth Liberalism in the Sixties: Great Societies at Home and Grand Design Abroad," in *The Sixties: From Memory to History*, ed. David Farber (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 13-14.

⁷ Father Divine and later his wife, Mother Divine led an inner-city based black Utopian religious society known as the International Peace Mission in New York and Philadelphia beginning in the 1930s, and declining after Mother Divine's death in 1992. Like Father Divine, Jim Jones made claims of divinity

that the end was near and that he must move to a more remote, and therefore safer site. Not every Indianapolis member made the journey to California. Some were unconvinced by Jones' prediction of nuclear disaster, others had become disaffected with Jones himself, some simply could not imagine moving to such a foreign place. Dozens of members committed to the move, leaving behind family, friends, and jobs to follow Jones to this rural region not far from Eureka.⁸ They hoped to acquire land and use it to create a self-sufficient community that would act as a Utopian model of racial harmony and equality. Jones required his followers to donate every penny they could spare to the church. He quickly convinced local media that Peoples Temple would be a benefit to the community and gained control over the reporting on his church.

Reading the local media coverage on Peoples Temple, Jones's influence is evident from the positive imagery and the elaborate descriptions that differ greatly from the press on other area churches.⁹ Tolerance from the community would be essential for Jones to expand his church and more aggressively pursue his goals for social justice. He wanted and needed political influence and greater financial resources to achieve his aims. Jones and his members recruited college students and local professionals, taking

and used charismatic preaching to draw in and keep followers. Jones appreciated the financial success of Father Divine and the large size of his following. Father Divine and Jones conflicted after Jones apparently attempted to poach followers away from Father Divine's community.

⁸ Denice Stevenson, ed., *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society* (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 20.

⁹ "Bay Area Church News and Activities," *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), August 28, 1971, 25; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXX, Issue 6, February 10, 1973, 16; *Sacramento Observer*, Vol II, Issue 13, March 6, 1974, B-5; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXXI, Issue 25, June 22, 1974, 8; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXXIII, Issue 32, July 14, 1976, 28.

advantage of the dearth of activities in the area to invite them to church services and social gatherings. Members who joined in this period comment on how attuned Jones was to their concerns and criticisms of society. Laura Johnston Kohl remembers how she came to Peoples Temple from the Black Panthers and the counterculture looking for a safe place where she could live according to her ideals. Jones talked to her of her progressive heroes, told her what she wanted to hear. Peoples Temple seemed to embody her anti-racist, socialist, egalitarian progressive beliefs and people in the group appeared healthy, happy, sober.¹⁰ "Jim and everyone else talked about socialism and equality and then lived it. I loved what I saw."¹¹

Ukiah was not the most promising source for attracting wealthy and idealistic white members or black members who would need and desire the outreach from Peoples Temple, so Jones turned his sights on San Francisco.¹² In the late 1960s, Peoples Temple shifted their attentions from subsistence activities to greater outreach in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Over the course of 1969, Peoples Temple tripled its membership to about five hundred who came to services regularly.¹³ Jones used revival-style preaching, faith healings and other miracles, and inner-city activism to reach both the black communities and idealistic young white activists. Although Jones faked his

¹⁰ Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look* (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2010), 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Jeff Guinn, *The Road to Jonestown* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2017), 139.

¹³ Guinn, *Jonestown*, 160.

supposed gifts such as extrasensory perception and healing with the aid of his closest allies in the group, the act was convincing enough to bring in both members and donations. Former members acknowledge now how Jones deceived them and try to rationalize it. "It's suspension of disbelief. It's very powerful. It makes you feel important in a very strange way. It does. It makes you feel chosen recognized, important."¹⁴

Jones' approach to social justice differed considerably from the that of most Christian churches in the mid-1960s. Although Christianity underwent a renewal in the 1960s and 70s seeing the growth of ecumenism, liberation theology, and particularly charismatic movements, there was limited outreach to people of color within the United States from white-dominated denominations.¹⁵ Missionary and charitable work in the Global South boomed, but "it was Christian individuals, not the churches as a whole who agitated to gain civil rights for blacks, Native Americans and other ethnic minorities."¹⁶ Many traditional black churches did try to help their communities; however, their conservative ideology encouraged the blacks to work within the system to reform American society and its institutions,¹⁷ or they treated the poor as a charity to give to

¹⁴ Jean Clancey, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 163.

¹⁵ James H. Cone, *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 130; J. Deotis Roberts, *Black Theology in Dialogue* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 59-60.

¹⁶ Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 452.

¹⁷ E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974) 71-72; There was considerable conflict in the late 1960s between more conservative black churches who wanted to continue Dr. King's approach of nonviolent appeals to the government to pass civil rights protections and those who demanded immediate, even revolutionary change. This is not an indictment of that decision, but rather a

rather than an injustice to be rectified.¹⁸ More conservative members found those churches that allied to a Black Power narrative disturbingly militant and insular.¹⁹ Jones actively and vociferously advocated outreach to non-white communities to create a better world for them in the here and now. Unlike many activists of the 1960s, Jones put action before ideology. It was not enough for him to preach equality and compassion, members had to practice this. He very much aspired to be the "white savior," to the black community but also Father to his white followers. Jones proclaimed that he was the reincarnation of Buddha, Lenin, Gandhi and Jesus Christ.²⁰ Most members referred to Jones as Father and accorded him respect and deference as a holy man despite his shortcomings including vulgarity, lying, cruelty, and sexual profligacy.

While it is tempting to paint Jones as a monster, Jones based his ideology on Utopian socialism and equality. Putting aside the tragic outcome of Peoples Temple at

recognition that many in the 1960s and 70s took a more radical path to address racial, gender and economic inequality.

¹⁸ Cone, *Risks of Faith*, 111; Frazier, *The Negro Church*, 75; Adele Oltman, *Sacred Mission, Worldly Ambition: Black Christian Nationalism in the Age of Jim Crow* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 152-153. Oltman notes that church attendance and moral standards determined eligibility to receive alms, 179.

¹⁹ Cornel West, "On Black Nationalism," in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 522-523; Cone, *Risks of Faith*, 3; Charles Lattimore Howard, *Black Theology as Mass Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 16; James H. Evans, compiler, *Black Theology: A Critical Assessment and Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 1; Frazier, *The Negro Church*, 78.

²⁰ Jennie Rothenberg Gritz, "Drinking the Kool-Aid: A Survivor Remembers Jim Jones," *The Atlantic*, November 18, 2011, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/11/drinking-the-kool-aid-a-survivor-remembers-jim-jones/248723/>, accessed July 5, 2018; Debbie Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 45.

Jonestown, no one went into Peoples Temple looking to commit suicide. Jones attracted members by telling them how they could change the world for the better and convinced them that he was the one to lead this change. People joined Peoples Temple because they believed that Jim Jones could guide them, and ultimately society, toward economic and social equality for all. "...we wanted to change the world. And we are accountable for what we did, whether in the context of Peoples Temple or the Vietnam War or whatever it was. We are accountable for our own actions."²¹

Although Jones did not reference Utopian thought, these writers influenced some of the educated whites who worked closely with him. Tim Stoen, for example, specifically connected his radicalism to seventeenth century English Utopians, the Levelers and the Diggers.²² While Jones preached a Utopian ideology of creating a better world through racial harmony and economic equality there is no indication that he drew on earlier Utopian communities to develop these ideas. Father Divine and the Black Panthers were the only contemporary communal groups with which he communicated and he largely disavowed them when he recognized that he could not co-opt their

²¹ Clancey, *Stories*, 298.

²² Tim Stoen, *Love Them to Death* (distributed in US as *Marked for Death*) (North Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 40, 44. The Levelers and the Diggers were both active during the 17th century Civil War in England. Levelers sought economic and political equality through broader suffrage and equality under the law for all. Unlike the Diggers the Levelers accepted private ownership. Winstanley's Diggers took local action against enclosures during the rule of Oliver Cromwell. They pulled down the barriers and planted crops in an attempt to "level" property ownership and combat economic inequality. While Jones did not acknowledge Utopian sources, he did analyze the workings of other Utopian communities and social movements.

membership.²³ When talking to activist college students, Jones turned to Marxism as an influence and focused on the social justice aspect of Temple ideology. He spoke of empowerment, equality and self-sufficiency to inner city blacks.

Peoples Temple welcomed people from all backgrounds including those with histories of substance addiction and criminal behavior. Strict rules against drug and alcohol use, discouragement of sexual activity (except when directed by Jones), help with job searches and placement made Peoples Temple seem to many outsiders to be a positive alternative to counterculture communalism prevalent at that time in California.²⁴ The group acquired a reputation for its drug rehabilitation program, becoming well-known locally for its success rate and for not charging participants. Other services provided by Peoples Temple included medical, legal, and elder care, again all free to members. These services plus the food and shelter provided to members living in Peoples Temple homes offered an opportunity to low income people to enjoy a better standard of living less dependent on the state. We should note that although these aid programs were available to anyone, regardless of color, because Jim Jones targeted inner city blacks beginning in 1969, that demographic dominated this sector of the

²³ Father Divine led a communal group for black uplift and spiritual awakening in Brooklyn from around 1907 to 1969. Jones admired Divine's success but took a more aggressively activist approach to Utopianism. The Black Panthers operated numerous community programs for inner-city blacks, initially in Oakland and then spreading to other cities in the 1960s. They sought to address problems of police violence, poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, lack of access to healthcare and legal aid and other social problems for African Americans. While admired for their authenticity by many white protest groups, the BPP created tensions with more moderate civil rights groups through their militant approach.

²⁴ Although other counterculture groups such as the Diggers and Black Panthers provided similar outreach programs, they struggled for recognition from straight society.

membership. Peoples Temple not only helped those people it was trying to recruit, they also performed community service as part of their ideology and to smooth their relationships with outsiders.

Jim Jones encouraged a mindset among his members that contributed to their decision to increasingly cut their ties with the outside world. He did so by limiting their access to outside sources of information and by reiterating the idea that Peoples Temple was the safest place for members in a dangerous world. Specifically, the dangers he emphasized were nuclear holocaust and race war. Jones proclaimed that the world was in jeopardy from the arms race prevalent during the Cold War. This concern was hardly unique; many Americans had feared nuclear destruction since the bombing of Japan during World War II. Increasingly Americans protested the arms race and the war in Vietnam seeing it not only as a danger to individuals directly affected by the conflict but as a threat to world peace.²⁵ Few Americans took the drastic step of trying to remove themselves to a quotidian place of safety although many built bomb shelters in the yards for protection from an attack.

Jones used these fears to deliberately isolate his followers from outside influences by moving them to rural Ukiah away from their families. When Peoples Temple re-located to Guyana, one of Jones' justifications for the move was to protect

²⁵ Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 22-24. Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23-24; Mark Hamilton Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 82-83.

members from the racist institutions of the United States, claiming the government would intern all blacks and whites who supported civil rights.²⁶ In giving the order to commit "revolutionary suicide," Jones declared that the government would not allow Jonestown to continue and claimed that the army was coming to kill or enslave them all. That the vast majority of members at Jonestown believed his claims demonstrates the effectiveness of Jones' propaganda campaign. Annie Moore's final statement perhaps best sums up the state of mind at the end, "We died because you would not let us live in peace."²⁷

How well did Peoples Temple achieve its goals or live up to its ideology? This is a contentious issue. In the memoirs and interviews with former members many assert that this was the best time of their lives, that they were acting against inequality in a meaningful way. They blame Jones for destroying a beautiful community and its good works. Others are more focused on the problems within Peoples Temple, particularly with the leadership of Jones and his inner circle and cannot step back from this to assess the community objectively. This is a significant challenge for studying Peoples Temple. It is necessary to balance a respect for the individual's understanding of their own experience with a recognition of the impact of abuse, shame, regret and other factors on

²⁶ Jim Jones, "Sermon," Fall, 1978, Q162 Transcript, transcribed by Fielding M. McGehee, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27350. While this was Jones' justification to the general membership, those closest to him were aware of his increasing fear of prosecution for financial crimes and a pending child custody case. Fleeing to Guyana put him beyond the easy reach of the law.

²⁷ Annie Moore, "Annie Moore's Last Letter," November 18, 1978, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=13939.

their accounts. Because it ended so horrifically it is difficult both for former members and for outsiders to separate Jones and the Jonestown tragedy from the years of the life of the community that preceded it. Those who left early felt disillusioned and many worked actively to stop Jones' worst behavior and end Peoples Temple.

Those who survived Jonestown are more mixed in their accounts. Some, including Stephan Jones, Laura Johnston Kohl and Garry Lambrev, are nostalgic for the good times they experienced with Peoples Temple while still critical of Jones and his inner circle. Jones recalls "It really was the best time of my life...It was a good time in my life, you know, and I learned how to work...My father was a narcissistic madman, a sick guy, and everywhere you went it just became about him. When he wasn't there I really felt that sense of community that I never felt in the Temple [Jones is referring to the time he spent with other members building Jonestown before his father arrived, i.e. that Jones undermined the purpose and communal spirit of Peoples Temple]. I felt it. A common purpose."²⁸ Kohl believes that Peoples Temple could have endured and continued to work towards its goals without Jones, but she also sees the devolution of Jonestown as beyond anyone's control.²⁹

Media reporting on Peoples Temple was and still is highly subjective. Jones's influence on the local press meant that at many newspapers he personally vetted any

²⁸ Stephan Jones, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 199.

²⁹ "Jonestown survivor: 'Wrong from every point of view'," interview by Anderson Cooper, *CNN Access*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/West/11/17/cna.kohl/>, accessed July 5, 2018.

stories about himself or Peoples Temple resulting in propaganda rather than reporting. Journalist Phil Tracy claims that Jones went beyond charming the press to threatening those who wrote negative articles.³⁰ Peoples Temple was implicated (although later cleared) in a break-in at *New West's* office,³¹ and used protests to pressure the *Examiner* into suppressing negative articles. These stories, beginning in the early 1970s, were extremely critical of the group, such as Lester Kinsolving's multi-part exposé in the *San Francisco Examiner* and a piece in *New West* magazine by Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy that caused Jones to catastrophize that the authorities were closing in on him. Articles after the tragedy at Jonestown are filled with factual errors, sensationalism, and clear prejudice against alternative religions and communalism.³² While it can be expected that stories from this time period would reflect the horror felt by the American public, the stereotypes generated at this time would haunt communes and small religious sects for decades to come.³³

³⁰ Phil Tracy, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 111; Julie Smith, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 120.

³¹ Tracy, *Stories*, 112.

³² Tom Mathews, "Death in the Jungle," *Newsweek*, November 27, 1978; Kenneth Woodward, "How They Bend Minds," *Newsweek*, December 4, 1978, 72-77; "The Cult of Death," *Newsweek*, December 4, 1978 [special report on Jonestown]; Melinda Beck, "The World of Cults," *Newsweek*, December 4, 1978, 78-81; "Cult of Death," *Time*, [special issue on Jonestown] December 4, 1978; Lance Morrow, "The Lure of Doomsday," *Time*, December 4, 1978, 30; "Nightmare in Jonestown," *Time*, December 4, 1978, 16-21; "Messiah from the Midwest," *Time*, December 4, 1978, 22-27; "Why People Join," *Time*, December 4, 1978, 27; Morton Kondracke, "The Cultist in All of Us: My Heart Belongs to Daddy," *The New Republic*, December 9, 1978, 9-11; "The Making of a Madman," *New West* [special issue on Jim Jones], December 19, 1978. Even magazines that would normally not cover such events joined in: Gary Smith, "Escape from Jonestown," *Sports Illustrated*, December 31, 1978, 124-133; Gregory Rose and John H. Jacobs, "Interview with Stephan Jones," *Penthouse*, April, 1979, 85-88, 167-170.

Examining these polarized sources and balancing them against each other, it appears that Peoples Temple as an organization provided substantial uplift to the black inner-city community in San Francisco including medical and legal aid, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, employment and job placement services, elder and child care, educational programs for children and college scholarships for teens, and providing food, shelter and clothing to poor members. Beyond the material assistance, Peoples Temple offered a sense of purpose and community to people who had lost hope and a sense of meaning in their lives. This was true for the broader membership not only those in straitened financial circumstances. Based on these accomplishments, Peoples Temple was successful in San Francisco at meeting many of its goals.³⁴

There are however, numerous criticisms of Peoples Temple's work. These include that the drug rehabilitation program was not nearly as successful as claimed, with many members continuing to use drugs, even hard drugs like heroin. Jones had members beaten, often brutally, when he caught them using drugs or breaking other rules like frivolous spending, sex with outsiders, or especially publicly questioning Jones' authority. Yet, many members who Jones physically abused or publicly humiliated view this as an appropriate punishment necessary to keep order within a large community.

³³ "Guyana's Ripples," *Communication*, East Wind: Federation of Egalitarian Communities, January 1979; Catherine Wessinger, *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000), 21, 56.

³⁴ It is unusual for a Utopian community to be as diverse as Peoples Temple in terms of race, class, and age. Although this group made many mistakes, they offered a model that directly attacked the complex problems of race and economic inequality and the challenges of providing for both children and elderly members.

Jean Clancey argues, "Abuse happened. In my mind it happened because we are in limbo, this purgatory, this hell...and pretty soon you are no longer thinking your own thoughts or being your own person: you are a penitent in this process of becoming the socialist entity."³⁵ Clancey was not claiming lack of agency so much as that members chose to cede their will for the greater good. Physical abuse, particularly, proved a polarizing issue, resulting in member defections. Reporter Phil Tracy notes that in the exposé he wrote with Marshall Kilduff they did not even discuss Jones' sex problems; they found enough in the physical abuse and questionable financial dealings.³⁶

Peoples Temple was much more than the sensational behavior of Jones or the tragic outcome of Jonestown. Despite Jim Jones' many flaws as a leader and a human being, and despite his descent into madness, the members of Peoples Temple joined for a positive purpose and a hope of creating a better world for everyone. Former member Richard Tropp later testified, "To be brief, I have found a place to serve, to be, to grow. To learn the riddle of my own insignificance, to help build a future in the shadow of the apocalypse under which I felt I was always living."³⁷ It is worthwhile to appreciate

³⁵ Clancey, Quoted in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 161. It should be noted as context that at this time corporal punishment was still used in many school settings and was widely used by parents although Dr. Benjamin Spock's work had begun to change this. The United States had only ceased to use flogging as a judicial punishment in 1952. Although members reported that Jones encouraged abusive and excessive punishment, the acceptance of this as reasonable by members is not inconsistent with social standards during their lifetimes. (J.D. Gleissner, "Prison Overcrowding Cure: Judicial Corporal Punishment of Adults," Vol. 49, Issue No. 4, *The Criminal Law Bulletin* (2013), 9.)

³⁶ Tracy, *Stories*, 113.

³⁷ Richard Tropp, testimonial, California Historical Society. Quoted in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 176.

Peoples Temple as a Utopian society with positive aspirations. Doing so does not diminish the devastating way in which nine hundred and eighteen people died, but rather brings their deaths back into balance with the way in which they lived their lives. As former member Rod Hicks recalls, "They didn't leave here saying, 'Well, we're going to go over here and be a bunch of crazy people.' ...They were looking for something good."³⁸ Investigator Jack Palladino contends that "The people who died there, and the people who have been left behind, may represent some of the best and most fundamental impulses in American culture."³⁹

Diggers

If authoritarian-led groups like Harmony Society and Peoples Temple represent one end of the spectrum of internal structure for Utopian societies, the 1960s San Francisco Diggers stand at the polar opposite. Drawing on the influence of Gerard Winstanley's seventeenth century radicals,⁴⁰ the modern Diggers took on not only their name but also their philosophy of creating economic equality by starting locally. The Diggers embodied the ideal of think globally, act locally in their creative and anarchic

³⁸ Rod Hicks, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 126.

³⁹ Jack Palladino, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 128.

⁴⁰ Winstanley's Diggers took local action against enclosures during the rule of Oliver Cromwell. They pulled down the barriers and planted crops in an attempt to "level" property ownership and combat economic inequality.

approach to countering mainstream values and institutions.⁴¹ Member Judy Goldhaft explains, "We put together a credo, which was, "Do your own thing"—no restraints, no rules—and 'Everything is free.' That [credo] provided so much open space that anything could happen, and . . . did."⁴² Digger Emmett Grogan attributed the writings from Dutch anarchist commune, the Provos, with helping the Diggers crystallize their concept of combining art and activism.⁴³ According to member Peter Coyote, "a big key was Gregory Corso's poem, where he said: 'Power is standing on a street corner doing nothing.' Because what we were about was autonomy, finding what authentic, autonomous impulses were. And then being responsive to them, and not making excuses, not waiting for the revolution."⁴⁴ From their perspective, the Diggers wanted to be the revolution, to live it one person at a time. Although they only lasted as a community for a few years, the Diggers left a lasting impression on the Haight and created a precedent for organizations that endure to the present day. To borrow Utopian scholar Lj Russum's neologism, the Diggers represent an "intrautopian" moment in that they created

⁴¹ The origin of this phrase is unsure, it came into popular usage in the late 1960s as an ideal to express the need to make small changes to create bigger effects. It parallels in many ways the feminist slogan "the personal is political" in the sense that Utopians and reformers in this period viewed individual choice as a building block for global cultural revolution.

⁴² Judy Goldhaft in Timothy Miller, *The 60's Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 44.

⁴³ "Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft," Interview, Marty Lee and Eric Noble, The Digger Archives, accessed July 3, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/oralhistory/pb_jg_0482.htm.

⁴⁴ Peter Coyote, Interview with Etan Ben-Ami, The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/oralhistory/peter_interview.html; Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (New York: Citadel, 1990), 240.

temporary liminal spaces for people in the Haight to experience Utopia.⁴⁵ The inclusion of the Diggers in this study serves to highlight the ways in which this understudied community is woven into the broader Utopian fabric of communalism.

In the mid-1960s, the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco underwent a transformation from declining working-class area to hippie central. Historian Anthony Ashbolt links suburbanization and redevelopment-driven white flight from the Haight with rising property values in the Beat district of North Beach to explain the emergence of Haight-Ashbury as a counter-culture center in the mid-1960s.⁴⁶ The San Francisco Mime Troupe (SFMT) played a key role in this emerging counter-culture as purveyors of social criticism through guerilla theater. While the SFMT continued its satirical attacks on the mainstream throughout the sixties and even to the current day, some of its members grew dissatisfied with the approach and broke off to expand their activism.⁴⁷ Peter Berg led the defectors, if led is the right word for an anarchist group, including Emmett Grogan, Billy Murcott, Judy Goldhaft, Phyllis Wilner, and Peter Coyote among others, to create a new approach to social criticism.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Lj Russum, "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound:" Making the Argument for the Grateful Dead Being the Greatest Intergenerational Utopian Band in American History," presented at the 43rd Annual Conference of the Society for Utopian Studies, Berkeley, CA, November 2, 2018.

⁴⁶ Anthony Ashbolt, "'Go ask Alice': Remembering the Summer of Love Forty Years On," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* (2007), 36.

⁴⁷ San Francisco Mime Troupe, *2018 SFMT Schedule of Events*, <http://www.sfmt.org/index.php>, accessed June 28, 2018.

⁴⁸ The other Diggers I have found brief references to are: Kent Minneault, Siena Riffia (aka Natural Suzanne), Lenore Kantor, Nina Blasenheim, Sweet William (aka Sweet Billy Tumbleweed aka Billy Fritsch), Jane Lapiner, Robert La Morticella, Karl Rosenberg, Brooks Butcher, Richard Brautigan, Michael McClure, Pam Parker, Eileen Ewing, David Simpson, Jane Simpson (may have had diff surname)

The Diggers continued the SFMT love of the absurd as a tool to draw attention to injustices in society. Where SFMT stopped at guerilla theatre, the Diggers took the same analysis and dismissal of the status quo and put it into action to change life in Haight-Ashbury. The Diggers rejected capitalism as a system for economic interactions because of its inherent exploitation of the working class and the way it fueled economic, social and political inequality. They developed a critique of capitalism based less on ideology than on direct action: praxis as a tool to revolutionary change. Digger practice revolved around being free in all its implications. This guiding principle that they referred to simply as Free was deliberately vague and yet all-encompassing, expressing their desire to live life without the constraints of mainstream society. The Diggers embodied the change they wanted to see in the world with the goal that others would embrace their ideas and expand them to change greater society. Peter Coyote's description, "Diggers was an anarchistic experiment dedicated to creating and clarifying distinctions between society's business-as-usual and our own imaginings of what-it-might-be, in the most potent way we could devise," emphasizes its essentially Utopian character.⁴⁹

The Diggers attracted mostly young men and women in their twenties, well-educated with middle class upbringings and artistic leanings. They shared a disdain for mainstream institutions and values including capitalism, racism, patriarchy, religious hypocrisy, and commodified academy art. They were frustrated by New Left politics, by

David Simpson in his interview with Deborah Altus asserts that by the end there were 250-300 members, 9.

⁴⁹ Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 34.

putative activists putting orthodoxy of ideology before action to create real change. The Diggers coalesced in a time of social upheaval, of widespread questioning of social norms and values. Many young people were dropping out of university, defying their parents' hopes and expectations for their futures and either joining activist groups to protest and agitate for social change or living an alternative lifestyle as hippies and communards.⁵⁰ Communal societies scholar Judson Jerome estimates the number of hippies living communally at 750, 000 in tens of thousands of communes, with many more living outside communes.⁵¹ The Diggers, then, did not arise in a vacuum but rather were just one more part of a vast interconnected rejection of mainstream society in the 1960s.⁵² The Diggers were Utopian anarchists in a period rife with Utopian possibilities and dystopian fears.

The Diggers deliberately eschewed public attention and formal hierarchical structures: there were no leaders, no one was a spokesperson, their actions while not strictly anonymous were always attributed to the group not an individual.⁵³ One step taken by the Diggers to ensure anonymity and perhaps, evade responsibility, entailed

⁵⁰ Miller, *The 60's Communes*, 68; Peter Doggett, *There's a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars, and the Rise and Fall of the '60s* (New York: Canongate, 2007), 55-56; Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 84-85; Blum, *Years of Discord*, 97-98; Matusow, *Unraveling*, 303; Leonard and Deborah Wolf, eds., *Voices of the Love Generation* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1968), xxv.

⁵¹ Judson Jerome, *Families of Eden: Communes and the New Anarchism* (New York: Seabury, 1974), 16-18; Miller, *The 60's Communes*, xxvii-xx supports this calculation.

⁵² David Simpson, "The Diggers, Petrolia, CA." Interview by Deborah Altus. *60s Commune Project*, November 14, 1995, 13.

⁵³ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 7.

having the leases signed for Digger projects by drifters, that is not by regular members.⁵⁴ This policy of anonymity caused conflict between the Diggers and the Yippies, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, who took a similar absurdist guerilla approach to protest but wanted to always be in the spotlight.⁵⁵ To be a Digger ultimately meant to live one's life by one's own standards, apart from the expectations of society; to be authentic, that well-used sixties term. Coyote defined Free in this way, "From our point of view, freedom involved first liberating the imagination from economic assumptions of profit and private property that demanded existence at the expense of personal truthfulness and honor, then living according to personal authenticity and fidelity to inner directives and impulses. If enough people began to behave in this way, we believed, the culture would invariably change to accommodate them and become more compassionate and more human in the process."⁵⁶

At this point, Diggers lived communally in flats scattered through the Haight, in many cases as squatters in empty buildings or splitting the low rents among many tenants. The Diggers sought out cheap rooms or empty spaces and made them available to homeless hippies to get them off the streets and into shelter, much like the activities of Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers on New York City's Lower East Side.⁵⁷ Unlike the

⁵⁴ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 249.

⁵⁵ Peter Coyote, "Playing for Keeps," The Digger Archives, accessed July 4, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/freerfall/forkeeps.html>.

⁵⁶ Peter Coyote, "The Digger Concept of Free," The Digger Archives, accessed June 28, 2018, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Digger_Concept_of_%27Free%27.

⁵⁷ Osha Neumann, *Up Against the Wall, Motherf**ker: A Memoir of the '60s, with Notes for Next Time* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 119.

Motherfuckers, however, the Diggers did not use force to protect kids sleeping on the streets. Instead, the Diggers sought to protect the huge influx, as many as 100,000, of young hippies, many of them runaways in their mid-teens, by providing care and information on the dangers of living on city streets. Digger crash pads, while crowded, provided a safe space with few rules, except no needles or drug paraphernalia, and no weapons permitted on the premises. This served to protect both the youth using the pads and the Diggers from legal harassment.⁵⁸ Digger flyers advertised their "Survival School," a three-day seminar to "save you from becoming a psychedelic casualty." Local veterans of the hippie scene offered their knowledge and experience on potentially life-saving topics including: "Sex Lore, Street Wisdom, Health & Hygiene, The Scene, Drug Lore, Policemanship," that the Diggers recognized naïve young newcomers lacked.⁵⁹

Father Harris of All Saints' Episcopal Church and the leadership at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco worked with the Diggers to support their activities. Harris brought the proposal of assisting the Diggers to his followers and despite the potential consequences of homeless and indigent hippies invading their sacred spaces, the congregation voted unanimously to help.⁶⁰ Harris and other "squares for hippies," proved to be in the minority as most mainstream organizations deemed the Diggers and

⁵⁸ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 286.

⁵⁹ Diggers, "Survival School: How to Stay Alive on Haight Street," (San Francisco: Communications Company, 1967), The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext_SQL.asp?bib2=4.

⁶⁰ Laurence L. Holben, *For All the Saints: The First Hundred Years of All Saints Episcopal Church* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2010), 278.

counterculture in general a menace to society. In particular, San Francisco Police Chief Thomas Cahill enforced the city bylaws to the point of persecution, going after the Diggers and other hip organizations for health violations, city planning offenses, and any other means he could use to encourage hippies to move out.⁶¹ Admittedly, during the Summer of Love of 1967 the population of indigent unemployed youth in the Haight burgeoned to the point that infrastructure could not handle the population effectively. Shortages of housing, increased crime, drug overdoses, and other issues were real and significant points of concern for the community, both hip and straight.⁶² Harassment by law enforcement, commercialization of hip culture, and concerns about safety in the Haight all contributed to the end of the hippie moment in San Francisco.⁶³

Other communal groups and activists shared information and resources with the Diggers as well. For example, the Olompali Ranch, Kaliflower and One Mind Temple

⁶¹ The Diggers, "Got It Anyway Who Wants Haight Street This Summer Any Way Got It?" (San Francisco: Communications Company, 1967), The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext_SQL.asp?bib2=19; The Diggers, "Storm Warning," flyer, February 5, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Order Out of Chaos," flyer, March 25, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society.

⁶² Insiders attribute the increase to the takeover of the drug trade by organized crime and the contamination of the supply. Dominick Cavallo, "The Diggers and the Haight-Ashbury Exit the Stage," The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/cavallo_pt__5.htm.

⁶³ The Diggers, "Dig!" flyer (San Francisco: Communications Company, April 1, 1967), San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Hippies in Haight Ashbury" (San Francisco: Communications Company, February 1967), San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "A Statement of Concern" (San Francisco: Communications Company, March 26, 1967), San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Survive, Baby!" (San Francisco: Communications Company, undated), San Francisco Historical Society.

communes baked bread for the Free Bread program.⁶⁴ During the 1960s there was considerable fluidity between various groups, partly because of their experimental nature and also because of their limited lifespan. Individuals regularly left one commune for another as they dissolved or personal conflicts arose. Most of the Diggers came from other communes or activist backgrounds including red diaper babies who grew up with Old Left parents, campus radicals such as SDS, and of course, SFMT. They chose the Diggers because that group satisfied their need to put direct action before theorizing and talk. This interconnectedness of membership and the connectivity between communal groups as they strove towards similar goals contribute to the understanding of Utopian communalism as an ongoing movement that has ebbed and flowed over time.

The Diggers stand out because of their relatively unusual anarchist organizational structure. Anarchism as an organizing principle inherently brings with it many challenges for coherence, longevity, and simply getting things done. Anarchist Utopianism depends on the voluntary commitment and contributions of members. All members have equal status and voice in decisions. But even within an anarchist group, some members are more equal than others. Historian Timothy Hodgdon notes that in the Diggers assertive men tended to take precedence over the introverted.⁶⁵ Whatever their

⁶⁴ "Second Free Bakery (Olompali Ranch, 1968);" "Fifth (and Sixth) Free Bakeries (Kaliflower and One Mind Temple, 1972)" both from The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/diggers/digbread.html>.

⁶⁵ Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counterculture Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 66.

differences, Diggers shifted in and out of leadership roles depending on the activity; no one person made decisions for all. Many groups used consensus to determine all decisions, leading to the common sixties complaint that members spent hours weekly in meetings without ever deciding anything. The underlying expectation in an anarchist community is that members will choose to cooperate and participate in the activities necessary for the group to exist and that if they decline to do so the group cannot compel them. In some groups there is a mechanism whereby they can ask uncooperative members to leave, but others cling more rigidly to anarchist principles and allow anyone to join, to stay to participate as they choose. Typically, these more ideological anarchists struggle with freeloaders and troublemakers.

In the case of the Diggers, the group's fluidity allowed members to choose their level of commitment and involvement. Simply put, when the group put out an idea for an activity, those who wished to participated, those who were uninterested did not. Somehow, the Diggers made this work for them, at least in the short-term. Member David Simpson recalls, "We came and went freely like the winds. Unfortunately, sometimes we made messes we didn't clean up. But generally, there were, it was a certain level of responsibility. These were not people who were out to trash the world. We were arrogant to the extreme, but it was not a planetarily irresponsible arrogance."⁶⁶ Likely, judging from the example of other anarchist groups, if the Diggers had not dissolved for other reasons, this lack of structure and compulsion would have proved

⁶⁶ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 12-13.

fatal before long.⁶⁷ As Peter Coyote put it, "Who will empty the garbage, clean the toilets, and do the dishes are mundane but vital questions...If I prefer washing my face in a clean sink and someone else doesn't, it is a difficult problem to resolve from an ideological position."⁶⁸ Within the Diggers, they managed to adhere to their principles relatively well, staying non-hierarchical, anonymous and voluntary. Hippies *en masse* proved intimidating to straight San Francisco, with the Diggers drawing attention or ire because of their activism rather than because of their anarchism.

Americans have long feared anarchists. In the late nineteenth century, they became associated in the sensational press with bomb-throwing terrorists. Individual anarchism is a personal philosophy rooted in liberty and freedom. The Diggers's approach reflects the work of Gerrard Winstanley of the original seventeenth century Diggers, and the writings of Josiah Warren of New Harmony and Modern Times. The Diggers used these Utopian threads to develop their approach to attacking capitalism and consumerism and rejecting American institutions of retail commerce, wage labor, and private ownership. Peter Berg also drew ideas from the writings of Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin and the French Situationistes.⁶⁹ Their work on anarcho-communism encouraged Berg to create the Diggers as a non-coercive communal group. *The Oracle*

⁶⁷ It is fairly common among anarchist groups to collapse after a couple of years or less due to mundane issues. Two examples, one contemporary to the Diggers and one historical: Cold Mountain had a cholera outbreak, that the health department shut down, because no one wanted to clean or follow food safety guidelines, Bettina dissolved because no one wanted to tend the crops they needed to survive.

⁶⁸ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 139.

⁶⁹ Berg and Goldhaft, "Interview."

and other hip papers published information about earlier Utopian communal projects, making these available to the sixties communards.⁷⁰ Publishers issued re-prints of books by Thomas More, Étienne Cabet, Charles Fourier and other Utopian thinkers in this period as well, and many students read these before they dropped out of university.⁷¹

Outsiders failed to consider the Diggers and the counterculture as Utopian, viewing them instead as both a threat to mainstream values and an oddity. In the late 1960s tour buses would travel through Haight Ashbury so that straight tourists could safely view hip culture like they were at a safari park watching the lions. The Diggers staged a response to the tour buses, passing out mirrors to hippies to hold up to the faces of the gawking tourists turning their gaze back on themselves, or spray-painting the windows or the tourists' camera lenses.⁷² David Simpson described, "There was a certain amount of nudity, and word got out, so there were always people coming around on weekends, hoping to see nude people."⁷³ The press labelled hippies including the

⁷⁰ "19th Century Hippies," *The Modern Utopian*, Richard Fairfield, ed. (Berkeley, undated), 9; "Changes," *Oracle*, Vol 1, No. 6, (February, 1967), 5.

⁷¹ Charles Nordhoff, *Communitistic Societies of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1875 reprinted Dover Publications: New York, 1966); John F. C. Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral Order: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (New York: Scribner, 1969); Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *French Utopias: An Anthology of Ideal Societies* (New York: Schocken, 1971); Mark Poster, *Harmonian Man: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier* (New York: Anchor Books, 1971); Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu, transl and eds. *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier; Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967).

⁷² Coyote, "Playing for Keeps."

⁷³ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 12.

Diggers as dirty, unpatriotic, sexually debauched drug addicts who were destroying American youth and therefore a threat to the future of society.

Ironically, these supposedly bad neighbors, the Diggers, organized events focused on cleaning up the neighborhood.⁷⁴ Some businesses called on the police to drive out the hippies, resulting in a rebuke for their hypocrisy from the Diggers, "The 'hip' merchants along Haight Street with notable exception (Psych shop and Phoenix) are talking about ridding the street of 'loiterers' (on public streets?) and panhandlers -- the kids that made the scene they are there to capitalize on."⁷⁵ Specifically, the Diggers objected to the promotion of San Francisco as the City of Love by local businesses for the purpose of luring youth to the Haight. The Diggers contended that businesses did this so that they could sell hip products to these youth. More concerning, businesses employed young hippies for "sweatshop wages" to produce more items for sale while ignoring the dangers to these young people.⁷⁶ The Diggers "Death of Hippie" was partly in response to what they viewed as the commodification of hip culture. Mainstream society began to consume sanitized representations of hip culture because it viewed hippies as edgy just as they did with black culture. The mainstreaming of longer (although not to hip lengths) hair for men, bell bottoms, tie dye, ethnic textiles, and "homemade" looks like macramé and patchwork represent this co-optation of

⁷⁴ The Diggers, "Morning Clean-in flyer," April 1, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society.

⁷⁵ "In Search of a Frame," *Berkeley Barb*, Nov. 25, 1966, 6.

⁷⁶ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 276.

counterculture style.⁷⁷ Ironically perhaps, while the Diggers objected to square society adopting hip culture they did not apply the same critique to hip culture's appropriation of black and Asian styles, philosophies, slang, or food.

When the Diggers decided to dissolve, after performing the "Death of Hippie" in late 1967, members became the Free Family and moved on to live off the land at Black Bear ranch and to other communes. Just as members of other communities moved into the Diggers, they too moved on to other Utopian projects, drawing the threads laterally. Member David Simpson attributes the shift to a sense that the world was hostile so the activism they had been doing was no longer feasible. It was better to focus inward on creating a better world for themselves.⁷⁸ Despite the short time the Diggers existed, the threads of their legacy stretch to the present. Peter Coyote argues,

In my estimation, the alternative culture won the war, but initiated its changes on such deep cultural levels, that it has not surfaced in the media or political dialogue very often. There is virtually no place in the United States today where one cannot find organic food, alternative medical therapies, environmental, consumer, legal reform, and civil rights groups struggling for progressive change. The political oligarchy struggles to

⁷⁷ In October 1967, the Diggers conducted the street theatre performance/ceremony, Death of Hippie, paralleling their earlier Death of Money. At Death of Hippie a solemn parade, like a funeral cortege, carried a coffin filled with hippie paraphernalia like incense, beads and feathers through the streets to Buena Vista Park. They bade farewell to authentic hip culture, ending with a ceremonial burning of underground papers and hippie clothing. The Diggers hoped this would make the press aware of their disdain and encourage them to stop covering the hippies like they were some sort of freakshow to entertain the mainstream. Cavallo, "The Diggers and the Haight-Ashbury." This is a link to the transcript of the event, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.redhousebooks.com/galleries/haight/death.htm>; The Diggers, "Here is Your Answer" (San Francisco: Communication Company, undated), San Francisco Historical Society; Chester Anderson, "Uncle Tim's Children" (San Francisco: Communication Company, April 16, 1967), San Francisco Historical Society. Judy Kutulas, *After Aquarius Dawned: How the Revolutions of the Sixties Became the Popular Culture of the Seventies* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

⁷⁸ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 9.

continue their chow- down at the trough, sending confusing signals and explanations to the populace at large, who, though fooled by the details, know enough to stay away from the electoral process in droves. Meanwhile, they look to themselves and their communities for solutions they have long since abandoned hope of from their leaders.

The Digger Family sent spores everywhere, as people realized how caring only for themselves was too easy to be interesting. The liberating potential of "free" was infectious, and more people accepted the challenge of playing their lives in that manner. The country was awash in a new sensibility. Small pockets of people existed everywhere who were intuitively connected to that sensibility and working to express it more fully.⁷⁹

The multiple examples of individuals and groups taking up their banner of community action to challenge the failings of capitalism and embody the Utopian society in which they wanted to live support Coyote's estimation. These extend beyond the Haight into greater San Francisco and even further across the United States. The Diggers influenced the founding of Free Stores in New York City and Kansas City as hippies moved back East.⁸⁰ There is still the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic in the Haight, begun in the 1960s and modelled on Digger ideals,⁸¹ although it should be noted that the Diggers criticized the Clinic initially for profiting off hip youth by pairing with researchers looking into drug addiction and treatment.⁸² Dozens of groups across the

⁷⁹ Peter Coyote, " Crossing the Free Frame of Reference," The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/freefall/freefram.html>.

⁸⁰ "Talk of the Town," *New Yorker* (Oct. 14, 1967), 49; "Dennis' Free Store?" *The Screw*, Kansas City, KS: [underground press], August 1, 1969, reproduced in The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/free_store_kansas_city.htm.

⁸¹ Carrie Feibel, "A 1960s 'Hippie Clinic' In San Francisco Inspired A Medical Philosophy," *NPR*, December 30, 2013, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/12/30/571979573/a-1960s-hippie-clinic-in-san-francisco-inspired-a-medical-philosophy?t=1530264555765>.

⁸² Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 290.

country offer free medical aid on this model, providing much needed aid to indigent and transient youth.⁸³ Groups across San Francisco provide food for the needy, housing for the homeless, free legal aid, the city even offers free community college to the benefit of both those who cannot afford higher education and businesses who require trained staff. The Free Print Shop operates on the web providing information to San Franciscans about these services.⁸⁴

Beyond the community service sphere, San Francisco is home to numerous cooperative businesses and barter networks that continue to challenge the mainstream economic model for trade. The Free Software Movement, for thirty years now, challenges the capitalist model of computer usage using the Digger ideology of Free.⁸⁵ Really Really Free Markets operate in San Francisco and New York City on the Free Store archetype.⁸⁶ The Occupy movements of recent years have borrowed heavily from the Digger precedent, including "a free store, a free kitchen, free library, and multiple collectives organizing all the work to maintain and sustain the community, just as had been envisioned in the article 'Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of Free City,' part of the Diggers' last publication from 1968."⁸⁷ These organizations embody not just

⁸³ David E. Smith, John Luce, and Ernest A. Dernburg, "The Health of Haight-Ashbury," *Transaction* 7.6 (1970), 41.

⁸⁴ Free Print Shop website, accessed July 4, 2018, <http://www.freeprintshop.org/index.html>.

⁸⁵ Free Software Movement website, accessed July 4, 2018, <https://www.fsf.org/>.

⁸⁶ Really Really Free Markets flyer, accessed July 4, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/really-really-free-market.pdf>.

⁸⁷ "Inflation of the Digger Dollar: A Cautionary Tale for Archivists of the Counterculture," The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/digger_dollar.htm.

Digger references to "Free" but the underlying philosophy and ideals. Other radical movements including Riot Grrls have drawn on the example of the Diggers to develop their critiques of capitalism and mainstream values.⁸⁸ "The Diggers, a group based in San Francisco, combined spontaneous street theatre and anarchistic action with political art happenings, providing free music events, food, medical care, transport and temporary housing. Feminist, women's liberation and lesbian gay bisexual transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) movements also drew upon this legacy of DIY cultural subversions to resist and establish control over the negative representations of women, feminism and LGBTQ individuals and concerns in popular culture."⁸⁹ The online *Digger Archives* exists for the purpose of providing modern activists with a prototype that they can build upon, extending their Utopia threads into the future. The Diggers changed the lives of the individuals they touched by offering them a new frame of reference that they carried with them into the future. Former Digger David Simpson asserts "It's essential to recognize that people living in specific places can take responsibility for the places they live, and really make a huge difference."⁹⁰

While it would be absurd to argue that the United States has moved away from capitalism or achieved economic, social and racial equality, the legacy of the Diggers

⁸⁸ Julia Downes, "Riot Grrrl: The Legacy and Contemporary Landscape of DIY Feminist Cultural Activism," in *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now*, ed. Nadine Monem (London: Black Dog Publications, 2007), 15.

⁸⁹ Downes, "Riot Grrrl," 15.

⁹⁰ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 21.

remains in the continuing counterculture's persistent resistance to traditional values and institutions. Member David Stewart saw the influence of the Diggers on a micro level, "people were just tremendously generous with their lives. We shared what we had. We didn't hold onto much."⁹¹ Peter Coyote muses on the different way we now conceptualize what was for the Diggers authenticity.

I cannot resist observing how people who act on their beliefs are currently labeled activists, as if the norm were to have ideas and beliefs and do nothing about them. Adding the "ists" to the verb, lumps such people along with communists, socialists, feminists, environmentalists, etc. all of whom we are supposed to assume represent a tiny minority of extremists. In such a way the integrity of the community is broken up into tiny, impotent, single-agenda fragments. When I was young, we called people who did not act on their beliefs, hypocrites. Who and what is served by this change in terminology?⁹²

Kerista

Kerista, a San Francisco intentional community that lasted from 1971-1991 also pursued personal responsibility and free love, although of a different style, but took a very different approach to community governance. Kerista's leader, John Presmont,⁹³ was charismatic, intense, and controlling. Kerista grew out of the Haight-Ashbury scene of the late 1960s in San Francisco, and beatnik bohemian enclaves in New York City. Presmont and Eve Furchgott, aka Even Eve, co-founded Kerista in 1971 upon ideals of economic communalism, democracy, equality, using structures such as polyfidelity and

⁹¹ Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 15.

⁹² Coyote, "Playing."

⁹³ Aka John Peltz, Jud, Brother Jud, or Bro Jud.

mutual criticism to achieve these goals.⁹⁴ Brother Jud proclaimed himself the "prophet of Kerista" as early as 1956, after a mystical experience.⁹⁵ The voice that spoke to Jud informed him that he would become the leader of a new religion. "Kerista is a religion of joy and freedom, a religion without dogma or restriction, and a religion of ecstasy, [sic] for the Voice had told Jud the Prophet, 'Have a ball, enjoy yourself to the utmost.'"⁹⁶ There are no monographs about Kerista; it has thus far escaped the attention of historians. This work will introduce the community of Kerista, with the plan to further develop a full scope history of the group in a later monograph.

During the 1960s, counterculture groups regularly explored spirituality and non-Judeo-Christian religious influences in search of more satisfactory answers to world problems than those provided within mainstream American religious institutions.⁹⁷ This was by no means a novel phenomenon; intellectuals like Thomas Jefferson and early nineteenth century Transcendentalists reached out to other traditions to seek solutions.

⁹⁴ To discuss Kerista entails learning a new Keristan vocabulary. Kerista developed its own language to describe what they believed was a new and different way of living. Polyfidelity is the Keristan term for their tightly controlled polyamory. "The erotic preference and family style of Keristans, which includes multiple relationships within a fidelitous family cluster, the use of a balanced rotational sleeping schedule, nonpreferentiality among partners, and a current intention of lifetime involvement. The word was coined after earlier phrases (non-promisuous polygamy, wholesome non-monogamy) proved too clumsy and imprecise." (Even Eve, "Glossary #2 of Keristan English (abridged)," *KERISTA Advanced Practical Scientific Utopian Theory* Vol. 2, Book 1, Summer 1985, San Francisco: Kerista Consciousness Church, 1985). Reprinted on Kerista Commune website, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/glossary2.html>.)

⁹⁵"History of the Kerista Commune," Kerista Village Handbook, February 1979. Published on Kerista Commune website, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/herstory.html>.

⁹⁶ Robert Anton Wilson, "The Religion of Kerista and Its 69 Positions," *Fact*, July/August 1965, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://kerista.com/nkerdocs/raw.html>.

⁹⁷ Miller, *60s Communes*, 214-216; Wolf, eds., *Voices*, xxvii; Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars*, 197.

From the late nineteenth century until the mid-1960s, however, opportunities to explore Eastern influences became more limited due to restrictions on Asian immigration to the United States. When the government passed a revised Immigration Act in 1965 it lifted these restrictions and many Americans sought out spiritual guidance from Indian gurus, Buddhist monks, and Eastern writings. Jud's religion of Kerista borrowed heavily from these traditions and pulled on the Utopian threads of early communities and thinkers to shape his ideas.

While Jud created strict and extensive rules about living in Kerista, his religious musings appear far vaguer and more esoteric.⁹⁸ Although these teachings underpinned the standards of Kerista, apparently, not all members accepted Jud's religious thought. Member Kipspeaks, as editor of the Kerista Commune website noted, "I am abridging the complete glossary to focus on terms with relevance for non-Keristans, and avoid the religious and WorldPlan mumbo-jumbo."⁹⁹ His vision of heaven was of an island inhabited by Keristans living together in "Humor, Equality, Liberation and Love."¹⁰⁰ He seems to posit a quasi-millennial view of his Utopian communalism ushering in a new

⁹⁸ Kerista refers to the religion created by Jud, the black mother goddess of the religion, and the Utopian community.

⁹⁹ Kipspeaks, editorial comment on Even Eve, "Glossary #1 of Keristan English (abridged)," *KERISTA Advanced Practical Scientific Utopian Theory* Vol. 2, Book 1 (Summer 1985), (San Francisco: Kerista Consciousness Church, 1985), Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/glossary2.html>. Kip in both his writings and conversation with the author consistently demonstrates a commitment to the communal and polyamorous ideals of Kerista concurrent with a skepticism for Jud's religious and philosophical musings.

¹⁰⁰ Kerista Commune, "What is the Religion of Kerista All About?" booklet, undated but attached to a letter dated 1982, Kerista KISS books, Box 1, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

age as a "Messianic Force."¹⁰¹ The details of how all that would come about and what it would look like are less clear. Kerista publications refer to Kerista Consciousness as a "Confederational theology" that acknowledges the interconnectedness of human experience and draws on this as a basis for creating a new social order.¹⁰² The progression towards a new world order, according to Jud, began with the formation of B-FICS, their removal from mainstream society to form a communal group, the application of Keristan energies to philanthropic outreach including education, arts, ending world hunger, ending poverty, ending crime and curing mental illness. "B-FIC: Short for 'Best Friend Identity Cluster', the formal name of a Keristan family. A B-FIC (pronounced 'bee-fick') starts with a group originator and grows to a maximum of 36 adults. Each member joins the group with a current intention of lifetime involvement and a nonpreferential feeling of deep affection for all other members."¹⁰³ B-FICs were not just a communal group but the basis for polyfidelity. The Keristan Planetary Peace Plan would move society towards the ideal, however there is little evidence that Kerista actually succeeded in eradicating these social problems.

¹⁰¹ Kerista Commune, "How Can Jest Folks Use the Philosophy of Joan Jett to Lasting Positive Social Change?" undated pamphlet, Communal Societies Special Collection, Burke Library, Hamilton College.

¹⁰² Brother Jud, "A Brief Outline of Kerista Psychotheology," undated booklet, 1, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Kerista Commune, "How Can Jest Folks Use the Philosophy of Joan Jett to Lasting Positive Social Change?" undated pamphlet, Communal Societies Special Collection, Burke Library, Hamilton College.

¹⁰³ Even Eve, "Glossary #1.

Jud offered respect and tolerance for other religions, acknowledging that they serve a purpose to their followers. He described a supreme being who was "all-knowing, omnipotent, pantheistic, non-corporeal [and] benevolent", called Kyrallah.¹⁰⁴ Kerista's comic book series, *Far Out West*, referred to Kerista as a black hippie goddess and sister to Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁵ Jud and his Kerista community explicitly described their vision as Utopian and linked it directly to the historical precedents of nineteenth century Utopian communalism. References to these predecessors including Robert Owen, Nashoba, Oneida, Fourierism at Brook Farm, and to Marx's writings on Utopian socialist run throughout Kerista publications.¹⁰⁶ Kerista viewed these experiments as establishing the foundations for living in racial harmony, eliminating economic inequality and creating a society in which all were equal. They sought to build on these foundations, adding their non-coercive version of Oneida's complex marriage to develop a model, that like that of Fourier, could spread to create a global movement.¹⁰⁷ They also criticized these

¹⁰⁴ Brother Jud, "A Brief Outline of Kerista Psychotheology," undated booklet, 2, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

¹⁰⁵ Even Eve, *Far Out West*, reprinted in *Communities* Issue 36 (1979), 18-19.

¹⁰⁶ Kerista Commune, "The Kerista Plan to Help the World Situation Through Gaming & Orchestrated Role Playing," pamphlet, 1986, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; "Why is SEX a Tool of the New Grassroots Political Ideology?" undated publication, 1 Kerista KISS Books, Box 1, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Eve Furchgott, "Sexual Economics and the Utopian Dream," booklet, undated, 1, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Bluejay Way, Eden Zia, and Wise Sun, "Kerista: The Utopian Community that Invented Polyfidelity," *Communities*, Issue 71, 1986, 65; Bluejay Way, Utopian Origins: The Utopias, Real and Imaginary, or Pythagoras, the Essenes, Thomas More, the Anabaptists and the Diggers are Examined, appears to be a magazine article, no source, date, Kerista, San Francisco Associations, Hippies Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

¹⁰⁷ Oneida practiced a tightly regulated form of group marriage called complex marriage in which all members were "married" to each other and could engage in sexual relations any other member. As in Kerista, Noyes designed this system to create a greater group bond, and children, also were raised

predecessors for their failures in achieving their Utopian goals. For example, an article about worker's collectives distinguishes their approach from that of Marxists, arguing that the collective avoided the hierarchy of communism that took power away from the workers, adding "We need to take responsibility for liberating ourselves."¹⁰⁸

Kerista further looked to twentieth century Utopian influences as diverse as the Kibbutzim movement in Israel, for whom they named Mileb the Keristan spirit of communalism, and the science fiction works of Robert A. Heinlein.¹⁰⁹ "Kerista's polyamorous sexual practice was influenced, as was that of the Church of All Worlds, by Robert A. Heinlein's (1907-88) science-fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), in which the Martian-raised human Michael Valentine Smith founded The Church of All Worlds, preached sexual freedom and the truth of all religions, and is martyred by narrow-minded people who are not ready for freedom."¹¹⁰ Other Kerista documents reference Aldous Huxley's *Island* and Austin Tappan Wright's *Islandia* as negative influences, in the sense that the Keristans viewed technology as necessary for Utopia rather than a dangerous development. Thomas More's *Utopia* also formed a vision for

communally rather than developing an exclusive bond with their birth parents. Fourier created a complicated system for communal living which he hoped would spread globally to an interconnected network of phalansteries (communal settlements) that would trade together and share common ideals.

¹⁰⁸ Gordon, "Sizing Up the Collective," R.S.V.P. (Spring/Summer 1977), 9.

¹⁰⁹ Stacey Barwick et al, "Utopian Capitalism in the Haight: Kerista Commune," undated, 15.

¹¹⁰ Carole Cusack, *Invented Religions: Imagination, Fiction and Faith* (London: Routledge, 2010), 59-60. Discussed in Eve Furchgott, "Sexual Economics and the Utopian Dream," booklet, undated, 1, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

Kerista to react against, in this case to More's anti-democratic ideals.¹¹¹ While Jud's ideas on Utopia moved towards voluntary democratic communalism, he drew on past Utopian threads to attempt to learn from their mistakes and build upon their successes.

Jud had worked on his vision of Keristan Utopia since his post-World War II days in New York City. His original "old tribe" of Keristans were anarchist and practiced an unstructured form of free love. In the early 1970s Jud met Eve and they worked together to develop a structure that would allow members to live freely and cooperatively without the tensions that tore the old tribe apart. Where Josiah Warren condemned communalism as the death of the individual and instead turned to an anarchist model for his community, Jud and Eve moved far in the opposite direction, imposing a strict plan for living together. Scholar Annalee Nimitz views Jud's Air Force experience as the source of this regimentation.¹¹² It seems likely, however, that Jud's experiences in the old tribe also played a significant part as suggested by his insistence that Kerista as a philosophy worked better than traditional religion or Utopianism because it adapted from its missteps. Eve represented well the people who sought membership in Kerista. Most members were educated, white, middle-class, and disgruntled with mainstream values. They came from a background of experimentation

¹¹¹ Furchgott, "Sexual Economics," 1.

¹¹² Annalee Newitz, "Test-tube Love: Kerista's Ambiguous Utopia," *Other*, Issue 7, June 2005, <http://www.kerista.com/testtube.php>, accessed August 17, 2018.

with alternative lifestyles, including communalism, open relationships, drug use, and cooperative economics.

Eve and Jud believed that rigid rules structuring the community and the relationships and behavior of the members were key to avoiding conflict and helping them transition to an alternate lifestyle.¹¹³ The rules at Kerista were long and detailed, covering all aspects of behavior and thought. In 1973 they numbered twenty-six;¹¹⁴ by 1983 the community subscribed to eighty-four standards and noted that "The complete social contract of the Keristan Islanders includes hundreds of points, many of which are understood in the oral tradition (that is, they are not written down)."¹¹⁵ Some of these standards were basic to group living, such as "18. Clean Up Your Own Mess," and "19. Non-violence (Except in Case of Self-Defense)."¹¹⁶

However, the rules also went into considerable detail to control member's sex lives and personal relationships with other members and even their beliefs and emotions.¹¹⁷ The details of Kerista's polyamorous project will be discussed in greater

¹¹³ Even Eve, "Afterword: What Happened to Kerista?" *Communities Journal* No. 80/81 (Spring/Summer 1993), accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/what.html>.

¹¹⁴ Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract of Kerista Village," Kerista Village Handbook, February 1979, reprinted on Kerista Commune website, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>.

¹¹⁵ Even Eve, "Social Contract of the Gestalt-o-rama Do-It-With-Friends Mental Health System," *Polyfidelity: Sex in the Kerista Commune and Other Related Theories in How to Solve the World's Problems* (San Francisco: Performing Arts Social Society, Inc. [a Kerista organization], 1984).

¹¹⁶ Kerista, "Utopian Social Contract."

¹¹⁷ Jud expected members to maintain healthy and positive attitudes, including towards government and institutions, and to avoid "anger, arrogance, envy, greed, salacious lust, sloth, impatience, intolerance, ingratiating manner, wastefulness, worry, ridicule, vindictiveness, falsehood, fear, gluttony,

details in later chapters. That Jud moved from anarchism to the oppressively restrictive rules of Kerista perhaps reflects his assertion of leadership and privilege within the new tribe in addition to his experience that anarchy as an organizing principle could prove destabilizing. In the old tribe Jud was prophet but not leader, in the new tribe Jud acted, not only as prophet, but guru and supreme leader. Despite the proclamations of equality and democracy, observers and former members have criticized the "cult-like" atmosphere in Kerista where members feared to dissent and Jud exercised oppressive control.¹¹⁸

Potential new members underwent a complex screening process to determine if they were suited to the Kerista lifestyle. They had a term for people who did not make the cut, ABNQ, Almost But Not Quite.¹¹⁹ It was important that potential members be compatible with the B-FIC that they were joining, both as housemates and sexual partners. Members assessed compatibility, calling it their flair, "Beyond agreement on

gossip, hypocrisy, narcissism, pessimism, pride, profanity," (26 Standards 1979) Later standards included the requirement that men get vasectomies and argued that rejecting a sexual encounter with a member in their B-FIC demonstrated a lack of communal commitment and would be subject to criticism and consequences in Gestalt-o-Rama.

¹¹⁸ Cummings, "Tale of Two Communes: A Scholar and His Errors," Fellowship for Intentional Community, 1996, accessed August 15, 2018 <https://www.ic.org/wiki/tale-two-communes-scholar-errors;> Even Eve, "Afterword;" Kipspeaks. "My Ins and Outs with Kerista," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018. <http://www.kerista.com/speak/kip1.html>; Roger Knull, "My Brief Encounter with Keristans: An Outsider's Account," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/rio.html> [It is unclear in this article whether it was written by an outsider. It was posted by member Rio and refers to the writer as Rio in the article]; Larry Hamelin [aka Tru], "And To No More Settle For Less Than Purity: Reflections on the Kerista Commune," *Praxis: Politics in Action* Volume 1, Issue 1 (August, 2013), 70.

¹¹⁹ Even Eve, "Glossary #1."

social contract standards and being nice, there seem to be other factors connected to compatibility such as sex appeal, gestalt intensity, and a person's pace in her/his own personal growth."¹²⁰ Publicly Kerista shared their seventeen standards in an undated flyer from one of their outreach programs. The ideals listed in this document differ dramatically from those used internally in that they focus on the basis for their Gestalt-o-rama program rather than polyfidelity or other more controversial practices.¹²¹ The seventeen standards included such general good behavior as no duplicity, accountability and rejection of sexism, racism, classism and ageism.¹²²

Kerista sought subscribers to their correspondence classes in Utopian theory, through which they endeavored to teach the basics needed to create a Utopian community on the Kerista model.¹²³ There are apparently no records to show how many people did in fact sign up for these courses or for Kerista publications. The slow growth

¹²⁰ Flair: "What attracts people to each other, and, once together, enables them to form the kinds of affinity bonds that keep them harmoniously together. Keristans have pondered this through years of dividing and regrouping, and studying types." (Even Eve, "Glossary #1.")

¹²¹ Kerista used Gestalt-o-Rama, a form of group criticism as a means to deal with conflicts and encourage self-improvement. Gestalt-o-rama: "The ongoing, egalitarian,[sic] non-commercial[sic] personal growth and interpersonal communications process used at all times by Keristans. Gestalt-o-rama is based upon principles like rationality, verbal expression, honesty, commitment to growth and change, and the desire of all participants to develop deep friendships with each other. The G-O-R social contract contains 101 standards. In addition [sic] to its mainstay of lots of conversation, the process uses 139 personal growth techniques." (Even Eve, "Glossary #1.)

¹²² Kerista Commune, "The Basic 17 Standards," flyer. San Francisco, date unknown, Communal Societies Collection, Hamilton College Library Digital Collections, accessed August 14, 2018, https://communalsocieties.hamilton.edu/islandora/object/hamLibCom%3A5736?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=7115deb7f888875ec483&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=9#page/1/mode/1up.

¹²³ Kerista Commune, "Practical Scientific Utopian Theory: A Free Introductory Course," flyer, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

of the community does not necessarily mean that there were few Kerista-curious subscribers. It is more likely given the proliferation of these documents through the counterculture and college communities in San Francisco that many people read them and passed them on.

Kerista was never very big, averaging about twenty-five to thirty members, although those individuals varied over time. Despite this they had a considerable influence on the post-Summer of Love counterculture of San Francisco. Kerista actively sought opportunities to proselytize to the broader community in San Francisco, using their publications from comic books to alternative religion, workshops, and forums, sometimes in collaboration with aligned groups. Kerista placed *The Storefront Classroom* in local stores for free, like other underground papers in the 1960s. It offered information on living communally, making sustainable choices, Utopian theories and art work including what became *Far Out West* comics. A few years later, in 1976, *Far Out West* became a full-fledged comic book promoting scientific Utopian ideals in a graphic form.¹²⁴

Keristans dreamed big as reflected by the absurdly convoluted organization charts that they created for their planned (though not clearly actual) Utopian projects. For example, the chart for Performing Arts Social Society, Inc. (P.A.S.S.) snakes around

¹²⁴ Even Eve, *Far Out West* Vol. 1 (San Francisco: Performing Arts Social Society, 1976). The lead character of *Far Out West*, Polly Morfus, differs greatly from the women in the *Oracle* and other counterculture papers in that she is clothed, intelligent, and provides interest to the reader as an active character rather than a idealized sexual object to gaze upon.

like a Seussian creature showing above P.A.S.S., its sources of income. Under the chart for P.A.S.S., which notes the group's function is to redistribute Kerista funds back into philanthropic education and recreation programs, there are eight sub-programs including a mobile school and health information center.¹²⁵ Kerista's standards indicated the significance of good mental and physical health for the community. While it is tempting at times to reduce discussions about Kerista to their radical departure from sexual norms, there were many other radical ideals and plans adopted at Kerista. Much of what Kerista practiced or proposed was rooted in 1960s counterculture. Scholar Judy Kutulas argues that "Lifestyle rests on a very postmodern idea, that reality is self-consciously constructed and self-consciously read; and it was both the constructing and reading that grew out of the sixties movements, with their undermining of established truths and conventional wisdoms."¹²⁶

The emphasis on health is an example of this. The 1960s marked a tremendous expansion of public awareness of health and safety issues and discussion about living well. Yoga, vegetarianism, organic farming and meditation are all practices that took root in America in the 1960s. They form part of the hippie cultural legacy.¹²⁷ Within Kerista, standards encouraged members to avoid the use of tobacco (although marijuana

¹²⁵ Kerista Commune, promotional materials, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

¹²⁶ Kutulas, *After Aquarius Dawned*, kindle edition, loc 308.

¹²⁷ Gisela Webb, "Sufism in America," in *America's Alternative Religions*, ed. Timothy Miller (Albany, NY: State University of New York, Albany Press, 1995), 242.

was acceptable), processed foods, and food additives and practice healthy nutrition and exercise habits.¹²⁸ While members seem to have accepted these standards for the most part or at least gave them lip service, it is harder to discern a significant impact on outsiders. Political scientist Michael Cummings visited Kerista in the 1980s and noted his surprise at the prevalence of fast food in the Kerista diet, a seeming contradiction to both the Kerista standards and to the lifestyle in other contemporary communities.¹²⁹ Compared to the Diggers' health programs and free food, which changed the lives of numerous Haight Ashbury hippies for the better, there are no records of action taken by Kerista to improve the health of their surrounding community.¹³⁰

Kerista put considerable effort into screening new members, and retaining them. This may reflect both Jud's authoritarian nature and the community's desire to avoid the problems many of their contemporaries faced due to lack of standards for joining. The group even sent out a questionnaire to members who left to try to learn from their choice.¹³¹ In some cases Kerista asked members to leave because they failed to live up to

¹²⁸ Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract of Kerista Village," Kerista Village Handbook, February 1979, reprinted on Kerista Commune website, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>. Interestingly, these health standards were not present in the 1983 Social Contract.

¹²⁹ Michael Cummings, "Tale of Two Communes: A Scholar and His Errors," Fellowship for Intentional Community, 1996.

¹³⁰ This is a significant and concerning gap in the historical record. While Kerista left volumes of documents describing plans and intentions there are not comparable records showing the response of the community to their outreach. The archives do contain numerous letters from outsiders seeking information about Kerista and their Utopian plans. It suggests that the counterculture community kept track of each other's projects, and that those responding to the appeals came from at least sympathetic if not parallel backgrounds to Kerista.

¹³¹ Kerista Commune, "Kerista Commune Follow Up Questionnaire," Kerista, San Francisco Associations, Hippies Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

the standards of the community. Again, this distinguishes Kerista from many other communes who, often deliberately, lacked a mechanism for disciplining or expelling members. Kerista employed a tool they called Gestalt-o-Rama, a rebranding of the popular 1960s communal practice of mutual criticism. Member Nu Luv criticized Gestalt-o-rama for encouraging silence and conformity, leading to resentment that eventually boiled over, leading to what Keristans called "schizing out."¹³² Keristans used this term to suggest one would have to be crazy, that is schizophrenic, to not be happy in Kerista. It can be difficult to determine why members departed, many left no record behind. Former member Tru argued that he should have been the perfect Keristan as its ideals and lifestyle were in theory aligned with his preferences and beliefs. And yet he left after a year and a half because, "the commune had failed to institutionalize happiness-promoting values; indeed, it had institutionalized a toxic value, the value of purity."¹³³ By purity, Tru referred to the inflexible adherence to an ideal that tore apart many counterculture groups in the 1960s, including notably, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).¹³⁴ Jud held members of Kerista to often unreasonable standards, while considering himself above such things.

¹³² Keristans used an Ouija board to select their new names. Each name was an acronym embodying what they viewed as positive traits or ideals. For example, Jud stood for "Justice Under Democracy" and Eve for "Eternal Vigilance in Equality."

¹³³ Hamelin, "And To No More Settle," 59.

¹³⁴ Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 35.

Jud's behavior often failed to live up to community standards. While a Utopia University publication proclaimed that "Anger, obnoxiousness, harassment or even the slightest hint of harassment are grounds for expulsion,"¹³⁵ several former members describe Jud's behavior as aggressive, bullying and hostile. These tendencies only amplified as he aged.¹³⁶ Members were afraid of Jud's rage and disparagement to the point where they avoided speaking up about their concerns during Gestalt-o-rama sessions.¹³⁷ As one of the centerpieces of the Kerista plan for communal living, Gestalt-o-rama proved a failure as much by insider standards as to the outside observer. The final breakup of Kerista came out of Gestalt-o-rama session in November 1991 when Eve and the so-called Gang of Five led an unprecedented criticism of Jud. According to one member, contact with outsiders through the Abacus business gave them the confidence and awareness of other practices to confront Jud.¹³⁸ In the past, Jud had resisted criticism, throwing it back at his accuser, making the offenses their fault. In this final session there were enough members working together to pursue their concerns that Jud could not fend them off. Rather than accept these criticisms and discuss ways to

¹³⁵ Kerista Commune, "University of Utopia," booklet, Communal Societies Collection, Hamilton College Library Digital Collections, accessed August 15, 2018, https://communalsocieties.hamilton.edu/islandora/object/hamLibCom%3A5963?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=8a7449319c022d8457d0&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=6&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=8#page/1/mode/1up.

¹³⁶ Jud was about twenty years older than his followers, beginning Kerista in his forties.

¹³⁷ Carole Cusack, "World Religions and Spirituality--Kerista Commune," January 19, 2017, accessed August 15, 2018, <https://wrldrels.org/2017/01/19/kerista-commune/>; Newitz, "Test-tube Love"; Diana Young, interview with Deborah Altus, *60s Commune Project*.

¹³⁸ Young, *60s Commune Project*, 50. Abacus was a multi-faceted umbrella organization started by Kerista that included a multi-million dollar Apple resale business, house-cleaning, landscaping, a travel agency and other companies.

resolve them and move the community forward, Jud chose to leave firstly the Purple Submarine B-FIC, and then Kerista altogether.¹³⁹ The community dissolved the following month.

Kerista pushed the boundaries of societal norms to test their belief that polyfidelity would better serve the needs of individuals for companionship and sexual satisfaction without jealousy, that communalism would allow them to balance creative expression with capitalist participation as a means of economic support and that mutual criticism provided a means to resolve interpersonal conflict and grow as an individual. While their experiments did not always provide the anticipated results, members mostly view their time in Kerista with fond nostalgia as a Utopian adventure. It is difficult to argue that Kerista substantively changed the world outside their community, although they did contribute to the ongoing experimentation in alternative lifestyles and Utopianism. Other communities kept up-to-date on developments at Kerista through Kerista publications, interviews, and intentional communities' newsletters, and had the opportunity to learn from their successes and missteps; this interconnection developed the horizontal Utopian threads.

These three communities demonstrate the carrying forward of Utopian threads from the nineteenth century into the twentieth to provide object lessons in how to create an alternative society that furthers Utopian goals. The interconnectedness of communalism as a movement allowed the weaving of these threads both horizontally

¹³⁹ Even Eve. "Afterword," 32; Kipspeaks, "Ins and Outs;" Newitz, "Test-tube Love."

between contemporaries to share ideas, successes and failures to help each other to build a better world. These lessons continue to resonate in the twenty-first century offering both current communitarians and outsiders with examples of practical applications of the desire for racial, gender and economic equality. Communalism continued in the twentieth century to evidence Tilly's characteristics of a social movement, sustaining its challenges to social and institutional standards, exhibiting and challenging traditional measures of WUNC, and offering political action both in traditional ways such as legal challenges and untraditionally by offering an alternative for government and society to adopt. The following chapters examine how these six communities addressed social injustices in the areas of race, gender, and class to demonstrate how their work represented part of a larger social movement, how they drew on and created Utopian threads, and why their efforts are worthy of serious discussion and consideration.

CHAPTER IV

COME TOGETHER

Introduction

While Utopian societies generally choose harmony as an ideal, not all of them actively work towards creating racial equality. In terms of concrete communal contributions to the quest for equality in the United States, race is the area in which Utopian communities consistently fall short of their ideals. As with their attempts to challenge economic and gender inequality, their success varied. A significant limiting factor for achieving their Utopian goals has been the persistence of mainstream structures and institutions. Despite the intention of rejecting racism, race-based stereotypes and racial hierarchies proved difficult for communards to relinquish. Utopian communities consistently conformed to many problematic social and economic attitudes and behaviors while confronting these. Particularly before the 1950s, this aspect of harmony received little attention in Utopian communities. This reflects the priorities of the predominantly white communards rather than obliviousness to the grossly unequal context of race relations in their time. It also stems from the inability of communalism as a movement throughout its history to attract nonwhite members at a meaningful level. This chapter examines the ways in which six Utopian societies addressed, or overlooked, questions of racial inequality. Of the six, Nashoba, Peoples Temple and the Diggers explicitly acknowledged the context of racism and discrimination in which they existed. For the most part, however, they defined racial equality in terms of black and white,

without considering the spectrum of racial and ethnic discrimination in America. The discussion in this chapter reflects the sources available but acknowledges that racial issues in the United States are, and have always been, far more complex than the sources from the communities under consideration indicate.

The communalist movement in the twentieth century traced Utopian threads back to the nineteenth century, taking the examples of their predecessors into consideration as they created their own communities. The lack of emphasis on racial equality and integration in twentieth century groups reflects a similar disinterest in the nineteenth century. Nashoba has proved to be the most enduring influence regarding race, mostly because it was the most significant white-led communal project to consider this question.¹ Communities also shared information, resources and members with their contemporaries, linking together the movement laterally. When racial equality proved an important ideal of the community, members promoted their critiques and solutions publicly, seeking to garner both public and institutional support for their cause and to prove the worth of their movement.

The racial climate in the twentieth century clearly differed dramatically from that of antebellum America; however racial inequality persists as a social concern to the present day. The context might have changed in terms of details, but the ideals of racial harmony and the practical critiques of the ways in which America has failed to reach its goals remain constant and relevant. For people experiencing marginalization and

¹ References to Nashoba and Frances Wright on the topics of racial and gender equality and on challenges to monogamy appear throughout Kerista's publications and in other counter-culture writings.

discrimination the knowledge of where we as a nation have come from in terms of those issues may be less compelling than their current experience and understanding of how far we have yet to go. Utopian communalism as a movement existed and exists in a context of racial inequality. Unlike people of color in mainstream society who could not avoid contending with institutional racism and everyday prejudices, isolation and the color of their skin afforded white Utopian communards a greater privilege in choosing whether to engage with or ignore concerns of race.

Nashoba

Frances Wright's Nashoba was unique in the nineteenth century because it explicitly attacked the institution of slavery. Critiques of slavery were increasing at this time, but no other Utopian community sought to resolve this social problem. Certainly, Wright's colonization project contained its fair share of flaws. While her plan for uplift at Nashoba included education and culture, there is nothing to indicate that Wright considered that French language instruction might be helpful to future settlers in a French speaking republic like Haiti. Educated urban blacks objected to colonization in general because it would in many cases move skilled artisans into agricultural roles for which they lacked skills and inclination. This is reminiscent of Indian Removal and the forcing of nomadic hunters into sedentary agricultural social patterns because it better suited the government and settler society's needs. A significant difference between colonization and Indian Removal is that colonization remained mostly a voluntary program, as opposed to a coercive and violent process of relocation.

Wright's Nashoba colonization plan suffered less from this flaw than most colonization projects as she freed slaves from plantations who had been working in agricultural labour and were moving to positions as yeoman farmers in Haiti. A larger issue with Nashoba and with colonization in general was the lack of consideration for the desires of the African-Americans as people, with agency, with desires and concerns of their own. While Wright's rhetoric focused on equality for all people regardless of gender, race or class she fell into paternalistic attitudes and felt entitled to make decisions for "the helpless beings who look to my countenance and lean upon my protection."²

Clearly, the white members of the commune agreed to the practices at Nashoba. Commune manager James Richardson sent regular excerpts from the Nashoba Book, the community log, to Benjamin Lundy for publication in his abolitionist paper *Genius of Universal Emancipation* as part of the commune's practice of updating interested parties on the progress of the project. While most of these were quotidian, Richardson excited concern from readers in 1828 with two entries. The first excerpt revealed that one of the female slaves at Nashoba had requested a lock on the door of the cabin she shared with another woman after one of the male slaves had entered their quarters uninvited demanding sexual favors. Richardson denied her request for the lock. Now, this story on the surface presented no issues. Enslaved people had no expectation of privacy on plantations, so to deny them that at Nashoba probably would not have raised any alarms.

² Frances Wright, "Letter to Robert Dale Owen, New Orleans, January 6, 1830," *Free Enquirer*, (New York, Jan 30, 1830), 125.

However, Richardson's rationale for refusing the lock did: "we consider the proper basis of the sexual intercourse to be unconstrained and unrestrained choice of both parties. Nelly [a slave] having requested a lock for the door of the room in which she and Isabel [another slave] sleep, with a view of preventing the future uninvited entrance of any man, the lock was refused, as being, in its proposed use, inconsistent with the doctrine just explained; a doctrine which we are determined to enforce, and which will give to every woman a much greater security, than any lock can possibly do."³ Richardson announced to the world that at Nashoba not only did blacks and whites live and work together in harmony but that they were expected to be open to free love. This proved too much for even the most liberal readers to accept.

Camilla Wright defended Richardson's statement in letters to friends and family, "The conduct of my friend Mr. Richardson in forming a connection in the manner [stated]—so far from exciting my reprobation, or that of any individual associated here—had their sanction and approval."⁴ It is not evident how Richardson's reaction would have played out if it had been Camilla Wright requesting a lock for her door after an unwanted visit from a black member. We cannot extrapolate from the records whether the members' actions matched their views on equality. Similarly, there is not a direct statement to indicate whether they offered slaves a choice as to whether they wished to adopt the free love ideology of the commune, although the request for a lock

³ James Richardson, Nashoba Book, entry Fri June 21, 1828, published in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, July 28, 1828.

⁴ William Randall Waterman, *Frances Wright* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1924), 119.

suggests that they were not consulted. This again brings into question the vaunted equality and liberty ideals of the commune.

To respond to that question, one can look to the writings of Frances Wright. Her response: "Neither the red savage nor the negro slave can be converted into American citizens by acts of legislation; and this not because the one is black, nor the other red, but *because the one is a savage and the other a slave.*"⁵ Wright believed that the problem with the inequality of men (and women) was not that they were born inferior but that society and its institutions created a system that oppressed them and restricted them from access to the education and culture that they required to achieve equality and liberty and become full citizens. So, at Nashoba, whites did not allow the slaves the choice of subscribing to the ideals of the commune because they did not believe the enslaved members to have yet achieved the level of education and culture to make an informed decision. We may view this today as paternalistic, yet, for the period, it represented an unusually enlightened and hopeful view of race relations.⁶ For example, one of the reasons the American Colonization Society promoted colonization was their lack of confidence that slaves, once freed, could achieve a level of education and acculturation sufficient for successful assimilation into white society.⁷

⁵ Frances Wright D'Arusmont, *Biography, Notes and Political Letters of Frances Wright D'Arusmont No. 1* (from the 1st British Ed. New York: John Windt, 1844 in *Life, Letters and Lectures.*) (reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), 28.

⁶ Coulthard, "Frances," 16-17.

⁷ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization or, an impartial exhibition of the doctrines, principles and purposes of the American Colonization Society. Together with the resolutions, addresses and remonstrances of the free people of color* (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1832); Lewis

As was her nature, Wright immersed herself in her subject, travelling with the Marquis de Lafayette to Virginia to stay first at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, then at Montpelier, the estate of James and Dolley Madison.⁸ While at Montpelier, the guests spent four days discussing the issue of slavery with Madison and his neighbours, also planters, allowing Wright and Lafayette the opportunity to learn about the economic and political concerns of Southern slaveholders.⁹ Wright visited Washington DC to read the laws on slavery and attend Congressional debates to further her understanding of the matter.¹⁰ What is not apparent is whether she talked to any slaves to understand their perspectives. It is, however, clear that Wright had no interest in joining the abolition movement, then in its early stages: “From the very outset she [Wright speaking of herself] had but little sympathy with professed abolitionists; among whom she [Wright] usually found much zeal but little knowledge ... Hatred of the planter seemed oftentimes to be a stronger feeling [for abolitionists] than interest in the slave...and to believe that their own [abolitionists'] view of every subject is precisely the right one are apt to take little pains to investigate the views of others.”¹¹

Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 49; Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 137.

⁸ James Madison, Letter to Frances Wright (Monticello, September 1, 1825). Library of Congress, James Madison Papers collection.

⁹ A. Lavasseur, Secretary to General Lafayette during his journey. *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825 or Journal of a Voyage to the United States*. Transl. John D. Godman (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1829), 222, accessed June 30, 2016, <https://ia800207.us.archive.org/23/items/lafayetteinamer01godmgoog/lafayetteinamer01godmgoog.pdf>.

¹⁰ Gilbert, Amos. *Memoir of Frances Wright, the Pioneer Woman in the Cause of Human Rights* (Cincinnati: Longley Brothers, 1855), 25.

¹¹ D'Arusmont, *Biography*, 24.

These considerations aside, it is problematic that Wright considered herself to have the right to dictate what was best for the slaves taken into the project. There are no indications that she discussed participation with the black members of Nashoba or obtained their consent. Because of her education and wealth, Wright believed herself enlightened and better able to envision the correct path forward for Southerners and the blacks they enslaved. This was hardly a unique perspective. Reformers historically have been convinced that they were in some way superior to those they sought to change, and therefore entitled to dictate the lives of others. Prevalence of a belief, however, does not render it accurate or appropriate. Wright had never owned slaves, and was an immigrant with no personal stake in the slavery argument. Her decision to become an American and to directly attack the slavery issue using her own personal fortune to pay for it reflected her commitment to equality. It is evident from the following comment from Benjamin Lundy, associate of William Lloyd Garrison and publisher of the abolitionist paper *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, that readers showed considerable interest in Wright's project. "The editor of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* is authorized to request that all communications addressed to Frances Wright on the subject of her establishment, may be postpaid; so many being received as to incur considerable expense."¹²

Wright did intend for Nashoba to improve the lives of the slaves in the community but with the goal that they would stay at Nashoba until they worked off their purchase price and gained an education and then would be moved elsewhere. That is,

¹² Benjamin Lundy, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, (Baltimore) No. 42, Vol. 1, June 10, 1825, 325.

Wright did not design Nashoba to provide a permanent or even long-term home for the individual slaves, new slaves would cycle through as earlier enslaved members achieved their goals and moved on. Further the white members living at Nashoba were there to oversee the project and help the slaves meet their goals. While these radicals would benefit in the sense that they would fulfill their reformist agenda and they would have the opportunity to take direct action on their ideals, the white members did not join Nashoba with the idea of living a better life in the usual Utopian sense. Nonetheless for the duration of the project members committed resources, labor and their support to living together and creating an experiment in emancipation.

Richardson, and through her complicity, Camilla Wright betrayed Frances Wright's ideals of equality for all. After Wright left Nashoba due to illness, Richardson used physical violence to discipline the slaves in the presence of Camilla. Lundy published Richardson's account of these proceedings in *Genius*.¹³ There is no record of Frances Wright's response to Richardson's abuse of power. This seems out of character, both because Wright did not shy away from owning up to controversial opinions or confronting men, and because Richardson's behavior totally undermined Wright's project at Nashoba. While Wright had been present onsite, the practice had been to avoid coercion and accept that the enslaved members would need time to learn what was expected of them.¹⁴ A further disconnect in terms of Wright's practice at Nashoba was

¹³ Richardson, *Nashoba Book*, May 24, 1828 and May 31, 1828 in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, July 28, 1828.

¹⁴ George Flower, Letter to Benjamin Lundy, June 12, 1826, published in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, July 17, 1826.

the separation of black children from their parents. The children spent their days in school, and their parents were kept away from them with the goal of culturally and socially preparing the children for assimilation.¹⁵ It appears again that this arrangement took place after Wright left. Her instructions to the trustees were to maintain the school and that the white and black children were to be educated together.¹⁶ The position on separation, while not in place while Wright lived at Nashoba, was consistent with Wright's later project for boarding schools for working class children.

Wright's original plan had not attracted a great deal of attention outside colonization circles and Nashoba was quite isolated so it largely went unnoticed. There is nothing to indicate that locals were aware of the experiment Nashoba carried out in their midst.¹⁷ That is, they remained blissfully ignorant until Richardson's admission of a romantic and sexual relationship with Josephine Prevot, the fourteen-year-old, mixed-race daughter of Nashoba's schoolteacher inflamed outsiders, even those who considered themselves abolitionists. While radicals were comfortable talking about emancipation and even equality for blacks, miscegenation remained a taboo. Josephine's age and the imbalance in power between her and Richardson did not apparently concern these readers. However, the mixing of races and the lack of a sanctified marriage between the

¹⁵ James Richardson, Nashoba Book, May 20, in *Genius*, July 28, 1828.

¹⁶ Frances Wright, Deed of Nashoba, December 17, 1826.

¹⁷ The Memphis area newspapers show no mention of Nashoba until the 1850s when Wright's daughter was selling the property as part of the settlement of Wright's estate. The correspondence with locals also is from the post-commune period and deals with matters such as access to lumber on the property. (Gholson-Kittredge Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society Archives)

two proved intolerably radical. Richardson proudly declared his support for miscegenation and free love, meaning relationships based on love and not requiring the sanction of church or state to initiate or end them.¹⁸ Richardson reiterated the commune's views on race "He told them that, in our estimation all colours are equal in rank, and that whatever distinctions may be established on this place, colour shall form the basis of none of them."¹⁹ At this point, Lundy broke with Richardson as he viewed the relationship with Josephine as no better than a master forcing himself on his female slaves.²⁰ Wright's supporters and friends became alarmed at the threat to Wright's reputation and first discussed the issue among themselves and then alerted her to Richardson's outrageous statements, demanding that she address the issue publicly.²¹

Of course, they expected Wright to denounce Richardson's behavior and assure her backers that this would not continue. In private Wright wrote to Richardson, not

¹⁸ Richardson, *Nashoba Book*.

¹⁹ Richardson, James, *Nashoba Book*, entry June 3, 1828 publ in *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, July 28, 1828.

²⁰ Waterman, *Wright*, 118.

²¹ James Madison, Letter to Lafayette, *Writings of James Madison*, Vol IX, Correspondence 1819-1836, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), 310-313 [Lafayette then communicated this to Wright when he brought her to his home, La Grange]; Jean Charles Léonard de Simonde, Letter to Julia Garnett, January 13, 1828, reprinted in Helen Heineman, *Restless Angels: The Friendship of Six Victorian Women*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 1983; Julia Garnett, Letter to Jean Charles Léonard de Simonde, September 3, 1827, reprinted in Helen Heineman, *Restless Angels: The Friendship of Six Victorian Women*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 1983; Charles Wilkes, Letter to Julia Garnett, October 15, 1827, reprinted in Helen Heineman, *Restless Angels: The Friendship of Six Victorian Women*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 1983; Charles Wilkes, Letter to Camilla Wright, reprinted in Helen Heineman, *Restless Angels: The Friendship of Six Victorian Women*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 1983; James Mylne, Letter to Julia Garnett, August 12, 1827, reprinted in Helen Heineman, *Restless Angels: The Friendship of Six Victorian Women*. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press, 1983; Frances Wright, Letter to Harriet Garnett, August 17, 1827, Houghton Library Garnett-Pertz papers, Harvard University.

condemning him for his views or behavior, but suggesting that he should pick his battles more carefully. “I am far from the conceit that it lies with us to convert the world. But I do believe it is in our power to influence it. I do believe that it lies with us to attract slowly and gradually much attention and to command not merely for our theory but for our practice the respect of our fellow creatures.”²² Wright, while radical herself, recognized that most people would need time and convincing to accept her beliefs.

When Wright took up pen to comment publicly, however, she did not repudiate Richardson. In fact, she effusively supported his decision and even took it further. Frances Wright responded to the clamor by issuing a printed defense, “Explanatory Notes Respecting the Nature and Object of the Institution at Nashoba and of the Principles Upon Which it is Founded” in the *New Harmony Gazette*. The foreword to this document reveals Wright's mood: “A friend of the much calumniated, and much abused Frances Wright...conceives it necessary in vindication of her character from the vile aspersions of the diurnal press, to publish the following documents *entire*.”²³ Keep in mind this was written several years before her speaking career took off and she acquired the epithets “Red Harlot of Infidelity” and “Priestess of Beelzebub.”²⁴ Nashoba and Wright, because of Richardson, received threats of violence and abuse. A writer, only identifying as “J.W.” had defended Wright early on from a statement from a South

²² Frances Wright, Letter to James Richardson, La Grange, August 18, 1827, Collection Number: 6934, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

²³ Wright, “Explanatory Notes.”

²⁴ Susan Kissel, *In Common Cause: the "Conservative" Frances Trollope and the "Radical" Frances Wright* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), 8.

Carolina planter, asserting, "everyone who has had the pleasure of meeting with that lady [Wright] must be fully satisfied that the most disinterested benevolence, alone, actuates her conduct and has endured very great sacrifice of society and ease in civilized life."²⁵

Wright defended Richardson in her "Explanatory Notes." She asserted, "The education of the race of color would doubtless make the amalgamation more rapid as well as more creditable; and so far from considering the physical amalgamation of the two colors, when accompanied by a moral approximation, as an evil, it must surely be viewed as a good equally desirable for both."²⁶ So, to Wright, miscegenation was not only a permissible practice but a common good which society should encourage. She believed that equality would be easier to achieve if everyone was of mixed race. This assertion inflamed the prevalent nineteenth century fear of miscegenation. Winthrop Jordan references the influence of several eighteenth-century writers including Oliver Goldsmith and David Hume who essentialized human capacities based on skin colour, affirmed the superiority of whites, and outlined the dangers that race mixing would cause in undermining that purity.²⁷

²⁵ J. W., "Letter to the Editor," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, (Baltimore), Vol. 1, Issue 38 (May 20, 1826), 302.

²⁶ Frances Wright, "Explanatory Notes Respecting the Nature and Object of the Institution at Nashoba and of the Principles Upon Which it is Founded," (New York, printed for the purchasers, 1830), 11.

²⁷ Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1968), 253-4.

Wright's view that the intermingling of races would benefit society provides an interesting parallel with the stirpiculture writings of John Humphrey Noyes of Oneida, and Dr. Edward Newbury of Modern Times.²⁸ Their approach to Utopian procreation focused on selection for superior genetics as a means to create a more healthy, intelligent and moral population. These early eugenics programs promoted science while ignoring its racist and classist undertones. While Wright also believed that selective breeding, in the sense of encouraging miscegenation, would improve society she focused less on the purported genetic superiority of the individual, than on creating a more harmonious and equal environment for all. Wright naïvely believed that if everyone was of mixed heritage, there would be greater equality and less excuse for prejudice.

What other shocking revelations did Frances Wright expose the unwary public to with these "Explanatory Notes?" Once she defended miscegenation and free love the public stopped listening as she clarified her reasons for creating Nashoba, that is, the social conditions that helped spur her to action. She explained the goals of the commune and what went on at Nashoba. She wrote of how in the United States there existed certain principles (liberty and equality) which the nation had since its inception advocated but not practiced. America lacked equality of all people based on race, color, sex, and class; a disconnect between rhetoric and reality that Wright could not accept

²⁸ Anita Newcomb McGee, An Experiment in Human Stirpiculture, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Oct., 1891): 319-326; Charles Codman, "A Brief History of 'The City of Modern Times' Long Island, N.Y.--And a Glorification of Some of Its Saints," (Brentwood, NY, ca. 1905.) Transcribed to typed copy from pencil script by Suffolk County Historical Society, 7-8. Stirpiculture was Noyes's take on eugenics.

and spent her entire career fighting. These references to the Constitution and Declaration of Independence reinforced both Wright's idealism and also her belief that her audience would connect to these American icons. Wright knew that these were meaningful and evocative documents so she used that shared understanding to establish her credibility as an *American* reformer rather than an outsider critic of American society. Wright felt that she possessed the necessary mental courage and passion to stand up to popular opinion and create an experiment to demonstrate that these ideals were viable.²⁹

There is no available record of what happened to the thirty slaves that Wright emancipated and colonized in Haiti. The white members of Nashoba joined because of their commitment to the reform ideals espoused by Frances Wright and to the Utopian dream that they could show the South a way forward out of slavery. Wright believed in gradualism; she was committed for the long haul. She was convinced that social, cultural, and political change of the type she believed in required a complete re-education of the American people beginning with the children and would take generations to accomplish.³⁰ Frances Wright was a radical not a revolutionary. Communalism was a phase in her trajectory as a reformer, not an end in itself. The end of Nashoba marked not a failure for its white members but rather a step forward. For its formerly enslaved members it marked a movement towards freedom and independence.

²⁹ Coulthard, "Frances," 18-19.

³⁰ Frances Wright D'Arusmont, "Parting Address," *Life, Letters and Lectures* (Reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), 216.

Wright did not intend for Nashoba to be a permanent commune or to free all the slaves of the South; neither goal would have been feasible. Wright did however demonstrate that her ideas about education and assimilation had merit. Unfortunately, the scandal over miscegenation and free love overshadowed the positive work at Nashoba. Antebellum society could not accept Wright's support for miscegenation or free love philosophies as a means to greater equality for all people and rejected her good intentions and accomplishments as tainted. Southern planters did not in fact take up her ideas for educating and training their slaves. Wright had provided an opportunity for planters to have their slaves work off their purchase price as a path to emancipate them without a financial loss and with a lesser cultural shock. It was not enough. Wright did not expect it of the planters. She did not believe they were yet enlightened enough.

Unlike Wright, most of Southern society and for that matter, the American Colonization Society, could not accept the concept of equality for all people including blacks. Wright, after Nashoba, continued to lecture and advocate for equal access to education for people of all sexes, races and classes as the means to transform society and end inequality. "All men are born free and equal! they are born, but do they so live? Are they educated as equals? And if not, can they be equal? And, if not equal can they be free? Do not the rich command instruction, and they who have instruction must they not possess the power? And when they have the power will they not exert it in their own favour?"³¹ For Wright, the possibility of equality for all people existed. The essential

³¹ Frances Wright. "Of Free Inquiry, Considered as a Means for Obtaining Just Knowledge," *Life, Letters and Lectures* (New York reprinted 1972), 25.

difference between Wright and the American Colonization Society lay in their belief in about the possibilities of black equality. Wright believed that with education slaves could join whites as equals in American society. The members of the American Colonization Society and the vast majority of Americans disagreed. Wright colonized her slaves as a means to offer them freedom when no other opportunity existed in America, while the ACS sought to rid themselves of an inconvenient social problem.

Scholars have wrongly criticized Wright's Nashoba as a failure because of its short duration and spectacular scandal.³² When re-assessed in comparison to the ACS, to Wright's goal, and placed in context as a stage in her overall reform project we can see that Wright achieved much of what she set out to do, including the emancipation of thirty slaves, an unusual accomplishment for a young woman in 1830. Wright's ideas, and perhaps even more so their source, proved a challenge for antebellum audiences to accept. Over time, however, appreciation for Wright increased and radicals and reformers alike looked back to her writings and her work as a model to build upon. Renowned American poet Walt Whitman admired Wright from the time he was a teenager, paying tribute to her, "She was a brilliant woman of beauty and estate, who was never satisfied unless she was doing good, public good, private good."³³ Wright's portrait appears on the cover of *Communities Magazine: The Journal of Cooperative*

³² Celia Morris Eckhart, *Fanny Wright: Rebel in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 270;

³³ John W. McDonald, *Walt Whitman, Philosopher Poet: Leaves of Grass by Indirection* (New York: McFarlane and Company, 2007), 72; Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, Vol. 1, March 28-July 14, 1888 (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1915), 80.

Living as part of a collage of inspirational leaders in a special issue on vision and leadership.³⁴ Her ideas continue to resonate with modern communalists for her powerful defense of equality for people of color, women and the working class. While Nashoba was short-lived and did not kick off a movement in the South for plantation owners to emancipate their slaves, Wright continued to write and speak, promoting and inspiring the cause of equality. This work concurs with scholar Alison Parker that biographical studies of Wright have focused far too much on sensationalizing her personal relations and not enough on Wright's influence as a radical thinker.³⁵ In the context of the reform movement of the nineteenth century, Wright and Nashoba provide an interesting sidebar, challenging the notion of what characterized a reform, and standing out as an active alternative to slavery and racial discrimination.

Modern Times

Other nineteenth century Utopian communities proved less interested in racial equality than Nashoba. While Josiah Warren founded Modern Times with goals of equality of opportunity and freedom to live as members wished, he did not explicitly consider race in his plan. This seems to have reflected Warren's privileged position as a white man in the North, removed to a large extent from contact with slaves. It does seem

³⁴ *Communities Magazine: The Journal of Cooperative Living* No. 80/81 (Spring/Summer 1993).

³⁵ Alison Parker, "What Do We Expect the People Legislatively to Effect': Frances Wright, Moral Reform and State Legislation," in *Women and the Unstable State in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alison Parker and Stephanie Cole (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2000), 62.

an odd omission that his partner, Stephen Pearl Andrews, who was chased out of Texas for his abolitionist activism, did not encourage Warren to include racial equality in the community's ethos. Modern Times lacked any bylaws or constitution, so members were free to follow their hearts on the issue of slavery rather than taking a stance as a group.

Modern Times attracted people with skills of various types, from doctors to shoemakers, because of Warren's economic theories and the opportunity to own land. Historian Roger Wunderlich noted that the many errors in the 1860 census provide challenges for researchers seeking quantitative information about Modern Times. However, Wunderlich did glean from that record demographic details that indicate Modern Times was much whiter and more Anglo in heritage than other areas of Long Island which had more people of color, and more Irish and Dutch immigrants. He concluded that it was not that Modern Times banned or made unwelcome non-whites, the precepts of the community were explicitly open-minded. Instead he posited that freed blacks were unlikely to choose to endanger the security of their reputation or income by living in a controversial community that would only draw attention to them.³⁶

Harmony Society

Similarly, Harmony Society did not directly concern itself with the question of racial equality, but their reasons for ignoring the issue tied directly to their millennial goals and their cultural heritage. Unlike Frances Wright, when George Rapp came to the

³⁶ Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 116.

United States, he did not involve himself in the problems of his adopted land. There is nothing in Rapp's writings to suggest he ever considered the question of African slavery. His quest was far more narrow than Josiah Warren's, grounded in perfecting his followers for the Second Coming. In Württemberg where the Rappites originated, questions of racial harmony were immaterial to their daily existence. Their insularity was not strictly racial; the Harmonists did not seek to convert outsiders, regardless of their heritage, to bring them into the fold of the elect.

As white Europeans, the concerns of black slaves were extraneous to their lives. Their privilege allowed them to disconnect the plight of the unfortunate from their Christian beliefs in duty to those in need. Americans in the nineteenth century, particularly Protestants of British heritage, grew increasingly suspicious of immigrants who spoke other languages or practiced other religions. As German immigrants, there were occasions when the Harmonists had to defend themselves against ethnic slurs and discrimination, petitioning the legislature for protection or appearing in court to respond to suits. Outsiders resented the financial success, and insular nature of the Harmonists, and during the war of 1812 questioned their patriotism. For example, in 1818 a petition to the state Legislature by twenty-one of the Harmonists' neighbors asked for action on rates charged by the Harmonist mills, more oversight of Harmonist influence in the banking industry, and demanding that the Rappites pay fines for not serving in the militia the same as other men in the state.³⁷

³⁷ "1818 Petition to the Indiana State Legislature," reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 263-3.

The Rappites were too isolated and focused on the Second Coming to worry about slavery, although they did support the Union army with supplies during the Civil War. Records show that later in their existence, when numbers were dwindling due to celibacy and decreased immigration, the Harmonists loosened their membership requirements. In this period, they took in non-Germans, including a free black family that does not appear to have conformed to the Harmonists' spiritual beliefs. Whether this was an act of kindness to a family in need, or perhaps the community needed laborers in a time when their population was aging, is unknown. In 1827, after the Harmony Society returned to Pennsylvania from New Harmony, they reaffirmed their commitment by signing a new set of Articles. A group of dissenters broke away at this time and reconstituted themselves as the Teutonia Society or Society of the United Germans. Although they still accepted many of the rules of Harmony Society, they sought a more democratic, less theocratic structure. Among their articles of incorporation was a commitment to "use a part of our means for the redemption of our Black brethren, not only out of bodily slavery but also for their reformation into quiet, peaceable and industrious men, and exemplary Christians. Something similar we have in view, with regard to the Aborigines of our blessed country--we shall not shun any pains, to convert the Indians to Christianity, and ennobling civilization."³⁸

It is clear from this document, that while Rapp may not have been willing to conform to the American ideal of democracy or make an overt statement against slavery,

³⁸ Articles of the Teutonia Society, March 9, 1827, reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847*, 263-3. Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968, 361.

several members of Harmony Society felt strongly enough about these issues to break with Rapp. While their missionary plans may be critiqued for their presumptions about nonwhite civilization and their attempts to destroy indigenous and slave religions, they are of a part with the missionary work of other religious contemporaries including the Baptists and Methodists.³⁹ The only public mention of a Harmonist stance on slavery that this author could locate was Frederick Rapp's vote in favor of barring slavery from the Indiana Territory (except when used as a penal punishment) when he participated as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1816.⁴⁰

The Harmonists appear to have felt concern and disapproval of the conditions of chattel slavery, at least when they felt indentured immigrants had been subjected to comparable treatment. They redeemed German immigrants from indenture to protect them from harm.⁴¹ Despite this concern for the mistreatment of German immigrants and the awareness, at least superficial, of the conditions of chattel slavery, Rapp did not extend his charity to actual slaves. It seems that again in this situation, Rapp did not

³⁹ Dartmouth College was founded by Congregationalists for the purpose of civilizing and converting Native Americans so that they could act as missionaries to their tribes. Jon Butler, Grant Wacker and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 188-189, 302, 106-107; Jon Butler, *Awash in A Sea of Faith Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 248-252; Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 46-52, 68-69.

⁴⁰ Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 168-169.

⁴¹ Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 186.

consider matters unconnected to the perfection of his Christian community to be worthy of his time and energies.

One other example of Harmonist attitudes on race is notable. As the population of Harmony Society aged and dwindled, they could no longer supply internally the labor demands of their commercial interests. To that end, in 1873 the Harmonists hired three hundred Chinese laborers who had come to Pennsylvania to work on the railroads. Once they completed that work, they lacked for employment so the Rappites took advantage of this opportunity to take these Chinese workers on at their cutlery factory, the largest in America at the time.⁴² Harmony had other day laborers at this time; they did not join the Society, but contracted for four years with the Board for work, without the knowledge of the membership, interestingly. Apparently, this decision proved contentious, not only internally but because nativist outsiders raised their standard cry that foreign immigrants were taking white American jobs. The Cutlery Company defended its decision against the protests by pointing out that they had searched for local labor before hiring the Chinese as a last resort. To pacify the protesters, the Society decided to take the profits over the time of the contract and use them to benefit the outside community through donations to churches, schools and charity for the poor. They further warned that if protests continued, they would take all contributions from

⁴² Charles Nordhoff, *Communitic Societies of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1875) (Reprinted Dover Publications: New York, 1966), 90.

the County, a considerable threat given that Harmony Society had the largest income locally and had built the town of Beaver Falls for outsiders.⁴³

Early communal scholar Charles Nordhoff, on his visit to Harmony in 1874 noted that "it is creditable to the Harmony people that they look after the intellectual and spiritual welfare of these strangers as but too few employers do."⁴⁴ Harmonist records do not indicate what this care consisted of, but given the group's emphasis on learning and religion, they likely taught the workers to read and write and introduced them to the Bible. We also do not have the opinions on members about this hiring decision because they were not aware of it and because it did not impact their lives directly. Harmony Society's record on race does not reflect activism, but rather consideration for the non-whites that they encountered. They did not take a stance in the national debate on slavery and their decision to conscientiously object to service in the Civil War was consistent with their actions in the War of 1812. This position represented resentment towards the government asking them to take time away from their perfectionist pursuits rather than pacifism or a rejection of the cause.⁴⁵

Over the next century the position of non-whites in America improved dramatically from the days of slavery, Indian Removal, the Chinese Exclusion Act and

⁴³ Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 112-113.

⁴⁴ Nordhoff, *Communitic Societies*, 90.

⁴⁵ John Duss, *The Harmonists: A Personal History* (Ambridge, PA: The Harmonie Assoc., 1970), 118.

other state acts of oppression; however, the mid-twentieth century burgeoning of civil rights movements illustrates that people of color and their supporters believed the United States still had far to go on this front. Jim Crow laws institutionalized racism towards African-Americans after Reconstruction and well into the twentieth-century. Civil rights activists challenged these laws in a wide variety of areas ranging from segregation in public spaces including transportation and lodging, to education at all levels, to employment and voting rights. White supremacists used violence to counter these threats to their power and try to intimidate nonwhites into silence. Although the government and social institutions oppressed other people of color throughout the twentieth century, this discussion focuses largely on African-Americans because of the limitations in the examined sources.

Peoples Temple

When Jim Jones began his church in Indianapolis in 1954, he dealt with considerable criticism from the public and threats from the Ku Klux Klan for his views on integration and equality. After moving the group to Ukiah, CA in 1963, many locals continued to be not only suspicious of Peoples Temple, but openly hostile. Racial integration of membership and services raised many concerns in this predominantly white community. Right-wing propaganda had also had its impact, demonizing blacks as freeloaders and social activists as dangerous communists. Peoples Temple, not surprisingly, challenged the comfort level of locals by introducing *en masse* a significantly large influx of individuals who set off all these warning bells. Ukiahans

responded by shunning Peoples Temple members at work and school, with rudeness in town businesses, and later with threats and violence.⁴⁶ Jones encouraged his followers to respond with friendliness and kindness to locals with the goal of building relationships that would soften their hostility even if Peoples Temple could not win them over completely.

Jones preached that the state was inherently racist and oppressive, so he created an alternative model for Peoples Temple. This model allowed wealthier, mostly white, members to contribute materially and poorer, mostly black, members to benefit and improve their life situation. Peoples Temple attracted a diverse group of followers, loosely categorized as 1. young, white, middle class and idealistic, 2. older, black, lower income and religious. Jones offered the first group a way to expiate their feelings of guilt for their white privilege and take substantive action towards their Utopian ideals at a time when American society was deeply divided over criticisms of capitalism, imperialism, and systemic institutionalized racism, and fearful that peace could not be achieved globally or nationally.⁴⁷ In this, Jones' approach parallels that of Frances

⁴⁶ Carol Stahl, in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 48; Rebecca Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown: The Moore Family Involvement in Peoples Temple* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 116; Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look* (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2010), 34; "Statement that will hopefully bring understanding to the principle," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, May 10, 1968, 10; "An Open Letter to Rev. Jones, His Family and His Church Members," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, July 8, 1968, 7; "Minister Reviled, Threatened," *Ukiah Daily Journal* (Ukiah, CA), March 31, 1969, 1; "Charges Filed Against Ukiah Hairstylist," *Ukiah Daily Journal* (Ukiah, CA), April 8, 1969, 1.

⁴⁷ Mark Hamilton Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 109, 274, 313-314, 302-303, 179-180; John Morton Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 270-1, 119, 124, 253-4, 72-3; Matusow, *Unraveled*, 71, 6, 374,377; Maurice Isserman and

Wright, who drew on the community of Utopians and abolitionists for her white membership. For some, it was difficult to live in the world under their Utopian ideals and Peoples Temple offered a safe haven. Former member Vern Gosney recalls "We couldn't rent an apartment at that time because no one would rent to an interracial couple, so we wanted to be part of the Redwood Valley community. It was, in a way, Utopia."⁴⁸ Many other young people in this period dropped out of university, rejected their parents' values and lifestyles and either protested war, oppression and capitalism or lived in isolation from them. Whether hippies, anarchists or activists, youth rejection of mainstream American society occurred in the 1960s and 70s on an unprecedented scale.⁴⁹ For many of his followers, Jim Jones offered a meaningful life and a positive alternative to both the mainstream and the counterculture.

The second group--older, religious, lower to middle-class blacks--is somewhat more complex. Communalism was far less common among African-Americans in the 1970s. Father Divine's mission and some of the Black Panther organizations are the best-known examples. Within Peoples Temple some black members were better educated and had higher incomes. Their attraction to Peoples Temple lay in Jones' appeal to black

Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 307, 181, 50, 175-177.

⁴⁸ Vern Gosney, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 76.

⁴⁹ "Protesting in the 1960s and 1970," American Archive of Public Broadcasting, accessed September 23, 2018, <http://americanarchive.org/exhibits/first-amendment/protests-60s-70s>; Neil A. Hamilton, *Rebels and Renegades: A Chronology of Social and Political Dissent in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 232; Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 172.

empowerment, a message more influenced by Black Power than traditional black churches offered. Because they were somewhat older, and held more mainstream values, Jones attracted them more than groups like the Black Panthers which appeared too radical and dangerous. Many of the older blacks in Peoples Temple came from a Garveyite background and viewed Jones as offering a satisfying Utopian vision of economic and racial equality.⁵⁰ Marcus Garvey came to America from Trinidad in 1916, bringing with him his ideologies of black nationalism and Pan-Africanism. Garvey attracted a purported four million supporters to his Universal Negro Improvement Association. The UNIA worked in the early twentieth century to promote black civil rights and economic advancement, although often in conflict with the NAACP.⁵¹ For elderly blacks, Jones offered the opportunity to be active in their community in ways that valued their experience. Peoples Temple activities allowed them to interact with people of all ages, and to act on their religious beliefs. For many elderly people, old age is isolating. As their friends become less active or die and their families are busy with their own lives, the elderly can find life lonely. Peoples Temple provided an alternative lifestyle for elderly members that was active, caring and social.

For lower income blacks, Peoples Temple assisted them with childcare, job placement, housing, medical and legal aid while empowering them to contribute to the community as equals. This model promoted self-help and encouraged personal

⁵⁰ Mary Maaga McCormick and Catherine Wessinger, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 22.

⁵¹ Mary G. Rollinson, *Grassroots Garveyism: The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the Rural South 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 23-27.

improvement. Former member Nell Smart recalls, "We lived in LA. There was police brutality even back then, drugs were on the rise, and there were gangs. I was a single mom at the time with four kids, trying to go to school in the evening and working full time. My kids wanted to be at the Temple instead of hanging out with gang members, and I thought, "This is good.""⁵² Nell's children, mother and uncle all died in Guyana after she left the group. While there were charities and government agencies that provided some aid to inner city blacks, these were mostly programs established under President Johnson and they were still working out many of their challenges to delivering effective and efficient aid. Nation of Islam in San Francisco chastised inner city blacks for turning to a white man for help, calling them sell-outs.⁵³ Many members of Peoples Temple collected some form of government assistance including welfare, social security, and child benefits which they contributed to the group in return for housing, transportation, food, clothing allowance, and medical care. While some criticized Jones for taking advantage of desperate people, unlike at Nashoba the black members of Peoples Temple ultimately had a choice of whether to join and whether to continue with the group.

Jones preached on the divisive issue of race relations in America. He warned followers that the American government would round up blacks and intern them in

⁵² Nell Smart, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 189.

⁵³ Leslie Wagner-Wilson, *Slavery of Faith: The Untold Story of the Peoples Temple from the Eyes of a Thirteen Year Old, her Escape from Jonestown at 21 and Life 30 Years Later*. Indianapolis: iUniverse, 2008), 36.

concentration camps and that those who tried to ameliorate this oppression would face government persecution also.

All right now, you brace yourself. I've prophesied the date, the hour, the minute, and the year, they're gonna put people in this country in concentration camps. They're gonna put them in gas ovens, just like they did the Jews. You say, "We're not having any concentration camps." The jails are filled with nothing but poor. As Senator Edward Brook said--the black senator from Massachusetts--he said, we already have concentration camps. He said the prisons of the United States are filled with 80 percent black, poor white, Chicano, but most of them are black. He said, that's already a concentration camp. [Pause.] You say, "Well, they're there because the committed crime." Oh, is that so? [Pause.] They were hungry and they wanted some food. [Pause.] Fifty percent of the black youth today have no jobs. Fifty percent of the Indians have no jobs. Unemployment's rising rapidly. The prime interest is 9.7 percent today. You know what it was in the Crash of 1929? Ten. [Pause.] This country has always had to have a war, or a depression. I tell you we're in danger tonight, from a corporate dictatorship. We're in danger from a great fascist state, and if the church doesn't build a Utopian society, if it doesn't build an egalitarian society, we're going to be in trouble. [Pause.] Watergate? Did Vice President Spiro Agnew go to jail? Nah. Did President Richard Nixon go to jail? Never, never. But if a black takes a piece of bread, he'll go to jail.⁵⁴

Jones' worldview proved convincing enough to members that most willingly followed him to Guyana and tragically believed that the American government would not allow them to continue living and seeking their Utopian goals in Jonestown.

Mike Touchette, one of the original settlers at Jonestown, still feels "I loved Jonestown. I miss it...Other than the birth of my children and grandchildren, Jonestown

⁵⁴ Jim Jones, "Sermon," Fall, 1978, Q162 Transcript, transcribed by Fielding M. McGehee, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=27350.

was the greatest time in my life."⁵⁵ Mike's wife Debbie, told interviewer Rebecca Moore that once they got back to the United States a psychologist told them all they had been brainwashed. Touchette disputed this. Peoples Temple had brought her family out of poverty, and they willingly chose to follow Jones because of what Peoples Temple did for them. She believed in the work Peoples Temple was doing because they saw evidence of it.⁵⁶ Mike's dad Charlie, also an original settler, acknowledges that he hates Jim Jones now but credits Jones for breaking down his racial prejudices and creating harmony within Jonestown. He admits that he would never have accepted a black daughter-in-law (Debbie) if not for Jones.⁵⁷ Jeannie Mills similarly admitted that her time at Peoples Temple broke down her prejudices against black people. She joined because of her husband's commitment to civil rights, but for some time found it very uncomfortable to be in close proximity to people of color. Spending as much time as she did, working side by side with black people helped her recognize and appreciate their shared humanity and commitment to Utopian ideals.⁵⁸ It can be disturbing to read the positive recollections of former members, knowing as we do the horrific finale of Peoples Temple; however it is important to separate the Utopian ideals and actions of the

⁵⁵ Susan Donaldson James and Christina Lopez, "Jonestown Massacre: Survivors Wrestle with Guilt, Shame," November 18, 2012, accessed July 5, 2018, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/jonestown-massacre-anniversary-survivors-wrestle-guilt/story?id=17741732>.

⁵⁶ Moore, *Sympathetic*, 78.

⁵⁷ Moore, *Sympathetic*, 79.

⁵⁸ Jeannie Mills, *Six Years with God: Life Inside Reverend Jim Jones' Peoples Temple* (New York: A&W Publishers Inc., 1979), 115.

group's members from the behavior of Jim Jones and the tragedy in Guyana. It is possible both for Jones to have behaved abusively, and for members to have believed that Peoples Temple provided them with a better home in which they lived closer to their Utopian goals than on the outside.

Many former members describe their time in Peoples Temple positively, focusing on the internal success they believed the group achieved in creating racial harmony. While most of these memories come from white members, there are some records from non-whites who corroborate this testimony. Part of the reason for the limited black records, according to oral historian Leigh Fondakowski, is that there is a stigma in the black community after Jonestown that resulted in many of the black members feeling embarrassed to admit that a white conman had duped them.⁵⁹ Jim Jones, like Frances Wright, felt entitled as a white, educated reformer to act as a "white savior" and decide for his black followers what was best for them. Several of those African-American members who have left testimonies were old enough to have been the children of former slaves, to remember Jim Crow, and to have experienced the changes to civil rights over the first half of the twentieth century.

Theoretically, at least, blacks had equal rights in America when Jones started Peoples Temple. Lyndon Johnson's government passed laws at the federal level to protect the rights of African Americans and provide assistance to combat legal, political,

⁵⁹ Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 29.

educational and economic discrimination. By the late 1970s interracial conflict had calmed down considerably since the race riots that engulfed the nation in 1968; however, Jones convinced black members that their lives were in danger and that Peoples Temple was their salvation. "I'll never go back to the U.S. again. Jonestown is the onliest place you can relax, it's the onliest place you can be safe, and I love it out here. I wouldn't go back to the United States if I had the best room in the best hotel in a silk suit and a pocket full of money." Henry Mercer had lived through Jim Crow, the Depression, McCarthyism, and witnessed lynchings. He died at Jonestown, age ninety-three.⁶⁰

His peer, "Pop" Jackson, aged one hundred and four at his death in Guyana expressed similar sentiments, "Now, when it comes to Jonestown, I'm telling you it's the best place that ever was. I want Jonestown to be cared for because it cared for me. When I came here it was just getting started. I been fooling around the United States for a hundred years and it didn't do a thing for me. The United States is the last place you ought to stop to. You in danger."⁶¹ Survivor Hyacinth Thrush, who hid when nurses in Jonestown injected elderly members with cyanide, insisted in retrospect that she had always been skeptical. Although she continued to believe that Jones had cured her of cancer, Thrush resented that Jones had accepted more than \$150,000 from her and turned out to be deceptive. She accepted a small settlement from Peoples Temple after

⁶⁰ Henry Mercer testimony, California Historical Society. quoted in its entirety in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 172-3.

⁶¹ "Pop" Jackson, testimony, quoted in its entirety in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 217.

Jonestown.⁶² Thrush is representative of the middle-class religious black members who believed in Jones' gifts and his message of empowerment.

Beyond the activist goals of Peoples Temple, as with most Utopian societies, its members sought to create alternatives to mainstream organizational structures and division of labor, values and gender roles. While Peoples Temple's activities aligned well with its ideals in many ways there were still many shortcomings beyond those of Jones personally. Like George Rapp, Jones's authoritarianism created challenges for his followers to act independently and when necessary reject his teachings. The power in the community stayed with the leader even when his judgment failed. Although the group claimed equality as their standard for organization and interactions within the community, the leadership of Peoples Temple, and particularly Jones's inner circle, the Planning Commission, was almost exclusively white, middle class, and educated. Regardless of education and experience, black members had less status and responsibility. Jones imposed the constraints on black members' opportunities within Peoples Temple, however overall the group aided and cared for its black members beyond what they had experienced on the outside.

Beyond the dichotomy of black and white, a few other non-white members joined Peoples Temple seeking aid for drug addiction, poverty and abusive relationships. The group had acquired a reputation for its drug rehabilitation program, becoming well-

⁶² Hyacinth Thrush, interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 170-171.

known locally for its success rate and for not charging participants. Janice Wilsey, of Native American heritage, and Christina Renée Lucientes, a Latina, represent the only examples found of members who were neither white nor black. Both came to Peoples Temple seeking help with addictions. Wilsey appreciated that the group supported her withdrawal and guided her towards post-secondary education.⁶³ Lucientes found it difficult to live in community, to give up her independence and privacy and to follow the strict rules even while acknowledging that it helped her control her drug use.⁶⁴ Both died at Jonestown.

Jim Jones founded Peoples Temple on ideals of racial harmony and economic equality. While the tragic end of the community at Jonestown overwhelms scholarship on the San Francisco years of Peoples Temple, the Utopian activities of this community that members dedicated their lives to furthering deserve more attention. Undisputedly, Jim Jones behaved abusively and irresponsibly towards his followers; however, the members of Peoples Temple actively worked to create a better world according to the ideals laid down by Jones. It is reasonable to criticize the inner workings of the group for paternalism or for limiting the growth of its non-white members, but nonetheless they should be credited for providing substantial aid to inner city blacks at a time when it was

⁶³ Janice Wilsey, Personal History in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 38.

⁶⁴ Christina Renée Lucientes, Personal History in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 40.

greatly needed. Peoples Temple offers lessons in the potential possible in an interracial Utopian community.

Diggers

Overlapping Peoples Temple chronologically and temporally, the Diggers showed less interest in confronting racial inequality instead broadening their focus to all of humanity. The Diggers guiding principle was Free, and they applied it to all aspects of human existence. The Diggers had few people of color among their members, but sought opportunities to help civil rights projects in San Francisco whenever possible. They showed an awareness of the concerns of nonwhites, unlike Modern Times or the Harmonists, but did not actively recruit anyone much less target people of color. The Diggers kept in regular communication with other groups in San Francisco including the Black Panthers. The Panthers might not have shared the Diggers' approach to social change but at times their interests or territory overlapped so they developed a friendly and cooperative relationship. The Panthers also led community outreach programs in Oakland to address local issues like food insecurity, education, childcare, safety and medical care.⁶⁵ BPP founder David Hilliard credits the Diggers' delivery of food to their headquarters with inspiring Huey Newton to start his program to feed inner city children.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Bobby Seale, *Seize the Day: The Story of the Black Panther Party* (London: Arrow, 1970), 457-462.

⁶⁶ David Hilliard and Lewis Cole, *This Side of Glory: The Autobiography of David Hilliard and the Story of the Black Panther Party* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), 158, 182, 211.

Sociologist Fred Davis observed that blacks were not interested in the counterculture because they did not have the privilege to allow them to drop out. This argument is problematic in that it localizes the experience of the African American population into the those of lower socioeconomic standing, yet Davis does correctly acknowledge the limited participation of blacks of any class in the counterculture. In inner city San Francisco blacks focused on survival from poverty, crime, racism, and police brutality. They simply could not relate to middle class white kids choosing to give up their comfortable lives to live hand to mouth on the streets.⁶⁷ While this more specific analysis holds up, there was a minority of blacks involved in the counterculture, including the Diggers.⁶⁸ Peter Coyote observed that African-Americans would cautiously approach them and then begin participating when they felt safe.⁶⁹ Roy Ballard, a civil rights activist, for example belonged to the Diggers and started a Free Store in the poor black majority Fillmore District.⁷⁰ This exception does not upset Davis' conclusions.

Digger writings reflect concern for many of the issues raised by the Black Panthers including economic inequality, community conditions, police brutality,

⁶⁷ Fred Davis, "Flower Children: Why All of us Might Be Hippies Someday," *Trans-action* (December 1967): 11.

⁶⁸ Digger Archives include numerous unlabeled pictures of blacks participating in Digger activities. That the whites in the pictures are more frequently labeled suggests that the black members were less involved and therefore their names unknown to the archivists.

⁶⁹ Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 81.

⁷⁰ "Black Peoples Free Store," The Digger Archives, accessed July 4, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/black_peoples_free_store.htm; "Black Peoples Free Store ad" Digger Papers, 17, undated, San Francisco Historical Society; "Black Peoples Free Store."

harassment of community programs by local authorities, and racism.⁷¹ Peter Berg noted that Emmett Grogan and Billy Murcott, when they were developing the idea of the Diggers, looked at the race riots in Fillmore and discussed how that could translate to white activism.⁷² Sometimes this manifested as advocating against police brutality or supporting BPP members like Huey Newton in his legal struggles, other times as direct aid to BPP projects. The Digger Free Bakery program donated a large commercial oven to the Black Panthers to assist them with their programs to provide food to blacks living in food insecurity in Oakland.⁷³ Digger programs were always open to people of color who came into the Haight including Free Food and health and legal services.⁷⁴ However, the huge white influx into an area of San Francisco with low rents, and educated white youth taking jobs that might otherwise have been taken by people of color continued to create tensions with the non-white community in San Francisco throughout this period.⁷⁵

⁷¹ "Garbage or Nothing," Digger Papers, 18, undated, San Francisco Historical Society; "Take a Cop to Dinner," Digger Papers, 14, undated, San Francisco Historical Society; "Huey Must Be Set Free," Digger Papers, 23, undated, San Francisco Historical Society; Chester Anderson, "Two Page Racial Rap," February 9, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Freedom Now," undated, San Francisco Historical Society.

⁷² Peter Berg, Interview with Ron Chepesiuk, 00:52:00, Oral History at Winthrop College, accessed July 4, 2018, https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/oralhistoryprogram/?utm_source=digitalcommons.winthrop.edu%2Foralhistoryprogram%2F25&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

⁷³ "Fifth (and Sixth) Free Bakeries (Kaliflower and One Mind Temple, 1972)" The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/diggers/digbread.html>.

⁷⁴ Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (New York: Citadel, 1990), 289.

⁷⁵ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 288.

The Diggers actively worked with non-whites to bring aid to underserved communities. Although there were few people of color who called themselves Diggers, the group did not discourage them from joining, and they did attempt to improve racial harmony in the Haight. The Diggers could have reached out to other non-white communities. Like the local black community, other people of color tended not to join in the counterculture or communal living in the Haight. Again, this may have stemmed from the survival concerns of inner-city non-whites, particularly vulnerable immigrant communities. It does not explain why middle-class people of color chose not to participate in the counterculture.

Emmett Grogan particularly, seems to have made special efforts to acknowledge the challenges faced by the black community in San Francisco, and talked to its representatives to identify areas in which the Diggers could assist their existing social outreach programs. In times of crisis such as after Black Panther leader Huey Newton's arrest, or after instances of police brutality, the Diggers organized protests and petitioned the police department and City Hall to take action towards justice.⁷⁶ The Digger Papers and other publications drew attention to local concerns, "The Justice Department takes cops to dinner with laws giving them the right to do almost anything."⁷⁷ This line of protest in a larger poem could just as easily have been written today. When black protests turned into riots after Watts, the Diggers put out bulletins to the hippies letting

⁷⁶The Diggers, "Huey Must Be Set Free," Digger Papers, San Francisco History Center.

⁷⁷The Diggers, "Take a Cop to Dinner," Digger Papers, San Francisco History Center.

them know what was happening and to stay out of the way of the police for their own safety.⁷⁸ Despite this awareness on the part of the Diggers a lingering racial problem remained in the Haight. Chester Anderson, who worked with the Diggers on their publications through his Communications Company published a critique of the Haight in 1967 that resonated with the Diggers and their efforts. "I came here, a sanctuary & jumped into the psychedelic community with all the joyful abandon of an otter in water. Gradually, though, something dawned on me, clouding my joy. To wit: HAIGHT-ASHBURY IS THE FIRST SEGREGATED BOHEMIA I'VE EVER SEEN!"⁷⁹

Kerista

It was just a few years later that Jud Presmont established Kerista in Haight-Ashbury. The area was in even greater decline than in its hippie heyday. Kerista focused on free love and economic equality far more than on race. It was not that society had resolved its race issues or that Kerista was uninterested in equality, in fact, it was one of their standards.

7. Equality

- Non-sexism
- Non-ageism
- Non-racism
- No special privileges accorded to anyone
- Equal standard of living for all⁸⁰

⁷⁸ The Diggers, "Survive, Baby!" Digger Papers, San Francisco History Center.

⁷⁹ Chester Anderson, "Two Page Racial Rap," February 9, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society.

⁸⁰ Kerista Commune, "26 Standards," (1979), Kerista, San Francisco History Center.

Kerista expanded on this ideal by the time they issued their revised standards in 1992, where they specified "no racial or ethnic group is inferior or superior to another. Treat people as equals regardless of their race or ethnic origin. Each human being is unique."⁸¹ Rather, like Modern Times, Kerista simply did not make racial harmony a priority. As we will see in the discussion of gender, Kerista also failed to live up to its ideals on special privileges and to some extent sexism.

In the old tribe, Jud had a black wife,⁸² Joy, but all mention of her disappears in the new tribe. Presumably she did not come to San Francisco with Jud. The old tribe included other black members who did not make the trip West.⁸³ Kip argues that race proved easier for Keristans to deal with than homosexuality because members had more personal experience with people of color. Interestingly, when asked about race, Kip's responses revealed a binary understanding of race as a black/white issue. Kip clarifies that there were black members in the new tribe Kerista, namely Sol, Kira and Ska, but that race sometimes led to strained relations. He attributes this to the impact of racial conditioning that shaped the prejudices of members, even though they self-identified as progressive liberals.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Kerista Commune, "The Basic 111 Standards of Common Sense, Congeniality, and Peer Self-Help and Group Therapy," January 23, 1992, Kerista, San Francisco History Center.

⁸² Robert Anton Wilson, "The Religion of Kerista and Its 69 Positions," *Fact*, July/August 1965, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://kerista.com/nkerdocs/raw.html>.

⁸³ "Nab 7 During Interracial Free Love Frolic In NYC," *Jet*, October, 1959, 28-29.

⁸⁴ Kip, Email to Cheryl Coulthard, August 19, 2018.

Kerista appears not to have followed through on its rhetoric of racial equality and anti-racism. On the rare occasions they had the opportunity to address racial prejudices internally, Keristans made excuses, or ignored the problems. Kerista may have been more diverse than many of its contemporaries but missed out on developing racial relationships towards greater harmony. In their writings on Utopia, Kerista referenced earlier Utopians, specifically criticizing Thomas More's Utopia for failing to eliminate the inequalities caused by sexism, slavery, and monogamy.⁸⁵ "We pick up where Oneida, New Harmony, and Nashoba left off. We are egalitarian, non-monogamous and we have a plan for fostering social justice in the world at large."⁸⁶ Kerista looked specifically at Nashoba as an example of a Utopian community specifically designed to combat racial injustice, yet failed to build upon the foundations laid by Frances Wright in the nineteenth century.⁸⁷ Compared to the activism of the Diggers and Peoples Temple, Kerista appears self-centered and oblivious to larger world concerns about race.

Nashoba provided the best nineteenth century model for creating an interracial community based on a quest for equality and harmony. Interestingly, the Diggers and

⁸⁵ Bluejay Way, "Utopian Origins: The Utopians, Real and Imaginary, or Pythagoras, the Essenes, Thomas More, the Anabaptists, and the Diggers are Examined," [this appears to be a Kerista publication, undated], No source, undated. Kerista, San Francisco Associations, Hippies Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 11.

⁸⁶ "The Kerista Plan to Help the World Situation Through Gaming and Orchestrated Role-Playing," Kerista, October, 1986, pamphlet, 1986, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁸⁷ Even Eve, *Sexual Equality and the Utopian Dream*, booklet, undated, 1, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.204. [Here Eve is talking about racial equality in the context of sexual relations]

Peoples Temple, while looking back down the Utopian threads did not choose to consider Nashoba instead turning to the earlier Levelers and Diggers.⁸⁸ It seems that despite actively addressing issues of racial inequality through their Utopian plans they did so through the lens of economic inequality rather than strictly race. In this sense, they offered a Utopian view of all people as equal in terms of their need for freedom and economic justice, while perhaps being blind to the intersectional struggles of low income people of color.

These three communities showed awareness of the work of their contemporaries, drawing on their expertise to develop their Utopian programs. Again, Peoples Temple and the Diggers showed greater success in collaborating with the Black Panthers, local churches and other communal groups. All three groups argued for their worth as representatives of a tribe with shared identity whether it was their own membership, the local counterculture community or a broader constituency of disaffected citizens. They unified their followers around their goals and projects. When necessary they made appeals to the public for support and to political and institutional leaders to effect changes in their community to reduce racial inequality and provide services to people of color in need. Peoples Temple, the Diggers, and Kerista all exhibited the properties of a social movement and connectivity to the broader communalist movement.

Race is a contentious area of social concern for Utopian communalists to address. While they enjoy white privilege for the most part, they also occupy a liminal space

⁸⁸ Diggers, untitled, undated flyer, Digger publications, San Francisco History Center.

between mainstream white society and the marginalized areas reserved for people of color, immigrants, people of lower socioeconomic status, LGBTQIA populations and others. Choosing an alternative lifestyle comes at the cost of a loss of status in the mainstream world. Secondly, as a largely white movement, Utopian communalists have great value as allies, but are not necessarily appreciated as leaders in racial justice matters. The modern communalism movement is cognizant both of the problem and their shortcomings in addressing it, and are actively moving towards greater engagement with marginalized people to learn how to improve. *Communities* magazine editor Chris Roth writes, "In short, intentional communities have a lot of potential for addressing questions of class, race, and privilege. And, as we see in this issue, they also have a LOT of work to do in all of these areas to create the conditions where reality can catch up to ideals. In many ways they are no further along in addressing these issues than the wider society is—and in some ways, they are often less far along in practical terms, even if they're further along in "intention."⁸⁹ There are great opportunities for Utopian communalism to take a greater part by actively addressing racial harmony within their communities, by actively recruiting a more diverse membership, and by working to support community action for racial justice.

⁸⁹ Chris Roth, "Addressing and Undressing the Elephant in the Room," *Communities Magazine* (Spring 2018, Number 178): 8.

CHAPTER V

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Introduction

For many Utopian communities, love, sex, relationships and gender roles are significant issues for critique and contention. Creating greater equality for women often drove these changes, but the gap between the rhetoric of empowerment and the lived experience in community was sometimes disappointing. Alternative gender structures were not the sole purview of progressive communities; conservative religious groups also revisited these with the intent of bringing their lives back into harmony with Biblical ideals. Utopian communities could provide a liminal space for experimentation with gender relationships and roles, family structures and child-raising, and gender expression away from the standards of the outside world. As a movement, communalism has critiqued social problems relating to gender throughout American history, with Utopian communities looking to each other for advice and support, weaving Utopian threads laterally between contemporaries and longitudinally across time.

As with their attempts to challenge racial and economic inequality, their success varied. A significant limiting factor for achieving their Utopian goals has been the persistence of mainstream structures and institutions. Communalism often offered significant challenges to mainstream models of marriage, family and gendered labor but struggled to overcome deeply held constructs and institutions including patriarchal beliefs, and limited expressions of gender. Utopian communities consistently conformed

to many problematic social and gendered attitudes and behaviors while attempting to confront these. Their solutions to the inequalities in how we relate to and treat each other varied in their effectiveness, but nonetheless offer lessons to modern communities and outsiders. This chapter examines the way six Utopian communities over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries dealt with the concerns about gender, specifically how they attempted to create equality for women in ways that differed from reform movements.

After the Second Great Awakening, women took on a greater public role in reform movements from abolition, to temperance, to suffrage. During the Second Great Awakening preachers encouraged participants at their revival meetings to re-commit to a personal relationship with God and to perfect themselves for the Second Coming.

William Ellery Channing, for example, emphasized conscience and good works as the hallmarks of Christian morality.¹ This theme of perfectionism carried through mainstream religious groups such as the Baptists and Methodists, Utopian communities like Oneida, and the early Mormons, and even to secular movements like the Owenites.² Perfectionism emphasized individual agency in improving one's life and one's

¹ William Ellery Channing, "Unitarian Christianity" (1819), reprinted in *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing-Emerson Parker*, introduced by Conrad Wright (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1961), 81.

² Lawrence Foster, "Free Love and Community: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Perfectionists," in *American Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 256-257; Whitney Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper, 1950), 238-9, 145, 241-2; John F.C. Harrison, *Quest for the New Moral World: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 92-93. All of these scholars point to perfectionism promoted by men like Charles Finney during the Second Great Awakening as significant influences on Utopian communalism in this period.

community. Middle class women greatly outnumbered male converts during the Second Great Awakening, gaining opportunities for greater self-expression, and began drawing on their moral authority as Republican mothers to create and join reform movements in the 1830s and 40s. While scholars such as Lori Ginzberg and Ronald Walters point to the influence of middle-class women in reform movements during the antebellum period, there is little academic consideration of women in Utopian communalism during this period with the exception of the Shakers, Oneida and early Mormons.³

Women made dramatic strides towards equality by 1960, gaining the vote, greater opportunities in education and the workplace, and increasingly asserting control over their bodies and sexuality. Certainly, women had far more legal, political, economic and social rights than they did a century earlier, and in this decade the women's rights movement gathered in momentum, propelling gender equality near the forefront of American awareness by the end of the decade.⁴ The sixties, as an era permeated with protest in a kaleidoscope of permutations, birthed (or perhaps rebirthed) modern

³ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the 19th-Century United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 18-19; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 103, 140-141; Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 80-81. Stewart Davenport's forthcoming book, *Sex and Sects* will also consider women in these three communities.

⁴ Ruth Rosen, "Daughters of the Fifties," in *U.S. History as Women's History*, eds. Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris and Kathryn Kish Sklar (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 324-5, 328, 333-334; Jane Sherron DeHart, "Rights and Representation," in *U.S. History as Women's History*, eds. Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris and Kathryn Kish Sklar (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 217; Barbara Easton, "Feminism and the Contemporary Family," in *A Heritage of Her Own*, edited by Nancy Cott and Elizabeth Pleck (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 563-565; Miriam Schneir, *Feminism in our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1994), xii-xiii.

feminism, civil rights, pacifism, environmental protection and critiques of capitalism and the state-- social issues that had achieved considerable attention in the nineteenth century. The Utopian communal movement continued, through the 1960s and beyond, to pursue alternative solutions to social problems including those of gender inequality, restrictive attitudes and institutions regarding marriage, divorce, sexuality and family, and gender norms. As with their attempts to challenge racial and economic inequality, their success varied. A significant limiting factor for achieving Utopian goals has been the persistence of mainstream structures and institutions. Despite the intention of rejecting or at least reconfiguring gender relationships, monogamy, sexism and patriarchy proved difficult for communards to relinquish. Utopian communities consistently conformed to many problematic social and economic attitudes and behaviors while confronting these. To varying degrees these Utopians drew on threads reaching back to their nineteenth century or earlier predecessors, building on their foundation to continue challenging injustices.⁵ For example, Kerista criticized More's Utopia for clinging to "patriarchy, sexism, monogamy and slavery," while praising him for his reorganization of community labor.⁶ These communities formed an intricate web of communitarian fellowship, swapping members, ideas, and resources.

⁵ Kerista as mentioned already discussed these earlier Utopian influences in their publications. The Diggers also reference books on nineteenth century communes, Holloway's *Heaven on Earth*, Noyes' *American Socialisms* and Nordhoff's *Communitistic Societies* as source materials in 1967 flyers distributed in the Haight (Digger Ephemera, San Francisco History Center).

⁶ Bluejay Way, "Utopian Origins: The Utopias, Real and Imaginary, or Pythagoras, the Essenes, Thomas More, the Anabaptists and the Diggers are Examined," no source, date, Kerista, San Francisco Associations, Hippies Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Nashoba

Frances Wright stands apart from her contemporaries for a few reasons. First, she preceded the expansion of women's role in reform. Wright spoke to mixed audiences of men and women ten years before the noted abolitionists, Angelina and Sarah Grimké took the stage. While she may not have been the first woman to do so, her popularity ensured that she reached a vast audience along the East Coast and throughout the Midwest.⁷ Nashoba also marked Wright as distinctive, in that there were no comparable examples of women establishing Utopian societies in the nineteenth century. Wright's leadership as a woman both in Nashoba and as a radical orator and writer earned reproaches for her lack of femininity and the inappropriateness of her public position.

Unlike many Utopian societies, Wright had not founded Nashoba as a rejection of a broad range of mainstream values and institutions. The members did not seek freedom to practice an alternative religion; in fact, Wright and her cohort rejected religion as unscientific, irrational and oppressive. The white members of Nashoba had a background in reform and communalism movements and actively critiqued American society, but Nashoba was not their alternative solution to the broad scope of these. Instead it targeted a specific problem. While the goal of Nashoba was to create an environment in which they could demonstrate the uplifting of slaves to where they could

⁷ Frances Wright, *Life, Letters and Lectures* (Reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972), 3-4.

be successfully integrated into mainstream free labor society, the members proved less concerned about addressing gender equality.

This seems strikingly odd given that Wright was an outspoken supporter of women's rights and a rejector of societal norms regarding women's behavior and place in society. At Nashoba, men and women worked side by side doing whatever work was necessary to establish the settlement. This reflected necessity not equality. When it came to childcare and teaching, these tasks devolved to the women. Wright, personally and in her work, defended the right of women to equal access to education, encouraged women to question authority and particularly men in authority, and rejected marriage as demeaning to women. "I would ask every father not absolutely dead to human feeling how he can permit his daughters blindly to immolate all their rights, liberties and property by the simple utterance of a word, and thus place themselves, in their tender, ignorant, and unsuspecting youth, as completely at the disposal and mercy of an individual, as is the negro slave who is bought for gold in the slave market of Kingston or New Orleans."⁸ However, there is no indication that the women at Nashoba followed suit. Men directed the financial matters and management of Nashoba, with the exception, of course, of Wright.

Nashoba did address concerns about the inequality of sexual relations, although even here it is clear that men retained the power in controlling interactions despite

⁸ Frances Wright, *Free Enquirer*. April 29, 1829. While today we generally recognize that comparing anything to chattel slavery diminishes the horrors of that institution, a variety of activists in the nineteenth century commonly used this rhetorical device.

ideological expressions of equality. There is limited information in the documentary record about white women at Nashoba. Frances Wright spent little time there herself after her illness, and George Flowers' wife, Eliza, left as soon as she was able.⁹ Only Camilla Wright stayed through to the end.¹⁰ The lack of information about black women at Nashoba parallels that of black men in the community. That is, the silence seems more a matter of their race and lack of education than the result of their gender. White members chronicled what is known about black women at Nashoba, adding a layer of bias to their story. Commune manager James Richardson and Wright sent updates to abolitionist Benjamin Lundy to publish in his paper, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, to keep supporters and other interested parties aware of how work at Nashoba was progressing. Richardson included excerpts from the "Nashoba Book," a journal of day to day activities. It became clear to the readers upon reading these excerpts that there was more happening at Nashoba than Wright's prospectus had described.¹¹ The first excerpt from the "Nashoba Book" revealed that one of the female slaves at Nashoba had requested a lock on the door of the cabin she shared with another slave woman after one of the male slaves had entered their quarters uninvited demanding sexual favors. Richardson denied her request for the lock. Now, this story, at face value, likely

⁹ Susan Kissel, *In Common Cause: the "Conservative" Frances Trollope and the "Radical" Frances Wright* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), 31.

¹⁰ William Randall Waterman, *Frances Wright* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1924), 131.

¹¹ Wright's prospectus outlined the goals of the commune for educating and providing slaves with marketable skills, and allowing them to work off their purchase price before emancipating them. Wright designed the project to address white concerns about economic losses and social disorder if they freed their slaves.

presented no issues for readers. Enslaved women had few expectations of privacy or of any right of consent to sexual encounters.

Richardson revealed to the public that at Nashoba not only did blacks and whites live and work together in harmony, but that Richardson (later defended by the other white members) permitted and encouraged sex outside the bounds of marriage. Their free love ideology defended a woman's right to consent while simultaneously viewing physical safeguards to this right as extraneous to the ideology--that is, if all accepted these rights there would be no need for locked doors. While at this time many radicals outside of Nashoba defended women's rights within marriage, adding miscegenation to the mix, as Richardson did when he announced his relationship with Josephine Prevot, proved too much for even the most liberal readers to accept.¹² This is not to argue that Nashoba was unique in practicing interracial relations, rather that Richardson's decision to advertise it, and Wright's choice to defend miscegenation as a social good challenged the norm of ignoring or denying such behavior.¹³

The conservative press, and even many radicals labelled Wright and the members of Nashoba as free lovers for their outrageous views. Conservatives used the label "free love" to demonize sex radicals in the nineteenth century, conflating what was often a

¹² Josephine Prevot was the fourteen-year-old mixed-race daughter of the commune's schoolteacher. She and Richardson moved to New Orleans and founded a school for black children. Their relationship was long-term not uncommitted as many critics accused free love supporters. Readers apparently proved more upset about Prevot's race than the age disparity between her and Richardson.

¹³ Miscegenation between white men and their black enslaved women was an open secret that while many disapproved of it, they generally avoided censure. (Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 418).

proto-feminist stance on equality within marriage with a hedonist desire for multiple partners outside of the bounds of marriage. Several questions arise about free love at Nashoba. Wright defended women's legal and economic equality within marriage. She compared, as was common at the time, women in marriage with chattel slavery.¹⁴ Nashoba, however, pushed beyond a feminist stance to a more anti-state position. Camilla Wright echoed her sister, expressing her “entire disapproval of the marriage tie...but in the highest degree pernicious in compelling these individuals to continue united...I also view marriage as forming one of the most subtle invention of priestcraft for poisoning the purest source of human felicity and fostering and perpetuating the sad catalogue of misery and crime...”¹⁵

While the women at Nashoba did not transcend outside gender expectations, Wright promoted the cause of women's equality and particularly access to education once she left Nashoba. Wright's convictions on free love and marriage paralleled those of many later radicals, such as Moses Harman and Francis Barry, who advocated for equal rights for women, but not until after the Civil War.¹⁶ Wright was ahead of her time, doing the difficult work of plowing the ground and exposing the inequalities inherent in post-revolutionary America. As a single woman, Wright's radical stance was particularly daring. She did not shy away from publicly asserting her opinion as an equal

¹⁴ Frances Wright, *Free Enquirer*. April 29, 1829.

¹⁵ Waterman, *Wright*, 118.

¹⁶ Joanne E. Passet, *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 2003).

to men, for which she was roundly criticized. George Washington's granddaughter, Nelly Parke Custis Lewis, a leader in Washington D.C. society was one of Wright's detractors, resenting Wright's influence with Lafayette and her ease with the upper echelons of male society.¹⁷ Despite Wright's very public espousal of race, gender and economic equality, equality failed to become a majority opinion in the nineteenth century, or even well into the twentieth.¹⁸

While slaveowners and even other reformers in the antebellum period rejected Wright's radicalism, she influenced later movements for women's rights, education, workers' rights and equality. In their *History of Woman Suffrage*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony acknowledged their debt to Frances Wright as a pioneering feminist on the title page.¹⁹ A portrait of Wright appeared on the frontispiece. Anthony displayed a portrait of Wright on the wall of her study.²⁰ Although Wright rejected the suffrage movement because she believed it would give additional power to married men, her advocacy for women's education and women's economic and legal rights positioned her as a powerful influence on the Seneca Falls Movement. Later feminists credited

¹⁷ Eckhardt, *Fanny Wright*, 81.

¹⁸ Passet, *Sex Radicals*; Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times*, New York (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. I, London: Charles Mann, 1889.

²⁰ Jacqueline Smith, "Frances Wright: Unsung Heroine of the Suffrage Movement," March 19, 2014, New York Historical Society: History Detectives, accessed August 20, 2018, <http://historydetectives.nyhistory.org/2014/03/frances-wright-unsung-heroine-of-the-suffrage-movement/>.

Wright for her advocacy and the sacrifices her work entailed.²¹ Oneida founder, John Humphrey Noyes wrote of Wright in his 1870 book, *History of American Socialisms*, that "Our impression is, not only that she was the leading woman in the communistic movement of that period, but that she had a very important agency in starting two other movements that had far greater success and are at this moment in popular favour: anti-slavery and woman's rights."²²

Josiah Warren had known Frances Wright at New Harmony and appreciated her views on equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic status. The free lovers at Modern Times acknowledged Wright's early defense of equality within marriage, miscegenation, and rejection of the church and state as arbiters of personal relationships. The clothing reform and cropped hair adopted by many radical women in the 1850s "Bloomer craze" closely resembled the practical sartorial choices Wright chose for herself.²³ Scholars of American sexual history John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman credit Wright's influence on freethinkers and sexual radicals, and claim

²¹ Ernestine L. Rose, speech at the National Woman's Rights Convention (1858) Library of Congress, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection; Paulina Davis, speech on Fanny Wright at a meeting of the National Woman Suffrage Association (19th October, 1870) Library of Congress, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection.

²² John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, (1870). (Reprint New York: Dover, 1961), 66.

²³ "Frances Wright," Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum, https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/heritage_floor/frances_wright, accessed August 20, 2018; O. B. Emerson, "Frances Wright and her Nashoba Experiment," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (December, 1947), 299.

that she "initiated a century-long free-love attack on sexual silences."²⁴ As such, Wright set an example for later sex reformers to bring the discussion of inequality and abuse into the public eye. Even into the twentieth century, Utopians like Kerista looked back to Wright's Nashoba as a model for interracial relationships and communal equality.²⁵ Wright and Nashoba established Utopian threads that reached across and through the communalist movement into the future.

Frances Wright visited other Utopian communities and talked to other Utopians before creating her plan for Nashoba. This included communication with George Rapp of Harmony Society, despite their significant differences in goals and approaches to social problems. This study differs dramatically from the work of Harmonist historian Karl Arndt when it comes to understanding Nashoba. While this study seeks to contextualize Wright and situate her work in the Utopian communalism of her time, Arndt dismissed Wright completely, "What Wright needed was some cracked ice for a cracked brain."²⁶ Arndt's comments reflect a conservative critique of nineteenth century reform and Utopianism. Where Wright's interests over her career as a reformer lay in

²⁴ John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 113.

²⁵ Bluejay Way, Eden Zia, and Wise Sun, "Kerista: The Utopian Community that Invented Polyfidelity." *Communities*, Issue 71 (1986): 65-66; Furchgott, Eve. "Sexual Economics and the Utopian Dream." Booklet. Undated. CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Kerista Commune, "The Kerista Plan to Help the World Situation Through Gaming & Orchestrated Role Playing," pamphlet, 1986, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

²⁶ Karl Arndt, "The Pittsburgh Meeting of General Lafayette, George Rapp, and Frances Wright: Prelude to Frances Wright's Nashoba," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Volume 62, Number 3 (July 1979), 295.

finding Utopian solutions to race, gender and economic inequalities, Rapp sought to prepare his followers for the Second Coming, isolating them from a wicked and undeserving world. In his quest for perfection, Rapp did address problems of gender and economic inequality, although that was not necessarily his goal. He introduced communal property and celibacy with Scriptural justifications, incidentally creating greater stability and resources for Harmony Society.

Harmony Society

Rapp's introduction of celibacy was intricately connected with his millennialism. Millennialist fervor was at a fever pitch in Western Europe during the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century.²⁷ While Rapp's ideas on the subject were not in and of themselves unique or unusual, they did hold sway over a significant population. Other Pietist German communities included Amana, Zoar, Ephrata and Bethel.²⁸ Times were difficult for the new settlers, and this may have contributed to a crisis in faith, a doubting of their prophet. Instituting a new set of practices that set the Harmonists apart from their neighbours may have temporarily at least drawn them together as insiders.²⁹

²⁷ Eileen Aiken English, "The Life and Legacy of Count Leon: The Man Who Cleft the Harmonie," *Communal Societies* 33, no. 1 (2013): 48.

²⁸ Victor Peters, "The German Pietists: Spiritual Mentors of the German Communal Settlements in America." *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Association* 1 (Autumn 1981): 55-66.

²⁹ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 94.

Rapp introduced celibacy as a group ideal in 1807, although many members, including Rapp, had been practicing it in Germany. Rapp never wrote celibacy into the Harmonists' bylaws; however, it became the majority practice for the almost hundred years remaining to the group. Rapp determined that husbands and wives could continue to live in the same household, but platonically as brother and sister. He ruled against young people courting each other and discouraged romantic and sexual relations. The Harmonists may have shunted to the perimeters of the community those that did choose to live as husband and wife so they would not provide a bad example to others, however it is also possible that couples chose to isolate themselves to avoid interactions with disapproving celibates. Harmony Society records clearly indicate that the Harmonists broadly observed the celibacy rule with only six marriages recorded in 1805, five over the next two years and then a gap of ten years before the next marriage. This in a community of hundreds of young men and women.³⁰

Demographic records indicate that few members left Harmony Society in the years immediately following the decision and by 1820 the number of children had dropped below statistical norms.³¹ The community brought in new members from Germany, adopted widows and orphans but slowly diminished in population until by 1905 when it dissolved, only five members remained. Both pieces of data indicate that

³⁰ Karl J.R. Arndt, ed., *Harmony on the Connequenessing (Harmonie am Connoquenessing) 1803-1815, George Rapp's First American Harmony, A Documentary History* (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 225.

³¹ Eileen Aiken English, "The Road from Harmony," *American Communal Societies Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 5.

members willingly accepted the practice and followed it even without penalties for disobedience. Visitor Charles Nordhoff asked members about this during his visit in 1874 and received the following reply, "If you have to watch people you had better give them up. We have always depended on the strength of our religious convictions, and upon prayer and a Christian spirit."³² It is notable that this response came sixty-seven years after Rapp introduced celibacy, suggesting further that most members accepted the decision rather than that it was imposed on them. Anthropologist Michael Strezewski points out that significantly, Harmonists in the two decades or so following 1807 continued to live in nuclear units with husbands and wives sharing a household yet very few children were born. This seems to indicate a high level of compliance with living platonically as brothers and sisters.³³

Although there were sound pragmatic reasons to adopt celibacy, including reducing the number of mouths to feed, and allowing women to devote their energies to necessary work, Rapp instead chose to justify it to his flock using a mystical theological understanding of early Christianity. He taught his followers that Adam before the Fall was both male and female in one body, hence sexual relations were irrelevant.³⁴ Upon the Second Coming God would restore the Rappites likewise to this more perfect state.

³² Charles Nordhoff, *Communitic Societies of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1875) (Reprinted Dover Publications: New York, 1966), 74.

³³ Michael Strezewski, "Harmonist Demography and Town Planning in New Harmony, Indiana," *Communal Societies: Journal of the Communal Studies Society* (Vol 35, No 1), 18.

³⁴ Genesis 1: 26,27 "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he him." *King James Bible*.

Sex and marriage would no longer be necessary or desirable.³⁵ The Harmonists believed that after the imminent Second Coming, mankind would again return to this state, so in practicing celibacy they were preparing for their inclusion in the Kingdom of God.³⁶

Celibacy proved a practice difficult for outsiders to overlook, although generally they tolerated it as an oddity of the Harmonists. Unlike polygamy, society generally did not view celibacy as threatening to public morality and the social order. "A Spectator" writing in *Harris' Pittsburgh and Allegheny Directory* in 1829 made the argument for toleration, noting that "Some peculiarities in their internal arrangements seem to us strange and singular, but having chosen the United States as their residence, and complying with all civic duties required by law, no one will pretend to question their free and undeniable privilege to select such a mode of living as in their opinion will best promote happiness here and hereafter."³⁷ Similarly, German economist Friedrich List asserted, "I do not want to judge their religious principles or other rules for which they have been criticized. It is not my objective to quarrel about certain issues or to investigate conjectures. The future will decide on that."³⁸ Visitors to the settlement

³⁵ Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 95.

³⁶ Arndt, *Harmony, 1785-1847*, 98; He had his work *Gedanken über die Bestimmung des Menschen: besonders in Hinsicht der gegenwärtigen Zeit* translated in 1824 into English as *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man* to help nonmembers understand the Harmonist beliefs. (Adam Darlage, "Heaven on Earth: George Rapp on the Destiny of Man," *Nineteenth Century Prose* 39, no. ½ (2012), 483.)

³⁷ A Spectator, *Harris' Pittsburgh & Allegheny Directory with the Environs &c, with their trades, businesses or occupations, and the public, literary, scientific and religious institutions*, edited by Isaac Harris, (Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson, 1829), 205.

³⁸ Friedrich List, "Travel Notes from the Year 1825," trans. Gertha Reinert, Harmony Society, Travel Old Economy Village, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission 8.

regularly commented on celibacy and asked members, in what now seems an intrusive way, about their sex lives or lack thereof.³⁹ Louise Weil, who spent several months at Economie, noted with dismay, "How unfortunate that this community from its own free will will die out. They could be a model for all of the United States. They, like the honorable Penn, could have created another state were it not for the unnatural state of celibacy which they introduced."⁴⁰ A story critical of the Harmonists appeared in *The Atlantic*. Among other things it explicitly linked celibacy to the essentialist understanding of women's lives foremost as mothers and wives, noting that the Harmonist women were moved at the sight of babies because Rapp so cruelly barred them from having any of their own. In his rebuttal to the article, Aaron Williams (an outside journalist) asserted that it was normal for women, whether Harmonist or not, to enjoy playing with babies.⁴¹

Others proved less tolerant, and their comments smack of a paternalistic assumption common to nineteenth century reformers that they knew better than these foreigners/peasants/fanatics what was good for them and how they should think and behave. The idea that Society members might hold a sincere belief about their path to

³⁹ A.J. MacDonald, *Strange Cults and Utopias of 19th Century America*, John Humphrey Noyes, ed. (Dover Publications: New York, 1966), 132; Karl Arndt, "Three Hungarian Travelers Visit Economy," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (April LXXIX, No. 2, April, 1955), 208; George W. Featherstonbaugh, *A Canoe Voyage Up the Minay Sotor* (reprinted St. Paul, MI: Minnesota Historical Society, 1970) (originally printed Richard Bentley: London, 1847), 82-3.

⁴⁰ Louise Weil, *From the Swabian Manse to America* (Stuttgart, 1860), transl. Hilda Kring, 1995, 10.

⁴¹ Aaron Williams, *The Harmony Society at Economy, Penn'a founded by George Rapp AD 1805* (originally published 1866) (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1971), 32.

salvation and the Second Coming, or that normal healthy youths might be willing to eschew marriage and sex for the promise of something better in the afterlife apparently was beyond the critics' comprehension.⁴² One, calling himself "a friend to the Harmony Society," wrote to Daniel Lynn asking that he propose legislation in the Pennsylvania House to force Rapp to end the celibacy rule because, "it is shurly [sic] not Right that those who are man & wife should not Enjoy each other as such so as to please the old gentleman [Rapp]."⁴³ This so-called friend apparently assumed Rapp's influence to be the only reason for Harmonist celibacy, an assumption belied by the continuation of the practice after Rapp's death.

It is understandable that outsiders would have questions about life within Harmony Society and would want to verify the situation for themselves, especially after negative rumors began to circulate. However the idea of interrogating complete strangers about their marital arrangements seems out of touch with nineteenth (or even twenty-first) century norms of polite conversation.⁴⁴ Harmony Society became something of a *cause célèbre* for reformers and entrepreneurs alike, attracting Europeans and Americans

⁴² "A Friend to the Harmony Society to Dann Lynn," reprinted in *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society 1814-1824. Vol 1 1814-1819*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1975), 578; Ferdinand Ernst, "Visit to Harmonie on the Wabash, starting July 18, 1819," reprinted in *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society 1814-1824. Vol 1 1814-1819*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1975), 746; Frederick Rapp, "Letter to John J. Wiestling asking to correct an erroneous article in Harrisburg *Morgenröthe*," October 9, 1819, reprinted in *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society 1814-1824. Vol 1 1814-1819*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1975), 775.

⁴³ "Dann Lynn," reprinted in Arndt. *1814-1819*, 578.

⁴⁴ Arndt, *Connoquenessing*, 271.

who then wrote of their visit in their published journals.⁴⁵ Even Lord Byron referenced the Harmonists' celibacy in *Don Juan*,

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd Marriage
In his harmonious settlement which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without these sad expenses which disparage what
Nature most encourages...⁴⁶

Interestingly, when the Shakers, who were also celibate, visited the Harmonists they did not consider the practice worth noting.⁴⁷

While the Harmonists expected outsiders to be tolerant of their practice of celibacy, Rapp did not extend that tolerance in the opposite direction. Rapp may have admired Frances Wright's quest to create greater racial equality at Nashoba but he had no patience for her promotion of free love. "For we must also know how the anti-Christian beast is still developing, for that Miss Wright, whom all of you know, once visited Harmonie and spied out everything among us and found a deep unity among us. And she also tried to build one [a Harmonie], but, of course, without light, and only with reason... And she went from us to New York and there spread her devilish doctrine, and

⁴⁵ H.D. Mason, "The Harmonite Community," *American Magazine*, vol. VII, March 20, 1888, 588; Weil, 7.

⁴⁶ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, (London: Milner and Sowerby, 1839), Canto XV, 385. Byron devotes two further verses to Rapp.

⁴⁷ Giles Avery, "Visit to Economy by Shaker Elder Giles Avery of New Lebanon, New York in 1862," transcriber June Sprigg, Curator, Hancock Shaker Village, 1-10; Amos Stewart, "Visit to Economy Village by Shaker Brother Amos Stewart in 1858," Transcriber June Sprigg, Curator, Hancock Shaker Village, 1-4.

the President [Andrew Jackson] and his comrades were in agreement with her, and gradually they hoped to eliminate the old moral code and introduce a bestial way of life."⁴⁸

Although their old-fashioned style of clothing and manners had no tangible effect on outsiders, many found it representative of the Harmonists' foreignness.⁴⁹ Visitor Louise Weil took a more aesthetic objection, "As dear as the ladies are, so noticeable is their mode of dress. I love these people dearly and I have received so much goodness from them that I would never say anything about them that would make them a laughing-stock; they certainly do not deserve that, but their clothes do nothing for them. In hesitation I wonder if God really would want to hide such lovely people he created."⁵⁰ A male perspective noted the modesty of the women in a statement that perhaps reflects more about his experience of outsider women than Harmonists. "Their costume is very plain; the women dress with no motive of conquest."⁵¹ Of course, Harmonist women had no reason to choose their dress with a view to attracting a husband, however, at least from this man's viewpoint, outsider women took this into consideration. Some simply

⁴⁸ George Rapp, Sermon, October 14, 1838, reprinted in Karl Arndt, "The Pittsburgh Meeting of General Lafayette, George Rapp, and Frances Wright: Prelude to Frances Wright's Nashoba," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Volume 62, Number 3 (July 1979), 292.

⁴⁹ Franz von Löher, "Western Pennsylvania Through a German's Eyes: The Travels of Franz von Löher, 1846," transl. by Frederic Trautmann, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 62 (July 1982), 235; 249. William Hebert, *A Visit to the Colony of Harmony in Indiana* (London, 1824), reprinted in Harlow Lindley, *Indians as Seen by Early Travelers* (Indiana Historical Commission, 1916), 336.

⁵⁰ Weil, *Swabian Manse*, 13.

⁵¹ "Harmonie Society," *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* (Providence and Pawtucket Advertiser: Providence, RI, August 24, 1820), 2.

viewed it as quaint, a notably benign response when compared to the attacks on women who chose Bloomers or other clothing "reforms."⁵²

In a nation that values highly, at least rhetorically, independence, liberty, and self-sufficiency it is difficult to accept the domination of a leader over his followers' economic, ideological, political, and social lives as a positive norm. For outsiders, and many members, the very fact that George Rapp had ultimate decision-making power for all aspects of life within Harmony Society meant that he was a tyrant.⁵³ We know less about women in Harmony Society as there are few personal accounts or official records of women breaking independently with Rapp. Interestingly, in a newspaper article responding to statements by Frederick Rapp, three men who were critical of Rapp also dismissed the women in Harmony Society by asserting, "Both Rapps were especially fortunate in making their plan effective through the second sex, where the weak side of women was very actively influenced by the leading heads for their personal advantage, either by threats of endless damnation or by heavenly bliss without limits."⁵⁴ Apparently

⁵² Kenyon Cox, Letter to His Mother, Leetsdale, NY, June 29, 1885. Old Economy Village, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harmony Society Collection.

⁵³ Philipp Passavant, "Letter to Detmar Basse," May 11, 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Arndt, Karl (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 779; W.A. Schulze, "Letter to Frederick Rapp," August 28, 1832, , reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Arndt, Karl (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 807; Arndt, "Three Hungarian," 198.

⁵⁴ Lorenz Scheel, Michael Feucht, and Jacob Schreiber, "Further Reply to Frederick Rapp" *Vaterlandsfreund*, No. 50, March 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Arndt, Karl (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 738.

they believed that women (more so than supposedly stronger, wiser men) fell prey to Rapp's theology and were therefore willing to cede their property and liberty. There were women among the large group who departed Harmony Society with Count de Leon in 1836 and records mentioned a few as defectors who left with Harmonist men to marry.⁵⁵

Rapp did not promise equality for women within Harmony Society in the same way that many other communal societies did in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ Rapp declared that there would be equality in the Kingdom of God, and women did have equal status for purposes of contributing labor and assets and as members collecting benefits of housing, clothing, food etc. That is, Harmonists valued women's labor, such as in the textile factories, equally with men's labor. Outsiders do describe Rapp treating women with respect.⁵⁷ Rapp discouraged marriage and pregnancy because they would draw women away from necessary economic work to unproductive childcare. Generally, women and men worked in separate spheres, with women taking responsibility for caring for the elderly, young and ill, working in the production of silk and other textiles, and clothing, general field labor, or as cleaning staff in the Harmonist hotel; while men worked as carpenters, masons, heavy manual laborers, distillers, shoemakers etc. or in

⁵⁵ Eileen Aiken English, *Demographic Directory of the Harmony Society* (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2011), 219-227.

⁵⁶ For example, at Berlin Heights, a mid-nineteenth century community near Cleveland, and at Modern Times, members promoted equal legal and economic rights for women including if they chose to enter a marriage or similar arrangement.

⁵⁷ Friedrich List, "Travel Notes from the Year 1825," trans. Gertha Reinert.

positions of authority such as teacher, lawyer, banker or doctor.⁵⁸ There is no indication of what the response would be if women or men asked to work in nontraditional areas.

Rapp's granddaughter, Gertrude Rapp, stands out as a woman given exceptional opportunities educationally and in terms of career, as Rapp put her in charge of the silk industry including dealing with outsiders in this business.⁵⁹ She is the only woman shown in the records as a supervisor except Rapp's purported mistress, Hildegarde Mutschler, who acted as garden and greenhouse inspector, and Susanna Duss at the very end of Harmony Society; although four women served at some point on the Board of Elders.⁶⁰ Gertrude was one of the most vehement defenders of the Harmonist lifestyle, earning her the epithet of fanatic from historian Karl Arndt.⁶¹ In a response to her former teacher Christopher Müller, Gertrude Rapp showed her bitterness at being criticized and condemns him to Hell because he does not accept the teachings of her grandfather.⁶²

⁵⁸ John Melish, *Travels in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: published for the author, 1812), 325; English, *Demographic Directory*, 229-250; Jonas Heinrich Gudehus, "Journey to America," transl. Larry Neff in *Publications of the Pennsylvania German Society*, Vol. 14 (Breinigsville, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1980), 285.

⁵⁹ Sandor Farkas, *Utazás Eszak Amerikában*, transl. John A. Lukacs, October 4, 1831, , reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 623; Featherstonbaugh, *Canoe Voyage*, 81-82, 84.

⁶⁰ English, *Demographic Directory*, 229-250. Mutschler enjoyed special privileges including Rapp permitting her to return after she ran away with Conrad Feucht, to marry Feucht, and bear children. (Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 426-429.) By the time Duss became an Elder, trustee, and supervisor Harmony Society had dwindled to a handful of members.

⁶¹ Arndt, *Economy*, 818.

⁶² Gertrude Rapp, "Letter to Dr. Christopher Müller, June 5, 1832, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, edited by Karl Arndt, 787. Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984, 787.

Gertrude Rapp represented an exception to the Harmonist norm that expected women to be modest, diligent and subservient to men.

Women in Harmonist homes were responsible for housework on top of their factory or other day jobs, so they did not escape the double day plight of their working woman counterparts on the outside. Although men were generally the heads of Harmonist households, in some cases if the husband died and the male children were young, the widow could become head. This added responsibility and power did not exempt her from housework, however. Mainstream society expected women in the antebellum period to conform to the ideal of the Republican mother, that is, they were responsible for maintaining Republican values of good citizenship within the home, both as a moral influence on their husbands and as the educator of young citizens. As a new nation, the United States put this expectation on women in the hopes that they would mold a society according to values of Christianity, hard work, honesty, democracy and civic duty.⁶³ After the Second Great Awakening women began to push this role out into the public sphere as they used their legitimacy as moral paragons to engage in reform

⁶³ Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 104; Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976): 202; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, NC; University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 10-12; Lorna Duffin, "The Conspicuous Consumptive: Woman as an Invalid," in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, eds. Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 31; Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 247; Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2,7; Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Attitudes Towards Sex in Antebellum America: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2006), 4.

projects.⁶⁴ Although women in Harmony Society rarely engaged with the outside world they did interact with everyone in their community including men in the workplace, in worship and in their homes. Harmonists expected women to contribute to the necessary labor of the community, to promote Harmonist values, but with an equal voice to their male peers in community decisions and an equal standing before God. In practical expressions of this belief, although Gertrude Rapp had some influence in the business sphere with her leadership of the silk industry, the Harmonist leaders permitted few women to serve on the council of leaders.⁶⁵ The Harmonist ideal of equality for all as members of the elect preceded much of the movement in this direction during the Second Great Awakening by almost two decades. Although the Harmonists fell short in terms of real equality for women, Rapp did promote a sense of equality for women. All members were equal before God and carried the responsibility of perfecting themselves for the Second Coming.

This narrow concept of femininity proved largely acceptable to Harmonist women. They seldom challenged Rapp or left the community because of this.⁶⁶ Granted,

⁶⁴ Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822-1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 223; Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis, 1944), 424; Ginzberg, *Women*, 9; Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges Within the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000), 35; Michael Bennett, *Democratic Discourses: The Radical Abolition Movement and Antebellum American Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 14.

⁶⁵ Arndt, *Economy*, 197.

⁶⁶ The author could find no records of Rapp censuring women for their behavior or them challenging him. Women did leave Harmony Society but typically as part of a larger group or with a man they wanted to marry rather than individually as a rejection of Rapp's standards for women.

for women, at least in the antebellum period, Harmony Society offered a comfortable and secure home with marginally more equality than in the outside world. Although they were subject to Rapp's edicts, just as the men in the community, the restrictions on their behavior and opportunities were no more oppressive than those in mainstream society. In the post-bellum period Harmonist women did not have to fear the future without a man to support them unlike many of their counterparts in the greater world. Harmonist women worked, but their labor was balanced with considerable free time for study and worship, and enjoying hobbies such as gardening.⁶⁷ Because of Harmony Society's communal nature, women did not have to fear poverty, or loneliness, and they were assured care in sickness and old age. The Articles of Association of the community included the provision,

George Rapp and his Society promise to supply the subscribers jointly and severally with all the necessities of life, as lodging, meat, drink and clothing, etc., and not only during their healthful days, but also when one or several of them should become sick or otherwise unfit for labor, they shall have and enjoy the same care and maintenance as before; and if, after a short or long period, the father or mother of a family should die, or otherwise be separated from the community and leave a family behind, none of those left behind shall be widows or orphans, but receive and enjoy the same rights and care as long as they live or remain in the congregation, as well as sick or healthful days, the same as before, or as their circumstances or needs may require.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Christiana F. Knoedler (raised in Economy, post-Harmonists) *The Harmony Society: A 19th Century American Utopia* (New York: Vantage, 1954), 93, 126-128; Hilda Kring, *The Harmonists: A Folk-Cultural Approach* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1973), 134, 143, 153, 156, 163.

⁶⁸ Harmony Society, Articles of Association, February, 15, 1805, reprinted in Kring, *The Harmonists*, 25.

While mainstream middle-class women chose to bear fewer children in the nineteenth century than they had in previous periods, celibacy offered women total freedom from the health risks and burden of raising a large family. The security and isolation of Harmony Society proved attractive to many women during the war, and immediately after, offering a haven for widows and orphans in an unsettled time.

Modern Times

Unlike George Rapp, Josiah Warren rejected coercion as a tool of conformity at Modern Times. This openness to a broad range of unconventional ideas and practices led to conflict within the community. Firstly, it is important to distinguish that it was not the beliefs *per se* that infuriated Warren but rather the presumption of those that held to them that everyone at Modern Times should comply. In 1854, Mary Gove Nichols and her husband Thomas Low Nichols came to Modern Times hoping to build a Hydrotherapy Institute to train young women in the practice. Their previous institute in Port Chester, NY had failed after scandal over the Nicholises' ideology on free love.⁶⁹ There were plenty of other members of Modern Times who subscribed to free love as a criticism of limitations on women's rights within marriage and of the state and church's authority to control marriage and divorce.

Free love in the nineteenth century ranged from this feminist stance to anti-statism to polyamory, but traditionalist critics conflated the reformist stance with

⁶⁹ "Letter from a 'Villager'," *New York Tribune* (July 21, 1853).

immorality and an assault on the family. For example, John Ellis in his screed against free love and communalism asserted that Modern Times had "discarded both law and religion" and that "very few couples at Modern Times could boast legal sanction to their marriage." Certainly, there were no bylaws or creed that members were required to adhere to and there were no restrictions on the right to follow one's conscience in whatever direction members found most valid. Every member took responsibility for their own behavior and wellbeing. Further Ellis claimed that men at Modern Times regularly discarded their aging wives for younger women and that infidelity and polyamory ran rampant; however, there is no evidence to support this.⁷⁰

So, why did the arrival of the Nichols inflame public opinion on this topic? Warren's partner Stephen Pearl Andrews took up the cause of free love publicly. He participated in a debate series against Horace Greeley and Henry James Sr. on marriage and divorce published in Greeley's paper the *New York Tribune* from November 1852 to February 1853.⁷¹ It began as a response to commentary on the recently published free love tract, *Love vs Marriage*, by Gove associate Marx Edgeworth Lazarus. Interestingly, all three debaters had taken part in the Fourierist movement. Greeley adhered to the Brisbane school of Fourierism that ignored Fourier's more radical work on love and

⁷⁰ Ellis, John. *Free Love and Its Votaries: Or, American Socialism Unmasked. Being an Historical and Descriptive Account of the Various Free Love Associations in the United States and of the Effects of Their Vicious Teachings upon American Society*. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1870, 389-391.

⁷¹ Horace Greeley, Henry James and Stephen Pearl Andrews, "Debates on Love, Marriage and Divorce," reprinted in *Free Love in America, a Documentary History*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 92-114.

marriage. James anonymously translated and published *Love in the Phalanstery*, a Fourierist work by Victor A. Hennequin on passional attraction, inflaming debate on the questions of gender relations.⁷² Andrews took advantage of this opportunity to portray, or in his mind expose, the supposedly progressive Greeley as a reactionary and to promulgate his own ideas, influenced by the Nicholsons, on free love. Andrews published the debate, a series of letters, in his 1853 book *Love, Marriage, and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the Individual*.⁷³

Greeley represented the conservative position of marriage being an inviolable eternal sanctified union between one man and one woman.⁷⁴ Further, and more damaging for *Modern Times*, he characterized the free love position as hedonism driven by animal lusts, that is immorality, and conflated it with Mormon polygamy.⁷⁵ Interestingly, Greeley purchased land at *Modern Times* although he never took up residence there. Likely the purchase reflected his support for the ideal village movement and Warren's ideal of homes for the homeless.⁷⁶ James's response was more moderate,

⁷² Joanne E. Passet, "Grassroots Feminists: Women, Free Love, and the Power of Print in the United States, 1853-1910," PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999, 24.

⁷³ Stephen Pearl Andrews, *Love, Marriage, and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the Individual: A Discussion between Henry James, Horace Greeley and Stephen Pearl Andrews, and a Hitherto Unpublished Manuscript--Love, Marriage and the Condition of Woman* (New York: Fowlers & Wells, Publishers, 1853).

⁷⁴ Horace Greeley, in *Free Love in America, a Documentary History*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 104.

⁷⁵ Greeley, in *Free Love*, 103.

⁷⁶ Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 30.

allowing that the existing laws on marriage and divorce created problems for women's sovereignty.⁷⁷ He argued that women should have full legal and economic sovereignty within marriage and have the right to divorce incompatible husbands without losing their children, their reputation or the guarantee of economic support for their offspring. Andrews, however, argued similarly to Lazarus against marriage as an institution promoting instead that unions should be entirely subject to the consent and desire of the individuals involved, lasting only as long as the partners wanted it to. He further argued against marriage for economic reasons, that people, both male and female, should be free to choose a partner for love not financial need.⁷⁸

Scholar Lisa Higgins added another possible reason for the response to free love at Modern Times in her discussion of anti-suffrage rhetoric. Higgins described the association of the adulterous Wild Woman with suffrage, the idea being that enfranchising women sexualized them and offered them independence that would destroy the institutions of marriage and the family.⁷⁹ Modern Times existed in the midst of the debate over woman suffrage and the free love argument bolstered the fears of traditionalists that their practices undermined mainstream social structures, threatening instability and chaos. Worse yet, Warren's economic theories, although not strictly speaking socialist, challenged capitalism, putting him into the same radical sphere as

⁷⁷ James in *Free Love*, 93.

⁷⁸ Andrews in *Free Love in America*, 110.

⁷⁹ Lisa Cochran Higgins, "Adulterous Individualism, Socialism and Free Love in Nineteenth Century Anti-Suffrage Writing, *Legacy*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2004), 194.

Marx or Fourier. The media similarly portrayed Socialists, like suffragists, as leading women astray by offering them more independence from their husbands which, according to the rhetoric, would inevitably lead to immorality.⁸⁰

The situation at Modern Times was far from the hedonistic chaos of partner-swapping suggested by critics like Greeley and Adin Ballou of Hopedale. In fact, only two women bore children out of wedlock, and although numerous members engaged in relationships unsanctified by church or state, these were generally long-term monogamous partnerships.⁸¹ Josiah Warren, for all his frustration with the free love label, likely lived with a woman, Jane Cran, not his wife throughout his time in the community.⁸² Modern Times presented a typical example of mid-nineteenth century free love in that while radical by mainstream standards, members were more interested in sending an ideological message of empowerment for women and in living their lives according to their personal inclinations not state or religious constraints. While some in the free love community did pursue polygamous relationships or made frequent changes in their partners, this was not the norm. Ballou presents a complicated picture of the criticism of Modern Times in that his Hopedale community promulgated anti-statism yet contradictorily required members to submit to Ballou's authority. In this sense it was not

⁸⁰ Higgins, 200.

⁸¹ Charles Codman, "A Brief History of 'The City of Modern Times' Long Island, N.Y.--And a Glorification of Some of Its Saints," (Brentwood, NY, ca. 1905.) Transcribed to typed copy from pencil script by Suffolk County Historical Society, 11.

⁸² Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 34.

anarchist, but simply substituted one state for another. Ballou forced out two members of Hopedale, Henry Fish and "Sister" Seaver, because of their extramarital relationship. They sought refuge at Modern Times. This acceptance of those he had cast out and the competition Modern Times presented for Hopedale encouraged Ballou to condemn Warren and Modern Times publicly and scathingly.

Certainly not every member of Modern Times accepted the label of free lover. George Stearns left the community to shed the taint and published *Art of Living* to express his views on the topic.⁸³ Josiah Warren similarly published his own response to the criticisms and to a *Nichols' Journal* article by Gove in his 1853 *Positions Defined*. For Warren tolerance and personal responsibility were paramount. If members wanted to practice free love of any sort that was their individual right to freedom of expression, but declaring Modern Times to be a free love community ignored the rights of members to dissent from this and have their views tolerated. Gove and Nichols tried to prescribe the behavior of the community members and that was greatly offensive to Warren. "The greatest characteristic of this movement [Modern Times] is its "INDIVIDUALITY"—that the persons engaged in it are required to act entirely as Individuals—not as a Combination or Organisation That we disclaim entirely, all responsibility for the acts, opinions, or reputations of each other."⁸⁴

⁸³ Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 59.

⁸⁴ Warren, Josiah. *Positions Defined*. Village of Modern Times: Josiah Warren, August, 1853.

Warren objected to marriage as an institution because it entailed state control and limits on individual freedom but he did not want members to feel they could not choose traditional marriage if they so wished. Further he was concerned, oddly, given his anti-state stance, that society should not abolish marriage without a replacement institution in mind. "One of these conclusions is, that with the sudden and total abolition of all marriage customs and habits, without replacing them with some definite, regulating, preserving thought and arrangement, our social condition would be worse, if possible, than it is now."⁸⁵ Warren had committed to the free love stance on women's rights before coming to *Modern Times*. In 1848 in an article entitled "Signs of Returning Reason," he lauded the New York legislature for following the lead of other states in "unmak[ing] the laws heretofore preventing Married Women from the exercise of their right to Individual Property, beyond the control, and free from the liabilities of their husband."⁸⁶

Modern Times also served as something of a haven for those fleeing conventional marriage. Women leaving bad marriages could make a new start free from the stigma of divorce, desertion or single motherhood. Roger Wunderlich noted the difficulty of discerning who was married and to whom at *Modern Times* because many chose not to institutionalize their relationship and even among those who did were many "Lucy Stoners," women who kept their maiden names, a radical choice at the time.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Josiah Warren, "Letter to a Friend," Princeton, MA, July 1873.

⁸⁶ Josiah Warren, "Signs of Returning Reason," *Peaceful Revolutionist*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Utopia, OH, May 1848, 12.

⁸⁷ Lucy Stone was a mid-nineteenth century feminist and suffragist who rejected the practice of married women taking their husbands' names; Wunderlich, *Low Living*, 85.

Women in the community had an equal voice in community decisions and the opportunity to pursue whatever education and work suited them. Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews had promoted women's equality for decades before founding Modern Times. Even when not explicitly writing on that topic, the support was implicit in the inclusive language used in their writing. Like Frances Wright, Warren and Andrews were more concerned with equality than simply suffrage, with creating equal access to education and economic opportunities and within marriage and the family.

It is difficult, however, to determine how many women actually took advantage of these expanded opportunities. The 1860 census data only lists occupations for three women, two teachers and an artist. Other information suggests that at least two other women sold their artwork. Undoubtedly women who married or co-habited with farmers worked in the family business. Similarly, those whose partner was an artisan with a home-based trade may have also worked with him. Certainly, Mary Gove Nichols who had left by 1860, was an active lecturer, educator and practitioner of alternative medicine.⁸⁸ Many chose to crop their hair short and wear the newest feminist fad, Bloomers or rational dress. As with Frances Wright, who also adopted the style, critics pronounced the women at Modern Times and these other communities unfeminine, but the look proved far more economical, practical, and safer than corsets, long skirts and long hair for women working in fields or other manual labor. We should note, while

⁸⁸ Jean Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless: The Visionary Life of Mary Gove Nichols* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 165.

Warren and many outsiders criticized the modern look, some men at *Modern Times* found it quite appealing and understood that the goal was more pragmatic than shocking. Charles Codman wrote "Many of the ladies of this village adopted and wore the costume, thinking it both healthful and convenient, and as it was the custom of the women reformers to wear short hair, the bloomer costume gave a youthful appearance and added to their comeliness."⁸⁹ Women at *Modern Times*, realized their goals for equality in practical terms to a greater degree than many contemporary Utopian communities.

While Warren might not approve of women's behavior, he defended their right to choose for themselves. His biographer William Bailie asserted that "A woman with ungainly form displayed herself in public in men's attire, giving rise to the newspaper comment that 'the women of *Modern Times* dressed in men's clothes and looked hideous." He [Warren] criticized the papers for taking an isolated story about a woman who died of malnutrition after following a fad diet and turning it into the hyperbolic, "the people of *Modern Times* are killing themselves with fanatical ideas about food!"⁹⁰ While Warren resented the attention the unconventional members drew to *Modern Times*, he refused to compromise his anarchist beliefs by instituting bylaws to create uniformity of beliefs and practices. Warren and Andrews continued to write on topics

⁸⁹ Codman, "Modern Times," 15.

⁹⁰ Bailie, *Warren*, 61.

related to individualist anarchy after Modern Times dissolved and gained considerable recognition for their work.

Peoples Temple

Peoples Temple similarly to Harmony Society provided security in a time of upheaval, war and social change. Jim Jones appealed to individuals who felt that the instability of American society in the context of cold war nuclear proliferation and increasing social tensions threatened their personal lives. Peoples Temple included the greatest diversity in terms of gender, age, race, and class of any of the Utopian groups in this study. As discussed in the chapter on race, while the general membership was ethnically and racially inclusive, the hierarchical nature of the community divided members on race and class lines. White women, particularly, held higher standing and trust from Jones because he believed he could control them more easily. Women in Peoples Temple took on roles of greater responsibility than many of their counterparts on the outside, particularly earlier in the 1960s. They dominated the leadership, controlled the finances, and many of the quotidian workings of the community. In many cases these women were the best qualified candidates for their positions, however that was not the determining factor in their promotion.⁹¹

⁹¹ Gang of 8, Letter to Jim Jones, 1973, reprinted in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, edited by Denice Stevenson. Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005, 67; Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look* (New York: Universe Inc., 2010), 34, 45. Kohl's comments reflect either her lack or refusal of reflection more so than awareness in that she implicitly acknowledges the hierarchy and that the promotions were not based in merit, but does not apparently consider why this was so; Jeff Guinn, *The Road to Jonestown* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2017), 228.

The women in power in Peoples Temple were those that Jones had sexual relations with or that he held some other form of dominance over. Jones publicly demeaned his sexual partners for their weakness and dependence. He did not give positions of influence to outspoken and assertive women except for his mistress, Carolyn Layton, but even she submitted to Jones. While women in the outside world struggled against inequality and sexual harassment in the workplace, and within Peoples Temple "Outside of Jim's inner circle, there was no glass ceiling," women on the outside did not have to submit to Jim Jones.⁹²

Many women both complained of and sought attention from Jones, sometimes at the same time. Because the entire community centered on Jim Jones, members, male and female, strove to please him and gain his approval. The consequences of doing so, however, often proved negative. While Peoples Temple officially promoted ideals of equality, the lived experience for many women in the community not only fell far short of its ideals but proved more damaging than outside problems. Jones' inner circle, the Planning Commission, included both men and women who gained power, status, and privileges in Peoples Temple at the expense of long criticism sessions and emotional and sexual abuse from Jones and other Commission members egged on by Jones. Debbie Layton joined other family members in the Temple when she was a teenager, rising to manage Jones' finances before she defected from Guyana. Layton describes Jones

⁹² Kohl, *Survivor*, 34. Kohl recalls that she escaped Jones sexual harassment but was aware of other's plights and the emotional abuse they all faced in Jones' inner circle; Jack Palladino, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 135-136; Guinn, *Road*, 223.

sexually assaulting her on a bus trip, and her shocked realization that Jones' private chamber on the bus was to allow him privacy for sex not for meditation.⁹³ His own wife, Marceline, displayed loyalty to Jones, accepting his rejection of her for a much-younger mistress after much pain, "This has been a very difficult thing for me to live with, and it's caused me a lot of heartache. However, tonight, as I heard him pour out his heart to you, explaining the suffering he goes through when he has to use his body to serve the Cause, I realized that I have been very selfish."⁹⁴ Many women in Peoples Temple, like Marceline, acted as apologists for Jones, arguing that his special position in the community excused his abusive and sometimes criminal behavior.⁹⁵ For others, the realization of Jones' failings led them to leave the community. The majority of the community, outside Jones' inner circle, were less aware of these problems as it did not affect them personally and was covered up.

While Peoples Temple offered an alternative based in equality and racial harmony, they often failed to live up to their utopian goals. White women did have opportunities for leadership and work that often exceeded the limitations in mainstream society, however those that enjoyed those privileges in Peoples Temple also suffered

⁹³ Debbie Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 72-73. Other women made similar claims: Jeannie Mills, *Six Years with God: Life Inside Reverend Jim Jones' Peoples Temple* (New York: A&W Publishers Inc., 1979), 218; Bonnie Thielmann, *The Broken God* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1979), 69.

⁹⁴ Mary McCormick Maaga, *Hearing the Voices of Jonestown* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 79-80; Kenneth Wooden, *The Children of Jonestown* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 43-44; Marceline Jones, Letter to Jim Jones, June 8, 1970, in Stevenson, *Dear People*, 60.

⁹⁵ Thielmann, *Broken God*, 83; Kohl *Survivor*, 45; Layton, *Poison*, 62.

abuse and sexual assault. The community did provide support and care for women (and men) who suffered from the effects of drug addiction, poverty and isolation in ways that were not as accessible for people of color in the mainstream. Patriarchal hierarchies, sexist assumptions about women's independence, and misogynistic uses of power and sex as tools to dominate women persisted in Peoples Temple, preventing them from offering women in reality the equality Jones vaunted rhetorically. Even without considering the tragic outcome of Jonestown it is difficult to credit Peoples Temple with achieving its gender equality goals. Utopianism is grounded in the search for a better way, rather than the actual achievement of it.⁹⁶ Peoples Temple set itself utopian goals to create gender, racial and economic equality in contrast to the failures in these areas they identified in mid-twentieth century American society. Members identified with and committed themselves to these goals.

Diggers

While Jones dominated the expression of gender and sexuality within Peoples Temple, the Diggers took the opposite approach; their guiding principle was Free. As mentioned earlier, Free was a fluid umbrella term that encompassed all aspects of life. The Diggers believed that everyone should live free of expectations and limitations. Reading the memoirs of former Diggers, we can see the tension between rhetoric and lived reality that challenged the Diggers as it did other Utopian groups. The Diggers

⁹⁶ Lyman Tower Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5-7.

proclaimed freedom as their guiding principle, living authentically and free and enabling others to do so as a means to changing society towards equality and harmony. Within the Diggers there is also some contradiction about how well they actually lived free and equal. Even as they rejected what they viewed as the oppressive conformity of mainstream society, the Diggers retained many of the structures they opposed.

Peter Coyote acknowledged that they typically divided labor on traditional gender lines, but that women could work as mechanics, or men perform childcare or cook if they so desired. He admits that while they appreciated female labor they did not value it as equal to male labor.⁹⁷ Women took responsibility for much of the daily labor including cooking, cleaning, gathering food, and participated in artistic endeavors as artists, poets, dancers. In retrospect, Emmett Grogan noted that the Diggers's projects could not have functioned without female labor as the men were unwilling to put in the necessary effort on a quotidian basis.⁹⁸ To a certain extent, as in many communal groups, women brought in welfare checks or child support that helped support their community. Peter Coyote noted that they were subject to regular government inspections to verify that there was no fraud.⁹⁹

Judy Goldhaft challenged judgements that the Diggers were sexist, believing she had support within the community to express herself and be taken seriously, to work

⁹⁷ Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 288.

⁹⁸ Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (New York: Citadel, 1990), 282.

⁹⁹ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 138-9.

towards goals she believed in, and to explore her creative energies.¹⁰⁰ Lenore Kandel argued that some tasks are inherently gendered but that men who were secure in their masculinity would not feel threatened by doing "women's work."¹⁰¹ Goldhaft's view is more Utopian in that it expresses the ideal of people having freedom to make their own choices with support from others in the community. Women or men performing gendered work is not inherently sexist if it is valued and consensual, but it appears the Diggers did not always achieve this goal. Male members acknowledged that even when participating in the same activities there was a gendered distinction, for example, garbage yoga, or the Digger practice of obtaining food and other donations for their projects. Men established a congenial relationship with purveyors to get donations of food, including Grogan drawing on his fluent Italian, while women flirted to achieve the same goal.¹⁰² It is difficult to discern in their descriptions whether the men viewed this as the expected approach or just recognized that it was different.

Coyote and other male Diggers (even well after the 1960s) often provide sexualized and sexist descriptions of women, referring to women more often as objects of desire and conquest than as equal partners in a social project.¹⁰³ Admittedly this is not unusual for the period. Gender was commonly essentialized both in the mainstream and

¹⁰⁰ Judy Goldhaft and Peter Berg, "The Diggers," in John Curl, *History of Collectivity in the San Francisco Bay Area: From Indian Times to the Present* (Berkeley: Homeward Press, 1982), 34.

¹⁰¹ Kandel in Wolf, *Voices*, 34.

¹⁰² Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 246; Simpson, *60s Commune Project*, 5; Coyote, *Sleeping*, 132.

¹⁰³ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 47; Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 235, 264, 281, 284; Gitlin, *Sixties*, 228.

counterculture.¹⁰⁴ Robin Morgan captured the resentments of many New Left women when she proclaimed "Goodbye, goodbye forever, counterfeit Left, counter left, male-dominated cracked-glass mirror reflection of the Amerikan nightmare. Women are the real Left."¹⁰⁵ Responding to comments like Stokely Carmichael's purported joke that the position of women in the Black Power movement was "prone," and catcalls to women speaking at rallies and meetings, feminism burgeoned in the early 1970s.¹⁰⁶ Coyote comments that he did not give sexual politics much thought unless women pointed out their concerns to him. He viewed the women in the Diggers as sexually assertive, unwilling to put up with patriarchy or limits on their sexual expression.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless Coyote proved guilty of sexism and misogyny both as a Digger and personally.¹⁰⁸

The Diggers took a free love approach to sexual relations, both in the sense of equality of consent for both partners with the freedom to begin and end relationships without the permission of church or state, and also in the sense of multi-partner relationships. As historian Timothy Hodgdon has noted, it is difficult to get a balanced feel for how well these arrangements worked as former members are reluctant to share

¹⁰⁴ Megan Garber, "'You've Come a Long Way, Baby': The Lag Between Advertising and Feminism," *The Atlantic*, June 15, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/06/advertising-1970s-womens-movement/395897/>; Chafe, *American Women*, 217.

¹⁰⁵ Robin Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," *Rat*, February 9, 1970, 6-7.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph, *Midnight Hour*, 271; Gitlin, *Sixties*, 263.

¹⁰⁷ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 247.

¹⁰⁸ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 47, 132, 159, 247.

this information.¹⁰⁹ Male memories dominate the available accounts and they often amend them as the men became more aware of how others might view their past today. An exception is poet Lenore Kandel's conversation with Leonard Wolf in which she openly discussed her views on sexuality. Kandel achieved fame in 1966 for an obscenity trial relating to her poem "To Fuck with Love" in her collection, *The Love Book*.¹¹⁰ Male Diggers also described her engaging in public nude dancing at their events. Kandel did not fear expressing her sexuality. She comments on sexual relationships that they should be open and honest and accepting without the "hang-ups" of conventional morality. Kandel encouraged other women to experiment and value their own bodies and sexuality.¹¹¹

Peter Coyote admired the women in the group for what he viewed as their radical act of faith in daring to raise children in that environment.¹¹² Scholar Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo observes that feminist women tended to avoid communal living because of the patriarchal structures and gap between their rhetoric and reality, but carved out liminal spaces in the counterculture for cooperative women-centered projects.¹¹³ The

¹⁰⁹ Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counterculture Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 81.

¹¹⁰ Lenore Kandel, *The Love Book* (San Francisco: Stolen Paper Review, 1966); David Talbot, *Season of the Witch: Enchantment, Terror, and Deliverance in the City of Love* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 24.

¹¹¹ Lenore Kandel, "Interview with Leonard Wolf, undated in *Voices from the Love Generation* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 35-36.

¹¹² Coyote, *Sleeping*, 139.

¹¹³ Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counter-Culture* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009).

Diggers seem to be an exception in that women saw its anarchist structure as offering more space for them to assert themselves.

The Diggers did emphatically act to protect both young men and women from street dangers including rape and sexually transmitted diseases, and unlike some communal groups of the period, there is no indication that Diggers exploited or abused women.¹¹⁴ Women's voices were equal within the Diggers, partly because they used an anarchist organization plan, with consensus and voluntary participation the guiding principles. Poet Lenore Kandel remarked about her time in the Diggers that while she valued her work and the opportunities it provided her for self-expression, she also valued her femininity and would be unwilling to sacrifice one for the other. Kandel viewed femininity as an expression of traditional characteristics of womanhood: nurturing, caregiving, emotional sensitivity.¹¹⁵ In terms of their opportunities to work equally with men, their opportunities for self-expression and their status and power within the community, women fared better in the Diggers than in mainstream society in the late 1960s, when feminism was struggling to carve out positions for women. Race and class shaped women's experiences and opportunities, but even looking at the most privileged white, educated women, inequality remained a limitation on their lives.¹¹⁶ Yet, even so,

¹¹⁴ Chester Anderson, "Uncle Tim's Children," San Francisco: Communication Company, April 16, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society.

¹¹⁵ Kandel in Wolf, *Voices*, 34-35.

¹¹⁶ Wini Breines, *Young, White and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1992), 68-69, 87, 135-136; Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 139, 157-158, 197, 163-165; Susan M. Hartmann, "Women's Employment and the Domestic Ideal in the Early Cold War Years," in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 85-86; Wini Breines, "The 'Other' Fifties: Beats and Bad Girls," in *Not*

women in the Diggers faced objectification and sexist assumptions about their capabilities that persisted in the Diggers just as in the outer world they had rejected.

Kerista

Kerista, similarly to Modern Times, Nashoba and the Diggers faced criticism for their radical rejection of traditional gender standards. Kerista embraced free love, in the form of polyfidelity, as a group ethic. Early member Even Eve describes her decision to join Kerista. Eve had just recently completed high school and after a brief stay in a Vermont commune came to San Francisco to break free of the monogamous marriage and domestic life she saw as her dictated future. She described herself, looking back about fifteen years later,

When I first embarked on the polyfidelity path, I was driven by the ideal of a communal life where all are equal, all things shared, and love liberated from the shackles of straight-laced convention. It was a beautiful vision; it gave me a cause to live for. Conveniently (and not entirely coincidentally), it also fit well with the efforts of a young adult to differentiate herself in the world, and the political perspectives of the era. I had little prior experience in the real world of love and relating from which to understand or form my own private preferences.¹¹⁷

June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 387, 396-397.

¹¹⁷ Eve Furchgott, untitled article on becoming monogamous, *Loving More*, 1996 or 1997, reprinted on Kerista Community website, December 8, 2004, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/eve0.html>. [I have not been able to find archival records for this magazine, only the current online issues. *Loving More* is a magazine promoting and supporting polyamorous relationships.]

Many were very young when they joined, including Eve, Way, Ora, and Jeb, but nonetheless corresponded with Kerista for years before joining,¹¹⁸ or had previous communal experience.¹¹⁹ Women in general, seem to have been attracted by the vaunted ideals of equality, a nontraditional lifestyle that would not limit them to a domestic role, as well as the opportunity for sexual experimentation in a safe environment.¹²⁰

Kerista started very small with a handful of members, Jud, Eve, Jebby (female), Qes (female), and Keg (unknown gender).¹²¹ Eve's high school friend, Bluejay Way (female) replaced Qes when she left after a few months. This initial group formed the first polyfidelity group,¹²² later known as Purple Submarine. One of the key structures that marked Kerista as different from other free love communities at the time was the B-

¹¹⁸ Ora Joy, "Ora says Hi and SHE started Abacus Housecleaning!" Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/ora0.html>; Nea Wave, "Nea Wave says Hi!" Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018 <http://www.kerista.com/speak/nea0.html>.

¹¹⁹ Jeb, "Jebby says Hi! and She joined before Keg! Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/jeb0.html>.

¹²⁰ Even Eve, "Even Eve says Hi and writes about her conversion to monogamy!" [*Loving More* apparently published this article in 1995 or 96] Kerista Commune website, December 8, 2004, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/eve0.html>; Delv. "One usec (Utopian second?) on the Sleeping Schedule." Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/delv0.html>; Diana Young, *60s Commune Project*, 16.

¹²¹ Keristans adopted a new name when they joined, often a 3-letter acronym eg. Kap stood for Knowledge Augments Power, and Ora for Optimism Relishes Amiability.

¹²² To discuss Kerista entails learning a new Keristan vocabulary. Kerista developed its own language to describe what they believed was a new and different way of living. Some key terms include: polyfidelity, compersion, Gestalt-o-rama and B-FIC (bee-fick). These and other uniquely Keristan words will be defined as they arise in the discussion. Polyfidelity is the Keristan term for their tightly controlled polyamory. "The erotic preference and family style of Keristans, which includes multiple relationships within a fidelitous family cluster, the use of a balanced rotational sleeping schedule, nonpreferentiality among partners, and a current intention of lifetime involvement. The word was coined after earlier phrases (non-promiscuous polygamy, wholesome non-monogamy) proved too clumsy and imprecise." (Even Eve, "Glossary #2.)

FIC,¹²³ and its highly controlled polyfidelity. Probably the closest parallel to Kerista in terms of its rigid rules over sexual relationships was Oneida, a group that Kerista looked back to as a model.¹²⁴ Jud Presmont, like John Humphrey Noyes at Oneida, imposed strict rules on his community. Like Noyes, Presmont was much older than most of his followers and exerted a charismatic influence over their lives. Cynics and disenchanted members have suggested that both men used these structures to their own advantage and to prioritize their own sexual needs over that of the rest of the community.¹²⁵ Members belonged to a B-FIC as the base unit of organization within the larger Kerista community. Joining a B-FIC required the consensus of existing members; more assertive people in a B-FIC sometimes pressured others into accepting newcomers that they did not feel attracted to.¹²⁶ One of the eventual causes of the breakup of Kerista proved to

¹²³ B-FIC: Short for 'Best Friend Identity Cluster', the formal name of a Keristan family. A B-FIC (pronounced 'bee-fick') starts with a group originator and grows to a maximum of 36 adults. Each member joins the group with a current intention of lifetime involvement and a nonpreferential feeling of deep affection for all other members." B-FICs were not just a communal group but the basis for polyfidelity. (Even Eve, "Glossary #1)

¹²⁴ The nineteenth century Oneida community practiced complex marriage in which all members were "married" to each other. Noyes did not permit romantic or monogamous relationships, and he regulated both sex and procreation of the community; "Why is SEX a Tool of the New Grassroots Political Ideology?" undated publication [penciled date April 1985], 1, Kerista KISS Books, Box 1, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

¹²⁵ Randy B., "Randy B speaks about Bro Jud and Kerista's legacy," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/rjb1.html>.

¹²⁶ Nu Luv, "The Dark Side of Community: Hidden Limits to Lasting Groups," Kerista Commune website, 2015, accessed August 15, 2018. <http://www.kerista.com/shadowKerista-NuLuv.html>; Even Eve, "Afterword: What Happened to Kerista?" *Communities Journal* No. 80/81 (Spring/Summer 1993), accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/what.html>.

be Jud's unwillingness to allow new men into Purple Submarine.¹²⁷ While they tried to balance genders within the B-FICs, in reality, women usually outnumbered men.

As a result, women spent more nights alone, which may or may not have worked to their advantage. To assume that women in Kerista enjoyed having nights to themselves without an assigned partner, accepts the stereotype that women are less sexually interested than men. Some of the men in Kerista suggest that women and men, *en masse*, have different sexual and emotional needs, an essentialist understanding that denies individual differences.¹²⁸ Outsiders by contrast, tended to view the women of Kerista, more so than the men, as sexual deviants whose promiscuity was unnatural and immoral.¹²⁹ During an appearance by eight members of Kerista on the Phil Donahue show in 1980 the host asked "Why isn't this immoral?" to which member Ram replied that Kerista's B-FIC's were grounded in fidelity to other members of the family group. Members commit to the group rather than an individual; the arrangement is not promiscuous but based in love and respect. He contrasted polyfidelity to the burgeoning divorce rates among monogamous couples at the time.¹³⁰ The idea that men and women

¹²⁷ Michael Cummings, "Tale of Two Communes: A Scholar and His Errors," Fellowship for Intentional Community, 1996, accessed August 15, 2018 <https://www.ic.org/wiki/tale-two-communes-scholar-errors>.

¹²⁸ Kipseeks, "My Long Slow Road to Monogamy," Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/kip0.html>, accessed August 15, 2018.

¹²⁹ Sylvan Porter, "The Kerista Cult or Sex on the Half-Baked Shell," *Man to Man*, January 1967, 39.

¹³⁰ "On Beyond Jealousy: Keristans on the Donahue Show," July 1, 1980, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/donahue.html>.

are individuals with individually differing needs and desires that change over time did not seem to occur to any of them. Contrastingly, women in Kerista argued that they had more control over their bodies and their sexuality, and more freedom and safety to explore them within Kerista.¹³¹

Like the free love movement in the nineteenth century, Kerista argued for women to have sovereignty over their bodies and equality within their relationships. Polyfidelity pushed beyond the bounds of what most early free lovers would have considered acceptable relationships by institutionalizing multiple concurrent partners. However, Kerista retained the concept of relationships unsanctified by church or state, based on mutual attraction and lasting until the partners wished it dissolved. Like nineteenth century free lovers, Keristans committed to their partners; they did not consider themselves promiscuous but rather bound to their B-FIC. Outsiders in both centuries objected to the challenges these groups provided to traditional structures of monogamous, eternal marriages, patriarchal control of finances and property, and women confined to the domestic sphere.

Keristans believed polyfidelity superior to historical forms of multi-partner relationships because it was based in women's liberation, rebalancing the old formulas to give women parity and removing the moral assumptions that prevented women from

¹³¹ "On Beyond Jealousy."

expressing their sexuality freely.¹³² Some former members, including Even Eve, have since reconsidered this position. Eve wrote articles about her personal disenchantment with polyfidelity and move towards monogamy, but still argued that in theory polyfidelity provides positive benefits.¹³³ Over her twenty years in Kerista, Eve had a child with one man in Kerista, then later left to marry another. Eve made the critical observation that even if many people are better suited to having multiple partners, the only way to avoid romantic preferences that lead to jealousy is by totally avoiding emotional connection with partners. While she found that the rigid structure provided by Kerista made this easier than more spontaneous arrangements outside the group, she acknowledged that even within the B-FICs members experienced jealousy. It seems unsurprising to learn that even when told not to develop personal relationships at an individual level that human nature led Keristans astray. Eve seems to acknowledge this naïveté when she asserts that, "I don't expect that I or my partner will never again feel attracted to others, but I understand that there's a lot more to sleeping with someone else than just the 'sleeping.'"¹³⁴

¹³² Even Eve. "Social Contract of the Gestalt-O-Rama Do-It-With-Friends Mental Health System." *Polyfidelity: Sex in the Kerista Commune and Other Related Theories in How to Solve the World's Problems*. San Francisco: Performing Arts Social Society, Inc. [a Kerista organization], 1984.

¹³³ Even Eve, "Even Eve says Hi!"

¹³⁴ Even Eve, "Even Eve says Hi."

Women could not have children for their first five years in the community and after that only one child per woman was permitted.¹³⁵ This could be seen as a logical extension of Jud's sexist attitude in the old tribe, "Most of the Keristan men detest condoms...so it's up to the girls to protect themselves. They use the usual things, diaphragms and coils and pills."¹³⁶ For a group that claimed to value and prioritize equality the sexist expectation that birth control was a woman's responsibility reflected a failure to live up to their ideals.

Kip intimated that Jud's adamantly heteronormative attitudes limited the inclusion of LGBTQIA members within the B-FICs. In response to a question about whether Kerista actively included or recruited from the LGBTQIA community, former member Kip acknowledges that while Kerista was surrounded by the LGBTQIA community in San Francisco, and had friends in the community, the acceptance of LGBTQIA members proved more challenging. Kip contends that Kerista struggled with the concept of bisexuality because fundamentally they believed that "bi's [sic] were indecisive." Like many people in the 1980s, they viewed sexuality as a choice rather than as an orientation, that bisexuals were confused about who they were attracted to. Geo (female) came out as bisexual while active in Kerista. Kip notes that while they eventually accepted Geo's sexuality, it took time and Geo's patience in staying and

¹³⁵ Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract of Kerista Village," *Kerista Village Handbook*, February 1979, reprinted on Kerista Commune website, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>.

¹³⁶ Robert Anton Wilson, "The Religion of Kerista and Its 69 Positions," *Fact*, July/August 1965, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://kerista.com/nkerdocs/raw.html>.

working to gain acceptance.¹³⁷ It may be that Geo's gender made it easier for Keristans to accept her as bisexual. Kip further argued that Kerista's members focused on their Utopian program and "weren't very experimental in their thinking, more black and white."¹³⁸ Kerista's Utopian ideals and the practices they adopted pushed considerably beyond mainstream boundaries and their scientific Utopian approach was grounded in experimentation and adaption so this claim rings hollow as an excuse for unwillingness of Keristans to match their practices with their ideals.

In practice, visitors noted that women in Kerista waited on Jud, that he enjoyed different treatment from the bulk of the membership. Women further looked after the cleanliness of the home not because they believed it was their duty as women to do so but because the men refused to take responsibility for cleaning up after themselves and the women could not stand to live with the consequences. Outsiders commented on the filthy conditions in Kerista.¹³⁹ Even Eve's essay on the breakup of Kerista expresses her frustration with this lack of personal responsibility as a factor of the group's demise.¹⁴⁰ Similarly, women in Kerista, although outsiders may have sexualized them because of their lifestyle, presented a more businesslike image in the community. While Digger women might dance naked or barely clothed to attract attention to their projects and

¹³⁷ Kip, Email to Cheryl Coulthard, August 19, 2018.

¹³⁸ Kip, Email.

¹³⁹ Pamela Des Barres, *I'm With the Band: Confessions of a Groupie* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005), 45; Cummings, "Tale of Two Communes."

¹⁴⁰ Even Eve. "Afterword," 33.

scandalize straight onlookers, Kerista women offered ideas. They ran the multi-million-dollar Abacus computer business. They were responsible for creating the publications that brought Jud's rambling philosophy into sharper focus and more palatable form, yet in many cases they subsumed their work under Jud's name perhaps because as prophet he lent authority to their work.¹⁴¹ Other work is unsigned, simply a production of Kerista Commune reflecting the cooperative attitude of the group although members' comments suggest that the women in the community created the bulk of their publications.

Outsiders did not necessarily respect the freedom of Keristan women. They sent numerous letters that Kerista deemed so offensive or lacking seriousness that they created an entire file of them labeled psychos or nut letters. Some of the letters are profane and threaten violence to members; one even referenced Peoples Temple threatening "If you thought Jonestown was bad wait til you see Kerista," adding a postscript, "We will destroy Kerista!"¹⁴² These letters attack men in Kerista more than women; they appear to be an attempt to "save" the women from Kerista. This reflects an uneven understanding of freedom of choice and sexuality. Particularly they indicate that the writers blame the men in Kerista for their sexual and emotional control of women.

¹⁴¹ History of the Kerista Commune, "Kerista Village Handbook," February 1979, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/herstory.html>; Kerista Commune, "Design and Development of a Democratically-Run, All Volunteer Civilian Branch of Service," booklet, undated, Kerista Publications, CS349-2-5, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Kerista Commune, "Culture Sculpture," course flyer, Kerista Publications, CS349-2-5, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

¹⁴² "Psycho letters," [numerous undated, unsigned documents] Psycho Letters folder, CS349-2-13, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection. Reading these letters, it appears based on the handwriting and unusual ink color that likely that many of them come from the same source.

There are numerous possible sources including disgruntled former members or individuals refused entry to Kerista, radical feminists objecting to the treatment of women in Kerista, or outsiders that condemned polyfidelity as immoral and saw women as victims rather than active participants. Then again, they could, as the Keristans' response to them indicate, be the work of mentally disturbed individuals. That many of the threats are written in verse adds a particularly macabre note to them.

Internally, Jud's increasingly controlling and abusive behavior became the impetus for dissolving Kerista. "Many Keristans say in retrospect that they should have noticed the telltale signs: Jud forced members to agree to his principles without question, and nonconforming members were gestalted into submission. Although it was supposed to be a vehicle for self-discovery, the Gestalt-o-rama evolved into a way for Jud to abuse people who disobeyed or displeased him." ¹⁴³ Other members, like Bluejay Way tried to excuse Jud's behavior, arguing that while there were behaviors that were cultish, they were not "glaring" while also acknowledging that Jud would treat members badly then make them feel it was their fault.¹⁴⁴ This reads like textbook emotional abuse. Journalist

¹⁴³ Gestalt-o-rama: "The ongoing, egalitarian,[sic] non-commercial[sic] personal growth and interpersonal communications process used at all times by Keristans. Gestalt-o-rama is based upon principles like rationality, verbal expression, honesty, commitment to growth and change, and the desire of all participants to develop deep friendships with each other. The G-O-R social contract contains 101 standards. In addition [sic] to its mainstay of lots of conversation, the process uses 139 personal growth techniques." (Even Eve, "Glossary #1) Gestalt-o-rama served as the method for mutual criticism sessions for Kerista. Annalee Newitz, "Test-tube Love: Kerista's Ambiguous Utopia," *Other*, Issue 7, June 2005, accessed August 17, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/testtube.php>; Larry Hamelin, "And To No More Settle For Less Than Purity: Reflections on the Kerista Commune," *Praxis: Politics in Action* Vol. 1, Issue 1 (August, 2013): 64.

¹⁴⁴ Newitz, "Test-tube."

Annalee Keritz described Kerista as a dysfunctional family writ large, not a cult but definitely a family with emotional problems.¹⁴⁵

Looking back, Eve argues that personal responsibility and commitment are essential to a successful group relationship, whether sexual or just communal. She sees this as another factor in the breakup both of Kerista, and her post-Kerista group. She now views controlling leadership as dangerous. Authoritarian religious leadership acted as a stabilizing force in Harmony Society and to a point in Peoples Temple. In Kerista, similar forces were in play, Jud and his singular vision drew members to Kerista and helped them maintain their commitment until they became disillusioned with his bullying and hypocrisy. Kerista pushed the boundaries of societal norms to test their belief that polyfidelity would better serve the needs of individuals for companionship and sexual satisfaction without jealousy, that communalism would allow them to balance creative expression with capitalist participation as a means of economic support and that mutual criticism provided a means to resolve interpersonal conflict and grow as an individual. While their experiments did not always provide the anticipated results, members mostly view their time in Kerista with fond nostalgia as a Utopian adventure.

The Diggers and Kerista addressed the limitations of monogamy and the moral double standards attached to women's sexuality by encouraging all members to explore their sexuality and to base their relationships on mutual consent and attraction rather than limiting them to institutionalized marriage. In this they echoed their predecessors at

¹⁴⁵ Newitz, "Test-tube."

Modern Times and Nashoba. Peoples Temple, like Harmony Society encouraged celibacy as a tool to channel energies into their Utopian project. Jones did not feel the need to justify his rules Scripturally, unlike Rapp, instead trusting in his dominance to ensure compliance. Women did not necessarily have more sexual freedom within these communities in the sense that each community, much like the outside world, promoted its own standards. For those who accepted the standards willingly, the alternatives to mainstream sexuality could prove liberating whether as the freedom to abstain from sex and marriage, or to explore their sexual proclivities without the limitations or monogamy.

All of these communities except Kerista struggled to provide real equality for women in terms of opportunity and work choices. Like the Keristans, women in the outside world could also work in careers in publishing, or computers, however in the 1970s and 80s they had limited opportunities in these fields. Kerista offered women the opportunity to lead and innovate in their workplace and provided the support of community childcare for those with kids. The community also, through its shared income program, financially supported members in less lucrative careers including artists. Women in Harmony Society and Peoples Temple may have had the freedom from worry about their economic security and the opportunity to work in a variety of jobs without concerns over childcare however their career path was chosen for them by their leader according to the needs of the community not the individual.

The connections both laterally and longitudinally of Utopian threads are visible in the sharing of ideas and consideration of past projects by these communities. Although we have yet to achieve gender equality in America, many of the experiments attempted in late twentieth century Utopian communities have seeped into the mainstream and shaped social and institutional changes. In the twenty-first century women still campaign against misogyny and sexism, LGBTQ communities against homophobia and discrimination, and men reject toxic patriarchal standards and expectations, but society increasingly accepts their critiques and calls to action. Issues of gender and sexuality continue to resonate in American society, and Utopian communalism offers opportunities to consider alternative approaches.

All three of the nineteenth century communities continued to stretch their Utopian threads into the future, long after they ceased to exist leaving records of their experiments for later communitarians to build upon. Their sharing of information, members, and resources nurtured the communal movement throughout the nineteenth century. Nashoba, Modern Times, and Harmony Society defended publicly their ideals and practices, arguing their worth as alternatives to mainstream society. Peoples Temple, Kerista and the Diggers similarly promoted their utopian goals using the media to create public awareness of their work. They united to address their concerns with American society, amassing sufficient numbers to conduct their experiments. When necessary they petitioned men in power to further their goals. These communities exhibit Tilly's markers of a social movement, and created challenges to mainstream approaches to gender equality that continued to resonate into the future.

CHAPTER VI

MODERN LOVE

Introduction

Although it does not appear to have been explicitly stated in the goals of most Utopian communities, in seeking to create an alternative to mainstream structures and attitudes communal societies also open a liminal space in which men can reconsider their expressions of masculinity. Gender equality, changes to gender roles and innovative leadership structures all theoretically offer men the opportunity to move beyond mainstream definitions of manhood and appropriate behavior and tasks for men. When the leader of an intentional community is an authoritarian man, however, male members may be denied that opportunity if the leader imposes his own limitations on acceptable masculinity. As in the areas of equality for women and people of color, historically intentional communities struggled to align their lived experiences with their rhetoric of Utopia. Even while declaring their venture an alternative to problematic outside standards on gender, they continued to conform to patriarchal hierarchies and limited understandings of acceptable performances of masculinity. This chapter considers six historical communities, examining the ways in which their male members strove to challenge mainstream standards and, in some cases, faced greater limitations from within the community.

Harmony Society

The structure of Harmony Society offered freedoms to women beyond that of mainstream society in terms of taking off the pressure to find a husband, relief from bearing and caring for numerous children, and not having to worry about social or economic support, however these benefits impacted men somewhat differently. As a Harmonist, men agreed to subordinate themselves to a male leader. They gave up a man's duty to support a wife and children and their ambition to be economically successful with its accompanying status. Further Harmonist men allowed someone else to tell them how to conduct their sexual life and relations with women and children, gave up control over their career trajectory, and believed or at least accepted, what Rapp dictated in terms of values, religious beliefs, and practices. To be a man in Harmony Society, thus meant ceding control over one's life to another man who would make all decisions about all aspects of life. Granted, male Harmonists still had free will; they could choose whether to abide by Society expectations, but in general, they chose compliance. An observation by historian Lorien Foote in regards to the Civil War era, applies also to Harmonist men: while men might define their manhood variously, they shared a desire to have others acknowledge and respect their self-definition.¹

Men defined their manhood somewhat differently depending on their class and ethnicity or race, and also their religion. The Harmonists' definition contradicted

¹ Lorien Foote, *The Gentleman and the Roughs: Manhood, Violence and Honor in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 4.

mainstream concepts of manhood. Society expected men in the nineteenth century to strive economically, to financially support a wife and children (and to marry and have children), to conform to religious expectations in regards to morality.² This was the era of the emerging belief in the self-made man as an American ideal, that men were responsible for learning a trade or profession, working hard and getting ahead financially without the assistance of state or church.³ Gender scholar R. W. Connell notes that particularly after the mid-nineteenth century working-class men adopted this expectation as a tool to force women out of the workplace.⁴ Variations in this expectation occurred across dimensions of race, ethnicity, class, and geographic locale, for example farm families and low-income families relied on the entire family to provide the necessary labor and income for self-sufficiency.

Connell points to another trope of the nineteenth century, the frontiersman, and argues that it represented resistance among men to the feminizing of men by the moral influence of the Republican mother. Although they lived on what was then the frontiers of western Pennsylvania and southern Indiana, and lived a self-sufficient lifestyle, the Harmonist men did not conform to the macho, violent image of Buffalo Bill Cody or Daniel Boone.⁵ As conscientious objectors in the War of 1812 and the Civil War, neither

²E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 19-20.

³ David H.J. Morgan, "Family, Gender, and Masculinities," in *The Masculinities Reader*, eds. Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 226.

⁴ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 29.

⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, 194.

did they conform to martial manhood standards.⁶ Harmony's neighbors portrayed them as less manly and less American, particularly during the War of 1812, for failing to join the local militia to protect their community.⁷

Society expected men to take the lead in their households and their community, to make the rules and enforce them, to care for the weak, to do what was best for those in their care. Communalism directly contradicted this ideal through commitment to the group welfare and working together to achieve social and economic goals. While Harmonist men cared for others in the community and contributed to the wellbeing of society, they did so as communalists not individuals. Rapp had removed for them the impetus for personal ambition and redefined their understanding of success in transcendent terms. They accepted a different definition of manhood and masculinity than that held by the greater society they had rejected. In agreeing to obey the word of Father Rapp, allowing him to make decisions about not only what they believed but how they lived their lives, men in Harmony Society willingly reduced themselves to the status of dependent children. Unlike in mainstream society, Harmonist men were not the

⁶ Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12; Foote, *Gentleman*, 3, 174; Cheryl Coulthard, "Harmony Under Fire: Harmony Society, Pacifism and the American Civil War," presented at the Utopian Studies Society Conference, Tarragona, Spain, July 2018, 11. While Foote argues that Northern men contested definitions of manhood more than Southern men in this period, she acknowledges that they shared an expectation that men owed a patriotic duty to fight for the Union. Certainly, wealthy men bought substitutes, but nonetheless in doing so they addressed the expectation that they would do their duty to society and state. Horowitz also references "sporting men" as a minority alternative to moral manhood, again Harmonist men did not conform to this rejection of mainstream manhood (Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Attitudes Towards Sex in Antebellum America: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2006), 23.)

⁷ Dann Lynn, Letter, January 5, 1818, reprinted in Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 179.

authority in their own household and derived their understanding of what it meant to be a man from a single source, Rapp. Under his aegis, the governing council of Harmony Society determined what jobs men could work at, what they wore, where and with whom they lived, of what their needs for sustenance comprised. In this sense, the men of the community were no different from children, women, or wards of the state. This dependency tightly proscribed how men viewed themselves as men, and how they were permitted to perform masculinity. For most of the men in Harmony Society this proved an acceptable change, suggesting that these men were uncomfortable with contemporary American masculinity and therefore willing to subsume themselves to Rapp's mastery. In the first generation that came from Germany, the Harmonist men may also have been more comfortable with a more authoritarian leadership than was the norm in America. Men did leave Harmony Society over its century-long existence because they rejected celibacy or wanted more control over their professional and personal lives; however, these remained a minority according to the records of the Harmonists and the demographic study of these.⁸ While men in mainstream society did not readily accept subservience, this does not inherently make the communal arrangement harmful or wrong. For the Harmonists, it generally resulted in happiness and material comfort that challenged the self-made man model.

The intrinsic problem with the Harmonist approach, which paralleled that of other communal societies with supreme leadership, was that there was a single ideal for

⁸ Eileen Aiken English, *Demographic Directory of the Harmony Society* (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2011).

masculinity within the community with limited and limiting parameters for diverse expressions of manhood. Rapp, and therefore Harmony Society, defined gender and gender roles on the basis of an essentialist understanding--that is, that men are men because of their physical attributes--rather than a recognition that within that category there exist a myriad of individual differences. To deny this basic fact undermines the individuality of men. The Harmonists expected men to perform their masculinity in certain constrained ways because they were men and that was the only way for men to act. In constructing these parameters for masculinity, Rapp created challenges for men whose self-understanding could not conform.

The Harmonists did not keep diaries or engage in personal letter writing with outsiders, not even family members. For the most part Rapp isolated them from the wicked world, designating only a handful of the hundreds of members to learn English and conduct their business affairs. This lack of documentation makes it difficult to discern the personal opinions and feelings of members. It is necessary to reconstruct this information from more formal records, which ultimately lack the emotion of the personal. However, from court records and discussions of legal matters in their correspondence, it appears that not every man submitted willingly to the rule of George Rapp. In 1827, a petition was filed to the Governor of Pennsylvania requesting that the government investigate Rapp and the Harmony Society. The 488 signers of the petition appear to be defectors with various complaints against Rapp including financial fraud (based on their agreement to give up their assets), refusal to allow marriages and the breaking up of existing relationships, Rapp's nonconformist beliefs and dictatorial

manner and hard labor expectations without wage compensation.⁹ Defectors even formed an organization in 1827, Teutonia, Society of United Germans, that worked to undermine Rapp.¹⁰

Despite growing up in Harmony Society with a single definition of manhood, it was the second generation of Harmonist men who proved most able to break away, as seen in the Count de Leon schism. He promised them more freedom, particularly over their personal relations and a less austere lifestyle.¹¹ Count Leon appealed especially to the second generation of Harmonists: children born before the celibacy rule who grew up in the society but did not share their parents' personal commitment to Rapp. For these young men, Rapp appeared a tyrant who controlled their lives rather than a prophet who would save them. "Count Maximilien of Leon should be our spiritual leader and the guide of our civic conditions, and thus-to represent not only against George and Frederick Rapp and their aides and accomplices our natural human rights, as well as to secure, assert and activate our civic rights and freedoms with regard to all complaints which we in justice have to make against the two Rapps..."¹² Leon's followers were

⁹ Jacob Schreiber et al, Petition to the Governor and Legislature of Pennsylvania Asking for an Investigation of Rapp's Harmony Society, November 22, 1827.

¹⁰ Karl Arndt, ed. *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History* (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 87.

¹¹ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 473.

¹² Declaration Ousting George and Frederick Rapp as Officials of the Harmony Society and Electing Count Leon and Dr. John George Göntgen in Their Place, January 25, 1832, transl. by Karl J. R. Arndt.

unwilling to give up freedom and comfort in the present for the promise of salvation in the future. Rapp's insistence on hard work, celibacy, cheerful self-denial and devotion to God and to himself as a self-proclaimed prophet created a model of manhood that they would not conform to.

As time passed and the Kingdom of God had not arrived, doubts about Rapp as prophet arose. Many outsiders also found the alien nature of the Harmonists' culture and beliefs off-putting to the point of generating hostility. Utopian societies have the potential to create an alternative to mainstream values and understandings of gender roles that provide members with healthier and happier lifestyles. However, if the new model is too narrow and rigid it can stifle personal freedom and expressions of sexuality and gender identity. Harmony Society offers an example and a lesson in failure on the effects of imposing repressive constructions of masculinity.

Modern Times

Modern Times and the Diggers, while also resisting definitions of sexuality, masculinity and gender relations current in society, did so by creating a noncoercive community that allowed greater range of expression than the authoritarian communities led by Rapp, Jones, and Bro Jud. Documents from Modern Times never explicitly discussed masculinity, but implicitly the community offered a liminal space between the constraints imposed by mainstream society and other intentional communities such as Oneida and Harmony Society for men to perform masculinity as they chose. The non-coercive ideology of individual sovereignty created flexibility for men to remain in

monogamous traditional nuclear families and maintain their authority and responsibility of supporting their family as expected in mainstream society or reject any part of that standard to practice alternatives. Men could, as with many of the free lovers at Modern Times, engage in a more equal partnership with a woman, including as work partners with each maintaining control over their economic lives. Others eschewed relationships and lived out their lives independently.

While Warren and the free lovers at Modern Times did not comment specifically on homosexuality, and the records do not identify any members as LGBTQIA, theoretically the community would have tolerated it. Some free love advocates outside of Modern Times did condemn homosexuality as unnatural or unhealthy and therefore for society to discourage.¹³ As with the women who chose Bloomers and cropped hair over corsets and hoop skirts with ringlets or elaborate updos, men at Modern Times could wear what they preferred and many grew their hair long and shaved their facial hair. One exception to this was a man who practiced public nudity. In this case, he was criticized by Warren not because he chose to eschew clothing but because he inflicted his nudity on other members who might not appreciate it, and ignored his children's individual sovereignty by forcing them to go naked.¹⁴ So, although men at Modern Times did not

¹³ Jesse Battan, "'The Word Made Flesh': Language, Authority, and Sexual Desire in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Oct., 1992), 223-244, 228.

¹⁴ Josiah Warren, *Practical Applications of the Elementary Principles of "True Civilization" to the Minute Details of Everyday Life, Being Part III, the Last of the "True Civilization" Series, and the Facts and Conclusions of Forty-Seven Years of Study and Experiments of Reform Movement From Communism to and in Elementary Principles, Found in a Direction Exactly Opposite to and Away from Communism, But Leading Directly to All the Harmonic Results Aimed at by Communism* (Princeton, MA; Josiah Warren, 1873), 17-20.

directly express opinions on masculinity, definitions of manhood or expectations put upon them, their actions illustrated the fluidity of the community in this regard.

Peoples Temple

Similarly, men in Peoples Temple struggled with and sometimes against Jim Jones' imposition of limitations on how they could behave as men. Jones, however, proved far more destructive to the goals of gender equality than Rapp had in Harmony Society. Men in Peoples Temple not only submitted to Jones' decisions about what jobs they could work, where they could live and whose company they could enjoy, but also to his physical, emotional and sexual abuse. While Jones enjoyed sex with whomever he chose, he expected his followers to practice celibacy, even those whose marriages he arranged.¹⁵ Tim Stoen describes his desire to start a family with his wife Grace as "heresy under PT communalism." The group understood that their loyalty was to Jones and Peoples Temple, not to individual relationships, and that they must devote their energies to their Utopian project not waste them in sexual indulgence.¹⁶ Several members recall that they worked such long, hard days that it did not feel like a sacrifice.¹⁷ Not everyone conformed to this requirement, but constant internal spying

¹⁵ Debbie Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 54; Bonnie Thielmann, *The Broken God* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1979), 94; Jean Clancey, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 161.

¹⁶ Michael Bellefontaine and Dora Bellefontaine, *A Lavender Look at the Temple: A Gay Perspective of the Peoples Temple* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011), 12.

¹⁷ Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look* (New York: Universe Inc., 2010), 39; Annie Moore, Letters from Annie Moore, Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple, accessed August 10, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=14112.

ensured that it was difficult to keep secrets, and engaging in sex or other taboos guaranteed a public humiliation once Jones learned of their sins.¹⁸ Jones used the young adult members' sexuality as a tool to control their behavior whether through denying them partners, tearing apart and creating couples at his whim, demanding sexual favors from them, or shaming and punishing them for normal human desires.¹⁹ Jones applied this pressure to both white men and women, but focused on those in their twenties and thirties, using religion, and his sham psychic gifts to control older members and people of color.²⁰

To guarantee their loyalty, Jones forced members to write and sign affidavits and make "blackmail tapes" confessing to a whole range of crimes and acts that would keep them in Peoples Temple rather than risking the embarrassment and possible persecution if Jones released the affidavits. Many of these focused on sexuality, including pedophilia, adultery, and homosexuality.²¹ Members generally viewed this as necessary

¹⁸ Jeannie Mills, *Six Years with God: Life Inside Reverend Jim Jones' Peoples Temple* (New York: A&W Publishers Inc., 1979), 222, 224; Tim Stoen, *Love Them to Death* (distributed in US as *Marked for Death*) (North Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 114; Wagner, *Slavery*, 71; Vera Washington, "Reflections on Leaving the Temple," November 2003, reprinted in Stevenson, *Dear People*, 65.

¹⁹ Thielmann, *Broken*, 94; Mike Cartmell, "Why We Left," accessed July 5, 2018, Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=31351; Phil Tracy, interview in Fondakowski, *Stories*, 113.

²⁰ Mills, *Six Years*, 219, 249; Guinn, *Road*, 225-226.

²¹ Layton, *Poison*, 61, 68; Mills, *Six Years*, 15; Thielmann, *Broken*, 85; Leslie Wagner-Wilson, *Slavery of Faith: The Untold Story of the Peoples Temple from the Eyes of a Thirteen Year Old, her Escape from Jonestown at 21 and Life 30 Years Later*. Indianapolis: iUniverse, 2008), 54; Jennie Rothenberg Gritz, "Drinking the Kool-Aid: A Survivor Remembers Jim Jones," *The Atlantic*, November 18, 2011, accessed July 5, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/11/drinking-the-kool-aid-a-survivor-remembers-jim-jones/248723/>, a/. [interview with Teri Buford O'Shea]

for Jones' assurance, and only a problem for them if they were considering defecting.²² Jones normalized homosexuality in the sense that he proclaimed that everyone was gay, yet he also stigmatized as a source of shame. This was particularly true of the men with whom Jones had sexual relations. He used their public humiliation as a means of control over them, claiming they had begged him for sexual favors. He treated the women with whom he had sex, whether consensual or coerced, in the same way.²³

While Jones frequently talked about sex at member-only meetings, discussion of his own sex life was far more restricted with most members unaware of his promiscuity.²⁴ Sociologist Judith Weightman argues that Jones also used abasement of men for homosexual feelings and behavior as a means to expiate self-loathing over his own homosexuality.²⁵ Jones was arrested for exposing himself to undercover police in Los Angeles in an attempt to solicit sex, although within Peoples Temple he claimed he

²² Rebecca Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown: The Moore Family Involvement in Peoples Temple* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 142.

²³ Layton, *Poison*, 77; Thielmann, *Broken*, 82; Harriet Tropp, testimonial in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 89; Laurie Efrein Kahalas in Michael Bellefontaine and Dora Bellefontaine, *A Lavender Look at the Temple: A Gay Perspective of the Peoples Temple* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2011), 15; Mike Cartmell, "Carolyn Layton--The Gray Eminence," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=30797; Hue Fortson in Jeff Guinn, *The Road to Jonestown* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2017), 240.

²⁴ Theilmann, *Broken*, 51, 82; Gang of 8, Letter to Jim Jones, 1973, reprinted in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 67. The group of defectors who wrote this letter believed Peoples Temple had become distracted from its radicalism. Interestingly, they blamed Jones' inner circle not the leader himself.

²⁵ Judith Weightman, *Making Sense of the Jonestown Suicides* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1983), 29.

only took part in homosexual acts because gay members requested and needed him.²⁶ Those members who actually were gay and became involved with other members were chastised and physically beaten as punishment.²⁷ Yet, despite this, some gay members assert that they felt more accepted in Peoples Temple than outside and that the anti-teasing rules of the group were supportive of members who were different.²⁸ Others faced serious conflicts within Peoples Temple yet still turned to it because they needed support for addiction or other problems.²⁹ Some gay members found the climate in Peoples Temple intolerable and chose to leave.³⁰ In his study of LGBTQ members in Peoples Temple, Michael Bellefontaine raises the ultimately unanswerable question of whether Jones thought he was actually helping LGBTQ members deal with their sexuality at a time when it was socially dangerous to come out, or simply used the

²⁶ Bellefontaine *Lavender Look*, 10, 16; Robert Lindsey, "Jim Jones--From Poverty to Power of Life and Death," *New York Times*, November 26, 1978, 1; Tim Reiterman, *Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 231.

²⁷ Garry Lambrov, interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 179; Bellefontaine, *Lavender*, 27-28; Gritz, "Kool-Aid."

²⁸ Cynthia Davis in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 50; Linda Mertle, "From Baby Steps to Long Strides," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=31422.

²⁹ Bellefontaine, *Lavender Look*, 54; Garrett Lambrev, "The Tale of the Tape," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*, accessed July 5, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=40178; Cynthia Davis, in *Dear People: Remembering Jonestown. Selections from the People's Temple Collection at the California Historical Society*, ed. Denice Stevenson (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2005), 50; Vern Gosney, interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 76-77.

³⁰ Bellefontaine, *Lavender Look*, 46; Lambrov, interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 178-179.

stigma against homosexuality as a tool to emasculate men in the community and assert his dominance over them.³¹

Whether or not Jones believed he was helping, the parameters for acceptable masculinity and sexuality within Peoples Temple proved problematic. Jones arbitrarily decided how members should look and behave, from the trivial to the oppressive. For example, in 1972 Jones decreed that all the men should crop their hair short because he believed it looked more respectable.³² While this reflected a need to prove their worth as a respectable social justice organization, it also expressed Jones' desire to control the men in Peoples Temple. Jones only permitted one man to be in control or to take on a leadership role, himself.³³ Jones expected the adulation and deference of his followers as only deserving of the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. He was all things to all people, Father, savior, and lover. Many of them accepted Jones in this role, even while acknowledging that serious abuses co-existed with his love.³⁴ Garry Lambrev describes being outside Peoples Temple, "I felt I was dying by vibrational distance from incarnate

³¹ Bellefontaine, *Lavender Look*, 12.

³² Mills, *Six Years*, 174.

³³ Janet Shular, email to Leigh Fondakowski, in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 182; Guinn, *Road*, 176; Don Beck, interview with Laura Johnston Kohl, *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, accessed July 7, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=64983.

³⁴ Kohl, "The Change and Chameleon that was Jim Jones," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, accessed July 7, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=70623; Jacinta Hector Powers, "A Visit to Peoples Temple," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, accessed July 7, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=34319.

deity, Jim Jones, God=Socialism, the only coherent reflection of sanity in our globe-dominating culture."³⁵

Other men could shoulder responsibilities but only as designated by Jones and only if they remained submissive to him. For example, Tim Stoen had considerable status and power in his role as legal advisor but Jones kept Stoen in his place by having an affair with his wife Grace and then requiring Stoen to sign an affidavit lauding Jones and stating that Jones had fathered Stoen's son John Victor.³⁶ Stoen later asserted he did not believe the document would hold up in court, yet he and Grace struggled unsuccessfully to gain custody of their son when they chose to leave Peoples Temple.

Jones also determined that male roles within Peoples Temple should generally parallel those in the outside world, including manual labor and professional jobs, although some men worked in child and elder care. Women, similarly, worked largely as caretakers or teachers although some had influential outside administrative jobs in areas such as welfare and oversight of care facilities.³⁷ Jones would allow members to take training but pull them out before they certified to limit the portability of their

³⁵ Lambrev, "Tale."

³⁶ Jones often accepted Stoen's advice and guidance but would not publicly acknowledge this. (Birth certificate of John Victor Stoen, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=13826; Tim Stoen, Affidavit of February 6, 1972, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=13836; Taped conversation between Jim Jones and Tim Stoen, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=13823; Jim Jones, Affidavits on Grace Stoen, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=13827 all accessed September 22, 2018 from *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*); Stoen, *Love Them*, 75, 84.

³⁷ Juanita Bogue, Interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 93; Guinn, *Road*, 133, 149, 175.

credentials.³⁸ As in Harmony Society, men in Peoples Temple shifted their duty to provide from a nuclear family level to a communal level with all members contributing to the greater whole. This removed the need to compete for workplace status, for career ambition, as Jim Jones dictated what roles his members filled.³⁹ In *Manhood in the Making*, David Gilmore argues that the patriarchy uses manhood to motivate men to work by making career success a marker of masculinity. Many men may choose, or at least desire, not to conform to the societal expectation that they work hard and strive for economic and career success, however, Gilmore contends that by emphasizing the linkage between this success, virility and manhood male-dominated institutions maintain their hold on society by ensuring that men continue to hold the wealth and positions of power.⁴⁰ In a communal setting this changes to a communal ideology encouraging all members to contribute to the betterment of the community and the furtherance of its goals.

Many men in America in the 1960s and 70s were challenging traditional models of masculinity in diverse ways including growing their hair longer and trading conservative clothing for more colorful and feminine styles, exploring alternate models of capitalism and marriage, and encouraging emotional expression through

³⁸Layton, *Poison*, 64.

³⁹ Bogue, Interview in *Stories from Jonestown*, ed. Leigh Fondakowski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 92.

⁴⁰David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 106-108.

consciousness raising and other frameworks.⁴¹ Others, particularly men of color, reasserted their masculinity through aggressive militance and machismo.⁴² Peoples Temple, in many ways, provided a less healthy environment for men to evaluate and explore their own definition of manhood than was available in mainstream society because Jones demeaned and punished expressions of manhood that fell outside the parameters that he set or that challenged his own.

Kerista

Kerista, while successful in many ways at creating an alternative to mainstream expectations of monogamous marriage and allowing men to express their masculinity in a wider range of ways, still fell short of their ideals because of the influence of a charismatic leader. Founder Jud Presmont was a World War II Air Force veteran, who after returning to the United States, fell into the Beatnik counterculture and then communalism. The so-called 'old tribe' of Kerista lived in anarchist free-love Utopian clusters, not strictly communal, in New York City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles; but lacked the formal structure of the 'new tribe' that began in 1971. As early member, Yo, expressed it, "In the old days there was only one rule, and it wasn't so much a rule as it was a statement of truth: 'People don't belong to people.'"⁴³ While on the surface this

⁴¹ Connell, *Masculinities*, 234; Mark Hamilton Lytle, *America's Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 47, 70-71, 145, Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 174-175.

⁴² Lytle, *Uncivil War*, 236, 296; Peter Doggett, *There's a Riot Going On: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars, and the Rise and Fall of the '60s* (New York: Canongate, 2007), 73; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 240, 351. Peniel Joseph, *Waitin' 'Til the Midnight Hour* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006), 161-162.

⁴³ Yo, "Yo says Hi! Only 1 Rule (?) & William A Butterfly," January 28, 2010, Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/yo0.html>, accessed August 14, 2018.

echoes the Diggers, Kerista focused more on personal, sexual freedom than an all-encompassing Digger ideal of Free. Jud moved around, observing the struggles the groups experienced as they moved toward collapse. "The difficulty was never external pressure or problems, the unraveling influences in every case were internal and psychological. People could not live together harmoniously. The reasons, as the years ticked by, mounted up. Coupling, promiscuous sex, pets, tightwadism, rivalry."

Many of the male members admit that the potential for sexual opportunities in polyfidelity proved a stronger attraction to them than any scientific Utopian theory, however they were aware of, and in many cases involved in, other communal projects before joining Kerista.⁴⁴ Nu Luv would be an exception to this as he vetted the group and its practices thoroughly, taking interest in its philosophy, activities and lifestyle.⁴⁵ Keristans acknowledged that outsiders were intrigued by the mechanics of polyfidelity-- that is, how they determined who would engage in sex with whom. The system resembled a chore wheel with female members in one list, male in another and a simple rotation through the list on a daily basis. If the numbers were uneven, extra members would have nights off.⁴⁶ The idea behind the system was that if everyone engaged in sex with everyone else it would dispel jealousy because members would not form romantic

⁴⁴ Kipspeaks, "My Ins and Outs with Kerista," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 17, 2018. <http://www.kerista.com/speak/kip1.html>

⁴⁵ Nu Luv, "The Dark Side of Community: Hidden Limits to Lasting Groups," Kerista Commune website, 2015, accessed August 15, 2018. <http://www.kerista.com/shadowKerista-NuLuv.html>.

⁴⁶ "Sleeping Schedule," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/ss.html>.

or exclusive relationships with any other person. Further, they believed this would bond members more closely together than just living communally.

Member Ram (male) emphasized on the Phil Donahue Show that this was a sleeping schedule not a sex schedule; what happened in the bedroom was between partners.⁴⁷ However, Keristan writing about the sleep schedule asserts that "Sex was not mandatory, but it was expected. Most people did have sex, as far as I know. If you weren't having sex with a certain someone then something was probably wrong in your dyad. Rotating partners every night is a sure way to feel like you should fuck this person who you hadn't been with in several days."⁴⁸ Refusal to sleep with the assigned partner was grounds for dismissal from the B-FIC. This contradicted the standard of consent.⁴⁹ If members truly had the right to consent, and this right included changing their mind over time about who they wished to partner with and when they wished to participate,

⁴⁷ "On Beyond Jealousy: Keristans on the Donahue Show," July 1, 1980, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/donahue.html>.

⁴⁸ "Sleeping Schedule."

⁴⁹ The *17 Standards* asserted that "Everyone a unique & sovereign individual," accessed August 16, 2018. (<https://communalsocieties.hamilton.edu/islandora/object/hamLibCom%3A5736#page/1/mode/1up>) The 1979 *26 Standards* included both "5. Wholesome Sexual Practices Sex always in the context of loving mutual reciprocity" and "11. Law of Mutual Consent: Total reciprocity in all relationships, Graceful distancing, dividing and regrouping, practiced wherever relationships lose their reciprocal highness and comfort," (<http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>) and the 1983 *84 Standards* echoed this, adding "38. Ability to Say 'No' - Members never agree to do something they do not really want to do, but rather exercise their ability to say 'no.'" and "53. Law of Mutual Consent - In every type of interpersonal interaction or relationship, mutual consent is a precondition. Any form of coercion or non-reciprocity is scrupulously avoided," including, "74. No Touching Anyone Without Her/His Consent - Some people are into things like social hugging; others are not. It is considered ungracious to assume that another person is into it unless she/he indicates an openness to such gestures." (<http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>).

criticism or expulsion of a member for refusing another should not have been the rule. Contrast this with a traditional monogamous relationship in which partners have the right to consent or refuse intimacy.

Jud responded to an outsider question about this, arguing that anyone who was uninterested in sleeping with a member of their B-FIC either lacked commitment to the ideals of polyfidelity or had prejudices that they needed to overcome. Either way, Jud made it clear this was unacceptable and antisocial behavior.⁵⁰ Member Lee (female) took the criticism of the questioner further calling him, "a masochist...an imbecile...a docile craven type...a hypnotized mind-impinged person, incapable of thinking for himself."⁵¹ Keristans often responded to questions about their system by becoming defensive and accusing the questioner of having hang-ups, of being unable to break free of their conditioning. Again, Lee indicated explicitly that Keristans did not tolerate members asserting their right to consent. Way's (female) response to the question, "I would never ever vote someone into my B-FIC if I didn't think they were hot stuff,"⁵² draws into question the egalitarian ideals of Kerista and instead suggests the importance of physical appearance over character.

⁵⁰ "The Islanders Answer: The First Question in a Series of Questions From Strangers," Box 1, Kerista KISS books, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection. Kerista sometimes referred to themselves as Islanders, according both to Jud's prophecy that they would one day inhabit an island and their concept of themselves as a society isolated by their alternative lifestyle.

⁵¹ "The Islanders," Center for Communal Studies.

⁵² "The Islanders," Center for Communal Studies.

One former member pointed to the criticism of "hunkism" that Jud, particularly, used in Gestalt sessions. Jud accused women who sided with an attractive man in these sessions of doing so because they were younger and more physically attractive than he was.⁵³ This manipulation silenced women from supporting Jud's critics. It further helped to maintain Jud's dominance by discouraging other men from challenging him in Gestalt-o-rama or for supremacy in his B-FIC, Purple Submarine. Jud further vetoed men from joining Purple Submarine if he felt threatened sexually by them, especially as he grew older. Jud's authoritarian nature and his status in Kerista allowed him to place limitations on how other men expressed their sexuality and performed masculinity in contradiction with the community's standards of equality.

The Keristans argued that polyfidelity was consensual because they agreed to the rules when they joined. "Everyone 'buys' the lifestyle she/he lives in, whether she/he likes it or not."⁵⁴ Members were expected to evaluate the Kerista doctrine as a "lifestyle package" with the implication that like a satellite tv package there would be elements that they would tolerate in order to get what they really desired. Members had the option for additional spontaneous sexual encounters within the B-FIC; however, "Excessive 'freebies' - especially with the same person over and over, was a sign of preferentiality, and therefore BAD!"⁵⁵ The rhetoric of Kerista at the time, of course, argued that

⁵³ Diana Young, Interview with Deborah Altus. *60s Commune Project*, 49, 51.

⁵⁴ "Lifestyle Package," Even Eve, "Glossary #1 of Keristan English (abridged)," *KERISTA Advanced Practical Scientific Utopian Theory* Vol. 2, Book 1 (Summer 1985), San Francisco: Kerista Consciousness Church, 1985, Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/glossary2.html>.

⁵⁵ "Sleeping Schedule."

polyfidelity promoted harmony, equality and coherence within the community. Similarly, former member Kip offered a male perspective on polyfidelity. He argued that while monogamy does not ensure emotional intimacy, polyfidelity discourages it. Now monogamous, he acknowledged that polyfidelity may serve others well, and that for young men it offered the benefit of extensive opportunities for sex with a variety of women; but polyfidelity is emotionally and physically exhausting. Kip found monogamous life simpler and more satisfying.⁵⁶

His comments on his experiences, while insightful, differ from those of others in the group in that they overlook jealousy. Keristans claimed that polyfidelity led to compersion, the opposite of jealousy.⁵⁷ The aspect of jealousy in polyfidelity attracts considerable comment from both former members and outsiders. Kip, in another post, responds to the assumptions made by researcher Ayala Pines in her book, *Romantic Jealousy: Causes, Symptoms, Cures*. Kip argues that members did feel jealousy but not envy, and that feeling jealous did not contravene the rules of Kerista provided members did not act on it. This seems contradictory for a group that promoted openness and mental health, but Kip elaborates further.

I think we did conquer jealousy in Kerista. Firstly, we sorted out the jealous types by attracting non-possessive people. A new member was screened for months before starting the sleeping schedule, even after joining a family, so the new member would have to deal with their

⁵⁶ Kipseeks, "My Long Slow Road to Monogamy," Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/speak/kip0.html>, accessed August 15, 2018.

⁵⁷ Compersion: The positive emotion that comes from seeing one's partners enjoying themselves together, the antithesis of jealousy. (Even Eve, "Glossary #1.")

potential-mates naked and sleeping all-around before the new member would have the chance to be jealous. Most often, seeing your naked potential-mate just washing off another lover's fluids - every single day. So, it was hard to be jealous in Kerista - as we would rub your face in it, and then closely monitor your reaction.⁵⁸

Eve responded very differently from Kip,

sorry, but we lied. or i guess i should just speak for myself -- i lied about the no jealousy thing. also lied to myself as much as was able... trying to re-frame those uncomfortable pesky feelings in more keristanly-proper terms. what is true, though, is that i'd say i felt less jealous overall in that setting and poly context than in other situations... ayala was a very sweet and smart woman. i'm sorry we took her for a ride. it was too socially dangerous within kerista for any individual to own up to feeling jealous, at all, so no one did.⁵⁹

Kip claimed that he still did not believe he was jealous even in a monogamous relationship which may reflect more upon him as an individual than on the group situation in Kerista. Particularly, if as Eve claims, members were putting on a public, and even internal, show about their abilities to conform to the Kerista creed it may be that Kip simply did not see others' insecurities. Roger Knull, an outsider who toyed with joining Kerista joked that the only way to know what a Keristan thinks was to get them away from Kerista--an insight that reinforced Eve's perspective.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Kip, "Question for any members willing to respond," October 11, 2010, Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/kellyc0.html>, accessed August 15, 2018.

⁵⁹ Even Eve, "Question for any members willing to respond," October 11, 2010, Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/kellyc0.html>, accessed August 15, 2018.

⁶⁰ Roger Knull, "My Brief Encounter with Keristans: An Outsider's Account," Kerista Commune website, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/nonspeak/rio.html>. Numerous letters in the collection at Hamilton College show members expressing their concerns about their feelings of jealousy and their inability to raise these within the community.

One of the tools for approaching new members was a "Lifestyle Checklist" in some of their publications. Taking this quiz allowed potential members to see how they aligned with Kerista values and could the group could use as a part of the vetting process.⁶¹ Kerista asked for considerable commitment from its members. Leaving aside even their belief that it was to be a lifelong commitment, the physical/sexual demands included total chastity to allow the clearing of the mind (including no masturbation) between acceptance into Kerista and placement in a B-FIC (a process that took three to six months). Beginning in 1983 Kerista demanded that men have vasectomies after they committed to join Kerista.⁶² This reflected Kerista's concern about over-population, and their desire to re-focus group energies on projects rather than childcare, not an intention to take the responsibility for birth control off women.⁶³ Vasectomies were cheaper, and less invasive than tubal ligation as a form of permanent birth control. Probably nowhere is this expressed more clearly than in their leaflet, "Multiple Parenting: The First Four Years." As one might expect from the title, this publication explained Kerista's ideology on parenting but it also included comments that suggest that not only were the two births unexpected, they were perhaps also somewhat resented. "Raising children requires a lot

⁶¹ Kerista Commune, "Lifestyle Checklist," *Utopia 2: Blueprint for Heaven on Earth*, Vol 4, Issue 3 (Winter 1988), 52.

⁶² Kerista Commune, Timeline of the Kerista Commune, Kerista Commune website, <http://www.kerista.com/timeline.html>, accessed August 16, 2018.

⁶³ Michael Cummings, "Tale of Two Communes: A Scholar and His Errors," Fellowship for Intentional Community, 1996, accessed August 15, 2018 <https://www.ic.org/wiki/tale-two-communes-scholar-errors>;" Stacey Barwick, Michael S. Cummings, Lise Leibacher and Lyman Tower Sargent, "Utopian Capitalism in the Haight: Kerista Commune," undated, 8; [This paper appears to be in precursor study to "A Tale of Two Communes"] Even Eve, "Multiple Parenting: The First Four Years," 10, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

of energy! And it is not our main objective. This we should not overload ourselves with childcare, at the expense of our greater goals...No more baby worship! Children are innocent in some ways, it's true, and helpless and cute, but these qualities needn't be romanticized or distorted. They are also capable of nastiness as much as niceness, and may be more accurately described as uncivilized barbarians."⁶⁴ The publication goes on to describe the challenges members faced dealing with their preschoolers' NEMS.⁶⁵ It makes one wonder what experience they had with children before Liberty and Revery arrived as their naïveté and lack of understanding of normal children was appalling.

Apparently, at least some members of Kerista had become disenchanted with parenthood despite their other proclamations of how much they had all gained from the experience. The historical timeline notes that in 1982 when the girls were three years old they moved to a "children's house," but there are no documents to describe what this was or how it functioned.⁶⁶ A former member who joined in the early 1980s asserted that Keristans did not want her to bring her children into the community because they viewed children raised outside Kerista as corrupting influences. She felt discriminated against within Kerista because she had children.⁶⁷ By the late 1980s as the AIDS crisis took off, new members had to be disease free after three consecutive tests before joining.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Even Eve, "Multiple Parenting, 9.

⁶⁵ Another Kerista term, NEM pathologized normal young childhood tantrums and irrationality as Nonviolent Episodic Malfunctions, although it could also apply to adult antisocial behavior.

⁶⁶ Kerista Commune, "Timeline."

⁶⁷ Young, *60s Commune Project*.

⁶⁸ Cummings, "A Tale of Two Communes."

Historian Timothy Miller noted that Kerista's policies sheltered it from the devastation of AIDS.⁶⁹ This marked a significant difference from the experience of many free love communities in the counterculture and also mainstream sexual adventurers who struggled with a variety of sexually transmitted diseases.⁷⁰

Before the vasectomy rule, two children were born at Kerista. Even Eve had the first, Liberty, in 1979 and Geo the second, Revery, in 1980.⁷¹ The 1979 *26 Standards* discuss child-rearing in Kerista, presumably in response to Eve's pregnancy.⁷² As in Oneida, Kerista raised their children communally, although unlike at Oneida, Keristans do not appear to have discouraged the birth mother from forming a special bond with her child. All members of the B-FIC took responsibility for care of the child, with the larger Kerista community tasked with their education. The standards indicate that the fathering of children would be done by "Utopian Roulette"--that is--it would be randomly assigned within the B-FIC since given the sleep schedule it would be difficult to determine biological fatherhood.⁷³ (Keep in mind, this pre-dated DNA paternity testing) Kerista

⁶⁹ Timothy Miller, *The 60's Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 135.

⁷⁰ Brian Alexander, "Free Love: Was There a Price to Pay?" June 22, 2007, accessed August 17, 2018, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/19053382/ns/health-sexual_health/t/free-love-was-there-price-pay/#.W3bd9ehKg2w. Laura Johnston Kohl likewise opined that celibacy in Peoples Temple protected her from AIDS and other STDs (Kohl, *Survivor*, 87).

⁷¹ Kerista Commune, Timeline.

⁷² Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract."

⁷³ Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract."

publications promoted their cooperative parenting model as better for both the children and the adults in the community. Kerista publications include concern about "momism," which they described as the unhealthy focus of moms (and dads) on their child resulting in a loss of identity for the mom.⁷⁴ Both children and adults benefitted from multiple perspectives and opportunities to engage in play. Children raised together did not get lonely because there were always people to interact with.

The 1983 *84 Standards* proclaimed that children would be "treated as equals wherever developmentally appropriate," but nothing about child-rearing.⁷⁵ Kerista used a democratic model for settling conflicts, with children receiving a vote in the process. Similarly, children were subject to Gestalt-o-rama as a tool to confront antisocial behaviors and personality traits. The document does not, unsurprisingly, disclose how children responded to this method of discipline.⁷⁶ Women were freer to engage in other types of labor because Kerista did not restrict them to childcare, and men had the opportunity to enjoy interacting with and nurturing children without stigma. In a period when there was limited access to daycare, communal childrearing could be advantageous. Kerista proved fairly successful in breaking down gender standards regarding domesticity and the workplace, encouraging men and women to follow their

⁷⁴ Kerista Commune, "How do Keristans Raise Their Kids?" Box 1, Kerista KISS books, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁷⁵ Kerista Commune, "Utopian Social Contract."

⁷⁶ Kerista Commune, "Keristans Raise Their Kids?"

bliss rather than limit themselves to mainstream norms of nuclear families, and men's (or women's) work.

Masculinity in Kerista did not conform to many mainstream standards of the time because it allowed men to express themselves creatively and actively participate in the raising of the community's children. American society in the 1970s and 80s still viewed these areas as the domain of women, or feminine men, although this view evolved over time. Living communally, with all members equal theoretically meant that men took equal responsibility for housework and other domestic concerns. Sharing income, the lack of nuclear families, and monogamous marriage allowed men in Kerista to break out of the expectation that they must be the breadwinner simply because they were men. Masculinity in Kerista did not devolve to the ability to provide or to sire offspring. In this area, Kerista offered men a significant break from societal standards of masculinity and support to explore, within Keristan strictures, alternative models of manhood.

Nonetheless, Kerista did struggle with allowing members to move beyond heteronormativity. While the old tribe proclaimed its sexual freedom by sleeping with anyone, and everyone, including homosexual couplings, the new tribe did not internally acknowledge homosexuality.⁷⁷ Nu Luv describes a relationship that he engaged in with another male Keristan, but this appears to have been clandestine. Larry Hamelin (aka Tru) asserts that everyone was heterosexual when he joined in 1987, but later there were

⁷⁷ Larry Hamelin, "And To No More Settle For Less Than Purity: Reflections on the Kerista Commune," *Praxis: Politics in Action* Vol. 1, Issue 1 (August, 2013), 60.

two bisexual women. He also states that "Most Keristans were bi-sexual."⁷⁸ He makes no further comment about this or any mention of gay or bisexual men in Kerista, nor does he offer corroboration for the statement.⁷⁹ In a response to an article in *Beyond Monogamy*, Jud asserted that "Social tolerance for other people's sexual preference is a golden rule with us," however he seems to be using preference in the context of monogamy vs polyfidelity or open marriage not homosexuality.⁸⁰ In an undated interview, Jud noted that "the lifestyle has been designed for people of any sexual persuasion (gay, bi or hetero) to form polyfidelitous households."⁸¹ Once again this appears to be an example of the rhetoric not living up to the reality at Kerista.

Diggers

While there is documentation showing that Emmett Grogan used homophobic slurs to break up an SDS meeting in 1967, there is little to indicate the Diggers' attitudes about homosexuality or their treatment of the LGBTQ+ community. Historian Alice Echols pronounces the culture of the Haight homophobic, however she does not present evidence that demonstrates a cultural rejection of homosexuality. She limits her examples to Grogan's comment and Timothy Leary's (who was marginally influential by

⁷⁸ Hamelin, "To No More," 60. Hamelin in this instance is referring to the Old Tribe, pre-1971.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Bro Jud, "To the readers of *Beyond Monogamy*," November 19, 1982, Box 1, Kerista KISS books, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁸¹ Jud Presmont, "Utopia the Original Story," *The Keristan Islands Best Friendship Cooperative: Introductory Handbook*, undated, CS349-3-13, Kerista, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

the late sixties) claim that LSD could "cure" homosexuality.⁸² Neither of these examples reflect a widespread rejection of homosexuality as part of the sexual experimentation in this period or among social groups in the Haight. The lack of discussion of homosexuality among communards in the late twentieth century suggests heteronormative assumptions and perhaps a discomfort with nonconformity in this arena.

Masculinity within the Diggers walked a line between rejecting straight ideals of the nine-to-five worker bringing home a paycheck to support a wife and kids, of consumerism as a measure of self-worth, of visual markers such as short hair and conservative clothing and also rejecting flower child pacifism.⁸³ Instead historian Timothy Hodgdon aligns Digger men with those of the more radical and militant counterculture such as the Black Panthers, Hells Angels, and traditional male outlaws like gunslingers and Native American warriors.⁸⁴ While the Diggers put on a bravado front of anarchist radicalism, it is difficult to correlate their actions with the violence of these groups. Certainly, the Digger rhetoric was defiantly anti-state and anti-capitalist but unlike the Black Panthers, the Hells Angels, or Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers, the Diggers did not engage in confrontational violence to defend their turf, their bodies,

⁸² Alice Echols, *Shaky Ground: The Sixties and Its Aftershocks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 34.

⁸³ Miller, *60s Communes*, 117; Peter Cohon interview with Leonard Wolf in Leonard Wolf and Deborah Wolf. *Voices from the Love Generation* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 114-116; Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 217.

⁸⁴ Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counterculture Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 41.

or their ideals.⁸⁵ The war engaged in by the Diggers was fought on the battleground of people's perspectives, using weapons of satire, and disruption to reshape the way people viewed the world and its possibilities.

When harassed by straights, rather than respond with violence like the Motherfuckers or Angels, the Diggers advised hippies to continue being hip and ignore or make fun of their attackers.⁸⁶ Long hair represented freedom not femininity to the Diggers and other members of the counterculture; it was a rejection of mainstream insistence on arbitrary rules for fashion and appearance. By hip analysis, mainstream society emasculated straight short-haired white men. Similarly, they used the symbolism of their 1% Free posters with its image of Chinese Tong warriors or assassins to represent themselves as edgy, potentially dangerous, beyond the mainstream expectations of profession or domesticity.⁸⁷ Outsiders often and variously interpreted these posters to mean many things, with some commentators speculating it was a sort of mob-style demand for protection to be paid by local businesses and bands. There is no definitive explanation of the posters and no evidence to suggest it was a threat. Although the Diggers often created provocative street events that resulted in the authorities

⁸⁵ Peter Berg talks about how Emmett Grogan and Billy Fritsch "performed" tough but that it was an act. Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft, Interview, Marty Lee and Eric Noble, The Digger Archives, accessed July 3, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/oralhistory/pb_jg_0482.htm.

⁸⁶ Osha Neumann, *Up Against the Wall, Motherf**ker: A Memoir of the '60s, with Notes for Next Time* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 68, 119; "Are the Mothers of America Avatars of Delilah?" Free City News Handbill, undated but between fall 1967 and mid-1968. HSDR, folder 6, MS3159, NBL-CHS.

⁸⁷ "Overview: who were (are) the Diggers?" The Digger Archives, accessed July 3, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/overview.htm>.

harassing, fining, or arresting them, they did not seek violent conflicts with the police. The Diggers did challenge the rules regularly because it was essential to their ideology of Free. These confrontations were a means for the Diggers to draw public attention to the repressive nature of the state. Diggers further called out the police and local authorities through their handbills and other publications.⁸⁸ Diggers looked across Utopian threads to black nationalism and other contemporary radical social movements to learn from their approaches and support their struggles.

Hodgdon draws links between the Diggers' idealizing of radical black manhood as a model for their style and earlier whites who adopted black music, speech, dance, and dress during the Harlem Renaissance.⁸⁹ Other parallels can be seen in the Diggers' predecessors the Beats, notably in Norman Mailer's *White Negro*,⁹⁰ and their contemporaries the Students for a Democratic Society who also valorized black radicals as more authentic.⁹¹ While there is evidence of a superficial connection between the Diggers and for example, the Black Panthers, it appears to be a stylistic emulation of their radical chic rather than a commitment to using violence for self-protection or

⁸⁸ Digger Papers and other publications by the Diggers regularly refer to local political problems and offer advice to hippies on how to respond, encourage and announce protests and other petitions of police, city and Chamber of Commerce officials to effect change (Digger Papers, Digger Ephemera, San Francisco Historical Center).

⁸⁹ Hodgdon, *Manhood*, 45.

⁹⁰ Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Dissent* (1957), 276-273.

⁹¹ Doug Rossinow, "'The Revolution is About our Lives': The New Left's Counterculture," in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 101.

achieving their goals. Perhaps the best way to understand the Diggers' use of revolutionary style is to remember that the Diggers were performers, using theatre and other arts to create change. To do this effectively they adopted rhetoric and a look that would grab the onlooker's attention and create a scene. Peter Coyote talks about this in relation to how the men behaved related to women, but it also has a bearing on their behavior in relation to non-Digger men. "The men tended to be stud peacocks and flaunted and puffed more than women. But our authority was not based on ownership or status or bringing in the bacon."⁹² The posturing of the male Diggers allowed them to assert themselves within the community and gain at least the pretension of authority within a group that denied hierarchy, leadership, materialism and consumerism.

As with many free love communities, the Diggers struggled with jealousy and possessive behavior. While most of the accounts reference Peter Coyote, there is limited evidence available, making it likely many others were also involved.⁹³ Lenore Kandel argued that the Diggers replaced monogamy with honesty. If both partners were comfortable with and honest about their feelings and actions then relationships could be more successful than straight marriage.⁹⁴ Like many in the counterculture, the Digger men argued that non-hip men envied their freedom.⁹⁵ The Diggers viewed straight

⁹² Peter Coyote, "Interview with Etan Ben-Ami," Mill Valley, CA, January 12, 1989, The Digger Archives, accessed July 3, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/oralhistory/peter_interview.html.

⁹³ Hodgdon, *Manhood*, 82.

⁹⁴ Lenore Kandel, Interview with Leonard Wolf, undated in *Voices from the Love Generation* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 35.

⁹⁵ Bennett M. Berger, "Focus on the Flower Children--Hippie Morality, More Old than New," *Trans-action*, (Dec 1976): 19; Beth Bailey, "Sex as a Weapon: Underground Comix and the Paradox of

monogamy as repressive for both men and women, as always, their approach was based on freedom. Not all Diggers sought or desired free love. David Simpson joined the Diggers with his wife and started a family there. He asserts that "women were the equals. And children were well taken care of."⁹⁶

During the 1960s the war in Vietnam became a polarizing event that impacted American understandings of masculinity. Traditionally, Americans viewed the military as heroic and patriotic, but Vietnam changed this with increasing numbers of people rejecting military service and the war. While broad-based social movements attacked the military, but more specifically the draft, the government's lack of transparency, and colonialism overlapped with the often less political hippie counterculture, the Diggers took a limited stance on the issues. A perhaps unanticipated effect of the Free Store was its attraction for men either fleeing military service or attempting to assimilate into the counterculture after completing their service. These soldiers came to the Free Store and traded their uniforms for civilian hippie clothing. Sometimes these included straight clothing that Digger women had tie-dyed or embellished with beads and embroidery.⁹⁷ Symbolically, they exchanged their masculine military garb for the androgynous or frankly feminine style of the counterculture.

Liberation in Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 307.

⁹⁶ David Simpson, interview with Deborah Altus, *60s Commune Project*, 9.

⁹⁷ John Curl, *History of Collectivity in the San Francisco Bay Area: From Indian Times to the Present* (Berkeley: Homeward Press, 1982), 34.

Many of the attacks on hippies and war protesters addressed their appearance and pacifism, or at least rejection of this war, as effeminate.⁹⁸ Peter Coyote comments, "The Diggers felt that the war in Vietnam was a struggle to benefit a class of people that were neither our allies nor our friends. Unlike many who opposed the war, we respected the boys who went to serve and did not presume to judge their intentions or morality. We preferred them alive and unscarred, however, and when we encountered soldiers had changed their minds about military service, we did what we could to help."⁹⁹ He goes on to explain how they further assisted men trying to evade service using falsified draft documents. The war in Vietnam provided context for the counterculture and the New Left with many young people becoming politicized by their objection to the war and to the government's deceptions regarding it. The Diggers were relatively apolitical in regards to the war, considering it part of the state and mainstream structure that they had rejected and were operating outside of. Their interactions with soldiers or draft dodgers supported the men in their desire to be free. Beyond this their anti-war activities appear to be rhetorical. The Diggers allowed men a wide range of latitude to express their

⁹⁸ Kimmel, *Manhood*, 179-180; Say Burgin, " Understanding Antiwar Activism as a Gendering Activity: A Look at the U.S.'s Anti-Vietnam War Movement," *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Vol. 13, Issue 6 (December, 2012): 25; Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 217.

⁹⁹ Peter Coyote, " Crossing the Free Frame of Reference," The Digger Archives, <http://www.diggers.org/freefall/freefram.html>, accessed June 29, 2018.

manhood including martially through support for the war, or as pacifists, as free lovers, or monogamists; but always as Free.

These Utopian communities illustrate some of the concerns addressed within the communalism movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All of them except Modern Times used some form of communal property to free men collectively from the expectations of acting as family patriarch, by shifting the bonds of family to a broader basis. Even though Harmony Society, Peoples Temple and Kerista retained a patriarchal male leader, the members of the community shared labor and resources, each providing for the communal good. Men and women participated in the decision-making process to varying extents in all of these groups, to a more equal extent than in mainstream society.

Masculinity, according to numerous gender scholars, is a social construct, an ideal created by society to support its institutions and values. Society teaches men this framework from an early age and expects conformity.¹⁰⁰ Historically the construction of manhood has varied in both its content and its breadth, at times tolerating considerable range in expressions of masculinity. All of these groups, except perhaps Modern Times, proved challenging for men and women who wanted to express their gender beyond the accepted limitations of their communities. Utopian societies have the potential to create an alternative to mainstream values and understandings of gender roles that provide

¹⁰⁰ Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon, in "Socialization: Learning How to Be a Man," in *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority* edited by Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), 233.

members with healthier and happier lifestyles. However, if the new model is too narrow and rigid it can stifle personal freedom and expressions of sexuality and gender identity. Peoples Temple provides a chilling example of the ways in which sexuality and gender can be perverted into tools of coercion and abuse. While the Diggers and Kerista allowed for a greater freedom of expression they also used peer pressure to limit particularly homosexuality, and masculinity; rewarding dominance in the case of the Diggers, and submission to Jud at Kerista.

Communalism collectively challenges gender roles, expressions of gender and sexuality and institutional structures relating to marriage, sex and the family. While these experiments have not been uniformly successful, they offer social critiques and lessons, sometimes cautionary, for creating gender equality. Each of these communities presented itself to the public as worthy of serious consideration and as more worthy than the status quo alternatives. All of them, even the anarchist Diggers and Modern Times, demonstrated unity, of purpose and ideals. The numbers of these communities proved sufficient for their needs, and to qualify as a commune under Miller's definition.

Although none of these is still in existence, they demonstrated commitment to each other and their ideals, with many members continuing to pursue these Utopian goals after they moved on. They created campaigns to educate and awaken the public about gender inequality and other injustices and took political action on their concerns through

demands on the legal system, addresses to political leaders, and public support of political causes.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Politicians in San Francisco relied on Jim Jones to bring out a crowd to campaign events. He is credited for influencing elections in the city; Tim Carter, Grace Stoen and Jean Clancey in interviews in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 165-166; Guinn, *Road*, 137-38, Digger Papers and other publications by the Diggers regularly refer to local political problems and offer advice to hippies on how to respond, encourage and announce protests and other petitions of police, city and Chamber of Commerce officials to effect change (Digger Papers, Digger Ephemera, San Francisco Historical Center).

CHAPTER VII

MONEY CHANGES EVERYTHING

Introduction

For many Utopian societies economic inequality is or becomes a key driver of practice within the community. Those that adopt some form of shared property and labor experiment with alternatives to traditional capitalism and private ownership, such as barter systems and cooperative businesses. The goal may, at least initially, be survival, but eventually tends to evolve into some sort of capitalist critique. Since industrialization and the shift to a market rather than subsistence economy beginning in the late eighteenth century, many wage laborers have found themselves dissatisfied.

Philosophers and economists from Marx and Engels through C. Wright Mills and Michael Harrington have challenged the notion that capitalism and private property offer the best mechanisms for prosperity for all.¹ Utopian communalists in the nineteenth century created alternatives to the mainstream economy both to improve the standard of living for their members and as an experiment to find broader solutions to economic inequality. As with their attempts to challenge racial and gender inequality, their success varied. A significant limiting factor for achieving their Utopian goals has been the persistence of mainstream structures and institutions. Despite the intention of rejecting

¹ Karl Marx, *Das Kapital, a Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1959); C. Wright Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951); Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1962).

or at least reconfiguring capitalism, consumerism, materialism and private property proved difficult for communards to relinquish. Utopian communities consistently conformed to many problematic social and economic attitudes and behaviors while simultaneously confronting these. Kerista was the only one of the six groups in this study that showed a real understanding and awareness of this tension. They reference the problems of letting go of the conditioning society places upon individuals, causing them to struggle with new perspectives and structures. A cartoon in one of their publications shows a Keristan woman unlocking the shackle around her ankle. The ball bears the label "conditioning."² In the late twentieth century shared property, back to the land, and eco-based communities burgeoned as people became alienated from the consumerism, materialism, and workaholism of the age in which they lived.³ Many of these groups examined the Utopian threads laid by their predecessors to create a new model based on these early foundations.

² Paz Now, "Getting Closer: A Step That Will Change Your Life," *Utopian Eyes: A Journal of the Utopian Movement*, Issue 1, (Performing Arts Society [Kerista]: San Francisco, 1975), 51-52, Communal Studies Archive, University of Southern Indiana Collection, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14, 51. [cartoon is likely by Even Eve]

³ Victor J. Seidler, ed., *The Achilles Heel Reader: Men, Sexual Politics, and Socialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 27-29, 67, 129; Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society* (New York: Verso, 1970), xvii-xx [Berman explicitly draws connections between the Utopian search in the 1960s and Enlightenment and 19th century thought]; John Morton Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 8-10; Neil A. Hamilton, *The ABC-CLIO Companion to The 1960s Counterculture in America* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 67-68.

Nashoba

Before Frances Wright offered her proposal for Nashoba she visited numerous other communal projects and talked to Utopian thinkers, planters, and political leaders. Wright used these Utopian threads to develop her plan, accepting the advice of men like Robert Owen and Thomas Jefferson while rejecting the religious foundations of Harmony Society.⁴ When Frances Wright created Nashoba, she did not seek to reject capitalism, *per se*, rather she attacked the peculiar institution fundamental to the Southern economy--slavery. Wright sought to overturn slavery but she recognized that she must gain the support of plantation owners. To have them willingly emancipate their enslaved workers, she needed to devise a plan that would not result in economic loss for the planters.

When Wright proposed Nashoba the outline detailed that the enslaved members would work off their purchase price before emancipation, thus allowing the slaveowner to break even financially. Wright included this provision to address the concern expressed to her by plantation owners that they feared financial ruin if they freed their slaves.⁵ Her project addressed what she had identified as the excuses used in the South for clinging to an economic system she found intolerable. Her belief, despite the

⁴ Frances Wright, Letter to Dolley Madison, December 4, 1824, Lafayette MSS, Lilly Library, Indiana University; Frances Wright, Letter to Dolley Madison, February 23, 1824, Lafayette MSS, Lilly Library, Indiana University. [Although Wright is corresponding here with Dolley Madison, she describes her meetings with Jefferson and Owen.]

⁵ Frances Wright, *A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States Without the Danger of Loss to Citizens of the South* (Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, 1825), accessed June 30, 2016, <http://antislavery.eserver.org/tracts/lundyplan/lundyplan.pdf>.

naysaying of the powerful men such as James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and the Marquis de Lafayette, persisted that Southern planters would accept the wisdom of her project once they saw it in action.⁶ Wright also arranged to train the slaves in the skills they would require as yeoman farmers including basic literacy and mathematics. The goal was that the emancipated slaves would assimilate better into free society and have an equal opportunity to thrive as a farmer once provided with skills.⁷ Wright believed in equal access for all people regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status. Economic equality and independence depended on this access. Unfortunately, we cannot confirm the success of the former members of Nashoba once Wright settled them in Haiti. We do know that planters in the South remained unconvinced, although more because of their horror over the immorality of free love and miscegenation at Nashoba than because of any economic proposals. After the scandal of Richardson's free love and miscegenation with Josephine Prevot became widely known, planters shied away from association with the notorious Frances Wright, even if they had been sympathetic previously.⁸

⁶ James Madison, Letter to Frances Wright, September 1, 1825, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/item/mjm019655/>; Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Frances Wright, August 7, 1825, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib025495/>. [Interestingly given their public statements on religion, both Jefferson and Madison noted that religious authoritarian leadership such as that of George Rapp seemed to be a significant factor in the stability of Utopian communities.]

⁷ Frances Wright, *A Plan for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the United States Without the Danger of Loss to Citizens of the South* (Baltimore: Benjamin Lundy, 1825), accessed June 30, 2016, <http://antislavery.eserver.org/tracts/lundyplan/lundyplan.pdf>.

⁸ Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 179-180, 190, 209.

Harmony Society

Similarly, the Harmony Society met with mixed response from outsiders however this reflected a tension between resentment for the Harmonists' economic success and their otherness as German immigrants following an alternative religion versus their role as an archetype for the American Dream.⁹ The Harmonists persisted in their challenge to widely accepted models of capitalism despite criticism and hostility. Those visiting from afar tended to look more favorably on the Harmonists, viewing them as a positive example of immigrants achieving the American Dream.

Only of the emigration of whole colonies in which only able, industrious, honest and loyal persons, mostly families, is received is something great and favorable rightly to be expected. There are many examples of what united wills and powers, reasonable communal labor, even with little means in the beginning, are able to accomplish in a short time in that land. The most remarkable colony of all in the United States is a German one which has the name Harmony and has a certain George Rapp as its founder.¹⁰

Traveler Friedrich List provided a backhanded compliment, "In general, the Germans do not give in easily to the tools and ways of this country. They learn the hard way. However, if they do accept them, they usually prosper much faster than the Americans."¹¹ German historian Franz von Löher prefaced his description of his visit to

⁹ Benjamin Franklin associated the concept that hard work and American ideals like democracy and equal opportunity provided every man in America, regardless of his origins with access to upward class mobility and economic success. Later writers, from John Steinbeck to Martin Luther King Jr., connected this idea to promoting equality for immigrants and marginalized populations, or the failure of America to provide equality to all. (*Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Norton, 1986), 349-360).

¹⁰ Jonas Heinrich Gudehus, "Journey to America," transl. Larry Neff in *Publications of the Pennsylvania German Society*, Vol. 14 (Breinigsville, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1980), 283.

¹¹ Friedrich List, "Travel Notes from the Year 1825," transl. Gertha Reinert, 8, Harmony Society, Travel Old Economy Village, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.

Economy with, "I had heard much against the Rappites (even though they are the most successful socialist-religious community in America.) But the minute I stepped out into that little town the grace of its good order amazed me."¹² In particular, the business community admired the shrewdness and hard work of the Rappites, viewing them as a role model.

Thus, we see that the Agriculture and the Manufactories are intimately connected, and dependent on each other; and that disconnected with foreign commerce and the luxuries and effeminacy which they introduce; they tend to the real wealth and happiness of society, and if pursued by the American Nation, would make us entirely independent of the old world, either in war or peace.¹³

Locals, however, proved far more critical, even litigious, regarding Rapp and his followers as an economic threat with too much financial and political power.

Newspapers and magazines encouraged this resentment through their biased reporting,

"It [the Harmonist's wealth] has been a subject of the grossest exaggeration on the part of the newspaper fraternity, who delight in placing it at fabulous sums."¹⁴ Both in

Pennsylvania and in Indiana, Harmony Society created concerns, sometimes based in fact, regarding their wealth and how they used it.¹⁵ That resentment carried over in 1818

¹² Franz von Löher, "Western Pennsylvania Through a German's Eyes: The Travels of Franz von Löher, 1846," transl. by Frederic Trautmann, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 62 (July 1982), 232.

¹³ "Harmonie Society," *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* (Providence and Pawtucket Advertiser: Providence, RI, August 24, 1820), 2.

¹⁴ H.D. Mason, "The Harmonite Community," *American Magazine*, vol. VII, March 20, 1888, 578.

¹⁵ Dann Lynn, "Letter," January 5, 1818, reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847*, (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 179.

into a petition to the state Legislature by twenty-one of the Harmonists' neighbors asking for action on rates charged by the Harmonist mills, more oversight of Harmonist influence in the banking industry, and demanding that the Rappites pay fines for not serving in the militia the same as other men in the state.¹⁶

Outsiders also condemned Rapp as a tyrant who enslaved his followers to labor for his benefit. An event often pointed to by critics as emblematic of Rapp's impunity was the decision in 1818 to burn the documents recording the assets members donated to Harmony Society. Contrary to the rhetorical use of this event, it was apparently a consensual decision based on the idea that the records were unnecessary and inimical to equality in the community.¹⁷ In 1836 after the Leon schism, the remaining members signed a re-affirmation of the Articles of Association that included, "2d All the property of the society, real, personal, and mixed, in law or equity, and howsoever contributed or acquired, shall be deemed, now and forever, joint and indivisible stock. Each individual is to be considered to have finally and irrevocably parted with all his former contributions..."¹⁸ Hence if members believed that once the goods were donated they were gone forever, there was no need to keep a record of donations. The amount of

¹⁶ "1818 Petition to the Indiana State Legislature," reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 263-3.

¹⁷ Charles Nordhoff, *Communitistic Societies of the United States* (Harper & Brothers, 1875 reprinted Dover Publications: New York, 1966), 76.

¹⁸ Nordhoff, *Communitistic Societies*, 84-5.

assets contributed to the Society were not a factor in status within, so making the amounts public would have served no purpose.

The issue was not whether Rapp used his power benignly or for the benefit of members but simply that he wielded this sole control. These views contrast with those of more measured observers, for example, A.J. MacDonald notes that "Rapp...kept the society in prosperous motion."¹⁹ For MacDonald, economic success and orderliness took precedence over individual freedoms as a metric for measuring Harmony Society. There are numerous references in the records of outsiders and defectors referring to the relationship between Rapp and his followers as slavery.²⁰ Granted, it was not uncommon in the nineteenth century to use slavery as a metaphor for any oppressive arrangement from indenture to marriage.

In this case however, it appears to be an attempt to portray Rapp's control over the workforce in Harmony as truly comparable to chattel slavery with no means of escape for members, no control over their own efforts or production. Clearly, this is an unfair comparison. Although members worked at the tasks assigned them by Rapp or his Board, and they did not receive a wage or profits from their labor, the members agreed

¹⁹ A.J. MacDonald, *Strange Cults and Utopias of 19th Century America*, John Humphrey Noyes, ed. (Dover Publications: New York, 1966), 132.

²⁰ Thomas Hulme, *Journal of a Tour in the Western Countries of America*, Vol. 10, September 30, 1818-August 8, 1819, 60, accessed September 23, 2018, https://www.loc.gov/resource/lhbtn.th010_0017_0084/?st=gallery; Petition to His Excellency Gov. John-Andrew Schultze of the State of Pennsylvania, November, 16, 1827, reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 364, 369; *The Beaver Republican*, November 19, 1829, reprinted in Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 410; George Rapp, Letter Defending Harmony Society, *Western Argus*, January 1, 1830, reprinted in Arndt, *Harmony 1785-1847*, 413.

when they joined Harmony Society that Rapp would make decisions for the community, that they would contribute their assets to the communal pot and that in return Rapp and his agents would supply them with any other necessities required. The question remains, is it inherently wrong for a leader to subsume the personal liberty of his followers for the good of the group? If the followers agree to follow the leader and there is no abuse of members' wellbeing then legally there is no wrongdoing. This is also a philosophical question of ideals that calls into question the very idea of whether it is socially acceptable to allow such dominance and even whether individuals can choose to divest themselves of their liberty.

Utopian communalists typically were less harassed by outsiders if their group remained small, self-sustaining, isolated, and inoffensive in their visible practices. Harmony Society drew both negative and positive attention for their well-run community, reflecting American beliefs about acceptable behavior of "good immigrants" while also offering a theoretical threat to the local economy and politics with their financial success. When they were a small, isolated, struggling commune in their early years, the Harmonists largely evaded the scrutiny of locals. When they established a business empire, outsiders decided to take a closer look. Rapp and his council defended their project in court and to the Pennsylvania and Indiana legislatures, leveraging Harmonist money and votes where necessary to protect the interests of his community.²¹

²¹ Rapp successfully pressed charges against defector Jacob Schaal for libel in June 1809 (Butler Co. (PA) Quarter Session Docket, No. 1 (1804-28), 65 Old Economy Village, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harmony Society Collection); in Sept 1863 Harmonist agents had Peter Ulrich imprisoned ostensibly for debt to the Society but actually in response to the critical letters he sent back to Germany about Rapp (Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ:

As hard-working, law-abiding, productive citizens the Harmonists defended their worth as a social movement and part of the large communal collective.

Similarly, some members, once the community rose above its struggles, decided that they should have a personal share in Harmony Society's success. Keep in mind that these members had agreed to donate their possessions and labor to the maintenance of the Society. Further, that these members received no wages but Rapp provided them with shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, child and elder care, and spiritual sustenance as per the Articles of incorporation.²² By all accounts the living conditions while simple were not lacking in material comforts.²³ The Harmonists ate well and often, wore clothing of silk and woolen textiles from their own mills, and although they were expected to work hard were given ample leisure time to pursue hobbies such as music and gardening and study the Bible.²⁴ All of these pursuits helped perfect the members

Associate University Presses, 1968), 225); during escheat proceedings against Harmony in 1822, Rapp presented a long statement reiterating the goals of Harmony Society and their value to the community (George Rapp, Letter to Samuel Worcester, October 9, 1822, reprinted in Karl J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 238-241).

²² Articles of Association, March 9, 1827, reprinted in Aaron Williams, *The Harmony Society at Economy, Penn'a* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015) (Originally printed Pittsburgh: W.H. Haven, 1866), 129-131.

²³ Thomas F. Gordon, *A Gazetteer of the State of PA* (Philadelphia: Belknap, 1833), 113; Isaac Harris, ed., *Harris' General Business Directory of the Cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny and Also the Most Flourishing and Important Towns and Cities of PA, OH, W NY, VA, &c.* (Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson, 1839 and 1841), 204; Karl Arndt, "Three Hungarian Travelers Visit Economy," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (April LXXIX, No. 2, April, 1955), 199.

²⁴ Giles Avery, "Visit to Economy by Shaker Elder Giles Avery of New Lebanon, New York in 1862," transcribed by June Sprigg, Curator, Hancock Shaker Village, 7; Rebecca Harding Davis, "The Harmonists," *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XVII, No. CIII (May 1866), 535; James Silk Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, III Volumes (London, 1842), Vol II, 205-236; Donald MacDonald, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald, 1824-26*, XIV, No. 2 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Publications, 1942), 217; A Spectator. "Economy." In *Harris' Pittsburgh & Allegheny Directory*

and created a more enjoyable existence for the community. Unlike many communal societies, the Harmonists retained a considerable degree of privacy, mostly living in family or fraternal units in separate dwellings with private gardens.²⁵

Although Rapp dictated the behavior and practices of the community, enforcement seems to largely have been largely benign, Rapp simply expected the individual to conform. If members felt they could not abide by the rules of the Society they left, usually of their own volition although in rare cases by Rapp's ruling. It is difficult to argue that the Harmonists were "brain-washed" as the media and outsiders commonly assert in the modern era reflecting their struggle to understand why rational people would willingly give up the assets and personal sovereignty to a charismatic leader.

While there were certainly situational factors such as language barrier, lack of assets, and the difficulty of successfully living alone on the frontier that would encourage members to remain in community even if they had doubts about Rapp as prophet or about communalism, celibacy and other Harmonist practices; nothing ultimately prevented a determined defector from leaving.²⁶ Although Rapp was

with the Environs &c, with their trades, businesses or occupations, and the public, literary, scientific and religious institutions, edited by Isaac Harris, 203-205 (Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson, 1829), 204.

²⁵ Sandor Farkas, *Utazas Eszak Amerikaban*, October 4, 1831, trans. John A. Lukacs, reprinted in *Economy on the Ohio, 1826-1834: The Harmony Society During the Period of its Greatest Power and Influence and its Messianic Crisis George Rapp's Third Harmony: A Documentary History*, ed. Karl Arndt, (Worcester, MA: Harmony Society Press, 1984), 199.

²⁶ Demographic records indicate that members left occasionally alone, more often in couples, often to elope, and as groups of defectors at certain key points in Harmonist history. (Eileen Aiken English, *Demographic Directory of the Harmony Society* (Clinton, NY: Richard W. Couper Press, 2011)

influential and it was difficult to go it alone, members retained their free will and ability to secede. While critics might point to the authoritarian nature of the community's leadership, Harmony Society provided hundreds of German immigrants with a stable home, met their material needs and furnished a spiritual and cultural support system. For many who struggled alone on the frontier, this model would have offered an attractive alternative to market capitalism and individualism.

The Harmonists received many visitors from Europe and other Utopian communalists. The travel notes of these visitors reflect their knowledge of other contemporary Utopian projects and their discussion of these with Rapp and the other leaders they met on their journeys.²⁷ This transmission of Utopian threads between communities helped weave them together into a movement and tie them to future communities. Works like John Humphrey Noyes' (Oneida) *American Socialisms* and Charles Nordhoff's *Communitic Societies of the United States* both published in the nineteenth century, and republished in the 1960s and 70s reflected contemporary interest into Utopian communalism.²⁸ Rapp created a communal alternative to mainstream individualism that allowed the Harmonists to first survive, and then thrive economically in America. Although internally they operated communally, externally they proved highly successful capitalists, leveraging their initial investment into a diverse portfolio

²⁷ Farkas, *Utazas*, 204-205; Davis, "The Harmonists," 531.

²⁸ John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, (1870). Reprint New York: Dover, 1961; Nordhoff, *Communitic Societies*.

including oil wells, railroads, and manufacturing. In the twentieth century, Kerista took up the Harmonist thread of shared property and capitalist exchange with the outside world and modernized it for the computer age.

Modern Times

Josiah Warren took a markedly different approach to economic matters than Rapp, rejecting coercion and authoritarianism and even shared property. Josiah Warren was an anarchist, that is, he believed that the coercive structures of the state bred corruption and were toxic to individual freedom. Like the Diggers, Warren created an alternative to capitalism, taking yet another approach to the problems created by the market revolution. He attacked the exploitation of the wage laborer by creating "cost the limit of price" as an alternative to the supply and demand system of pricing goods.²⁹ Warren's Time Store in Cincinnati put these concepts into practical use, successfully creating an economic system in which workers could trade their labor or their production for other products or labor. Essentially, the store moderated a clearing house for a barter system for labor and production. Initially, Warren stocked the store with high-demand items that he then sold not for profit, but for the cost plus overhead (rent, power, etc.) and Warren's labor in selling the item as recorded by a prominently situated time clock.

²⁹ Stephen Pearl Andrews, *The Labor Dollar*, reprinted from the *Radical Review* (Boston: Benjamin R. Tucker, Publisher, 1881), 8. [Andrews published many of Warren's ideas, becoming the greatest propagandist for individualist anarchism and cost the limit of price]

Warren hated haggling, and appreciated that this setup discouraged such practice as the longer a transaction took to complete, the greater the cost of the item.³⁰

Individuals could come into the store with items they had produced and sell them to Warren for the price of the labor required to make the item plus the cost of materials. Alternatively, they could purchase items using labor notes, essentially an IOU for labor to be performed. For example, a painter could purchase a chair for the promise to paint a house, or whatever would be equivalent in hours worked. Warren did not try to compete with capitalist businesses in Cincinnati, instead he sought to offer a different model. By the time he shut the store down in 1849, according to Warren's estimates, hundreds of customers actively used it.³¹ This differs dramatically from the Free Store concept of the Diggers, in that although it also challenged the retail system, Warren's Time Store involved the exchange of labor for goods while the Diggers gave away items they had accumulated through their own labor.

Warren applied the logic of non-coercion and labor exchange to his children. In the nineteenth century society expected men to provide for their families and they controlled any income earned by their wives and children.³² Warren described a

³⁰ James Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles Publisher, Inc., 1970), 21.

³¹ Josiah Warren, *The Quarterly Letter, Devoted Mainly to Showing the Practical Applications and Progress of "Equity." A Subject of Serious Importance to All Classes, but Most Immediately TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF LABOR AND SORROW!* Vol. 1, No. 1, (Cliftondale, MA: Josiah Warren, October, 1867), 7. No corroborating sources were found.

³² Myron Brenton, "The Breadwinner," in *Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, eds. Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), 96; Robert Gould, "Measuring Masculinity by the Size of a Paycheck," in *Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, eds. Deborah Sarah David and

conversation with his seven-year-old daughter about earning a living. He explained to her that he and his wife earned their support through their labor and asked the child how she contributed to the family. The girl expressed a desire to contribute but lacked the understanding of how she might do so. Her father encouraged her to work for the benefit of the family, suggesting that she might wash the dishes, thus freeing her parents to do productive labor. Warren emphasized to his daughter that her labor must be voluntary, she should not feel pressured through guilt or fear of potential punishment.³³ While what Warren proposed differed little from the common family practice of assigning children chores, he put the emphasis on the child's sovereignty, the right to choose voluntarily to participate after learning about their options. Rhetorically Warren proposed that any person should be free to do any labor, however, in practice it appears he guided females towards more traditionally gendered tasks.

Warren's attacks on the apprenticeship system represented another facet of this concern. He argued that requiring young men to work for a master for three to seven years with no control over their body or their labor equaled slavery. While today we frown upon equating anything with chattel slavery as a diminishment of the catastrophic consequences of that institution, in the nineteenth century it was a common rhetorical

Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976) 113; Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 11-12.

³³ Josiah Warren, *Practical Applications of the Elementary Principles of "True Civilization" to the Minute Details of Everyday Life, Being Part III, the Last of the "True Civilization" Series, and the Facts and Conclusions of Forty-Seven Years of Study and Experiments of Reform Movement From Communism to and in Elementary Principles, Found in a Direction Exactly Opposite to and Away from Communism, But Leading Directly to All the Harmonic Results Aimed at by Communism* (Princeton, MA; Josiah Warren, 1873), 111-112.

device for reformers to use. Masters held their apprentices through indenture, with the permission of their parents for the duration of their training, typically until age twenty-one.³⁴ As such, they were at the mercy of their masters, unable to leave or earn money for their labor, with no control over the terms of their service. Warren created a vocational school in which the children exercised free will over their decisions to stay and learn or to do otherwise. He believed that all young people should be prepared to become self-supporting citizens by being taught useful trades. Warren's trade school did not compel students to commit to a certain timeframe of apprenticeship or punish them for not working. He took the view that if students wanted to benefit from their opportunity they would work harder to learn quicker and be able to move into the workforce. Warren offered equality of opportunity, it was up to the students to do something with that. Warren's system returned sovereignty to the worker and allowed them the choice of exchanging their labor for skills education and practice, and the freedom to end the arrangement at any time. Further, because the students were not indentured to Warren, there was no incentive to drag out the education process needlessly for the purpose of exploiting the students' labor. As a result, students mastered the necessary skills much more efficiently allowing them to join the workforce and support themselves much sooner.³⁵

³⁴ Daniel Jacoby, "Apprenticeship in the United States," Economic History.net, accessed August 9, 2018, <https://eh.net/encyclopedia/apprenticeship-in-the-united-states/>.

³⁵ Josiah Warren, *Practical Details in Equitable Commerce, Showing the Workings, in Actual Experiment, during a Series of Years, of the Social Principles Expounded in the Works Called 'Equitable Commerce' by the Author of This, and 'The Science of Society, by Stephen P. Andrews* (New York: Fowlers & Wells, 1854), 46.

Warren described the agreement, "My object was, among other things, to teach him to need no control from anyone; that he was to have all the proceeds of his own labor, pay his board to the company, exercise his own judgment or taste to his clothing, and do whatever he chose with his surplus time or property."³⁶ The young people paid Warren for their education, room, and board with their labor as they learned their craft including carpentry, shoemaking, music, and other skills. Warren took his ideals a step further than reforming apprenticeship. He argued for the sovereignty of children just as he did for adults. Warren believed that children had the right of free will and control over their persons. "Let them learn to place their children upon their own separate and distinct interests; *entirely separate and distinct* from the interests of their parents, masters, rulers or advisers. In other words, let them learn that children, as human beings, have human rights; the right of *Individuality*, the right of sovereignty, as much as an adult, to be exercised within the same limits, *i.e., at their own cost*, and that the exercise of these rights is indispensable to further education."³⁷ Warren believed that if children were shown the reason for demands made upon them they would voluntarily choose to comply. The use of corporal punishment or other forms of coercion disregarded a child's right to sovereignty and did not, in Warren's view teach them anything other than submission. To be a responsible adult, children must learn how to assess situations and make wise decisions; keeping them dependent impeded this maturation process.

³⁶ Warren, *True Civilization*, 113.

³⁷ Warren, *Practical Details*, 64.

When Warren established Modern Times on the basis of individual sovereignty and cost the limit of price, he expected an initial need to look to New York for income, but anticipated that once the village grew to critical mass it would become unnecessary to look elsewhere for sustenance. Further, because they sold the land at cost and did not require communal ownership, Warren and Andrews offered opportunity for people with little savings to become homeowners. In *Equitable Commerce*, Warren writes of his concern to make it possible for the working class to become homeowners, "to make the difference between everyone having a home upon the earth instead of one half of men and women being homeless."³⁸ Although a libertarian in his desire for small, or better yet no, government and in his demand for the protection of individual liberties, Warren diverged from modern libertarians in his concern for providing equal access to education and opportunities for all to thrive economically.

Like many progressives today, his concern was to resolve the problem that workers did not receive a living wage that allowed them the stability of homeownership. Homeownership represented the movement of workers from subsistence to comfort and upward mobility. As the United States moved from artisans and home-based labor to factories and wage labor, Warren believed that individuals had lost sovereignty over their labor, their production and their lives. That the individual sovereignty aspect of the

³⁸ Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce: a New Development of Principles as Substitutes for Laws and Governments, for the Harmonious Adjustment and Regulation of the Pecuniary, Intellectual, and Moral Intercourse of Mankind, Proposed as Elements of New Society*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1852. https://books.google.com/books?id=9hIsAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=warren+equitable+commerce&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiGzvCg_dnVAhXr1IMKHWRBx8Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=warren%20equitable%20commerce&f=false, 81.

community also attracted a wide range of free thinkers and extremists proved an unexpected consequence of Modern Times' policy of tolerance. While Warren's critique of how capitalism treated wage laborers fit into the broader context of concerns over industrialization and the market economy that began in the Jacksonian era, his solution to the problem differed from mainstream reform.³⁹ Reformers in the nineteenth century targeted workplace safety, length of workday, living wages and other concerns of the growing wage labor class by petitioning for legislative regulation, and pressuring employers to alter their practices.⁴⁰ Labor Unionism did not take off as an approach to countering the negative aspects of industrialization until after Warren's time. Rather than reforming the existing system, Warren instead created an alternative to market capitalism and some of its structures.

Warren himself viewed Modern Times as a successful experiment in that for thirteen years it offered a viable alternative to mainstream economics, institutions and values. Members lived in a crime-free community with relative comfort, although not material wealth, they built homes for homeless workers, and enjoyed the freedom to practice and believe according to their consciences without (internal) persecution or ridicule. The community weathered the Panic of 1857 without concern because Warren had not tied their economy to that of the outside world. They did not rely on dollars or

³⁹ Stewart Davenport, *Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 112, 141; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 36-27; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 23-25, 285.

⁴⁰ Sellers, *Market Revolution*, 287.

speculation profits for their income. Women and children had far more freedom and control over their bodies and labor than outside Modern Times.

Andrews and Warren had entered into the project with the idea that it should offer an example to others, not that it should be permanent or result in a mass social change. As with Frances Wright's belief about emancipation, Warren did not believe that mainstream America was ready for individual sovereignty or equitable commerce but he hoped that over time, with education, people would become more enlightened.⁴¹ Modern Times served as a stage in the development of political, economic and social change ideas for the members of the community. It was not intended as an end in itself but an experiment to put into practice Warren's concepts and allowed him to refine them based on what transpired in real life. His ideas had long-reaching influence among American anarchists such as Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker, and in the English Owenite community, leading to the formation of co-ops and labor exchanges on Warren's model.⁴²

In the twentieth century, the economy had changed in many ways. By the end of World War II, the United States had come out of its Depression and the government had

⁴¹ Stephen Pearl Andrews, preface to Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce: a New Development of Principles as Substitutes for Laws and Governments, for the Harmonious Adjustment and Regulation of the Pecuniary, Intellectual, and Moral Intercourse of Mankind, Proposed as Elements of New Society*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1852.
https://books.google.com/books?id=9hIsAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=warren+equitable+commerce&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiGzvCg_dnVAhXr1IMKHWRBx8Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=warren%20equitable%20commerce&f=false, v-vi.

⁴² Martin, *Men Against the State*, 103, 88.

begun the process of creating a social safety net including unemployment insurance, welfare, and healthcare for low income and elderly citizens.⁴³ However, despite the changes in the system, and the abundance enjoyed in the post-war era, many workers, particularly women and people of color found themselves left out of the American Dream. People both inside the government, and outside, including academics like William Appleman Williams and John Maynard Keynes offered critiques of capitalism and suggestions to improve the system to make life better for all Americans.⁴⁴ Utopian communalists continued to offer alternatives to the market economy, to wage labor, and to private property because they grew frustrated with the inability of the government to identify and solve the problems of economic inequality.

Kerista

Kerista began shortly after the Diggers left San Francisco and they built on the Diggers foundation of outreach projects. They viewed the Digger's work as "a great way to use your time! Helping other people, being funky, and having fun at it."⁴⁵ Kerista

⁴³ John Morton Blum, *The Progressive Presidents: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 130-131; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage, 1955), 308, 242; Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 196-198, 203; Steve Fraser, "The Labor Question," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75-76.

⁴⁴ Alan Brinkley, "The New Deal and the Idea of State," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, eds. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 108-109; William Appleman Williams, *The Great Evasion: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of Karl Marx and on the Wisdom of Admitting the Heretic into the Dialogue About America's Future* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964).

⁴⁵ Even Eve, "Where Have All the Hippies Gone?" *Utopian Eyes: A Journal of the Utopian Movement* Issue 1 (Performing Arts Society [Kerista]: San Francisco, 1975), 5, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

identified economic inequality as a social problem that they needed and wanted to address. "What we are dealing with is that there are big inequalities of wealth in the world and a lot of suffering due to Not Enough, of many things. We don't feel capable of ignoring this fact, nor are we grim altruistic types who begrudge a good time and radiate anhedonic vibes."⁴⁶ Further they described in their project in one publication as "The Keristan Plan to Help the World Situation," a utopian perspective on economic and social equality.⁴⁷

Kerista, however, used a more Rappite model to create an internal structure of shared property and labor and an external engagement with the capitalist market. This represents reconciliation as an alternative to capitalism, a more human face on capitalism in which the workers owned the means of production and sharing resources allowed people to find work that was personally fulfilling without having to worry about survival. Both men and women in Kerista worked in a variety of jobs both inside and outside the community. Kerista never completely rejected the capitalist model and reflected this both in their engagement with the market as resellers of Apple computers and in their retention of some private property even for committed members. The old tribe had survived on what they could include government assistance and Jud's military pension. The new tribe of Kerista, however, was far more financially stable. The

⁴⁶ Bro Jud, "Meaning of Philanthropy," *Utopian Eyes: A Journal of the Utopian Movement* Issue 1 (Performing Arts Society [Kerista]: San Francisco, 1975), 31-36, Kerista, CS349-3-14 Center for Communal Studies Archive, University of Southern Indiana Collection, 36.

⁴⁷ "Keristan Plan to Help the World Situation," Kerista Publications, CS349-2-5 Center for Communal Studies Archive, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

standards to which new members committed included an agreement to participate in Project SISTER (Surplus Income Sharing Through Equalitarian Relationships). Note that this refers to surplus income.

The community set a basic income level (not specified in their documents) and those with outside jobs contributed their income in excess of that to subsidize those who earned less than the basic level.⁴⁸ Kerista Village Financial Trust Complex managed the funds and determined the needs of the group with the goal of limiting waste and making sustainable ecological choices for the community. Kerista chartered with the state of California the Performing Arts Society Inc. as an educational and arts non-profit for their projects in the community.⁴⁹ SISTER proved more consequential in the early years of Kerista. In 1978 Keristans (there is some dispute among former members about who) started Abacus as a housecleaning business. At some point it evolved into an Apple resale enterprise. "At its height, Abacus generated \$35 million in sales, employed 125 people, and serviced dozens of blue-chip corporations like Pacific Gas & Electric, United Airlines and Pacific Bell."⁵⁰ From here, Kerista diversified into a travel agency, rock band (SexKult), and Utopian Technology, a publisher of computer newsletter *The*

⁴⁸ Stacey Barwick et al., "Utopian Capitalism in the Haight: The Kerista Commune," [no publisher or date], 2, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14. Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection, [This article provides the amount as \$7953.45 in 1988 but does not cite a source]

⁴⁹ Kerista Village (A Cooperative Village of Artists and Psychosocial Research Scientists), *Introductory Handbook*, Kerista Publications, CS349-2-5, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁵⁰ Leander Kahney, "Free Love and Selling Macs," *Wired*, April 23, 2002, accessed August 17, 2018, <https://www.wired.com/2002/04/free-love-and-selling-macs/>.

Node and rock music journal *RockHEAD*.⁵¹ Communal scholar Michael Cummings observed on his visit to the community that, "While Kerista financed a number of free publications, we could never get beyond the officially crafted expression — “x ” percent of net income is “made available for philanthropy ” — to a concrete figure for actual dollars given. The only actual charity we learned of was a few hundred dollars given to a poor Jamaican household."⁵²

Kerista used the communal property model to ensure that they could provide for all members. They researched nineteenth century and science fiction Utopianism for ideas on how to shape a community that would foster equality and allow members leisure time to pursue art projects and community outreach.⁵³ As member Geoph explained, "We view our efforts as a synthesis of the efforts of the thousands of social pioneers that preceded [sic] us..."⁵⁴ Members with outside work could continue at their jobs, and Kerista created wage earning opportunities for its members through its entrepreneurial enterprises. This blending of engagement with the outside world and

⁵¹ Kerista Tribe, flyer, undated, Kerista Publications, CS349-2-5, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Even Eve, "Ruled By Rock: the Party Culture," *Utopia 2: Blueprint for Heaven on Earth*, Vol 4, Issue 3 (Winter 1988), 1-2, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁵² Michael Cummings, Lyman Tower Sargent and Lise Leibacher-Ouvrard, "A Tale of Two Communes: A Scholar and his Errors," Federation of Intentional Communities, accessed October 19, 2018, <https://www.ic.org/wiki/tale-two-communes-scholar-errors/>.

⁵³ "Origins: Neotribal Roots," *Utopia 2: Blueprint for Heaven on Earth*, Vol 4, Issue 3 (Winter 1988), 3-6, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection, 3; "Keristan Plan," University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁵⁴ Geoph Kozeny, "RSVP: A Basis for Interaction," *RSVP (Redeeming Social Value Project) News*, Vol 1, Issue 2 & 3 (Spring/Summer 1977), 1.

internal sharing of resources allowed Kerista to temper the harsh realities of modern capitalism with the Utopian values of economic equality and cooperative living. Central to their system was commitment to the group, "As a Keristan you are totally accountable to the members of the cooperative in all financial matters."⁵⁵ Transparency in their communications, whether regarding income and spending, emotions, or sexuality, helped Kerista to function effectively while breaking down standards such as private property and consumerism. Kerista specifically targeted materialism, providing members with a "sumptuary code: My partners and I evaluate what kinds of expenses and consumption patterns represent 'superfluous economic activity' (a standard of living too extravagant to be shared by all people on the planet). We vote on limiting our own personal consumption & expenses so as not to be into superfluous economic activity, and I abide by the group's vote."⁵⁶ In reality, however, members did not always abide by these values. Even Eve recalls "People felt free to spend money on all kinds of things in a way that they would never do if they were solely responsible for balancing their chequebooks and making ends meet. (And, as it turns out, when the accounting was done after the commune's demise, we found that our communal fund had been running in the red for years.)"⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Even Eve, "TASK: The Tribal Accounting System of Kerista," *Utopia 2: Blueprint for Heaven on Earth*, Vol 4, Issue 3 (Winter 1988), 25, 28, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-14, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁵⁶ Even Eve, "The Five Fundamentals of the Keristan Economic and Philanthropic System," *The Keristan Islands Best Friendship Cooperative: Introductory Handbook* (undated), unpagged, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-13, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

⁵⁷ Even Eve, "Afterword: What happened to Kerista?" *Communities Journal* No. 80/81 (Spring/Summer 1993), 31.

In terms of allowing Keristans a balance of income-earning work and leisure time the system worked well. Kerista, in the same pattern of many of its predecessors and contemporaries, struggled with ensuring that someone took care of all the less desirable, but nonetheless necessary, internal work. Visitors and members alike criticized the lack of cleanliness in the Kerista homes. Original member Even Eve bemoaned, "Our living spaces were disgustingly messy and unaesthetic, largely because no one felt any personal responsibility for them. It was everyone's - and therefore, no one's - problem."⁵⁸ Because the Keristans shared their living spaces, they also shared responsibility for cleaning them. Given that Jud had no problem with creating endless rules, it seems a bit uncharacteristic for him not to have better controlled this aspect of Keristan life; that is, the community guidelines included this concern, but they appear not to have enforced it.⁵⁹ Perhaps, Jud's comfort level with filth proved higher than that of his cohabiters, although Kerista acknowledged the issue in their publications, "We are not the world's best housekeepers, but our space is very comfortable and we think the motto, "Never do today what can be put off 'til tomorrow" is more relevant than "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."⁶⁰ Shared space and resources may have allowed the

⁵⁸ Even Eve, "Afterword," 31.

⁵⁹ "Clean up your own mess" appears as item 20 on the Keristan Social Standards as of October 27, 1983 accessed October 19, 2018, <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/84.html> and item 18 on Utopian Social Contract of Kerista Village <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html> <http://www.kerista.com/kerdocs/26.html>.

⁶⁰ "Art, Leisure, and Recreation," *The Keristan Islands Best Friendship Cooperative: Introductory Handbook* (undated), unpagged, Kerista Publications, CS349-3-13, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

Keristans to focus their efforts on philanthropy and art, however, their noncoercive ideals interfered with internal harmony. Finding a balance between taking care of business and allowing members freedom proved challenging for Utopian communities across the decades.

Diggers

While Kerista claimed to value equality and freedom more than they actually practiced them, the Diggers pushed those ideals to a logical if anarchist extreme that created its own challenges. Digger philanthropy proved inspiring to Kerista, although unlike the Diggers Kerista retained market capitalism as a mode to support their community. The Diggers did not just criticize capitalism, they rejected it outright as inimical to their ideal of Free. R.G. Davis founded the San Francisco Mime Troupe as a vehicle to create discomfort and force audiences to engage with nonconformist ideas on race, gender, capitalism, imperialism and other mainstream structures. Davis and his troupe were well-educated and well-grounded in both traditional theatre and radical politics. They employed theatre styles such as commedia dell'arte, mime and minstrelry and especially, breaking the fourth wall, to convey radical ideas that often enraged their audiences and the local authorities.⁶¹ Because of their commitment to theatre as a democratic institution, available to the masses, the SFMT often conflicted with the city of San Francisco over permitting and similar issues, leading to the legal troubles

⁶¹ R.G. Davis, *The San Francisco Mime Troupe: The First Ten Years* (Palo Alto, CA: Ramparts Press, 1975), 63.

mentioned above.⁶² Because they did not sell tickets but relied on donations, the group lacked the funds to mount a defense.

The Diggers developed as an offshoot of the SFMT, taking the critiques of society and turning them into action. The *modus operandi* of the Diggers involved imagining the change they wanted and then devising ways to create it. For example, being free of capitalism, free of exploitation began with removing money from the equation. The Diggers provided needed services in the Haight for free, with no expectation from those who participated except to open their minds to new possibilities. Historian Timothy Hodgdon aptly untangled the Diggers understanding of property from what appeared to be a charitable act. "Their free food was not an act of charity to the destitute, but a declaration that, if private property cohered in the illegitimate hoarding of resources, then the food they scrounged (and sometimes stole) already belonged to whomever would join them in the partaking of it."⁶³ Peter Coyote recalls that originally, he thought in terms of giving to those who needed more but was corrected by Emmett Grogan. "The point was to do something that you wanted to do, for your own reasons. If you wanted to live in a world with free food, create it and participate in it. Feeding people was not an act of charity but an act of responsibility to a personal vision."⁶⁴ This contrasts with the Keristan approach of using the capitalist system to generate income

⁶² R.G. Davis, *Mime Troupe*, 65.

⁶³ Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counterculture Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), xxvii.

⁶⁴ Peter Coyote, "Playing for Keeps," The Digger Archives, accessed July 4, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/freefall/forkeeps.html>.

and then redistributing this to those who had less. Like Kerista, and unlike the Harmonists and Nashoba, the Diggers brought their philosophy to the outside world and actively engaged outsiders in their Freedom project.

Perhaps the Diggers are most famous for feeding the masses of hippies who gathered in Haight Ashbury beginning in 1966. Members would practice "garbage yoga", that is, canvassing neighborhood grocers, restaurants and other food purveyors for supplies that they would have thrown away, for example, stale bread or overripe produce.⁶⁵ David Simpson remembers that the purveyors were happy to participate and see the items go to good use. Emmett Grogan notes that while they could have stolen all they needed in the short term, in order to create a program with lasting impact the Diggers needed to maintain good relations with local businesses.⁶⁶ These items would be turned into massive batches of stew served from twenty-gallon milk cans,⁶⁷ or other simple, nourishing meals at seven kitchens, like that of All Saints' Episcopal Church, that the Diggers would then feed at no cost to anyone who was hungry.⁶⁸

They popularized whole wheat bread with their Digger Bread baked in coffee cans to a large mushroom shape. Sympathetic outsiders supported the cause. Articles in

⁶⁵ David Simpson, "The Diggers, Petrolia, CA." Interview by Deborah Altus. *60s Commune Project*, November 14, 1995, 6, 14.

⁶⁶ Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (New York: Citadel, 1990), 248.

⁶⁷ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 246.

⁶⁸ Laurence L. Holben, *For All the Saints: The First Hundred Years of All Saints Episcopal Church* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2010), 277.

the *Berkeley Barb* interviewed a Palo Alto electrical engineer, Walt Reynolds, who volunteered for the Diggers when not working a straight job, baking over one hundred and fifty loaves of healthy bread a week to give to hungry hippies.⁶⁹ At their peak, the Diggers fed hundreds of people in Golden Gate Park.⁷⁰

FREE FOOD GOOD HOT STEW
RIPE TOMATOES FRESH FRUIT
BRING A BOWL AND A SPOON TO
THE PANHANDLE AT ASHBURY STREET
4 PM 4PM 4PM 4PM
FREE FOOD *EVERYDAY* FREE FOOD
IT'S FREE BECAUSE IT'S YOURS
the diggers⁷¹

While the Diggers would accept donations of food to their project, they turned up their noses at donation of cash. More than that, they burned cash donations publicly to demonstrate their rejection of capitalism and the straight world and its institutions.⁷²

A Digger might invite visitors to Free Food in the park to enter the Free Frame of Reference. This was a large, six by six foot yellow-painted frame built of two by fours. "People were encouraged to look through it and 'frame' any piece of reality through this 'free frame of reference,' which allowed them a physical metaphor to reconstruct (or

⁶⁹ "Bake-in Spreads Joy in the Haight," *Berkeley Barb*, June 30, 1967, 11; "Lots of Bread's Good for All," *Berkeley Barb*, July 14, 1967, reproduced on The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/diggers/digbread.html>.

⁷⁰ Kristine McKenna and David Hollander, *Notes from a Revolution: Com/co, the Diggers & the Haight* (Santa Monica, CA: Foggy Notion Books, 2012), 9.

⁷¹ "Digger Free Food Flyer," reprinted in Laurence L. Holben, *For All the Saints: The First Hundred Years of All Saints Episcopal Church* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2010), 276.

⁷² Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 248.

deconstruct) their worldview at their own pace and direction."⁷³ This post-modern method of opening the minds of people they encountered reflects the sixties' emphasis on awareness and broadening consciousness. Supporters of the Diggers also sported miniature versions of the Frame around their necks.⁷⁴ In this case, rather than using psychedelic drugs, the Diggers employed a simple prop. By engaging with the public in this way, the Diggers sought to change social attitudes by changing the way people viewed their world. They recognized that social change begins with the individual. The Diggers shared this quest with many other activists in the sixties but their approach differed in that it invited the public in and allowed them to form their own conclusions. It was a less confrontational, less didactic method of changing peoples' minds.

Another example of the Diggers money-free approach to living was the Free Stores.⁷⁵ People would drop off things they no longer needed, businesses would donate stock they could not sell. The Diggers would offer these to locals at Free Stores where one could pick out the things one needed and take them for free. Signs in the store explained the concept, take only what you need, drop off any surplus you have. People quickly came to understand that theft was meaningless as everything was free. Peter Coyote illustrated how this shifted their perspective on ownership,

⁷³ Peter Coyote, "The Digger Concept of Free," The Digger Archives, accessed June 28, 2018, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Digger_Concept_of_%27Free%27.

⁷⁴ Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 250.

⁷⁵ "Trip Without a Ticket," Digger Papers, 3, undated, San Francisco Historical Society.

One day, on my shift as "manager", I noticed an obviously poor black woman, furtively stuffing clothing into a large paper bag. When I approached her, she turned away from the bag coolly, pretending that it wasn't hers. In a conventional store, her ruse would have made sense because she knew she was stealing. Smiling pleasantly, I returned the bag to her. "You can't steal here " I said.

She got indignant and said, "I wasn't stealing!"

"I know" I said amiably "But you thought you were stealing. You can't steal here because it's a Free Store. Read the sign, everything is free! You can have the whole fucking store if you feel like it. You can take over and tell me to get lost.

She looked at me long and hard, and I went to the rack and fingered a thick, warm, sweater. "This?" I queried. She looked at it critically then shook her head, "No, I don't like the color. What about that one?" We spent a good part of the morning "shopping" together. About a week later, she returned with a tray of donuts, "seconds" from a bakery somewhere. She strolled in casually, set them on the counter for others to share, and went to browse the racks.⁷⁶

Shoppers became more thoughtful about their actual needs and became more confident that they did not need to stockpile goods as there would be opportunities to shop as necessary. As people benefitted from the offerings at the store, they began bringing in items they did not use or want any more to pass on to other customers.

Interestingly, the owner of a local store paid the rent for the space the Diggers used for the Free Store in the Haight as a way of contributing to the cause.⁷⁷ By removing money from the system, the Diggers allowed everyone to meet their needs regardless of income and created a barrier to their co-optation of their ideas by the

⁷⁶ Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1998), 90.

⁷⁷ Peter Berg and Judy Goldhaft, "Interview with Marty Lee and Eric Noble," *The Digger Archives*, http://www.diggers.org/oralhistory/pb_jg_0482.htm, accessed June 29, 2018.

capitalist mainstream. With no profit involved, the Diggers felt they were insulated from commercial interests.⁷⁸ Further, they aimed to shift shoppers' perspective on materialism and consumerism. If items were all free then they were equal in value and available to all. This removed the status assigned to items based on cost, and the impetus to own more stuff, just for the sake of ownership.

Some Digger actions criticized the state and capitalist institutions in more abstract ways, that is they did not represent an overt attack. The "Intersection Game," for example, encouraged participants to ignore traffic laws and walk through the cars in the Haight *en masse* disrupting traffic flow to the consternation of the police. The idea behind the Game was to open participants' eyes to the ways in which regulations impeded their freedom of movement and acted to funnel pedestrians towards businesses rather than allowing them to take the most convenient route to their destination. Sometimes the Game included puppets or dancing, but always the goal was to draw passers-by into their guerilla theater to become life-actors in the experience.⁷⁹

The Diggers made more radical public statements that went far beyond their actions on subverting capitalism. Like many groups in the Haight in the sixties, they made regular use of a Gestetner machine to create flyers to publicize their events, spread radical food for thought and make locals aware of problems in the area. When

⁷⁸ Coyote, *Sleeping*, 35.

⁷⁹ "Diggers' New Frame: The Game," *Berkeley Barb*, 3, no. 18 (November 4, 1966), 1.

mainstream press refused their ads, the Diggers turned to Com/Co an underground press that focused on getting out factual information more so than alternative papers like *The Oracle* that were more cultural in emphasis.⁸⁰ Emmett Grogan asserted that the Digger Papers were a direct response to what they perceived as the selling out of the *Oracle* to local businesses because the *Oracle* promoted the Haight and glossed over its problems. The Digger Papers sought to infuse the populace of the Haight with a new idealism that would move them to act locally to challenge the status quo and create something better.⁸¹ The Diggers provided food, and shelter, as detailed above, but also critical information such as how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and drug overdoses, the importance of proper nutrition and hygiene to health, reporting crimes and abuses (both hip and civic) on the streets as cautionary tales, and offering help to those who needed medical or legal aid, shelter, food or other assistance. Com/Co printed similar information for the Black Panthers and other groups doing community outreach. The *Berkeley Barb* and other underground press, flyers published by the Diggers, posters, bulletin board notices kept the hip community in the Haight in contact with each other and aware of what was going on around them in a time before social media.

The Digger archives labels the following as "The Quintessential Digger Manifesto,"

Money Is An Unnecessary Evil
It is addicting.

⁸⁰ *The Oracle*, San Francisco: Allen Cohen, 1966-1968, 12 issues.

⁸¹ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 238.

It is a temptation to the weak (most of the violent crimes of our city in some way involve money).

It can be hoarded, blocking the free flow of energy and the giant energy-hoards of Montgomery Street will soon give rise to a sudden and thus explosive release of this trapped energy, causing much pain and chaos.

As part of the city's campaign to stem the causes of violence the San Francisco Diggers announce a 30 day period beginning now during which all responsible citizens are asked to turn in their money. No questions will be asked.

Bring money to your local Digger for free distribution to all. The Diggers will then liberate it's [sic] energy according to the style of whoever receives it⁸²

The Diggers Free Bank actually existed for a while in some form. Essentially it operated for the communal Diggers as a sort of slush fund in which people put in the money they had and took out or were allocated funds according to their needs. Coyote acknowledges that the Bank only functioned according to the honesty and altruism of participants. Some people scrupulously accounted for their needs and removed only what they truly needed while others were less conscientious. Consensus decisions allocated funds to those who could convincingly articulate the worth of their requests.

Emmett Grogan viewed it as a reflection of the understanding that centralization in the Haight only served to benefit capitalists operating there. People committed to living free could do so anywhere, and perhaps better away from the Haight.⁸³

Communalism acted as a mechanism for the Diggers to live free in the moment that was hippie Haight Ashbury. It was not a goal in and of itself for them. After leaving San Francisco in the late 1960s, members continued their activism, working for freedom in

⁸² The Quintessential Digger Manifesto, [Cat. No.: DP025], accessed June 28, 2018, <http://www.diggers.org/diggers.htm>.

⁸³ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 291.

different ways. Despite the short time the Diggers existed, the Utopian threads of their legacy stretch to the present. Peter Coyote reflects

In my estimation, the alternative culture won the war, but initiated its changes on such deep cultural levels, that it has not surfaced in the media or political dialogue very often. There is virtually no place in the United States today where one cannot find organic food, alternative medical therapies, environmental, consumer, legal reform, and civil rights groups struggling for progressive change. The political oligarchy struggles to continue their chow- down at the trough, sending confusing signals and explanations to the populace at large, who, though fooled by the details, know enough to stay away from the electoral process in droves. Meanwhile, they look to themselves and their communities for solutions they have long since abandoned hope of from their leaders.

The Digger Family sent spores everywhere, as people realized how caring only for themselves was too easy to be interesting. The liberating potential of "free" was infectious, and more people accepted the challenge of playing their lives in that manner. The country was awash in a new sensibility. Small pockets of people existed everywhere who were intuitively connected to that sensibility and working to express it more fully.⁸⁴

Multiple examples of individuals and groups taking up their banner of community action to challenge the failings of capitalism and embody the utopian society in which they wanted to live support Coyote's estimation. These extend beyond the Haight into greater San Francisco and even further across the United States. The Diggers influenced the founding of Free Stores in New York City and Kansas City as hippies moved back East.⁸⁵ There is still the Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic in the Haight,

⁸⁴ Peter Coyote, " Crossing the Free Frame of Reference," *The Digger Archives*, <http://www.diggers.org/freefall/freefram.html>, accessed June 29, 2018.

⁸⁵ "Talk of the Town," *New Yorker* (Oct. 14, 1967), 49; "Dennis' Free Store?" *The Screw*, Kansas City, KS: [underground press], August 1, 1969, reproduced in *The Digger Archives*, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/free_store_kansas_city.htm.

begun in the 1960s and modelled on the Digger ideals,⁸⁶ although it should be noted that the Diggers criticized the Clinic for profiting off hip youth by pairing with researchers looking into drug addiction and treatment.⁸⁷ Dozens of groups across the country offer free medical aid on this model, providing much needed aid to indigent and transient youth.⁸⁸ Groups across San Francisco provide food for the needy, housing for the homeless, free legal aid, the city even offers free community college to the benefit of both those who cannot afford higher education and businesses who require trained staff. The Free Print Shop operates on the web providing information to San Franciscans about these services.⁸⁹

Peoples Temple

Once it expanded into San Francisco permanently, Peoples Temple established a site for its outreach programs and shifted its structure towards communalism in terms of shared living, and a centralized plan for income and resource distribution. Jones preached socialism not communism. He had no interest in a powerful, centralized state, but rather promoted a voluntary sharing of resources with the goal to create equality for all members. Jones and his followers did not proclaim publicly their ideology for fear

⁸⁶ Carrie Feibel, "A 1960s 'Hippie Clinic' In San Francisco Inspired A Medical Philosophy," *NPR*, December 30, 2013, accessed June 29, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/12/30/571979573/a-1960s-hippie-clinic-in-san-francisco-inspired-a-medical-philosophy?t=1530264555765>.

⁸⁷ Grogan, *Ringolevio*, 290.

⁸⁸ David E. Smith, John Luce, and Ernest A. Dernburg, "The Health of Haight-Ashbury," *Transaction* 7.6 (1970), 41.

⁸⁹ Free Print Shop website, <http://www.freeprintshop.org/index.html>, accessed July 4, 2018.

that outsiders would react with hostility. It was still the Cold War and society treated anything that smacked of communism as unpatriotic and inimical to the American way of life.

The choice to recruit heavily in the inner cities may have expanded the membership dramatically but it did little to finance the programs Jones envisioned. Like many churches, Peoples Temple asked members to tithe. The amount was greater than most other churches, initially ten percent, climbing to over twenty-five percent, then one hundred percent.⁹⁰ Jones expected members, male and female, young and old to work, helping the group's income to rise. However, by the early 1970s, Jones recognized that he needed more income to move forward. He changed the structure of the community and its economics by moving to a communal property system. Members were expected to live simply and donate any goods and income beyond their basic necessities, much like Kerista. Further, Jones had members sign an agreement to do so and to relinquish all claims to those assets if they left Peoples Temple. For many members this was a powerful incentive to remain in Peoples Temple as they lacked the resources to start afresh. The donated property included real estate, used by Peoples Temple to house members, establish businesses such as daycares or rented or sold to raise funds. Jones

⁹⁰ Tithing varies by church, but statistical analysis indicates that while the standard might be 10%, few people donate more than 5% on a regular basis. (James, Russell N., III, and Keely S. Jones. "Tithing and Religious Charitable Giving in America." *Applied Economics*, 43 (2011)); Rebecca Moore, *A Sympathetic History of Jonestown: The Moore Family Involvement in Peoples Temple* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 113.

also preached traveling revival meetings, relying on white guilt to bring in substantial donations from idealistic listeners.

While the counterculture rejected capitalism and the workplace as dehumanizing and inherently unequal, Jones criticized capitalism as oppressive and instituted a communal property system both to gain the assets of his wealthier followers and to create a more equal economy within the group. Certainly, he was very successful in the first endeavor as Peoples Temple's assets were assessed at over ten million dollars after the Jonestown tragedy.⁹¹ Jones' son Jim Jr. asserted he received \$5.7 million after Jones' death that he signed away because he felt it was tainted.⁹² Although the survivors and the families of the dead sued for \$1.8 billion in total, they received a fraction of what was petitioned for.⁹³ Hyacinth Thrush, an elderly black member and the only person to survive on-site at Jonestown received a small settlement in 1983 that did not begin to compensate her for the \$150,000 in assets she calculated she had donated over her twenty-one years in Peoples Temple.⁹⁴

⁹¹ John M. Crewdson, "US Freezes \$10 Million in Temple Money in Bank," *Evansville Press* (Evansville, IN), December, 20, 1978.

⁹² Jim Jones Jr., interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 158.

⁹³ Fondakowski, *Stories*, 301; "120 Awarded Claims Against Peoples Temple," *New York Times*, August 8, 1982; "Peoples Temple to Pay \$9M in Claims from Guyana Deaths," *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 1982.

⁹⁴ Fondakowski, *Stories*, 262-3.

Within the community members were unequal economically. Although in theory everyone received an allowance for necessities and housing was provided for each communal subgroup, favored members including Jones' family received much more than the rank and file membership. Jones placed himself above the law of the community and his followers accepted his special status as appropriate to his exceptional talents and his role as leader. To varying degrees members tolerated the inequity within the community created by special privileges accorded to Jones, his family and his inner circle. Interestingly, Jones' son Stephan does not mention privilege when he describes his childhood, instead he recalls, "I didn't experience the Temple as a healthy place...I lived in terror the first nineteen years of my life. We faced annihilation on a daily basis, but then my father would always swoop in and rescue us, you know, 'It's all okay,' Then you're eternally grateful to him. But you forget, 'Wait a minute, you're the one who created this terror.'"⁹⁵ Some members seem to have been aware of the challenges faced by Stephan and his siblings and allowed them more lenience in regards to their behavior.⁹⁶ Others were less sympathetic including Vern Gosney, "...my experience of him [Stephan] when we were in Peoples Temple was that he was a very angry, very hostile person. Very hateful."⁹⁷ Some members resented Jones' wife Marceline and her

⁹⁵ Stephan Jones, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 56-7.

⁹⁶ Diana Mills, "Recovering the Simple Pleasures in Life," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*, accessed September 24, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=31363.

⁹⁷ Vern Gosney, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 75.

sons for flaunting their greater wealth and status. Other boys in Peoples Temple knew that if they befriended Jones' sons, Stephan, Jimmy, and Lew, they would have more opportunities to go to movies and buy treats. Carolyn Moore justified this as "danger pay" as the Jones family lived under constant [purported] threats.⁹⁸ Jones personally kept up an appearance of frugality, preaching in worn clothes and shoes. He did, however, indulge in food, drugs, and a personal vehicle with bodyguards.

This disparity continued after Peoples Temple relocated to Guyana. At Jonestown, Jones, his family and mistress had larger, more private living quarters and better food.⁹⁹ Granted, the settlement grew more rapidly than originally intended and as a result the group could not build housing fast enough to accommodate everyone comfortably. The community at Jonestown proved less successful at farming than expected and were unable to achieve self-sustenance. Many, although not all, members complained about the lack of food quantity and variety.¹⁰⁰ Juanita Bogue asserts, "I don't ever remember having a plate with meat on it and I was there for a couple of years."¹⁰¹ Further, that members were punished for taking food, "If you were walking by an orange tree, you had been working out in this field all day, and you pick an orange and you eat

⁹⁸ Jeannie Mills, *Six Years with God: Life Inside Reverend Jim Jones' Peoples Temple*. (New York: A&W Publishers Inc., 1979), 215.

⁹⁹ Debbie Layton, *Seductive Poison: a Jonestown Survivor's Story of Life and Death in the Peoples Temple*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 195; Mills, *Six Years*, 215.

¹⁰⁰ Steve Rose, *Jesus and Jim Jones: Behind Jonestown* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 37; Layton *Poison*, 173.

¹⁰¹ Juanita Bogue, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 90.

it, that'd get the living daylight's beaten out of you and you'd be on the chain gang for a couple of weeks."¹⁰²

Others asserted that there was plenty of healthy food available, but acknowledged it was bland and monotonous.¹⁰³ Journalist Charles Krause visited with Leo Ryan and observed, "No one, not even the defectors on our truck, had offered any proof that the nine hundred or so people at Jonestown were being starved, mistreated, or held against their will."¹⁰⁴ Vern Gosney further notes that it was hard to really know other people within the group because the constant surveillance led people to be vigilant about letting down their guard.¹⁰⁵

Like Rapp, Jones faced criticism externally and to a lesser extent internally over his methods of leadership. Jones used coercion, abuse, and threats to keep his followers in line, contributing their assets, labor, and ultimately their lives to his cause in the belief that they would create a Utopia in which all would live harmoniously, and not want for anything. Sadly, Jonestown ended in tragedy without the results they had hoped for. While many members asserted that life in Peoples Temple represented an improvement

¹⁰² Bogue, interview in Fondakowski *Stories*, 91; Wagner concurs saying food supply and quality dropped with big influx of settlers, Leslie Wagner-Wilson, *Slavery of Faith: The Untold Story of the Peoples Temple from the Eyes of a Thirteen Year Old, her Escape from Jonestown at 21 and Life 30 Years Later*. Indianapolis: iUniverse, 2008), 83.

¹⁰³ Melanie Brooks quoted in "Peoples Temple Members Return from Guyana," newspaper unknown, November 30, 1978; Laura Johnston Kohl, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look* (New York: Universe Inc., 2010), 81; Wagner, *Slavery*, 73-74.

¹⁰⁴ Steve Rose, *Jesus and Jim Jones: Behind Jonestown* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 37.

¹⁰⁵ Vern Gosney, interview in Leigh Fondakowski, *Stories from Jonestown* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 75.

over their life on the outside, and that they remained committed to the Utopian ideals that Jones had promoted, many grew disaffected and left or became disillusioned once they learned the truth of Jones' actions.¹⁰⁶ Peoples Temple created a dream of a better world derived from criticisms of the economic and social marginalization of black people due to institutionalized racism and a solution based on cooperation, communalism and love. As with all the examples in this discussion, Peoples Temple fell short of its goals, maintaining many of the failings of outside society while trying to address them.

As they developed their critiques of and remedies to mainstream consumer habits, economic relationships and career expectations, Utopian communalists considered the approaches taken by their contemporaries and predecessors. Frances Wright consulted Robert Owen and George Rapp, Rapp discussed other projects with his visitors including Shakers, Owen, Wright, and Fourierists, Josiah Warren came to Modern Times from New Harmony, and Stephen Pearl Andrews had been a Fourierist. Members moved between communities taking with them lessons from their previous experiences. This bonded Utopian communalism into a movement of people seeking to create a better world for themselves and in many cases provide a model for the mainstream world to adopt.

¹⁰⁶ Vernon Gosney, "Remembering Monica," *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple*, accessed September 24, 2018, https://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=40193; Mills *Six Years*, 307; Layton, *Poison*, 230-236; Tim Stoen, *Love Them to Death* (distributed in US as *Marked for Death*) (North Charleston, SC: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 215.

In the twentieth century this trend continued. People seeking a more cooperative lifestyle and an alternative to nuclear families, alienation in the workplace and wasteful, consumption-driven habits re-considered the communal model of the nineteenth century and modernized it to reflect their current context. Communes used newsletters, meetings, workshops and other pre-internet communication methods to share ideas, seek help for problems, and address mutual concerns. They developed networks to collaborate on projects, create cooperative economies and businesses, and share resources. The movement of Utopian communalists continues into the present through groups like the Federation of Intentional Communities, Communal Studies Association, online education networks like GaiaEducation.org, and use of social media and podcasts to share ideas, teach, and work collaboratively to pursue their goals.

These six communities used newspapers and other media to present their projects to the world, to represent themselves and their projects as worthy of serious consideration. They concentrated a critical mass of numbers and sustained them for a period of time while they furthered their Utopian agendas. When necessary they used the courts or appealed to politicians and institutions to gain support for their projects. While they might not have solved all the societal problems that they identified, these Utopian communities advanced the understanding of these problems and experimented fruitfully with practices to address them. The records that these communities left provide meaningful lessons for the Utopians that follow to build upon and continue to struggle with bettering our world.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

"In his [seventeenth century Digger Gerrard Winstanley's] work *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* he expounded on the theme that 'Reason requires that all women/men benefit from the fruits of the earth.' Since the earth and its products belong to all, the land should be returned to the people to be worked...He does not however, mandate compulsory participation in communism. Thus, we are introduced to the great idea which separates Utopian socialists from communists."¹ Keristans read Utopian literature extensively from More's *Utopia*, to Ray Bradbury, to the more activist Gerald Winstanley of the seventeenth century Diggers. Kerista drew on these Utopian threads as influences as they shaped their own Utopian vision. These threads cross between contemporaries and through the centuries weaving Utopian communalism into a social movement for positive change. Utopian communalism presents a somewhat atypical example of a social movement in that it walks a line between the public and private, criticizing mainstream society and institutions implicitly and offering a model for change without demanding that the rest of society act on it.

According to Sociologist Charles Tilly social movements use the tools of: campaign, WUNC (worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment) displays and political

¹ Bluejay Way, "Utopian Origins: The Utopias, Real and Imaginary, or Pythagoras, the Essenes, Thomas More, the Anabaptists and the Diggers are Examined," no source, date, Kerista, San Francisco Associations, Hippies Collection, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 13.

action.² Looking at Utopian communalism we can see that while typically they did not engage in public activism (except when they felt threatened), actions that are commonly associated with social movements, they did use the tools Tilly describes. Campaign, by Tilly's definition is "sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target audiences,"³ In relation to communalism, these groups created throughout their existence a campaign in the form of presenting an alternative to the contemporary economic, gender and institutional situation arguing, at least implicitly although in some cases directly, that they had created a better way. Although not typically contentious, choosing instead to establish an alternative model in parallel to the status quo, these Utopian communities challenged, by their very existence, mainstream society. While many did not directly appeal to political leadership to acknowledge and accept their alternative, they did offer their ideas and practices to the public.

For example, the Diggers and Kerista published flyers, pamphlets and posters to engage the public in their Utopian vision.⁴ Peoples Temple influenced local papers to

² Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 3.

³ Tilly, *Social Movements*, 3.

⁴ "Trip Without a Ticket," Digger Papers, 3. Undated, San Francisco Historical Society; "The Digger Free Store," The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/free_store.htm, The Diggers, "Dig!" flyer, San Francisco: Communications Company, April 1, 1967, San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Freedom Now," undated, San Francisco Historical Society; The Diggers, "Got It Anyway Who Wants Haight Street This Summer Any Way Got It?" San Francisco: Communications Company, 1967, The Digger Archives, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.diggers.org/bibcit_fulltext_SQL.asp?bib2=19; Kerista Commune, "Culture Sculpture," course flyer, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Kerista Commune, "Design and Development of a Democratically-Run, All Volunteer Civilian Branch of Service," booklet, undated, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection; Kerista Commune, "Gestalt-o-rama Workshop Catalog," undated, CS349-2-5, Kerista Publications, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana Collection.

publish invitations to the public to join in their programs and promoted their activities.⁵ All three of these groups actively invited the public to participate in their project and gain a new perspective. Famously, the Diggers set up their Free Frame of Reference and offered a portable version to observers to encourage them to look at the world in a new way.⁶ In the nineteenth century Stephen Pearl Andrews and Mary Gove Nichols, particularly, promoted the ideals of Modern Times, and Frances Wright and James Richardson of Nashoba through articles and lectures, encouraging the public to adopt their ways, or at least consider their perspective.⁷ While Harmony Society remained a largely isolated group, they did defend their practices in print in response to outsider

⁵ "Bay Area Church News and Activities," *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), August 28, 1971; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXX, Issue 6, February 10, 1973; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXXI, Issue 25, June 22, 1974; *Sun Reporter* (San Francisco), Vol XXXIII, Issue 32, July 14, 1976.

⁶ Peter Coyote, "The Digger Concept of Free," The Digger Archives, accessed June 28, 2018, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Digger_Concept_of_%27Free%27.

⁷ Stephen Pearl Andrews, Preface to Josiah Warren, *Equitable Commerce Showing the Workings, in Actual Experiment, during a Series of Years, of the Social Principles Expounded in the Works Called "Equitable Commerce," by the Author of This, and "The Science of Society" by Stephen P. Andrews* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, Publishers, 1854); Josiah Warren, *Practical Applications of the Elementary Principles of "True Civilization" to the Minute Details of Everyday Life, Being Part III, the Last of the "True Civilization" Series, and the Facts and Conclusions of Forty-Seven Years of Study and Experiments of Reform Movement From Communism to and in Elementary Principles, Found in a Direction Exactly Opposite to and Away from Communism, But Leading Directly to All the Harmonic Results Aimed at by Communism* (Princeton, MA; Josiah Warren, 1873). <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015080475208;view=1up;seq=16>; Warren, *Practical Details in Equitable Commerce, Showing the Workings, in Actual Experiment, during a Series of Years, of the Social Principles Expounded in the Works Called 'Equitable Commerce' by the Author of This, and 'The Science of Society, by Stephen P. Andrews* (New York: Fowlers & Wells, 1854), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015079014455;view=1up;seq=13>; Thomas Low Nichols, *How to Behave* (1873) (Stroud, UK: Amberley Publishing, 2015); Nichols, *A Manual of Manners and Morals* (London: Longman's and Green & Co, 1874) [Nichols also wrote extensively on birth control and sex education]; Mary Gove Nichols, *Lectures to Women on Anatomy and Physiology: With an Appendix on Water Cure* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1846); Frances Wright, *Life, Letters and Lectures* (Reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1972).

attacks.⁸ Further, when necessary they lobbied directly for representation in the legislature and the Constitutional Convention in Indiana.⁹ All of these examples demonstrate ways in which Utopian communities utilized the social movement repertoire as tools to promote and defend their ideals.

Tilly's third characteristic, WUNC, also applies to Utopian communities. Each of these groups presented their Utopian ideals to the public with the goal of being taken seriously. Even the Diggers guerilla theatre concealed a core of social critique under a veneer of absurdity. These groups earnestly believed in their missions and the significance of society's problems for the future of themselves and America; they trusted that they were worthy of consideration as an alternate to the status quo. As communities, these Utopians inherently demonstrated unity, in several cases over the long term. Unity does not mean that there was not dissent or contention within the group, but rather that they persisted and adapted to work through these conflicts.

While Utopian communities demonstrate a range of numbers in terms of their size, in this they resemble other types of social movements such as protests and reform groups. All of the examples in this study maintained a critical mass of members who accepted the ideals and practices of their community over time. According to Tilly

⁸ Aaron Williams, *The Harmony Society at Economy, Penn'a*. London: Forgotten Books, 2015 (Originally printed Pittsburgh: W.H. Haven, 1866). Williams was a journalist invited to Economy to write a rebuttal to disparaging articles published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Williams responses were published as a series of articles in the *Pittsburgh Commercial* in 1866. Rapp would also send letters to papers to address slurs about Harmony.

⁹ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847* (Cranbury, NJ: Associate University Presses, 1968), 168-169.

numbers are displayed through "headcounts, signatures on petitions, messages from constituents, filling streets." In the case of these communities that could include signing Articles of Association, participating in visible projects like Free Food or workshops. While larger numbers are better from a standpoint of visibility, committed numbers are also important to demonstrate the legitimacy of a movement. Active participation is more convincing than simply masses of bodies. These six Utopian communities were neither ephemeral nor unstable; illustrating the final part of WUNC, commitment, as a necessary characteristic of social movements.

By Tilly's definition each of these groups qualifies as a social movement, but does communalism as a broader whole fit this characterization? Much like the reform movements of the nineteenth century, communalism is a movement of overlapping and interconnected projects. As discussed in this work, communalists drew on a pool of dedicated Utopians working on a variety of social projects and critiques. As with the reform movement, individuals moved horizontally between communities bringing with them an expanding perspective and experience of utopia in both theory and practice. Communities, further, communicated with each other, sharing achievements and challenges, seeking advice and information to advance their goals. As communities collapsed their members moved on to other groups and projects, continuing their pursuit of utopia through different methods and approaches. Looking longitudinally, groups sought inspiration and practical learning by turning to the writings and history of past Utopians.

Although by sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter's standard of twenty-five years only Harmony Society of these six communities ranks as successful, each of them demonstrated commitment and made serious strides toward accomplishing the goals they set internally.¹⁰ Kanter's metric lacks the consideration of purpose and the longevity of Utopian goals beyond the bounds of a commune's lifespan. Donald Pitzer's concept of developmental communalism permits a better understanding of Utopianism as a long-term commitment to bettering one's own life and improving greater society.¹¹ The six communities discussed in this work all utilized the tool of living in community, sharing resources, supporting each other and separating themselves, at least temporarily, from the greater society around them. They used this time to experiment with alternative spirituality, such as Kerista consciousness and Rappian pietism; to create alternative economic structures, like Warren's labor notes and the Diggers' Free Food and Free Stores; and explore alternative ways of relating to each other, including free love at Nashoba, Modern Times, Diggers and Kerista, Kerista's communal parenting and Harmonist celibacy. While Utopian groups operate communally for fixed periods of time, the experiments they carry on in their isolated bubble, the brainstorming and discussing of new ideas and practices, and the mistakes they make and learn from are carried out into the broader world as lessons for society to build on. Each of the groups

¹⁰ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 245.

¹¹ Pitzer, Donald E. "Developmental Communalism: An Alternative Approach to Communal Studies." From Dennis Hardy and Lorna Davison eds. *Utopian Thought and Communal Experience*. Middlesex, Engl: Middlesex Polytechnic, 1989.

in this study offer examples of their legacy, ways that their ideas or practices moved from the isolation of community to larger Utopian projects or became part of mainstream culture.

Commitment to their ideals increased longevity and stability of community, as noted by Kanter and other sociologists, to strong but positive leadership, and to effective tools for communicating and resolving concerns.¹² There is no single model for creating a stable, long-lasting community. Rather it appears from the historical examples that the interplay of these three factors must be balanced in ways that work best for the individuals in that particular community. As Donald Pitzer has noted, the ability to resolve the tension between adapting to fit changing conditions and persisting to uphold a set of ideals significantly affects the longevity of Utopian communities.¹³ For example, in *Modern Times*, Josiah Warren had to accept the proclivities of members to behave and think in ways which he found absurd or offensive in order to maintain his belief in individual sovereignty.

Communities that have effective methods of resolving differences and charting their path prove to be more stable, and members feel valued and heard. Again, there is

¹² Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 65.

¹³ Donald E. Pitzer, "Developmental Communalism into the Twenty-first Century," in Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Yakov Oved, and Menahem Topel, editors, *The Communal Idea in the 21st Century*, Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2013), 3.

no one model for achieving this goal. For some people a consensus method with members given equal voice and no coercion works best such as at Modern Times or in the Diggers, whereas other people long for the structure of a hierarchical leadership and clear boundaries and rules such as in People Temple or Harmony Society. Utopianism is not a one size fits all plan for a better life. Members of a Utopian society bond based on shared goals and values and maintaining their society requires respect for those proclivities.

Utopian communalists have a choice of staying in society and being unhappy, changing it from within, forming a new religious movement or social group while still living in mainstream society or finally and most extreme, cutting themselves off from the world and creating an alternative community. That decision is bound up in the world in which they lived and must be studied in that context. Communalism represented a stage in the members' commitment to exploring alternatives and working towards a better life for themselves. In each of these six Utopian communities, different factors drove the members' choices, but in each case, they responded to a sense of urgency to seek solutions outside mainstream society.

The Harmonists, and to a certain extent Peoples Temple, responded to persecution by local officials both state and religious to their nonconformity. Rapp and his followers faced incarceration for their refusal to comply with local laws regarding baptism, education and military service. Religious authorities and neighbors reacted negatively to racially inclusive policies at Jim Jones' original church in Indianapolis contributing to Jones' decision to move to California. The Diggers, Modern Times,

Nashoba (although this was not the original reason for the commune) and Kerista rejected expectations to marry, maintain a monogamous relationship, conform to social standards regarding appearance and behavior, and accept patriarchal relationships within marriage and the family.

In both centuries, society put expectations on men to provide for and protect their wives and children and for women to accept subservience to their husbands and the biologically determined role of mother. Women and men within these communities rejected the patriarchal implications of these expectations that limited their opportunities and their choices for living their lives in ways they found fulfilling. Certainly, society has not given up completely on monogamous marriage as an ideal, however there has been significant movement away from this as the sole model of adult relationships. Women continue to fight for equality within and outside of marriage against expectations that they put marriage and motherhood before career and against standards that treat men and women unevenly in terms of their sexual freedom. These six communities illustrate the challenges of creating an alternative to mainstream models of gender equality, family structures and gender relationships. Often within these communities, mainstream patriarchal structures were replicated in a more local and immediate form. Women generally experienced greater freedom within intentional communities than their contemporaries on the outside. Men, however, often found that without the protective structures of mainstream patriarchy it could be more difficult to assert power and more limits were put on their freedom of expression.

The Diggers, Kerista, Harmony Society, Peoples Temple, Nashoba and Modern Times further rejected the existing capitalist relationships of their times. For Nashoba this meant a rejection of slavery, for Harmony Society and Kerista and Peoples Temple this manifested as sharing resources internally while still participating to some extent with external capitalism. The Diggers and Modern Times rejected capitalism and the market economy altogether creating their own alternative that provided equality of access and opportunity through barter of resources and labor. In both centuries these Utopians reacted to the exploitation of labor in an increasingly industrialized marketplace and the competition and consumerism that increased economic inequality. While these alternatives proved unsustainable within these communities their legacy in mainstream society are visible in cooperative business models, sharing of resources through labor and goods swaps, and shared housing.

The response of outsiders to Utopian communities reveals the confidence of society in its institutions, practices and standards. Disproportionate responses, such as calls to restrict freedom of religion after Jonestown, to incarcerate or expel indiscriminately dissenters in the Adams' presidency, after the McKinley assassination, during the Red Scare, the McCarthy era or the Vietnam war reveal the insecurities of the American social and political leaders. Freedom of speech, religion, and association are key ideals in the United States and threats to these civil liberties undermine democracy and liberty. Utopian communalists have historically been threatened, persecuted, or discriminated against because they challenge traditional perspectives and offer alternatives to the status quo. These alternatives threaten the authority and legitimacy of

social, political and religious leaders by encouraging the populace to think critically about why they behave in certain ways or accept standards and institutions.

As Utopian communities created their alternative vision of society, many considered the work of other Utopians both contemporary and historical. Ideas flowed from group to contemporary group as both members moved between them and as they shared their experiences and theories with each other. Records of correspondence and visits between communal societies demonstrate that they took interest in each other even when they diverged in values or goals. Whether we look at the Owenites and Fourierists, the Shakers and Harmonists, Hopedale and Modern Times, or in the twentieth century Diggers and Oloompali, Peoples Temple and the Black Panthers; members moved in and out of communities, and got together to learn from each other. Some of the later communes also looked to historical and literary utopias seeking ideas and lessons. Kerista explicitly listed many historical influences including Nashoba, Fourier, and Robert Owen. They took interest in the literary utopias and dystopias of Robert A. Heinlein and Aldous Huxley in particular. These works of historical and classic literary Utopianism were republished beginning in the mid-twentieth centuries providing opportunities for students, in school and out, to explore the rich heritage of Utopian ideas. While many in the counterculture rejected the idea of accepting uncritically the authority of traditional sources, they read and discussed these Utopian ideas taking their own conclusions from them. These Utopian threads bind the movement together across time and space.

Utopianism has provided alternatives to problematic institutions, structures values and ideas in mainstream society for centuries. Modern society still benefits by critiquing itself and looking for a better way. Utopian societies are flourishing as people search for solutions to racism, sexism, homophobia, loneliness, climate change, unhealthy and unsafe food supply systems, overcrowding, economic inequality and exploitation, and resource mismanagement. Some create eco-villages that practice sustainable and healthy lifestyles, others focus on economic and emotional support as they age. Regardless of their goals and values, what these experiments share is the quest for a Utopian solution to social problems, the search for a better life for themselves. Society will always face challenges. Utopianism such as that pursued by these six communities offers us lessons that we can apply to our own quest.

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