

Excess and Utopia: Meditations on Moravian Bethlehem

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The problem of excess is, at once, psychological and material. It is a matter both of feeling and politics.

Since it is, in part, psychological, let me begin with one of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic parables—in this case, a parable about excrement. Freud tells us that before toilet training, little children experience defecation as a pleasurable act of creation. So imagine, if you will, a young child, enraptured with the productions of her own body, who leaves in some public part of the home, as a gift to her parents, a turd. Her parents may respond in various ways. In the culture of Freud's bourgeois fin-de-siècle Vienna, revulsion was perhaps the most likely: a sense of distress that something expelled from the body—waste, excess—had been deposited where it did not belong.¹

The child is then taught that waste must not merely be expelled from the body, but purged from the home, family, and civilized community. It must be expunged, buried, washed away, disposed of without a trace, separated from the senses and from feelings of pleasure or desire. The boundaries of the ego, the domestic sphere, and the social order are constructed in this way. In order to become a normative subject, the child must internalize this prohibition against taking pleasure or feeling pride in waste, in excess. This internalization entails the development of feelings of shame or guilt in relation to objects and emotions that must be repudiated. So the psychoanalytic problem of excess is an emotional problem: it is the problem of how one feels and how one is supposed to feel about those things culturally marked as excessive—as abject, forbidden, beyond the pale.

It is, of course, not merely the problem of how we feel about our own waste, but about all that comes forth or goes out from us: about all the feelings of desire, pleasure, ebullience and ecstasy, rage and grief, sexual vitality and creative exuberance when these exceed cultural norms and conventions of respectability. What happens when our capacity for joy, pleasure, and connection exceeds cultural prohibitions and social hierarchies? Do we re-

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pudiate and disavow our pleasures? Do we have the courage to reclaim them, to overturn the internalized regime of shame and the social hierarchies that derive their strength from it?

The problem of excess is as much material as it is emotional. A half century earlier than Freud, Karl Marx, for example, told an influential materialist variant of the story of excess. While Freud was concerned with the problem of surplus emotion, with prohibited or excessive feeling, Marx was preoccupied with surplus value. In any society that has evolved beyond the barest subsistence, the collective labor of the population produces more value (more wealth, more goods) than is strictly necessary for survival. Marx tells us that in order to understand any society, we should ask: how are those labor-relations organized and what is the fate of that surplus? Capitalist societies, he explains, are organized in order to maximize the accumulation of the surplus—the accumulation of capital. The mechanism by which this takes place is that those who happen to own the means of production, whether factory or farmland, seek to implement the most efficient possible exploitation of labor. They seek to maximize their profit by appropriating to themselves the difference between the value produced by the laborer and the wage that she or he is paid.² This particular way of distributing surplus value, of distributing the collective economic excess—our common wealth—leads to impressive accumulations of capital and also to the immiseration of large portions of the population. (If you doubt the continued relevance of this analysis, consider this: in the United States today, the richest one percent of the population owns as much wealth as the bottom ninety-five percent. In South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—where I live—ninety percent of children live in poverty.)³

Although academics sometimes forget this, Marx and Freud were emancipatory thinkers. Each was concerned, above all, with the question of how we might live fuller, freer lives. Each believed that in order to address the problem of freedom, we would need to face the problem of excess. Freud said that if we were able to make conscious our prohibited emotions, our excessive feelings, then we could also question the social norms that impose deforming psychological prohibitions. We would then be less haunted by what we have denied in ourselves and we might, indeed, travel down a path to fuller satisfactions. Marx, too, insisted that we should attend to excess, that we should claim the surplus as our own. He thought that by claiming the material surplus we have collectively produced, we could challenge an

exploitative economic order and we could share the common wealth to meet our common needs. Freud and Marx alike insisted, then—in their respective psychological and material registers—that we should lay claim to the full range of our libidinal and productive capacities. By doing so, they suggested, we might resist alienating and exploitative social processes that demand that we relinquish whole domains of what we are capable of feeling and creating.

William Blake, one of our great visionaries, writing a half century before Marx, shared many of the libidinal and material intuitions that we associate with the later developments of psychoanalysis and modern socialism. As profoundly as Marx and Freud, though with still greater eloquence, he too insisted that if we want to learn how to be free, we must attend to excess; we must claim it as our own. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, completed in London in 1793, he wrote that “the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.” For Blake, the liberation of desire, the emancipation of our bodies, our libidinal energies, and hence our creativity can alone lead us to full knowledge of ourselves, our freedom, and the requirements for a just society. A century before Freud, Blake tells us that “He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.” He proclaims that “Energy is the only life, and is from the Body”: “Energy is Eternal Delight.” He reminds us that “Exuberance is Beauty.” Blake had contempt for religious traditions preoccupied with sin, with cultures of prohibition that induce shame. Shame, he tells us, is nothing more than “Pride’s cloak.” Like his most emancipatory successors in the psychoanalytic and socialist traditions, Blake asserts that the shaming of the body, the repression of libido and creativity, is causally related to the construction and preservation of unjust social arrangements. “Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion,” he tells us in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.⁴

Blake thus emphasizes that the dynamics of libidinal and material excess are not merely analogous, but intertwined. He reminds us that the shaming of the body facilitates material exploitation. He points out, for example, that once religion equates sex with sin and marks female bodies as abject, then the full exploitation of female sexuality may proceed: the brothel rises. We can see this, too, in other domains. By promulgating the biblical fantasy that Africans were the disgraced descendants of Ham, Europeans justified the enslavement of millions of Africans and the exploitation of their children as chattel in perpetuity.⁵ Capitalist societies, past and present, have never tired of proclaiming, against all evidence, that the mass of women and men

who create wealth through their labor are least entitled to its use because of their shameful ignorance, lack of talent, character, and enterprise. If shame thus facilitates exploitation, then the converse is also true: the repudiation of shame increases our capacity to claim the common material surplus as our own and to share it equitably. Repudiating shame enables us to question the social hierarchies that rest upon it. Liberating the body and its libidinal energies enables us to see that what comes out from us, what we create, is indeed our own, and should be ours to use and share. Repudiating shame does not, of course, guarantee the equitable distribution of the surplus: libidinal energies can be released for domination, too. (This will be evident to almost anyone living in late capitalist societies, which have been prolific in their invention of repressive forms of desublimation.)⁶ But liberating the body from shame, as Blake understood, is a necessary condition for the creation of just and equitable societies.

In Blake, Marx, and Freud, then, we can identify three moments in an evolving emancipatory tradition in Western thought that intuits that the “road of excess” may carry us not merely to “the palace of wisdom,” but towards a utopian understanding of justice.⁷ I end these opening provocations with Blake, in part, because he saw so clearly the link between the libidinal and the material, between excess and utopia. But I have traced this genealogy backward to him, in particular, for one additional reason. In reading Blake’s astonishingly radical poetry, one is tempted—as with his later, but equally daring, spiritual twin across the Atlantic, Walt Whitman—to imagine that he came from nowhere, dropped off perhaps by aliens from outer space. Blake scholars have, needless to say, been unsatisfied with that particular explanation, and they have offered a range of accounts of the origins of his bold utopian visions. I will point here to one tantalizing fact. When Blake was a child in the 1750s and 1760s, his mother took him regularly to the Fetter Lane Society in London, where he heard the unorthodox, ecstatic preaching of a central European Pietist sect known in the English-speaking world as the Moravians.⁸

I will not claim in what follows that the Moravians were Marxists or Freudians *avant la lettre*. Nor will I claim even that Blake’s wildest imaginings are merely an extension of Moravian theology. (Though I will note in passing that if you want to know why Blake and his wife celebrated the Sabbath by sitting naked in their London garden, after the manner of Adam and Eve, you will need to go back to what he heard at Fetter Lane.) What I will claim

is this: that the experience of the first generation of Moravians in the middle of the eighteenth century bears out much of what Blake, Marx, and Freud intuited about the relationship between excess and utopia. I will propose, more specifically, that the women and men who founded the city of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the 1740s and 1750s followed practices of spiritual and libidinal excess that led them, in turn, to create one of the most egalitarian communities in European North America. I will also suggest that fear of excess—libidinal and material—compromised that egalitarian experiment from the outset and led to its sudden collapse after one generation.

The Origins of Moravian Bethlehem

The founders of the city of Bethlehem were the spiritual heirs, and in some cases the actual descendants, of a revolutionary movement that emerged in fifteenth-century Moravia and Bohemia (the part of the world that today we call the Czech Republic). A century before the Protestant Reformation, the most radical followers of Jan Hus, including the political visionary Petr Chelčický, launched a radical experiment in spiritual and social equality. Insisting that everyone should have access to the Bible in the vernacular, they had the temerity to propose that the Sermon on the Mount provided a practical blueprint for society. They condemned all forms of social hierarchy as sinful, rejecting both the spiritual leadership of Catholic priests and all hereditary class privilege. Chelčický wrote that the pope and the emperor were “whales” who had “torn” the “net of true faith.” He condemned the nobility, clergy, and landowners for riding on the backs of the common people as if they were “beasts.” Led mainly by peasants and village artisans, they set out to create communities based on material equality, the sharing of wealth, the repudiation of violence, and the cultivation of a direct relation to the Word of God. By 1457, at the end of the Hussite wars, these dissident Christians were calling themselves the *Unitas Fratrum* (Unity of the Brethren). These radicals—who believed in the spiritual knowledge of those at the bottom of the social order, and who dared to lay claim to the material surplus of their communities—were, not surprisingly, subjected to violent persecution. The *Unitas Fratrum* was ultimately destroyed during the Thirty Years’ War—a period of intense religious violence among European Christians. (Thirty percent of all Germans died in the intrafaith bloodletting of the early seventeenth century.) According to the suppressed movement’s own mythology, some of the ideas of the *Unitas Fratrum* were kept alive—through

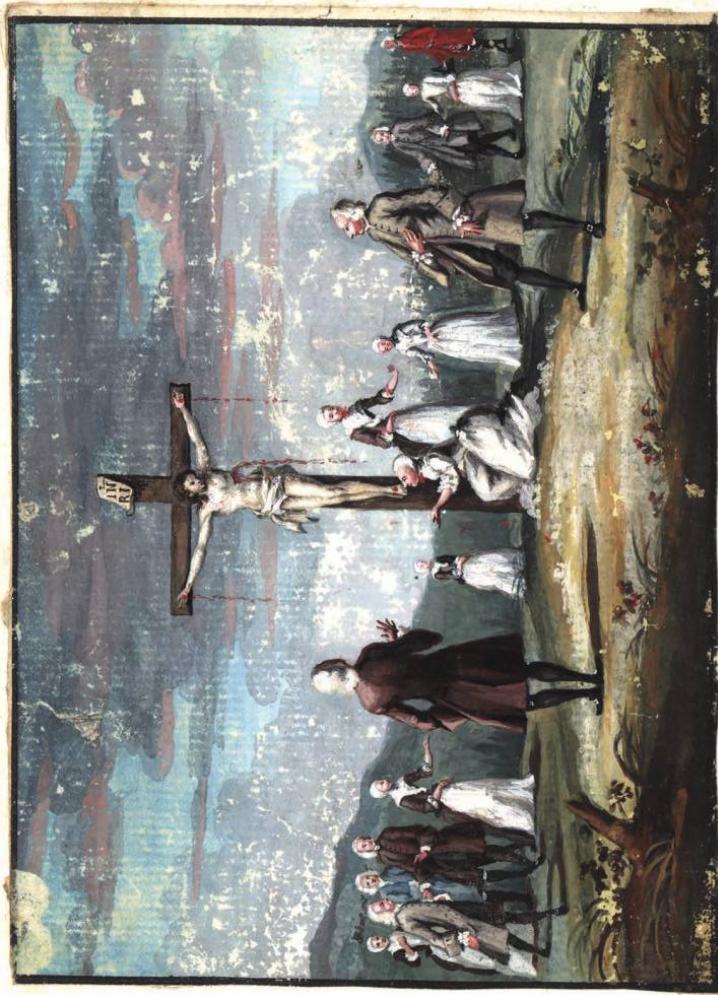


Figure 1: Moravian men and women at the cross, contemplating the crucified body of the Savior and catching the blood as it drips from his wounds. Watercolor, artist unknown, circa 1750. Moravian Archives, Herrnhut, Germany. TS Mp:375-9.



Figure 2 (above) and Figure 3 (below): two devotional miniatures depicting Moravians living their ordinary lives inside the Savior's side wound, represented as a womb. The text in figure 2 reads: "I fall asleep in the little Side Hole." The text in figure 3 reads: "How warm to lie in the Little Side. Glory be to the Shrine in the Side." Artist unknown, watercolor on paper, each 55 × 40 mm, circa 1740. Moravian Archives, Herrnhut, Germany, TS Mp.375.4.e and TS Mp.375.4.d.





Figure 4 (above) and Figure 5 (below): two additional devotional miniatures. Figure 4 depicts a Moravian choir house inside the Savior's side wound, with another representation of the bleeding side wound inside the doorway. The text reads: "The Little Side Hole remains mine now and in eternity." The text of figure 5 reads: "I am asleep in the Little Side Hole, do not wake up my noble little soul." Artist unknown, ink on paper, circa 1740, 62 × 36 mm. Moravian Archives, Herrnhut, Germany, M.135.1 and M.135.3.





Figure 6: Johann Valentin Haidt, *The First Fruits*, oil on canvas, 1747. Here Haidt represents the first Moravian converts from many nations who had died and rejoined the Savior. (They are individually identified in the legend below: “Guly from Persia,” “David the Armenian,” “Thomas of the Hurons,” “the Carolina Negro Johannes,” “Hanna from Guinea,” “the Hottentot Kibbodo,” and so on.) The painting captures, at once, the Moravians’ racial inclusiveness and their tendency toward a paternalistic exoticism. Moravian Congregation at Zeist, the Netherlands.

hymns secretly sung in the middle of the night and banned writings hidden in caves—during the period of the Hidden Seed, which extended from the 1620s to the 1720s. For a full century, then, this abject kernel, violently expelled, lay dormant.⁹

It then found fertile ground—improbably—on the feudal estate of a young Saxon count, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf was the gifted and eccentric heir to one of the ancient houses of the Austrian nobility, and he sought to solve unconventionally the problem of his vocation by rejecting political power at the Saxon court and turning his formidable energies (and wealth) to the cause of religion. Profoundly influenced by his erudite and pious grandmother, Zinzendorf turned his estate, Berthelsdorf, into a refuge for Pietists and Christian dissenters of various kinds. Word spread and, in 1722, the first of the Moravian and Bohemian peasants and artisans who viewed themselves as the remnants of the persecuted *Unitas Fratrum* arrived at Zinzendorf's estate and began to build the community of Herrnhut. Within five years, Zinzendorf had founded a religious sect, the Renewed *Unitas Fratrum*, and established himself as its charismatic spiritual leader, political protector, and financial promoter.¹⁰ It was a paradoxical development. A radically egalitarian, antihierarchical, pacifist, and communitarian movement had been revived, reimaged, and relaunched by a feudal aristocrat. The paradox ran, in some sense, still deeper, for it was rooted at the very core of Zinzendorf's own personality. He was, on the one hand, vain, class-proud, status conscious, and deeply invested in maintaining social hierarchies—of class, gender, and race—of which he was so spectacularly a beneficiary. But he was also filled with a passionate yearning to break through those hierarchies, in order to arrive at an ecstatic experience of libidinal connection to others in a radically inclusive community of spiritual equals. That tension, as I mean to show, structured not merely Zinzendorf's personality, but the whole of Moravian life in the first generation of the movement.

For the Moravians (as they came to be called in the English-speaking world), or the *Brüdergemeine* (as they called themselves in German-speaking places), did, indeed, become a movement on a startling scale. Within three decades, the Moravians had established thriving congregations, communities, and evangelical outposts on four continents. They made their presence felt across Europe, from Lapland and Russia in the east, throughout central Europe (including present-day Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany), in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia (Norway, Swe-

den, and Denmark), as well as the British Isles (including Ireland, Wales, and England). Their missionaries worked actively down the length of Africa (from Algeria to the Gold Coast to South Africa), in South America (Suriname), throughout the West Indies (St. John, St. Thomas, St. Croix, Jamaica and Antigua), and even in Greenland. They established congregations and communities throughout the eastern seaboard of North America, from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. While Herrnhut remained the center of Moravian church authority, the town of Bethlehem on the Pennsylvania frontier was built in the 1740s as the hub of this rapidly growing missionary empire. And it was built, also, as a model of Moravian community and spiritual life. Like the Puritan founders of Massachusetts, who have entered so much more famously into America's mythology, the Moravians in Bethlehem, and their sister communities in the middle of the eighteenth century, sought to be an inspiration to the world. As August Spangenberg, perhaps Bethlehem's most influential leader in the first generation, wrote to his comrades in 1756: "The Saviour's heart will be blessed by you and your light will be seen far and wide, for you are a city built upon a hill."¹¹

Spiritual Excess and the Release of Libidinal Energy

So what did the first generation of Moravians believe—and why would I claim that these eighteenth-century evangelical Protestants were committed to practices of spiritual and libidinal excess? It is, first, important to understand that the Moravians were Pietists. Zinzendorf advocated a "religion of the heart," insisting that the path to salvation was to be discovered neither through reason, nor by mastering a formal theology, but by cultivating a depth of feeling for one's intimate relation to the Savior. Theirs was an overwhelmingly Christ-centered religion. Zinzendorf insisted that "your Creator is your Savior," that the Creator described in the Old Testament and the redeemer described in the New Testament were one God, and that all aspects of Moravian life should be organized around the intensely charged, immediately experienced, love of the Savior. All of life would be sacralized in this way. As Zinzendorf explained, "When you spin, knit, sew, and anything else, do it as love for the Prince [the Savior], and, as I have told you before, as a Liturgy. Walk and stand for him, eat and drink for him, and when you lie down, you lie in his arms. In short, if everything you do, you do for him,

if you liturgize to him from early in the morning until night, you will enter into his joy and do blessed labor."¹²

The Moravians embraced, in particular, a “blood and wounds” theology, which had its own long history in central Europe. Because Jesus had redeemed the world through his physical suffering on the cross, Zinzendorf urged his followers to focus their spiritual attention—in hymns, prayers, sermons, and a range of liturgical practices—on the wounds inflicted on Christ’s body and the blood that flowed from them. The Moravians’ descriptions of the bloody wounds of the Savior were detailed, graphic, and often highly sensual. In their visual art and central religious texts, the first generation of Moravians represented themselves as ecstatically licking the wounds of the Savior, as catching the redemptive blood as it dripped from his pierced and crucified body, as being “spattered by the blood of the lamb” (fig. 1). During the period of Bethlehem’s founding (which was also a highly volatile period in Moravian theology, often referred to by historians as the “Sifting Time”), the Moravians referred to themselves as “corpse bees” or as “worms” crawling in the “moist and juicy” wounds of the Savior. They practiced, in short, an ecstatic blood mysticism: by meditating persistently on the bloody wounds and tortured flesh of their deity, they experienced also an ecstatic proximity to their own redemption. As Zinzendorf explained, “one should see that it is biblical to be joyful while bent over the suffering of God.”¹³

The Moravians were especially focused on the side wound of the Savior (*Seitenhölchen*—little side hole), inflicted when Christ’s flesh was pierced by a Roman spear. They explicitly and systematically represented the side wound as a womb and as a vaginal opening through which humanity was reborn. As Zinzendorf explained in his *Twenty-One Discourses* of 1748, for example, redeemed souls were “begotten” in the “matrix” or womb of the side wound. He asserted that true Christians want “to enter again into our Mother’s Womb, viz his [the Savior’s] Side.” He celebrated the fact that Moravian women explicitly associated their own reproductive organs with the “clear image o[f] the holy side of Jesus, which was opened on the cross, when he birthed our souls.” The gendered implications of the side wound were further intensified by other comparisons to the nurturing breast: Zinzendorf explained that when the redeemed Christian is united with the Savior, he sets his “mouth to his side and drinks” of the blood from the wound, “ever opening itself anew.” In their intense preoccupation with the side wound, understood at

once as womb, vagina, and nurturing maternal breast, the Moravians thus participated in a long minority tendency within European Christianity (one that goes back to the Middle Ages, as Carolyn Walker Bynum has shown) that has worshipped an explicitly androgynous Savior: a redemptive figure who is, at once, male and female (figs. 2–5).¹⁴

It is important in this context to emphasize that the Moravians in this period cultivated an intensely eroticized vision of the Savior and their relation to him. Participating in another long tradition within Western Christianity, the Moravians viewed the Savior as the “mystical bridegroom” with whom every saved soul would be ecstatically united after death. The men and women who founded Bethlehem in the 1740s and 1750s understood this mystical marriage in explicitly sexual terms. For Zinzendorf and his followers, sexual intercourse (within marriage) was understood as neither sinful nor shameful. It was, on the contrary, a sacred act, a liturgical practice, because in sex, the Moravians believed that they experienced a foretaste of the ecstatic union with God. Men and women alike were to understand themselves explicitly as “brides of Christ”—and the gendered language here is important. Zinzendorf insisted that every human soul was female, in men and women alike, and that all of the redeemed would be ecstatically possessed by the Savior, as they understood the wife to be by the husband during intercourse. Zinzendorf explained, for example, that God “has made all souls; the soul is his wife. He has formed no *animos*, no manly souls . . . only *animas*, [feminine] souls, who are his Bride, Candidates of rest in his arms and of the eternal sleeping room.” Every Christian, male and female, would act “as a consort, as a playmate for the marriage bed of the blessed Creator and eternal Husband.”¹⁵

This sexualized conception of mystical marriage had implications not only for Moravian spirituality, but also for gender identity and libidinal organization in eighteenth-century Bethlehem. At the risk of anachronism, I would like to propose that the Moravians cultivated what we might today describe as a queer theology, a daily religious practice that encouraged both opposite- and same-sex eroticism in the most important domain of their lives—the spiritual. This theology also encouraged fluid gender identifications, especially for men. As I have already noted, Zinzendorf insisted that men were female souls trapped, poignantly but only for a time, in male bodies. The whole of Moravian life was organized around promoting a libidinally charged relation to an androgynous Savior: relations between wives and

husbands or children and parents, for example, were entirely secondary to everyone's relation to Christ. (As Zinzendorf explained: "I do not love you for your own sake but for his sake. I love you as my fellow little cross-air birds, as my playmates. . . around his side. I love you as my fellow little swarming bees on his corpse.")¹⁶ All Moravian men and women were to focus their libidinal energies, day after day, on the vision of a Savior who was at once the male "bridegroom" who would possess them all as brides, but also the female lover whose "moist and juicy wound" they would enter and the mother to whose breast and into whose "womb" they would all return.

It will, perhaps, be clear that what I have called the Moravians' queer theology, their ecstatic fusion of blood mysticism and mystical marriage, was excessive by the standards of most eighteenth-century Europeans and North American colonists. And I will describe below the forms of social egalitarianism that flowed from it in Bethlehem's early years. But it is important to emphasize that this libidinal excess—this reveling in bloody wounds and physical torment, this cultivation of gender fluidity and queer eroticism—flourished in the domain of spiritual representation and organized religious fantasy. The Moravians' religious views led them to challenge many social mores, but one should not imagine that Bethlehem was a kind of eighteenth-century Woodstock or a sadomasochistically tinged communal free-for-all. On the contrary, even as the Moravians insisted that Christ's incarnation had removed the taint of original sin from human sexuality, they nevertheless were deeply concerned to control sexual behavior carefully. Even as the Moravians insisted that all souls—and, indeed, the Holy Spirit itself—were female, they regulated gender relations (and all social relations) strictly. But I want to propose that in their spiritual practice, the Moravians nevertheless created a sacred space in which powerful libidinal impulses, widely suppressed throughout the Christian West, were imaginatively explored. The founders of Bethlehem encouraged one another to entertain libidinal possibilities that were elsewhere prohibited. But these impulses were also displaced rigorously into the etherealized domain of spiritual contemplation. Craig D. Atwood, the distinguished scholar of Moravian theology, has proposed that the remarkable social accomplishments of eighteenth-century Bethlehem can, perhaps, be attributed to this community's ability to channel safely sexual and aggressive impulses that might otherwise have proved destructive to communal life.¹⁷ There is truth in this formulation, but I am inclined to place the emphasis differently. What is most remarkable about eighteenth-century Bethlehem,

in my view, is not the safe controlling of these impulses, but the astonishing release of libidinal energies—which led, for a time, to the creation of one of colonial America’s most egalitarian experiments.

Sharing the Surplus

The problem of excess is material as well as libidinal; it is a question of economics, as well as feeling. The economic life of the Moravians, like so much else about them, was deeply paradoxical. This rapidly spreading, vibrant, transnational religious empire was funded, in the first generation, largely through the personal finances of Zinzendorf himself—and, to a lesser degree, by his aristocratic Pietist friends. Although Zinzendorf was not especially rich by the standards of the Austrian nobility, his considerable personal wealth represented the capital accumulated through seven hundred years of exploited peasant labor on the family’s feudal estates—a process of primitive accumulation that continued throughout Zinzendorf’s own lifetime.¹⁸ Without this capital, the explosive growth of the Moravian enterprise would have been impossible. At the same time, however, as a number of historians have shown, the Moravians were also active, highly savvy, entrepreneurial participants in the burgeoning commercial and mercantile economy of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.¹⁹ The transnational network of Moravian congregations was also a highly sophisticated economic network of urban and agricultural production and of commercial exchange among far-flung Moravian settlements and between Moravians and non-Moravians on four continents. The Moravians themselves lived in diverse ways and organized their economic life variously. Some lived dispersed amongst non-Moravians in “town” and “country” congregations. Others lived in closed communities (in which only members of the church could live) of which there were, in turn, two kinds. Most closed communities (*Ortsgemeinen*) were organized around conventional family structure—and every family was, in the usual modern European way, responsible for its own economic success or failure. A small number of closed communities—the Pilgrim Congregations (*Pilgergemeinen*)—were organized along quite different lines. In these closed communities, the central unit of social organization was not the nuclear family, but the Choir (same-age, same-sex cohorts) and their economic lives were communal.²⁰

Bethlehem was the first and most highly developed Pilgrim Congregation. Viewed through the conceptual terms I proposed at the outset, Bethlehem

was a community founded by women and men committed to laying claim to the surplus produced by their own labor, sharing it equally to meet their common needs and to achieve their highest shared aims. The people of Bethlehem described their form of economic organization as the General Economy. In the middle of the eighteenth century, everyone in Bethlehem worked for the community and each received in return, not wages, but access to the necessities of life (food, clothing, and shelter), as well as equal access to what we might call a free, fully socialized system of universal education, healthcare, childcare, and care for the elderly. There was an exceptional degree of economic and material equality in this community as a result: nearly everyone lived in the same material conditions in communal choir houses; they ate the same, communally prepared food; and they dressed (with some relatively minor exceptions) in a similar manner. Everyone, male and female alike, received access to education (there was nearly universal literacy in eighteenth-century Bethlehem), and everyone knew that he or she would be cared for by the community from birth until the moment of death, when they believed they would pass into the arms of the Savior. Although they shared inevitably the material uncertainties of other frontier communities, the people of Bethlehem, astonishingly, lived without fear of individual poverty or destitution in illness or old age.²¹

The Moravians were clear that this egalitarian communal economy served two purposes: to provide the material conditions, including the material security, that would enable every member of the community to flourish spiritually; and, by pooling labor and sharing the surplus, to emancipate as many members of the community as possible for various forms of spiritual activity. Some of that spiritual labor took place in the community itself—tending to the spiritual needs of one's choir, writing hymns, educating children, or preaching sermons—but much also took the form of freeing women and men to engage in missionary activity throughout Pennsylvania, across the Eastern Seaboard, and indeed, throughout the Moravian world. As Spangenberg explained in the 1750s, the General Economy served the highest aims of the community “partly because we can lighten the loads of many brothers and sisters who otherwise would have it much harder, if they had to work for themselves, and partly because we can that much better take care of the affairs of the Savior.”²²

The Moravians' spiritual, libidinal, and economic arrangements had transformative, and in many ways utopian, effects on their experience of

work. First, all forms of labor were conducted with the highest aims of life in mind. The libidinal energies liberated by Moravian spiritual practice infused their daily labor: as Spangenberg explained to Zinzendorf in a letter dated April 26, 1746, the brothers and sisters “mix the Savior and his blood in their rail-splitting, land-clearing, fence-making, plowing, harrowing, sowing, mowing, washing, spinning, in short, in everything.” In practical terms, the Moravians also insisted that every kind of work conducted in Bethlehem was of equal value, because each forwarded the larger spiritual mission of the community. All forms of labor were, at least in principle, honored equally and they were remunerated in the same way. It is not surprising that, as a result, the Moravians placed a priority on each individual’s finding forms of work to which she or he was well-suited, so that, as Spangenberg put it, all would perform their labor “not out of duty, but rather with pleasure and gratitude.” The Moravian economy was highly diversified, entailing a great many skilled trades and, as a result, a high degree of division of labor. But it is a remarkable testament to the generally nonalienated character of labor in Moravian Bethlehem that despite the enormous investment of resources devoted to training skilled workers, the *Gemeine* categorically refused to fix the division of labor, insisting instead that workers should be able to change their work, moving, for example, back and forth between materially indispensable labor at the tannery or laundry and engaging in the spiritual work of deacon or missionary or eldress. The leaders of the community acknowledged explicitly that allowing the head of the waterworks or a skilled saddlemaker or weaver to take up missionary work would disrupt economic efficiency, but this was understood to be in the best interest of both individual and community.²³

Bethlehem’s General Economy was, in many respects, a dazzling economic success. In the first twenty years after the community’s founding in 1741, a population that grew from seventeen to seven hundred people built the majestic communal architecture that you can still see in the city today; they built one of the first systems of municipal running water in North America; they successfully operated fifty different industries and trades, many of them water powered; they produced not only comfortable, materially secure lives for themselves, but also created an economically self-sustaining community of startling spiritual, creative, and artistic vitality.²⁴ The exceptional technological sophistication and material prosperity of Bethlehem attracted such distinguished visitors as Benjamin Franklin and John Adams who marveled (often with considerable misunderstanding) at what they

saw. As the records of the first generation reveal, the people of Bethlehem worked very hard, indeed.²⁵ But it is clear that the libidinal energies released by their spiritual practice, and the material energies emancipated by their economic arrangements, created a communal life in which—at least some of the time—work became both joyful and meaningful. The *Bethlehem Diary* of July 10, 1752, for example, describes mowing time this way: “Immediately after breakfast there was a mower’s lovefeast, at which a hymn prepared by the late Br[other] Cammerhof for a similar occasion was sung. Thereafter the sickles were distributed and the whole house, the Brethren and Sisters separately, went with music into the field and began to harvest with joy.” Or consider this description, recorded in the *Bethlehem Diary* of October 12, 1745, of married men and women laboring together: “It went quite cheerful and lively: one worked on shoes, another made clothes, a third made powders for the apothecary, a fourth copied, some peeled turnips, some knitted, others spun, sewed, etc. and with it all love was discussed quite heartily and freely and in the midst of everything beautiful bloody verses were sung.”²⁶

In my view, then, Moravian spiritual practice released powerful (and elsewhere prohibited) libidinal energies and it facilitated the reduction of class hierarchy and the sharing of material resources to satisfy common needs and pursue collective aims. Their egalitarian and communal organization of economic life, moreover, led to the emancipation of material energies on an impressive scale. Both, in turn, fostered remarkable forms of gender equity—or, as Beverly Prior Smaby has put it more precisely, gender “symmetry” in Moravian Bethlehem during its first two decades.²⁷

The Moravians’ excessive or transgressive spiritual beliefs—what I have called their queer theology—led, in various ways, to the elevation of the status of women. Striking at one of the foundations of Western misogyny, for example, Zinzendorf insisted that the bodily incarnation of Jesus (including his birth through Mary’s pregnancy and reproductive labor) had forever lifted the taint of original sin, and shame, from human sexuality and from the sexual bodies of women and men alike. Repudiating the long biblical tradition of shaming female bodies went hand-in-hand with acknowledging women’s spiritual power. Zinzendorf’s insistence that all souls were female, his assertion that the Holy Spirit was the *mother* of the church, and his androgynous elaboration of the mystical marriage tradition all contributed to the dramatic elevation of the spiritual stature of women in Moravian life. The Moravians affirmed the spiritual equality of women and men, as for example,

when Zinzendorf wrote that the Savior “loves with an inexpressible and inimitable equality.” More than this, Zinzendorf insisted upon the capacity, and the biblical authority, of women to exercise spiritual leadership within the church. As he put it in a passage that has been often quoted by Moravian historians, “Now the sisters belong to the class of those whom the Saviour has declared to his heavenly Father as priests just as much as the men: hence there is no question that the whole band . . . are not only priestesses but also priestly women.” The Moravians believed, moreover, that the spiritual needs of women and girls were distinct from those of men and boys, and that these could only be properly addressed by other women.²⁸

This combination of beliefs led to one of the Moravians’ most remarkable social innovations: the revolutionary displacement of the nuclear family as the central unit of social organization, in favor of the Choir. Because the Moravians insisted on the primacy of every person’s relationship to the Savior, and because they believed that that relationship could best be cultivated in same-sex, same-age cohorts, they organized life in Bethlehem by bands or groups they called Choirs. After infants were weaned, they were cared for in a communal nursery and then went on to live in separate girls’ or boys’ choirs respectively, then as adults in separate choir houses for Single Brothers and Single Sisters; then, if married, in choirs for married men and married women; and, after the death of a spouse, in the Widows’ or Widowers’ Choir. Although the Moravians encouraged marriage and procreation (and birth rates were high in the first generation), the *Lebensläufe*, or memoirs, written by every member of the congregation reveal (as Smaby and others have shown) that the strongest emotional bonds were homosocial ones, to other members of one’s choir. Nearly all aspects of life—domestic, economic, spiritual, and emotional—were organized around the choirs. Because of the sex-segregation of the choir system, women in Moravian Bethlehem exercised an exceptional degree of leadership, both social and spiritual. Women were ordained in substantial numbers as acolytes, deacons, and presbyters and, although they appear not to have formally preached to the entire congregation, they were responsible for the spiritual education of girls, for the spiritual mentoring of women in their choir, for the leading of prayer groups, and spiritual work (including preaching) among women as missionaries. They were also responsible for administrative leadership of their choirs, overseeing social, economic, and practical matters; as elders, they played a central role in the leadership of the community as a whole.²⁹

Women in Moravian Bethlehem were, moreover, explicitly emancipated from the privatized burden of domestic labor, including childrearing, in order to free them to assume these forms of leadership. Caring for infants, raising and educating children, caring for the sick and the elderly, the labor of cooking, cleaning, and laundering—all of these tasks were socialized in Moravian Bethlehem under the General Economy. These were forms of work that individuals (including men, in the case of raising boys) might choose to undertake if they had an aptitude for it, but these were not the prescribed destiny for women. By socializing these forms of labor, the Moravians explicitly acted to free women to serve as spiritual, intellectual, and social leaders in their community. Many made extensive use of this physical and intellectual liberty, as demonstrated, for example, by the extraordinary mobility of Moravian women missionaries (who traveled up and down the eastern seaboard and, indeed, throughout the Atlantic world). In this context, it is also important to note that the General Economy and the choir system together lifted from women any material necessity to marry. The life of a Single Sister in Bethlehem was honored, respected, and materially secure; it promised abundant community and homosocial intimacy; and it offered the opportunity to participate voluntarily in childrearing, as well as scope for leadership within and beyond the confines of the community.³⁰

The Moravians' spiritual vision and their socialization of the economy (their sharing of the surplus) thus led to striking forms of economic equality and gender symmetry in Bethlehem. It led also, and for related reasons, to forms of ethnic and racial integration that were rare in colonial America. In contrast to the spiritually parsimonious Puritans and Calvinists of various kinds who had also been attracted to the New World, the Moravians believed that all souls, and not merely a privileged "elect," could be saved, that all human beings could join in the ecstatic embrace of the Savior. They insisted upon the spiritual equality of all human beings, across racial as well as gender lines—a proposition that flowed from their faith in the "inexpressible and inimitable equality" of the Savior's love. For complex reasons (including his own grandiose ambitions and tendency towards paternalistic exoticism), Zinzendorf was drawn from childhood onward to the idea of evangelizing among the indigenous people encountered by Europeans in the course of imperial expansion. From the very outset, the Moravians felt a special calling to evangelize among African slaves in the New World (they sent their very first missionaries to St. Thomas in 1732, a decade before Bethlehem's found-

ing) and also among the native peoples of North America (fig. 6).³¹ There are tragic aspects of the Moravians' evangelical enterprise among Africans and Native Americans, which I will address below—as well as comic ones (including Zinzendorf's elaboration of the fanciful notion that the native people of the Delaware Valley, the Lenape, were one of the lost tribes of Israel). But I want, first, to emphasize that during the first twenty years, the Moravians integrated both Africans and Native Americans into Bethlehem's choir system, where they lived, worked, learned, and worshipped communally, on terms of approximate material equality, with their coreligionists from across Europe. (One can still glimpse this startling racial integration today by walking through Bethlehem's Moravian cemetery, God's Acre, where one can see Native Americans and Africans buried alongside their European choir-mates in the 1740s, 1750s, and 1760s, each identified by tribe or nation: Ibo and Irishman, Moravian and Mohican.) They slept and broke bread together in their choir houses, learned to read and to practice trades together, exchanged the kiss of peace and washed one another's feet during worship. As Spangenberg explained of the Africans in Moravian Bethlehem, "there is no difference between them and other Brothers and Sisters. They dress as we do, they eat what we eat, they work when we work, they rest when we rest, and they enjoy quite naturally what other Brothers and Sisters enjoy."³²

In summary, then, I am proposing that the practice of spiritual excess and the claiming of the economic surplus in Moravian Bethlehem released powerful libidinal and material energies and led to the construction of a community characterized by forms of economic equality, gender symmetry, and racial integration that were rare, not only in the middle of the eighteenth century, but in our time as well. Excess, in this sense, led to utopia.

Fearing Excess

The Moravians were, however, ambivalent about the excess they enjoyed. They feared, as well as loved, what was most utopian in their own communal life. As a result, they compromised from the outset and ultimately destroyed their own most impressive social accomplishments.

First, some of the most transgressive aspects of Moravian spiritual life—those associated with the so-called (and much-debated) Sifting Time—became a source of embarrassment, anxiety, and fear not only to later generations of Moravians (and to many historians until recently), but also to some of those within the eighteenth-century church leadership itself. The

Moravians' lurid blood-and-wounds theology, their sexualized conception of mystical marriage, and their particular organization of gender roles and sexuality, made them targets of suspicion and hostility from outsiders in the mid-eighteenth century, in North America and in Europe.³³ Within the church itself, growing concerns about the libidinal intensities of the Sifting Time led to calls for greater circumspection and restraint—calls intensified, perhaps especially, when the homoerotic impulses of Moravian theology found expression in what Paul Peucker has shown may have been male homosexual practice (especially in Herrnhag, where Zinzendorf's son, Christian Renuus, became the charismatic leader of the Single Brothers' Choir—a group of men who apparently enjoyed the fraternal kiss of peace quite fervently and who, among other remarkable acts, decided to join, en masse, the Single Sisters' Choir as an affirmation of the female character of their souls.)³⁴

Second, some among the Moravians always feared the economically and socially equalizing tendencies of the General Economy and of the choir system (both of which had roots, in part, in a much older, revolutionary peasant movement). Zinzendorf himself was torn between acute status consciousness and desire for egalitarian community—and in a range of ways, he sought to affirm his paradoxical status as “first among equals” in Moravian life. As a number of historians have shown, aristocratic (and wealthy) members of the Moravian community tended to exercise greater degrees of authority and power even in Bethlehem—a tendency that led, in particular, to a period of crisis during the leadership of Bishop Johann Nitschmann (1748–1752), who sought to weaken the General Economy and to introduce more hierarchical forms of status discrimination in Bethlehem.³⁵ Particularly after the Seven Years' War exacerbated the financial troubles of the international church, some leaders of the *Brüdergemeine* in Herrnhut began to push for the abolition of Bethlehem's General Economy.³⁶ Pursuing a capitalist economic logic, these German leaders of the church insisted that if Bethlehem were already prosperous under the General Economy, then privatization—making every family responsible for its own economic survival—would motivate people to work still harder and would enable Bethlehem to send more money to Herrnhut to pay off the church's steadily mounting international debts. When the people of Bethlehem were asked to consider abolishing the General Economy in 1758, they wrote eloquently and with apparent unanimity in its defense, indicating that they cherished the material security, spiritual meaning, and

shared purpose provided by their communal life.³⁷ But after Zinzendorf's death in 1760, the new generation of leaders in Herrnhut imposed their will, abolishing the General Economy, against the wishes of the people of Bethlehem, who were now expected to live in conventional family units and to pursue their private fate in the market economy. Within less than a decade, as Smaby and others have shown, economic equality evaporated, as wage disparities, differential ownership of wealth, a fixed division of labor, and individual vulnerability to poverty all asserted themselves in Bethlehem for the first time. (Interestingly, the population of Bethlehem also plummeted during this period, and its economy faltered as the community lost its egalitarian ethos and passionate sense of common purpose.)³⁸

Third, there was always a deep ambivalence among the Moravians—perhaps especially among its male leaders—about the community's tendency toward gender symmetry and equality. Even as Zinzendorf had struck at one of the foundations of Western misogyny by insisting that Christ's incarnation and suffering had lifted the stigma of original sin from human sexuality and from women's bodies in particular, his anxieties about potential heterosexual contact between unmarried people was, in part, responsible for the almost manic character of sex segregation in the city of Bethlehem. Although Zinzendorf's spiritual vision had authorized exceptional opportunities for female leadership, he could not break away from the deep patriarchal strain within Western Christianity that insisted on the inferiority of women. He asserted, for example, that "The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ of the *Gemeine* He must treat her with understanding, in order to give her respect as the weaker part." Elsewhere, he explained that when "Scripture calls the female person a weak worktool, it means by this that she cannot think as broadly, deeply, and continuously as the Brothers" and "therefore one finds many fewer among you than among us who have the gift of governing."³⁹ Although Bethlehem removed any material necessity for women to marry, the most significant forms of power, leadership, and mobility were accessible to Moravian women only if they married—and these were lost as soon as they became widows. Some of the hostility towards Bethlehem's General Economy and choir system among German leaders of the *Brüdergemeine* derived from their discomfort with the community's unorthodox gender relations and displacement of the nuclear family. And indeed, when the General Economy was abolished in 1760, women were reinserted into the structure of the patriarchal family—and they lost most of

the forms of power, leadership, material autonomy, and much of the primary homosocial community that they had enjoyed in the first two decades of the city's history.⁴⁰ (In this regard, the intuition of twentieth-century feminist radicals, from Emma Goldman to Gayle Rubin, that the full emancipation of women requires not only a challenge to the patriarchal family but also to the market economy is powerfully born out by the experience of Bethlehem's first generation.)⁴¹

Finally, the Moravians feared racial equality even as they practiced surprising forms of racial integration. There are many strands to this important and tragically emblematic American story. At its heart, however, lies a paradox that David Brion Davis and other intellectual historians have shown to be central to the history of European enslavement of Africans—as it is also central to some aspects of Europeans' imperial subjugation and displacement of native people in the Americas.⁴² The Moravians believed in the spiritual equality of all human beings: they insisted that Africans and Native Americans could as surely be saved as Europeans, if they would abandon their own spiritual beliefs and embrace the Moravians' particular vision of Christianity. They also showed a striking willingness during Bethlehem's first generation to live together, in racially mixed community, on terms of physical and spiritual intimacy and on terms of relative material parity. But the Moravians' commitment to spiritual equality did not entail a commitment to social equality: indeed, it was often fused to religious justifications of structural inequality and exploitation. When Zinzendorf first encountered an African, a West Indian slave named Anthony at the Royal Court of Denmark in 1731, he immediately began to dream of saving the souls of slaves on West Indian sugar plantations. He did not dream of liberating them from bondage. Indeed, he assumed the legitimacy of slavery, just as he assumed the legitimacy of his own relation to the peasants on his Saxon estates. When Moravian missionaries went to save souls on the island of St. Thomas in the 1730s, they purchased slaves and operated a sugar plantation with enslaved labor in order to cover the cost of their missionary endeavor.⁴³ When Zinzendorf himself visited St. Thomas in 1739, he instructed slaves to "Remain faithful . . . to your masters and mistresses, your overseers and bombas, and . . . perform all your work with as much love and diligence as if you were working for yourselves. You must know that Christ himself puts each one of his children to work; for the Lord has made everything Himself—kings, masters, servants, and slaves. And as long as we live in this world,

everyone must gladly endure the state into which God has placed him and be content with God's wise counsel." He went on to explain that "God has punished the first Negroes with slavery. The blessed state of your souls does not make your bodies accordingly free, but it does remove all evil thoughts, deceit, laziness, faithlessness, and everything that makes your condition of slavery burdensome."⁴⁴

When the Moravians came to Bethlehem two years later, they brought with them the practice of slavery and the Christian justification of it. Within less than a year of founding Bethlehem—a "city built upon a hill" that would shine its "light" "far and wide"—the Moravians began purchasing slaves. As the *Bethlehem Diary* of November 1742 reported, they found that "*white hired hands* . . . behaved so arrogantly and insolently" that it would be "preferable" to meet their labor shortage by "buy[ing] Negroes from St. Thomas."⁴⁵ Over the next twenty years, Bethlehem's Moravians purchased perhaps three dozen slaves. Most of those Africans to whom I alluded earlier—living in choir houses on terms of rough material equality, sharing education and sharing, too, the love feast and the kiss of peace—were held as chattel by the church. There is a great deal to be said about this paradox, but I will end here merely by emphasizing that European Moravians viewed these Africans as spiritual brothers and sisters—and, therefore, as entitled to their place within the General Economy. But there were limits to the forms of sisterhood or fraternity they could allow themselves to feel. In order to solve their labor problem in this particular way, in order to create a particular kind of economic surplus in the first year of the community's existence, they needed to embrace an ideology (and, in turn, an emotional comportment) that branded Africans as a population punished by God with the fate of slavery.⁴⁶

In conclusion, then, I would like to propose that the city of Bethlehem was founded on practices of spiritual excess that liberated libidinal and material energies and brought into being a community characterized by kinds of equality that most Americans today believe to be impossible. But it was a community—like the ones in which we live today—frightened by its own excess and frightened, too, by its own egalitarian intensities. As Blake, Marx, and Freud intuited, our capacity for freedom and our capacity to practice justice may in the end be rooted in our capacity to honor libidinal impulses that we have been taught to fear and to claim our common surplus to meet our common needs.

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Notes

1. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (1953), 7:185–87 and "On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Eroticism" (1917) in *Standard Edition* (1955), 17:125–33.
2. Karl Marx, *Capital*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (1967), 177–230.
3. On distribution of wealth in the US, see G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America: Challenges to Corporate and Class Dominance*, 6th ed. (2009)—or, for a quick summary, see Domhoff, "Wealth, Income and Power," <http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/wealth.html>. In 2011, 91% of children attending South Bethlehem's only public junior high school received free or reduced-cost lunch (*Broughal Community School* brochure statistics confirmed through interview with Ed Docalovich, Principal of Broughal Middle School, Bethlehem, PA, November 2011).
4. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in *The Portable Blake*, ed. Alfred Kazin (1946), 250–55.
5. See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro, 1550–1812* (1968), 18–19, 35–37, 41–42, 54–56 and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (1975), 539–41.
6. On repressive desublimation, see Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1966), 56–83.
7. This emancipatory tradition is a rich and varied one, with many literary, political, and theoretical branches. Readers with a theoretical turn of mind will be aware of an array of conceptual projects that explore the relationship between libidinal repression and material exploitation—and, accordingly, between psychological and social emancipation. The liberationist moment that we might describe as the long 1960s gave rise to a particularly ambitious set of efforts, including, for example, Herbert

Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (1955); Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (1959); Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share* (1946, 1967); Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire* (1972); and Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (1975), 157–210.

8. Keri Davies, "The Lost Moravian History of William Blake's Family: Snapshots from the Archive," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 6 (Nov. 2006): 1297–1319 and Keri Davies, "Jonathan Spilsbury and the Lost Moravian History of William Blake's Family," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (Winter 2006–07): 100–109.

9. J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church* (1983); Rudolph Řičan, *The History of the Unity of Brethren*, trans. C. Daniel Crews (2008). For his political vision, see Petr Chelčický, "On the Triple Division of Society," "On Spiritual Warfare," and "On the Holy Church," trans. Howard Kaminsky, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 1 (1964): 123–73 and Enrico C. S. Molnár, "A Study of Peter Chelčický's Life and a Translation from Czech of Part One of His *Net of Faith*" (bachelor of divinity thesis, Pacific School of Religion, 1947), http://www.nonresistance.org/docs_pdf/Net_of_Faith.pdf. Quotations from *Net of Faith*, 33, 77, 81 and "Triple Division," 158–59.

10. For a typically hagiographic, but lively and useful biography, see John Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (1956).

11. For the geographical spread of the Moravians, see membership statistics of *Brüdergemeine* in 1743 in Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (2004), 229–30 and the map of Moravian communities in the Atlantic world in Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Jesus is Female: Moravians and the Challenge of Radical Religion in Early America* (2007), 6. Spangenberg's letter (Feb. 27, 1756), addressed to fellow Moravians in North Carolina, reveals the vision that informed both the Bethlehem and Wachovia communities: letter in Moravian Archives, Southern Province, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, vault 3, box 1, nos. 6, 20 (trans. Elizabeth Marx), quoted in Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763–1840* (1998), 76.

12. My account of Moravian theology here and throughout draws on the meticulous and revelatory scholarship of Craig D. Atwood. See *Community of the Cross*, chap. 2 and *passim*. Quotation from *Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf: Ergänzungsbände zu den Hauptschriften*, ed. Erich Beyreuther and Gerhard Meyer (1964–1985) vol. 6, part 67, 324, trans. and quoted in Atwood, 63.

13. On blood and wounds theology generally, see Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 95–112. "Corpse bees," "worms," and "moist and juicy wounds," quoted in Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (2005), 180. "One should see that it is biblical," in Zinzendorf, *Hauptschriften in sechs Bänden*, ed. Erich Beyreuther and Gerhard Meyer (1962–65), vol. 4, part 2, intr., 3 (unnumbered), trans. and quoted in Atwood, 101.

14. Zinzendorf, *Twenty one discourses or dissertations upon the Augsburg-Confession, which is also the brethren's confession of faith: deliver'd by the ordinary of the brethren's churches before the seminary*, trans. F. Okeley (1753), Discourse 4:58–59 and Discourse 9:136. See

Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 106–11 and Carolyn Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother* (1982). On devotional miniatures, see Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 80–82.

15. On mystical marriage, see Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 91–95 (soul as “con-sort” and “playmate,” quoted on 93). On Moravian marriage and sexual practice, see Paul Peucker, “In the Blue Cabinet: Moravians, Marriage, and Sex,” *Journal of Moravian History* 10 (2011): 7–37.

16. Zinzendorf, *Hauptschriften in sechs Bänden* vol. 4, part 23, 324; trans. and quoted in Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 109.

17. Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 218–21.

18. On Zinzendorf’s inheritance, see Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 55. On peasant income in the 1730s (in Prussia, north and east of Saxony), by way of comparison, see William W. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500–1840* (2002), 206–7.

19. See, especially, Katherine Carté Engel, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America* (2009).

20. On varied organization of Moravian communities, see Beverly Prior Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem: From Communal Mission to Family Economy* (1988), 9–32.

21. On economic organization to meet shared aims, see Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 175; on material equality, see Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 95; on literacy, see Atwood, 138; on security and passing into the savior’s arms, see Smaby, 171–79; on Moravian dress, Elisabeth Sommer, “Fashion Passion: The Rhetoric of Dress within the Eighteenth-Century Moravian Brethren,” in *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World*, ed. Michele Gillespie and Michael Beechy (2007), 83–96.

22. Spangenberg, “Spangenberg’s Gedanken,” SP A. II, Spangenberg Papers 1, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA; quoted in Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 37.

23. Spangenberg to Zinzendorf, April 26, 1746, Herrnhut Archives, R.14, A18, 31, quoted in Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 184. Spangenberg “not out of duty” quoted in Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 37. On equal value of work and movement from material to spiritual labor, see Engel, 37–38 and Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 183–85.

24. See Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 119–20; Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 52–55.

25. Helmut Erbe, for example, estimates that brothers and sisters worked as much as sixteen hours a day; see *Bethlehem, Pa.: Eine Herrnhuter-Kolonie des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1929), 90.

26. Quoted in Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 184–85.

27. Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 13.

28. Zinzendorf, *Hauptschriften in sechs Bänden* vol. 4, part 1, 88–89, quoted in Peter Vogt, “A Voice for Themselves: Women as Participants in Congregational Discourse in the Eighteenth-Century Moravian Movement,” in *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela Walker (1998), 229. See also Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, 47–48 and Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 94.

29. On sex segregation of the choir system and its implications for women (including ordination), see Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 101–103, 145–70; Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 67–68, 95, 173–83; Katherine M. Faull, trans. and ed., *Moravian Women's Memoirs: Their Related Lives* (1997).

30. See Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 175–76; Erbe, *Bethlehem, Pa.*, 38; Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 57, 145; and Faull, *Moravian Women's Memoirs*, xxiv, xxvii–xxxi.

31. See Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 28, 36, 93–101 and Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 25–26.

32. On racial integration of choir houses, see Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 99–100; Sensbach, *Separate Canaan*, 126; and Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (2003), 160–64. See Erbe's account (*Bethlehem, Pa.*, 27) of hymns sung in Bethlehem on Aug. 21, 1745 in Mohawk and Mohican, as well as fourteen European languages. See also John Catron, "Early Black-Atlantic Christianity in the Middle Colonies: Social Mobility and Race in Moravian Bethlehem," *Pennsylvania History* 7, no. 3 (2009): 301–45. Spangenberg's memorandum of Jan. 8, 1760, in Bethlehem Moravian Archives, box marked "West Indies, Miscellaneous Letters, 1739–1769" (trans. Lothar Madeheim); quoted in Susan M. Lenius, "Slavery and the Moravian Church in North Carolina" (honors thesis, Moravian College, 1974), 108; see also Sensbach, *Separate Canaan*, 121. It should be noted that in this passage, Spangenberg is describing the condition of slaves in Pennsylvania, contending that this degree of material equality meant that enslaved Africans in the community "actually . . . are not slaves with us."

33. On hostility in North America, see especially Fogleman, *Jesus is Female*, 135–217. On varied sources of European hostility, see also Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 69–70, 102–13, 205.

34. Paul Peucker, "Inspired by Flames of Love: Homosexuality, Mysticism, and Moravian Brothers Around 1750," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 1 (January 2006): 30–64.

35. Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 56–62; Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 126–29.

36. Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 136, 147–51.

37. See the compilation of written responses of 145 Single Brothers to the proposed abolition of the General Economy in 1758—and also the poignantly divided responses of the Sisters in 1764, as they struggled to adapt to the change imposed from above: folder: "Termination of the Economy"; Box: "Termination of the Economy, 1758–1764" (Shelf 226E), Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA.

38. On abolition of the General Economy and its effects, see Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 32–36, 57–58, 119–20, 230–43 and Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 161–81.

39. "Husband is the head of the wife" in "Verlass der vier Synoden der evangelischen Brüder-Unität von den Jahren 1764, 1769, 1775, und 1782," Bethlehem Moravian Archives, mss. 11, 11 and 13; quoted in Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 168. Woman as "weak worktool" quoted in Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*, 48–49.

40. See Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 168, 178–80 and Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 138–42.

41. Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love” and “The Traffic in Women” in *Red Emma Speaks*, ed. Alix Kates Shulman, 3rd ed. (1998), 204–13 and 175–89 and Rubin, “The Traffic in Women.” Those who doubt the continued relevance of this analysis should consider the 2011 US Census Bureau report, which reveals that 40% of female-headed households in the US today are living in poverty: Jason DeParle and Sabrina Tavernise, “Poor are Still Getting Poorer, but Downturn’s Punch Varies, Census Data Shows,” *New York Times*, 15 Sept. 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/15/us/poor-are-still-getting-poorer-but-downturns-punch-varies-census-data-show.html>.

42. This paradox is central to my book-in-progress, *Bethlehem: American Utopia, American Tragedy*, although I do not have space here to develop it in detail. See David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (1966) and *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (1975).

43. See Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, 49–51 and 106–7.

44. Zinzendorf address to the slaves, Feb. 15, 1739 in C. G. A. Oldendorp, *History of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John*, ed. and trans. Arnold R. Highfield and Vladimir Barac (1770; repr. 1987), 361–63. On the distinct but related paradoxes of Moravian-Native American relations, there is a growing body of scholarship: in addition to Engel, *Religion and Profit*, see Merritt, *At the Crossroads*; Amy C. Shutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (2007); Steven Craig Harper, *Promised Land: Penn’s Holy Experiment, the Walking Purchase, and the Dispossession of Delawares, 1600–1763* (2006); William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies in Penn’s Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (2004); Gunlog Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters among the Delaware Indians* (2009).

45. *Bethlehem Diary*, trans. and ed. Kenneth G. Hamilton (1971), 1:105.

46. On the paradoxes of Moravians and slavery generally, see Jon Sensbach’s pathbreaking work in *Separate Canaan* and *Rebecca’s Revival*. On slavery in Moravian Bethlehem, see *Separate Canaan*, 48–55; Catron “Early Black-Atlantic Christianity”; Katherine Faull Eze, “Self-Encounters: Two Eighteenth-Century African Memoirs from Moravian Bethlehem,” in *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World*, ed. David McBride, Leroy Hopkins, and Carol Blackshire-Belay (1998), 29–52; and Daniel B. Thorp, “Chattel with a Soul: the Autobiography of a Moravian Slave,” in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 112, no. 3 (July 1988): 433–51.