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Doing Utopia: Radical utopian communities, mobility, and the body in the early twentieth century

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Abstract

This article analyses communal projects in the first half of the twentieth century. It investigates communes in various places of the non-Western world, including the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, the Nōson Seinen Sha's anarchist commune in imperial Japan, and the Rastafarian Pinnacle Commune on Jamaica. At first glance these communes seem completely unrelated as they emerged in distinct cultural and historical contexts. However, bringing them into conversation demonstrates that these communes equally showcase a high degree of integration into global structural transformations of the early twentieth century. Mobility and the body are applied as analytical perspectives to underscore, firstly, the similarity and connectivity of these otherwise very different and distinctive communal projects. Secondly, mobility and the body also illustrate the importance of *doing utopia*, acknowledging historical experience and practice beyond established analysis of utopia that are too often concerned with mapping utopia's discursive formation. And finally, this article complements transnational comparative and global connected history by accentuating similarity and the interplay of integration and marginality as analytical tools to narrate a decentred global history.

Keywords: Utopian Communities; Radicalism; Mobility; the Body; Global Integration

At the turn of the twentieth century, radical utopian communities emerged all around the world. They ranged from socio-political communes to religious sects, encompassing the political spectrum from the radical left to the extreme right. Many communities attempted to put theories of anarchism and socialism into practice. Religiously inspired groups combined—at times conflicting—political and cultural ideas to articulate and live a utopian model society. In African, Asian, Latin American, and Western countries, radical utopians built communities in spatially remote and sometimes also socially secluded colonies apart from the urbanizing metropolises and developing industrial centres. They often aimed at creating a self-governed, autarchic lifestyle based on collective agricultural labour. And they developed new concepts of an ideal society, practiced new ways of being, and established a base for sharing and propagating their ideas and accomplishments. Radical utopian communities served as retreat for activists, reformers, and revolutionaries as well as exiles, refugees, and hermits. Yet they simultaneously constituted laboratories for utopian practice and hubs for the meeting of people and the circulation of knowledge globally.

Many community projects in the nineteenth and twentieth century have already been the subject of historical inquiry, but mostly within national frameworks. This article, however, places communal life as an integral part in the structural transformation, imagining, and making of

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the modern world.¹ Drawing on communal projects located around the world—the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, the Nōson Seinen Sha’s anarchist commune in imperial Japan, and the Rastafarian Pinnacle Commune on Jamaica—, this article highlights the global pervasiveness of radical utopian communities in the first half of the twentieth century. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach founded the Tolstoy Farm near Johannesburg in 1910 and it soon became a site for political, spiritual, and nutritional experiments. As role model for Gandhi’s future *ashrams*, it was also a laboratory to develop and exercise a new subjectivity through ideals of co-operative labour, communal living in harmony and simplicity, and vegetarianism—ultimately, it was also a testing ground for anti-colonial resistance.² Anarchists of the Nōson Seinen Sha (Farming Village Youth Association), such as Miyazaki Akira and Suzuki Yasuyuki, built a village commune in Nagano prefecture in 1920s and 1930s imperial Japan. Their practical or ‘pure anarchism’ was aiming at an immediate implementation of an egalitarian system of production and consumption organized in farming villages as the foundation of social revolution encapsulating cooperative ownership, eliminated hierarchies, and grass-roots democratic models.³ Finally, Leonard Howell, the ‘First Rasta’, founded the Pinnacle Commune in the hills of Saint Catherine’s parish in 1940 that attracted and fostered the Rastafarian community. Pinnacle was a centre for black millennial beliefs, religious revivalism, and political struggle against racism and colonial land ownership in Jamaica that promised the liberation of black peasants and workers.⁴

This article deliberately puts seemingly disparate, non-Western communes into conversation. All cases were situated at the alleged margins of society, whether their liminality was self-imposed, due to repressive politics or discarded in historiography. Yet despite their social, political, cultural, economic, and spatial marginalization at the time, I argue that radical utopian communities were globally integrated into intellectual developments, social movements and their demands, and technological advancements worldwide. Moreover, from the communes’ and their members’ perspectives, their radical utopian projects were never peripheral nor nostalgic, but avantgarde. Hence, regardless of their marginal position facing the asymmetries of power created by capital, empire, and the state, an analysis of radical utopian communities helps historians to move beyond a dichotomous logic of centre/periphery to recognize these communities’ significance and impact. Rastafari’s close entwinement with Reggae, for instance, greatly affected Jamaican music and art that popularized Jamaica globally and still attracts followers and influences musical styles and social movements worldwide.⁵ In imperial and contemporary Japan, anarchist thought shaped the literary scene, cultural production, perceptions of nature, and children’s imagination through anarchists’ readings and translations of authors as diverse as Leo Tolstoy, Petr Kropotkin, and Jean Henri Fabre.⁶ And *satyagraha* as specific form of non-violent resistance, which Gandhi developed

¹On global integration as one paradigm in global history, see Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9.

²James D. Hunt and Sureendra Bhana, ‘Spiritual Rope Walkers: Gandhi, Kallenbach, and the Tolstoy Farm, 1910-1913’. *South Africa Historical Journal* 1/58 (2007): 174-202; Shimon Lev, *Soulmates: The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach* (Dehli: Orient Black Swan, 2012), 34.

³John Crump, *Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993); Yōko Mihara, ‘Nōson Seinen Sha to Gendai’, in *Nōson Seinen Sha Sono Shiso to Tatakai*, edited by Hiroshima Museifushugi Kenkyūkai (Hiroshima: Hiroshima Museifushugi Kenkyūkai, 1988); Masayasu Hosaka, *Nōson seinen sha jiken: Shōwa anakisuto no mita maboroshi* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2011); Robert Kramm, ‘Trans-Imperial Anarchism: Cooperatist communalist theory and practice in imperial Japan’, *Modern Asian Studies* 55/2 (2021): 552-86.

⁴Hélène Lee, *The First Rasta: Leonard Howell and the Rise of Rastafarianism* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2003); Robert A. Hill, *Dread History: Leonard P. Howell and Millenarian Visions in the Early Rastafarian Religion* (Chicago: Research Associates School Times Publications and Frontline Distribution International, 2001).

⁵Noel Leo Erskine, *From Garvey to Marley: Rastafari Theology* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 169; Ennis B. Edmonds, *Rastafari* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 71-2.

⁶Sho Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese-Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 5 and 298-99.

during his sojourn at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa by appropriating parts of Hinduism and Sanskrit and combining them with Henry David Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience, eventually had a considerable impact on bringing down British colonial rule in India, it influenced Martin Luther King in the Civil Rights Movement and is referenced by various contemporary protest movements.⁷ Such appropriations, interplays, and effects, therefore, require a decentred global history approach.

A history of radical utopian communities in the early twentieth century demonstrates that other histories were possible notwithstanding the multiple constraints and grand narratives of capital, empire, and (nation) state power. Approaching radical utopian communities with methods developed in global history and the history of everyday life in regard to *doing utopia*, this article opens up decentred global history perspectives on a particular historical moment in the making of the modern world by complementing comparative and entangled history with a slightly different approach.⁸ Let me explain: Gandhi/Kallenbach, Miyazaki/Suzuki and Howell, and all the other respective members of the three communes in South Africa, Japan, and Jamaica, never actually met. A comparison of the three cases would systematically illuminate their parallels and differences, either highlighting their general agreements or distinct characteristics. From a global intellectual history perspective, we could reconstruct the entangled discursive formation in which all three groups engaged with the same literature, ideas, and debates.⁹ This article, however, explores a different venue that is less concerned with comparisons and connections than with juxtaposing the three similar communes at different times and places that were nevertheless grounded in the historic specificity of early twentieth-century capitalist modernity. Similarity does not imply sameness, nor does it dwell on difference. It rather acknowledges plurality without insisting on mutual understanding (*Verstehen*) but asks for tolerant accommodation (*Verständigung*), and, like non-normative comparative history, functions as a heuristic lens that is equally attentive to rupture and commonality.¹⁰

Following these incentives, *Doing Utopia* stresses the similarity of radical utopian communities across cultural, national, and imperial boundaries. Despite being situated in their respective contexts, they nevertheless shared a similar communal form, which included pursuing agricultural farming, and they were usually located at some remote place in the countryside, which promised a self-sufficient and independent lifestyle. Conspicuously, a similar logic underlies what Juri Lotman has explicated in the semiotic structure of the semiosphere, which consists of a metropolitan centre with more or less stable meanings and peripheries at the sphere's boundaries, an 'area of accelerated semiotic processes, which always flow more actively on the periphery of cultural environments, seeking to affix them to the core structures, with a view of displacing them'.¹¹ Translating Lotman's observation to communal experiments, this turns seemingly marginalized radical utopian communities into the most happening places, where new signification and new practices, ideas, and community flourished. Radical utopians lived and developed new practices and ideas of liberty and communal life that contributed to the making of the modern world.

⁷Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, trans. Valji Govindji Desai (Triplicane: S. Ganesan Publisher, 1928); Om Dikshit, 'The Impact of Mahatma Gandhi on Martin Luther King, Jr.', *Negro History Bulletin* 38/2 (1975): 342-44; Paul Banahene Adjei, 'The Non-Violent Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. in the 21st Century: Implications for the Pursuit of Social Justice in a Global Context', *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education* 3/1 (2013).

⁸Natalie Zemon Davies, 'Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World', *History and Theory* 50 (2011), 190.

⁹Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

¹⁰Anil Batthi, 'Ähnlichkeiten/Similarities: Vorläufige Überlegungen zu einem Suchbegriff', in *Ähnlichkeit: Ein kulturtheoretisches Paradigma*, ed. by Anil Batthi and Dorothee Kimmich (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2015), 15-7; Philippa Levine, 'Is Comparative History Possible?', *History & Theory* 53 (2014): 347.

¹¹Juri Lotman, 'On the Semiosphere', *Sign System Studies* 33/1 (2015): 212.

Radical utopian communities' patterns of cross-border exchange in South Africa, Japan, Jamaica, as elsewhere, were manifestly entwined with capital, empire, and state power. Despite different forms and experiences, capitalism as well as imperial and colonial state power nevertheless structured the various forms of disenfranchisement, repression, and exploitation manifesting, among other places and things, in South African racial hierarchies, the persecution of leftist political groups in imperial Japan as well as the highly stratified plantation labour system in colonial Jamaica. Yet imperial infrastructures also framed the global channels of communication and room to manoeuvre of its dissidents—in imperial centres and colonial peripheries alike.¹² Anti-imperialists and anti-colonialists protested against imperial power and colonial rule with civil disobedience, published political pamphlets despite censorship, refrained from paying taxes, and organized to resist the landowning elites—always in exchange with peoples, ideas, and movements worldwide, and quite often also beyond their own locality. At the turn of the twentieth century, as Leela Gandhi has so eloquently demonstrated, anti-imperial thought and activism flourished in cosmopolitan intellectual circles, and its advocates envisioned 'the promise of ideal community, a utopia order of things' in the deconstruction of imperialism through solidarity and exchange with their friends and knowledge from the colonial periphery.¹³

This article contributes to this scholarship by drawing attention to the marginalized, sometimes even silenced, yet nevertheless rich and integrated history of radicalism in the making of the modern world. The following section discusses various debates, definitions and interventions surrounding utopia and radicalism. It highlights the importance of *doing utopia*, the historical praxis in radical utopian communities, which is often overshadowed by the dominance of national, nationalist, and capitalist ideological narrative as well as precedence given to utopian discourse.¹⁴ Two themes, namely mobility and the ideal of the reformed body, are particularly helpful to emphasize the everyday utopia in Transvaal, Nagano, St. Catherine Parish and beyond, but also to narrate—as well as to complicate—this global history of radical utopian communities in the early twentieth century.

Radical utopian communities: Debates, definitions, and interventions

Cultural, literary, and religious studies have highlighted the rich tradition and impact of utopian ideals, and have engaged with modern ideas of utopia, tracing its genealogy—particularly in the West—from Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) to dystopian scenarios in pop-cultural literature and

¹²Jane Burbank and Frederik Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3–4.

¹³Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 8. There are numerous examples for the entwinement of global integration, empire, and dissent, including Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso, 2019); Tim Harper, *Underground Asia: Global Revolutionaries and the Assault on Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). Anarchists actually played a significant role in this history of anti-imperial dissent: Steven J. Hirsch and Lucien van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (New York: Verso, 2007); and Ole Birk Laursen, 'Anti-Imperialism', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anarchism*, edited by Carl Levy and Matthew S. Adams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 149–68.

¹⁴Harry D. Harootunian, 'Shadowing History: National Narratives and the Persistence of the Everyday', in *Uneven Moments: Reflections on Japan's Modern History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 179–80.

film in the twenty-first century.¹⁵ Utopian writing certainly can discursively open up horizons of possibilities, yet, unfortunately, the study of utopia often stops with the intellectual history of certain theorists of utopianism or imaginary narratives of utopia.¹⁶ Hence, here I want to underscore the importance of thinking about utopian projects not in terms of narrative, but actual praxis in specific communities.¹⁷

Extensive research examines single communal projects in England, Germany, Palestine, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Africa, and elsewhere.¹⁸ Much historiography on Northern American cases have prioritized an earlier period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Yet, taking their inhabitants and agendas in the United States much more seriously, this scholarship revealed that communal experimentation remains a viable, arguably even integral part of American life.¹⁹ Increasingly, transnational perspectives have demonstrated, for instance, that communal experiments on both sides of the Atlantic were showcases for early nineteenth-century scientification in the production of knowledge about social organization and progressive reform plans, and how anarchists in the Western and non-Western world sought the commune as a critical form with which to revolutionize human life.²⁰

The search for an all-encompassing definition of utopia and utopian communities is unquestionably an important intellectual endeavour. Yet one issue with most definitions is a latent Eurocentrism that favours a Western tradition of utopia, but also sustains a lack of dialogue between or at least an analytical oversimplification in approaching utopian concepts and community projects across time and space.²¹ Here, however, I would like to draw particular attention to

¹⁵For an overview: Gregory Claeys, *Searching for Utopia: The History of an Idea* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011); Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent, eds., *The Utopia Reader* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999).

¹⁶Laurence Davis, 'History, Politics, and Utopia: Toward a Synthesis of Social Theory and Practice', in *Existential Utopia: New Perspectives on Utopian Thought*, ed. by Michael Marder and Patricia Vieira (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 127-39. See also: Gregory Claeys, 'News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia', *History* 98/330 (2013): 145-73, 154.

¹⁷Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire called Utopia and other Science Fictions* (London and New York: Verso: 2005), xii.

¹⁸Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900-1945* (London: E & FN Spon, 2000); Ute Druvins, 'Alternative Projekte um 1900: Utopie und Realität auf dem "Monte Verità" und in der "Neuen Gemeinschaft"', in *Literarische Utopie-Entwürfe*, edited by Hiltrud Gntig (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2012), 236-49; Henry Near, *The Kibbutz Movement: A History, Vol. 1*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Lucy Sargisson and Lyman Tower Sargent, *Living in Utopia: New Zealand's Intentional Communities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins. Ascona 1900-1920* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986); Sureendra Bhana, 'The Tolstoy Farm: Gandhi's Experiments in "Cooperative Commonwealth"', *South Africa Historical Journal* 1/7 (1975): 88-100.

¹⁹Mark Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America 1680-1880* (London: Turnstile Press, 1951); Robert V. Hyne, *California's Utopian Colonies*, 3rd Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983 [1953]); Charles Pierce LeWarne, *Utopias on Puget Sound, 1885-1915*, 2nd Edition (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995); Francis Robert Shor, *Utopianism and Radicalism in a Reforming America, 1888-1918* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1998); Edward K. Spann, *Hopedale: From Commune to Company Town, 1840-1920* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992). For the actuality of utopian in modern and contemporary America, see: Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America, Volume I: 1900-1960* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), xiii; Donald Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Robert S. Fogarty, *All Things New: American Communes and Utopian Movements, 1860-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

²⁰Anne Kwaschik, 'Gesellschaftswissen als Zukunftshandeln: Soziale Epistemologie, genossenschaftliche Lebensformen und kommunale Praxis im frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in: *Francia*, Band 44 (2017): 189-211; Shakhrah Rahav, 'How Shall We Live?: Chinese Communal Experiments after the Great War in Global Context', *Journal of World History* 26/3 (2016): 521-48; Antony Taylor, "'Septic Edens": Surveillance, Eroticized Anarchy and "Depraved Communities" in Britain and the Wider World, 1890-1930', in *Global Anti-Vice Activism: Fighting Drinks, Drugs and 'Immorality', 1890-1950*, edited by Jessica R. Piley, Robert Kramm and Harald Fischer-Tiné (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

²¹For a critique within the field of utopian studies, see: Gregory Claeys, 'News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia', *History* 98/330 (2013): 145-73; Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, 2nd ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010 [1990]), 209 and 228-31; and Jacqueline Dutton and Lyman Tower Sargent, 'Introduction: Utopias from Other Cultural Traditions', *Utopian Studies* 24/1 (2013): 1-5.

the established and problematic notion that definitions of utopia and utopian communities maintain discursive precedence privileging utopian ideas and visions in contrast to human agency in utopian practice. Reverberating the old debate about the Greek terms non-place (*ουτοπία*) or perfect place (*ευτοπία*), prominent assessments of utopia thereby reproduce utopia as a perfect state—either nowhere or in the future—that limits human action to follow a pre-imagined script.²² Ultimately, such understanding subordinates radical utopians' adaptive creativity and ignores their *Eigen-Sinn*, radicalness, and the impact of contingent and at times inconsistent human agency.²³

I would like to suggest an approach which uses utopia as an analytical term to bring diverse radical utopian communities into conversation. In doing so, I am emphasizing utopian practice in radical utopian community building, which Dennis Hardy has already hinted at by stating that utopians have been 'seeking change by doing'.²⁴ In similar terms, Tessa Morris-Suzuki has highlighted a 'living politics', for instance in the context of Japan's New Villages founded in 1918, postulating that utopianism is a form of self-help and non-governmental politics with which people respond to what they perceive as a social and cultural crisis.²⁵ Building on these insights, I would like to further complicate this take on exercised utopianism and lived politics by arguing that radical utopians were not just responding to a crisis or to an idea, concept or vision of change. Rather, and within their everyday practice and experience: they were *doing utopia*. This is because, crucial to modern utopias is the insistence on recognizing the creative power of human beings who can build a better and emancipatory society in the mortal world.²⁶ The correlation of utopian ideas and practice hints toward non-static dimensions of the utopian encompassing possibilities of action and oscillating between conditions and critique of the present, visions of a better future, and the immediate experience and practice—doing utopia, intended or not.²⁷

Radical utopians' in motion: Physical and intellectual global journeys

One crucial aspect of all radical utopian communities was an idea of journeying. Studies on migration and diaspora as well as ritual pilgrimage have stressed the importance of movement to a far away and probably unknown place, an experience that would significantly strengthen community.²⁸ The Rastafarians even have their own term for such journeying—to 'trod'—, signifying, as Monique Bedasse has put it, 'to move within, between, and beyond the boundaries of any particular nation-state'.²⁹ Mobility constitutes a particular dynamic that fosters the visions, efforts, and willingness of individuals and groups to create a better place in a distant, allegedly empty, pure, and yet unexplored space. Yet, as with the Rastafarians' trodding, radical utopia is not just waiting in the distance, but it talks back and shapes and is shaped by highly mobile radical utopians and their doing utopia.

²²Also Claeys has argued that 'utopia should not be merely a synonym for visionary social improvement'. Claeys, 'News from Somewhere', 150.

²³Alf Lüdtkke, *Eigen-Sinn: Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse Verlag, 1993), 14-5.

²⁴Hardy, *Utopian England*, 147.

²⁵Tessa Morris-Suzuki, 'Beyond Utopia: New Villages and Living Politics in Modern Japan and across Frontiers', *History Workshop Journal* 85 (2018): 51.

²⁶Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, 3 vol. (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1982).

²⁷Phillip Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 11.

²⁸Fogarty, *All Things New*, 19; Lamin Sanneh, 'Time, Space, and Prescriptive Marginality in Muslim Africa: Symbolic Action and Structural Change', in *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities*, edited by Philip Pomper, Richard H. Elphick and Richard T. Vann (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 126-56.

²⁹Monique A. Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 3.

In the modern world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘fast ships, railroads, telegraph lines, inexpensive publications, and film all reached into hinterlands and erased distance’, writes Emily Rosenberg. Simultaneously, the globally integrated patterns of connection and connecting made differences more visible, and arguably even fostered an awareness of difference.³⁰ Radical utopian communities emerged in this ‘age of entanglement’, approximately between the turn of the century and the end of World War II. And they were drawn into what Kris Manjapra has called the global maelstrom of ‘the multiplication of boundaries and claims for difference,’ at a time when ‘the accelerated mutual implications and transnational feedback loops develop[ed] among discrepant national groups around the world [...] despite their power differences’.³¹

Radical utopians, whether in form of Rastafarian trodding, satyagrahian networking or Nōson Seinen Sha anarchist conceiting, actively used and contributed to the increased connectivity and accelerated mobility in the age of entanglement. Radical utopian communities constituted niches and hubs for people traveling and knowledge circulating across local, national, and imperial boundaries. They were nodal sites of solidarity—‘affective communities’, to use Leela Gandhi’s words—where people could experiment with the ‘politics of friendship’.³² They also distributed and appropriated knowledge through personal correspondences, the reception and translation of certain theoretical and literary writings, and the own production of newspapers, pamphlets, and postcards. Mobility—both physical and intellectual—was indispensable to build communities on the margins of global modernity, enabling radical utopians to navigate as ‘moving subjects’ within a world connected.³³

The journeys of Mohandas K. Gandhi were globally connecting and integrating as he travelled from the colonial periphery in Gujarat to study in the imperial metropole in London. While on route to become a barrister in 1891, many Indian students crawled the London pubs, but young Mohan toured the vegetarian restaurants and London’s theosophical circles, reading Henry Salt’s *The Vegetarian* and *The Vegetarian Messenger* and becoming an active member of the London Vegetarian Society. This was also a gateway allowing him to enter the Victorian middle-class as well as acquainting him with the writings of the likes of Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau, Edward Carpenter, William Morris, and John Ruskin.³⁴ Imperial infrastructure and trans-colonial entanglements brought Gandhi to South Africa, when in 1893, Dada Abdulla, a Porbandar-born businessman in Durban, hired Gandhi to settle a lawsuit against the racist anti-Asiatic regulations in South Africa. Over his more than twenty-year long sojourn in South Africa, Gandhi became well integrated into South Africa’s Indian community, ran a lucrative law office in Johannesburg, and fought the racist and unequal legal treatment in the British Empire through defences in court, petitions to the colonial administration, publicity, and non-violent protest that became known as the *satyagraha* campaign.³⁵

Although his peers were predominantly the Indian community, Gandhi also bonded with several Europeans that became highly significant for his life, activism, and the building of Tolstoy Farm. Among them were Henry S. L. Polak and Hermann Kallenbach, a British and a German Jew, whom Gandhi met in Ziegler’s vegetarian restaurant in Johannesburg. Kallenbach, Gandhi’s closest companion and ‘soulmate’, was born in Neustadt, East Prussia in

³⁰Emily S. Rosenberg, ‘Introduction’, in *A World Connecting, 1870-1945*, ed. Emily S. Rosenberg (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.

³¹Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals Across Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 4.

³²Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 26-31. Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (London, New York, and New Dehli: Routledge, 2014).

³³Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 3.

³⁴James Hunt, *Gandhi in London* (New Dehli: Promilla & Co Publishers, 1978), 12-39.

³⁵Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi Before India* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 81.

1871, learned and studied carpentry, masonry, and architecture in Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Stuttgart, and Munich. In August 1896, he travelled to South Africa to join his uncle in Johannesburg. As Eli Sarid, daughter of Hermann's niece Hanna Lazar, recalled in her biography on Hermann Kallenbach, 'South Africa was meant to be the new home for the 25-years old Kallenbach, the land of his dreams as *Baupionier* [construction pioneer]'.³⁶ Unlike Gandhi, the white, middle-class Kallenbach had not travelled abroad to enjoy a good education in the imperial metropole; yet like Gandhi, imperial infrastructures also allowed him to move overseas and to seek fortune at the edge of the British Empire in colonial South Africa.

Even before Tolstoy Farm, Kallenbach and Gandhi had lived together. In 1908, Gandhi moved in with Kallenbach in his Johannesburg apartment on Pine Road, where they tried simplistic living. In a letter to his brother Simon, Kallenbach described how they cut expenses down to £5 per person a month that would include rental, food, and clothing—'with the exception of fees towards study'.³⁷ A year later, they took their communal project a step further and lived in a tent at Mountain View for about a year, which Shimon Lev has described as a 'two-men ashram', and which laid the foundation for the Tolstoy Farm. On 30 May 1910, Kallenbach bought 1,100 acres of land, formerly known as the Roodepoort Farm 49, in Lawley near Johannesburg. As a European, he was legally entitled to buy and own land, unlike the South African 'Asiatics', and he subsequently offered the land to Gandhi and the *satyagraha* movement, as stated in the *Indian Opinion*, to be used as long as their 'struggle with the Transvaal Government lasts'.³⁸ From Tolstoy Farm, Kallenbach established a direct correspondence with Leo Tolstoy, asking for the Count's advice in communal living and informing him of their doings in South Africa. And at Tolstoy Farm, Gandhi developed *satyagraha* and turned the commune into the homebase of non-violent resistance, hosting its activists and their families as well as international guests including prominent protagonists of the Indian Independence Movement such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

About thirty years younger than Gandhi and Kallenbach, Leonard Percival Howell was born in Maye Crawle, Jamaica on 16 June 1898.³⁹ His parents were free peasants, and Howell grew up roaming the forested hills of Clarendon Parish. Rumour has it that one day in 1912, at the age of fourteen, Leonard was sitting in a tree and accidentally witnessed a manslaughter. Refusing to testify to the police, his father Charles decided it would be best to send his son away from Jamaica. Unlike Gandhi and Kallenbach, privileged to get a law degree in the imperial metropole and to build a business at the fringes of empire, Howell started his journey hidden on a banana boat, without the comfort of his family's financial, social, and emotional support, yet with a lack of trust in the colonial authorities. We do not know many details about his world-spanning journeys, but steamships sailing along imperial infrastructures brought Howell to Panama, where he witnessed the building of the Panama Canal and its horrible working conditions, to Europe and Asia while serving a US Army colonel, and to Harlem in New York City, where he got acquainted with Marcus Garvey and the politics of the black nationalist, pan-Africanist Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).⁴⁰

The coronation of Haile Selassie I as Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930 demarcated the beginning of the fulfilment of a biblical prophecy, Howell and the Rastafarians believed. Ethiopia stood in for the whole of Africa, as a place that promised black peasants and workers liberation from the exploitative forces of capitalist, plantation-based agricultural production, its class privileges, and racist hierarchies. It gained purchase particularly against the background of Jamaica's long,

³⁶Isa Sarid and Christian Bartolf, *Hermann Kallenbach: Mahatma Gandhis Freund in Südafrika* (Berlin: Gandhi-Informationszentrum, 1997), 12.

³⁷Letter from Kallenbach to Simon, 10 July 1908, Kallenbach Archive, Kfar Vradim, Israel.

³⁸'Mr. Kallenbach's Splendid Offer', *Indian Opinion*, 11 June 1910, 193.

³⁹Birth Certificate No. 1695 HK, Clarendon Parish Register, Jamaica.

⁴⁰Hill, *Dread History*, 22; Daive A. Dunkley, 'The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica, 1932-1954', *New West Indian Guide* 87 (2013): 69-70.

rich yet unsuccessful history of first slave and later peasant and worker rebellions. Yet it was mainly Howell's initiative to popularize the prophesy and the subsequent liberation of black Jamaicans by returning from Harlem in New York City to Jamaica in 1932 with pictures of Haile Selassie I, which he also sold as postcards in the streets of Kingston, preaching the divinity of the Emperor of Ethiopia. In April 1939, Howell bought land in St. Catherine's parish not far from Spanish Town up on Sligoville Road, and from 1940 there the Rastafarians would find their Promised Land in the Pinnacle Commune. As Hélèn Lee has described the Pinnacle grounds at the time of the Rastafarians' first arrival, 'The land seemed totally barren. There were no huts, and only a trickle of water'. Yet, the Rastafarians 'were thrilled. No more taxes. No land tenure. No police. No crooked politician. No hateful neighbors to su-su pon you!'⁴¹ Howell's Rastafarian Afrocentricity was a novel combination of ideas, which he synthesized with established Jamaican experiences of black revivalism and labour and peasant rebellions against racism, slavery, and colonial landownership, including the role of Ethiopia in the history of Africa and in the future of Africans in the diaspora.⁴² Hence, existing belief systems, past and prevailing asymmetries of power and exploitation, established experiences with resistance, unfulfilled yet desired liberation, and the mobility with persistence and adaptive creativity of historical actors such as Howell constituted Rastafarian radical utopian practice.

Journeying moulded *doing utopia*, embedded into imperial infrastructures and global capitalism, accelerated by early twentieth-century global mobility, which simultaneously fostered the very critique of and resistance against capital, empire, and state authority. The seaman Leonard Howell, I would argue, was inspired on his voyages between the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and the United States to build the Pinnacle Commune in Jamaica. In 1940, John Carradine, a journalist of Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* described Howell as a young and proud black man, who gathered 'within his comparatively short life a wealth of experience . . . , which he has reaped first hand by travels which took him over a large section of the earth'. Indeed, Howell himself remarked that he had 'traveled over a large section of the inhabited world, from Asia across Europe where [he] witnessed scenes of horror in such places as Austria, as the war just ended'.⁴³ Such high level of mobility also extended to Gandhi and Kallenbach, and for all of them the steamship indeed unfolded its rootless yet connecting force in the midst of the early twentieth century upheaval: it did not just bring two 'endpoints in contact' by crossing the sea, but it also enabled people to meet and reflect in transit, allowing them to experience a materialization and vision of passage and liberty.⁴⁴

Anarchists in imperial Japan, however, rarely travelled physically at all. Yet their intellectual journeying and experience of liberation nevertheless had a global, at times even universalist scope transcending borders and boundaries.⁴⁵ They eclectically read evolutionary theory, microbiology, and cosmology. They developed their understanding of radical utopianism in reference to Russian and French scholars dealing with mutual aid among prehistoric humans and animals, symbiotic microbe organisms, and a decentred universe. These became key references to scientifically prove anarchists' conceptualization of cooperatist communalism without the need of hierarchy and (state) authority in social organization. Based on scientific knowledge anarchists considered

⁴¹Lee, *The First Rasta*, 128-29.

⁴²Ennis B. Edmonds, *Rastafari: From Outcasts to Culture Bearers* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40. Daive A. Dunkley, 'Leonard P. Howell's Leadership of the Rastafari Movement and his "Missing Years"', *Caribbean Quarterly* 58/4 (2012): 2-5.

⁴³John Carradine, 'The Ras Tafari Retire To Mountain Fastnesses of St. Catherine', *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 November 1940.

⁴⁴Roland Wenzelhuemer, 'The Ship, the Media, and the World: Conceptualizing Connections in Global History', *Journal of Global History* 11 (2016): 165.

⁴⁵On the possibilities of being global without extensive travel, see: Dominic Sachsenmaier, *Global Entanglements of a Man Who Never Traveled: A Seventeenth-Century Chinese Christian and His Conflicted Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

cooperation and mutual aid—as opposed to exploitation and competition—as the engines of a distinctive modern temporality in historical progress and civilization.⁴⁶ As Nōson Seinen Sha's Suzuki Yasuyuki pointed out, people living in social equality and universal harmony would be part of a worldwide, even cosmological struggle for liberation:

It is deeply moving to carefully observe the entire landscape of the earth, its nature of infinite variety and the effect of human activities' eternal force causing its harmony (. . .). Yet, the very same earth—sustaining and furthermore providing for humankind—and heaven—illuminating the world and supplying the universe's energy—together with a matrix of human beings in harmoniously vibrating conditions can be seen and sensed.⁴⁷

Building on the understanding of a decentred universe and evolution of humankind that is based on harmony and cooperation, and not struggle or competition, the Nōson Seinen Sha were convinced that their 1930s anarchist farming village commune in the hinterland of Nagano prefecture was a first necessary step to aim for a never-ending cosmological dynamic preventing the establishment of hierarchies and exploitation.

The Nōson Seinen Sha did not become famous for their extensive cosmopolitan adventures. When they travelled, they did only navigate within the confines of the Japanese empire. Hence, also for the Nōson Seinen Sha imperial infrastructures provided channels of mobility—and in particular those of communication—that allowed them to stay connected and informed although most of them were physically staying put. Moreover, their commune itself was situated at the fringes of the Japanese empire, located in the hinterland of Nagano prefecture. Although Nagano is towards the geographic centre of the Japanese archipelago, it was not at the core of Japan's modernization and industrialization in the early twentieth century. Moreover, the Nōson Seinen Sha commune was in Tomigata, on a northern mountain spur of the Minami-Alps, slightly south of today's city Ina, the former castle town Takatō, and therefore somewhat off the beaten tracks. Presumably, this choice of a remote location was deliberate as it was 'keeping the state at a distance', to use James Scott's word.⁴⁸ In addition, yet equally speculative, some of the group's members were born in Nagano prefecture, so they had local knowledge and presumably also local ties that could have made it easier to find a place to settle.

Although the Nōson Seinen Sha appear to have been a rather male-dominated group, at least in terms of class background the group was not homogenous. The group's two most prolific writers and theorists were Miyazaki Akira and Suzuki Yasuyuki. Miyazaki Akira was born in 1900 in Okayama but grew up in an industrial mining area in Fukuoka prefecture in northern Kyushu. After junior high school, around the time of the Russian Revolution, Miyazaki started working in the railway industry. It is supposed that he encountered anarchist ideas during a leave trip to Hokkaido reading Russian novelists, pursuing engineering studies at a college in Shanghai, and maintained contacts in a Nihon University student settlement in Tokyo. Positioned outside the privileged realms of academia and without a rich family background, working class Miyazaki was indeed an anarchist from below. His comrade Suzuki Yasuyuki, on the contrary, grew up in the typical intellectual circles as many contemporary revolutionary theorists and agitators did. Suzuki was born in what is now Kitaibaraki, Ibaraki prefecture in 1903, and went to school in Kamakura, where he became fascinated with Ōsugi Sakae's interpretations of Christian socialism. In 1925, he entered Waseda University's Department of Law and thereafter started very soon publishing on anarchist thought. Together with Yagi Akiko (1895-1983), Hoshino Junji (1906-96) and Mochizuki Jirō (1912-37), Miyazaki and Suzuki founded the *Nōson Seinen Sha* in February 1931

⁴⁶Konishi, *Anarchist Modernity*.

⁴⁷Yasuyuki Suzuki, *Nihon museifushugi undōshi* [The History of the Japanese Anarchist Movement] (Tokyo: Kokushoku sensensha, 1990 [1932]), 81-2.

⁴⁸Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 127.

and started their communal experiment in Tomigata. Born in 1895, Yagi was the oldest member of the group, and apparently the only woman actively involved. She grew up in Nagano prefecture's Kiso-district, and she met Miyazaki after she moved to Tokyo and started working for the daily newspaper *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun* where she got attracted to Marxist and anarchist thought and activism. In 1927, Miyazaki got arrested for arson at the Hitachi Company, Yagi paid his bail, and apparently, they lived a 'cohabitant life' (*dōsei seikatsu*). Around that time, they met Hoshino Junji, who had been editing independent journals in Osaka from 1924, which also published some of Miyazaki's writings.

Mochizuki Jirō was the youngest founding member of the Nōson Seinen Sha. Born 1912 in Fuji in Shizuoka prefecture, Mochizuki accompanied his father to Tokyo, where he grew up in a working-class neighbourhood and loosely participated in socialist and anarchist union movements' activities. There he studied Miyazaki and Suzuki's writings, which appealed to him and apparently convinced him to join the group. Mochizuki was nineteen years old when they founded the Nōson Seinen Sha, and he died six years later in prison, allegedly due to sickness.⁴⁹ Mochizuki's and others' prison sentences followed a police raid of the Nōson Seinen Sha, who the national press had been scandalizing as terrorist cell within an empire-encompassing spy network—the immediate reason for the raid, however, was a military manoeuvre in the neighbouring prefecture Gunma, which the emperor was supposed to attend, and for which the police swept the area of all potential dissidents.⁵⁰ Anarchist group activities as well as study and publishing collectives brought members together and organize as the Nōson Seinen Sha. Yet some of their bonds also tightened through the shared experience of being demonized by the press, being harassed and getting arrested by the police, and spending time together in prison. The printing press, intellectual exchange, as well as the experience of modernity, here the forceful impact of capital, empire, and state power still fostered also the Nōson Seinen Sha's doing utopia and their radical utopian community building.⁵¹

As these brief biographical fragments indicate, these radical utopians in South Africa, Jamaica, and Japan were not the usual suspects of globally mobile historical actors, such as traveling elites, merchants, missionaries, agents of imperial states, and displaced migrant laborers. Rather, they were a new reform or even revolution-seeking, and globally conscious group of people from different social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Of course, they were somewhat privileged and not ordered or forced to move—both physically and intellectually. Yet their adaptive creativity allowed them to use existing means of circulation, and they actively appropriated and moulded them according to their own needs.

Despite the high level of global mobility and integration, ironically, radical utopians often despised modern technologies and repeatedly expressed their discontent with modernity's supposedly corrupting impact. Mohandas K. Gandhi finished his book *Hind Swaraj*, subsequently translated into English as *Indian Home Rule*, on board a steamship traveling from London to South Africa. In his book Gandhi warns about the 'evils of civilization', encompassing modern law and medicine as well as railways and producing machinery. They would all expand apace—steam-propelled, as they were—, destroying 'natural segregation', spreading diseases and enslaving workers. 'Railways accentuate the evil nature of man: Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. . . . Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin'.⁵² At Tolstoy Farm itself Gandhi and Kallenbach attempted to reject modern machinery and put much effort in living self-sustained in austerity through co-operative farming, sandal-

⁴⁹Nihon anakizumu undō jinmei jiten henshū iinkai, eds., *Nihon Anakizumu Undō Jinmei Jiten* (Tokyo: Paru Shuppan, 2004), 348, 574-5, 616, 639, 652.

⁵⁰See for instance: 'Nōson seinen sha no kessei', *Shinano Mainichi Shinbun*, 11 January 1937; 'Nōson seinen sha no danmatsu', *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 12 January 1937.

⁵¹On the experience of modernity in interwar Japan, see: Harry D. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁵²Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Phoenix, Natal: International Printing Press, 1910 [1909]), 38 and 91-2.

making, and cloth-sewing. Ideally, this could be accomplished in the countryside, because, as Gandhi foresaw: ‘Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery there are large cities; and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways; and there only does one see electric light. . . . I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery.’⁵³ Nevertheless, it was the steamship that had just brought him and his ideas from Europa to the very south of Africa, where his writings were first distributed in machine print in the self-produced newspaper *Indian Opinion*, and later produced as a book in the Gandhi-founded, South Africa-based International Printing Press in Phoenix, Natal from where printing machines and steamships, again, distributed his words, images, and actions worldwide.⁵⁴ Steamship travel also interrupted Gandhi and Kallenbach’s journey severely after Kallenbach got arrested on their way to India during transit in the UK, because he was carrying a German passport and was considered an enemy alien during the First World War.⁵⁵

Common in all cases of radical utopian community building was indeed a certain rejection of capitalist and industrial forms of production, consumption and living; yet they were closely entwined with modernity’s entailing mobility in the globalized world. They carved out their own spaces that were regardless of spatial and semiotic distances nevertheless inevitably linked to a broader social context. They oscillated between materialized and fantasized places, being simultaneously at the margin and the centre of modern society.⁵⁶ Radical utopians seem to have internalized this oscillation of rejecting modern life and simultaneously acting towards it in promoting and living alternative but no less modern lifestyles. Their constant engagement, exchange, and movement—their doing utopia—brought about border-crossing experiences and practices that fostered creative adaptivity and self- and world-improving strategies. And as I will discuss in the following section, the main target of radical utopians’ innovations and interventions was the human body—and with it all social formations.

Radical utopians’ bodies: Practices of self- and world-improvement

The body is kernel to human experience, interaction, and existence—and it was pivotal to *doing utopia* and the building of radical utopian communities. As Karl Marx wrote in the introduction to the *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*: ‘To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself.’⁵⁷ Marx’s emphasis on the materiality of human experience as well as humans’ capacity to make history, I argue, is an integral part of the otherwise often overemphasized discursive imaginary, the vision of utopia. Aware or more likely unaware, radical utopians followed Marx’s lead and evidently focused the human body and its habits, allegedly in need of fundamental, profound change, and they considered a reformed body the basis to reform themselves and society—and eventually humanity at large.⁵⁸

⁵³Ibid., 94.

⁵⁴Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi’s Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁵⁵Lev, *Soulmates*, 107.

⁵⁶Michel Foucault, ‘Des Espace Autres’, *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984 [1967]): 46-9.

⁵⁷Karl Marx, ‘Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie’, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol 1 (Berlin/DDR: Karl Dietz Verlag, 1976), 385.

⁵⁸Neither limited to its material or linguistic manifestations and experiences, scholars have established the understanding that the body matters in the ‘making and unmaking of the world’, and thus significant to any social formation; see Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1985); Philipp Sarasin, ‘Mapping the body: Körpergeschichte zwischen Konstruktivismus, Politik und “Erfahrung”’, *Historische Anthropologie* 7/3 (1999): 437-51. In imperial centers and colonial societies alike, the body became of primary concern for the myriad ways of affirming, sustaining as well as undermining productivity, healthiness, authority, and liberty—embodying the ‘dynamics of exclusion and inclusion’. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda’, in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. by Stoler and Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

Administrators, scientists, reformers, and revolutionaries of competing and conflicting political positions and scientific approaches worldwide, among them radical utopians of different colour, considered the human body as the smallest unit in the larger social organization that would hence require meticulous attention, labour, and care for the functioning and well-being of social organisation. In different ways, Nōson Seinen Sha's Suzuki Yasuyuki and British anarchist George Barrett, socialist and social hygienist Auguste Forel in Switzerland, sociologist Émile Durkheim in France, evolutionist Herbert Spencer in England, imperial Japan's ideologues' idea of *kokutai* (national body), and the Nazi's vision of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, fostered an understanding of society as a complex social organism that forms a whole through the functionality of all social parts and being.⁵⁹ Anarchists' notions of social organism of course departed from nationalist, imperialist, and fascist readings of the body in crucial ways. One fundamental difference was anarchists' opposition to state and market institutions' dictates to form any sort of unity by emphasizing people's voluntary association in social organization for fostering everybody's welfare.⁶⁰ For them, the material body needed food and other necessities, to which humans should have free access. Although there was much debate among different radical utopians about food's and other necessities' actual form and content—the proper ingredients, so to speak—they nevertheless practiced their radical utopianism similarly in autarchic village communes such as those in Nagano, St. Catherine, and in the Transvaal, concentrating on agricultural labour, production, and consumption as the basis for communal cooperation and being. Their shared concepts and practices of labour and living moreover emphasized the body and human agency not as limited to its functionality for the whole social body, but as pivotal to individual freedom in labour and association.

The body also tied labour and liberty to issues of health and morale. Radical utopian critique addressed the exploitative desire of cost-effectiveness and profit maximization in making the human body more efficient and productive on cash crop plantations as well as at factory assembly lines. Peasants and workers often answered this with their bodies' reluctance and stubbornness to function, including boycott, sabotage, strike, and insurrections.⁶¹ Yet, bodies' unsmooth functioning also resulted from the body's potential to injury, sickness, and disability. State and non-state endeavours, particularly in public health, aimed for the maintenance of productivity as much as for fighting communicable disease, which nevertheless allowed increasing intervention into the most intimate spheres of human life.⁶² This popularization of the body surpassed imperial and class boundaries, and to a certain extent also those of race and gender, and it was equally exercised and promoted in more established elitist circles as in alternative, counter-cultural milieus. For

⁵⁹Auguste Forel, *Die Trinksitten, ihre hygienische und sociale Bedeutung, ihre Beziehung zur akademischen Jugend* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1891), 6-7; Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (London: Macmillan, 1984 [1893]), 11; Susan Burns, 'Constructing the National Body: Public Health and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Japan', in *Nation Work: Asian Elites and National Identities*, ed. Timothy Brook and Andre Schmid (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 17-49; Boaz Neumann, 'The Phenomenology of the German People's Body (Volksoörper) and the Extermination of the Jewish Body', *New German Critique* 106, Vol. 36/1 (2009): 149-81; Klaus Theweleit, *Majnnherphantasien: Frauen, Fluten, Kofrper, Geschichte, vol. 1* (Frankfurt/M.: Verlag Roter Stern, 1977).

⁶⁰In anarchist discourse, this has been made explicit even in the most 'egoistic' positions as put forward, for example, by Max Stirner; see Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 228.

⁶¹Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn*, 139. For examples in Southeast Asia, see: James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and on Jamaica: Daive A. Dunkley, *Agency of the Enslaved: Jamaica and the Culture of Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013).

⁶²Michel Foucault has called these interventions the bio-politics, 'a power to foster life': Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 138 (italics in the original). See also: Philipp Sarasin, *Reizbare Maschinen: Eine Geschichte des Körpers 1765-1914* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2001); Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and in colonial societies: Allison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Robert Peckham and David Pomfret, eds., *Imperial Contagions: Medicine, Hygiene, and Cultures of Planning in Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013); Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 104-7.

adepts of the life reform movement (*Lebensreform*) and nudist hiking organizations in imperial Germany, middle-class gymnastic clubs in the British Empire, and anarchist revolutionary educators, a healthy, fit, and morally superior body became the marker of civilization and progress.⁶³ Radical utopian communities and their members were no exception to these developments. On the contrary, they were exceedingly active and up-to-date in practicing, promoting, and producing ideals of the reformed body to withstand, as they believed, the forces of imperialism, global capitalism, and state authority. Living in austerity, maintaining a particular diet, consuming or abstaining from certain substances, celebrating certain forms of labour, embracing physical exercises and health practices, among other things, all underscore physical practices and bodily regimes as key elements of radical utopian communities. They were at the heart of radical utopians' identifying—or rather: subjectifying—discourse and practices, and their favour of a modern and reshaped body, whose discipline in exercise, labour, food, and living allegedly promised equality, liberty, and progress for the individual and the world.

A compelling example for the gravity of the body in radical utopian communities are what Gandhi and Kallenbach have called their 'experiments' at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa. These experiments with body and health encompassed vegetarian diet as well as the abstention from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, which was mandatory on the Farm. They included sports and physical culture into their daily agenda, and they considered fasting a key practice for both healing and as a strategy of resistance.⁶⁴ Kallenbach, himself a gymnast and bodybuilder who had been trained by the world-touring strongman and physical culturist Eugene Sandow (with the birthname Friedrich Wilhelm Müller), enthusiastically exercised at the Farm and introduced practices of bodily fitness from the life reform movement to his fellow farmers in South Africa.⁶⁵ Walking in particular became a popular form of exercise at Tolstoy Farm, which Gandhi even considered to be the most natural and justifiable means of transportation in contrast to engine-driven mobility with automobiles and trains. Gandhi, Kallenbach and other members of the Farm took great pains in covering the distance of over thirty-five kilometres on foot between the Farm's premises and Johannesburg to run errands. Walking long distances saved travel expenses, but even more importantly, it advertised Tolstoy Farm's *satyagraha* practice to the local community and the outside world. Moreover, walking in the Transvaal was an essential training for protest marches that the Gandhi-led non-violent resistance and non-cooperation movement applied in South Africa and India, most prominently during the Salt March in 1930. Walking—physically and symbolically, quite similar to the Rastafarians' trodding—thus bore high significant and signifying meaning, a bodily practice visualizing the practitioners' movements in space, its appropriation, and the production of new social space.⁶⁶ All these bodily experiments, including walking, aimed at testing and stretching the limits—strengths and weaknesses—of the body, that would enable to live a life of simplicity and less need. This, in turn, makes the body independent from the forces of state and market as well as enduring the hardships of imprisonment, hunger strike, and protest. Simultaneously—and a prime example being Gandhi's protest marches as well as staging his

⁶³Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe, *Der neue Mensch: Körperkultur im Kaiserreich und der Weimarer Republik* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2004); Maren Möhring, *Marmorleiber: Körperbildung in der deutschen Nacktkultur, 1880-1930* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag 2004); Ina Zweininger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). For examples in the British Empire, see: Taylor, "Godless edens," 55; Harald Fischer-Tiné, "Character Building and Manly Games: Viktorianische Konzepte von Männlichkeit und ihre Aneignung im frühen Hindu Nationalismus," *Historische Anthropologie* 9/3 (2001): 432-55; and at its fringes in Egypt: Wilson Chacko Jacobs, *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870-1940* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁶⁴Gandhi's obsession with fasting is even repeatedly mentioned by himself, see for example: M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, Or, The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (London: Penguin, 1982 [1927 and 1929]).

⁶⁵Carey A. Watt, 'Physical culture as "natural healing": Eugene Sandow's campaign against the vices of civilization c 1890-1920', in *Global Anti-Vice Activism*, ed. Pliley et al, 74-5.

⁶⁶De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 91-110.

ascetic body during hunger strikes and at the spinning wheel—it allocates the body as a powerful image for radical utopian communities’ struggle for liberation that can and did circulate the world over and inspired people far beyond their respective locality.

Abstinence and asceticism at Tolstoy Farm aimed at strengthening the body physically but also spiritually, building character as it were. This included refraining from the vices of alcohol and drugs, and also sexual desire. Gandhi was convinced of vice’s domino effect, believing that, for example, drinking alcohol is directly linked to addiction, greed, and loss of self-control, because it can inevitably lead to gambling, debauchery, prostitution, and venereal disease.⁶⁷ In *Key to Health*, written after his experiences in South Africa, putting alcohol consumption and opium smoking on the same level of alleged unproductive uselessness, Gandhi sums up his anti-vice conviction arguing that, ‘Under the effect of alcohol a person becomes a rowdy, whereas opium makes the addict dull and lazy. He becomes even drowsy and incapable of doing anything useful’.⁶⁸ Yet Gandhi had already developed a similar reasoning on vicious temptations and the body’s vulnerability during his sojourn at Tolstoy Farm. In his 1910 published *Hind Swaraj*, or *Indian Home Rule*, a booklet in which Gandhi demanded self-rule and non-cooperation with the colonial regime, and a text that was also an important manual for communal living in the South African project, Gandhi writes: ‘Money renders a man helpless. The other thing which is equally harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison. A snake-bite is a lesser poison than these two, because the former merely destroys the body but the latter destroy body, mind, and soul’.⁶⁹ Gandhi’s experiments with sexuality included to compel even married couples at the Farm to refrain from sex, and to educate the children on the Farm in what he calls the ‘duty of self-restraint’: he sent girls and boys to group-bathing, always under his careful supervision allegedly to ensure no trespassing. He even took these experiments to an extreme, when, decades later, he lay at night with naked young girls to prove his strength to renounce any sort of sexual desire.⁷⁰

Gandhi’s rejection of alcohol, drugs, and illicit sex was part of his broader campaign against the imperial world order. As is well understood, Gandhi’s ideal of the liberation of India, tested and adjusted in the communal experiment in South Africa, was embedded into a global movement against imperialism and colonialism. Yet, lesser known are the similarities and overlaps regarding anti-vice activism, which Gandhi shared with social and moral reformers globally campaigning against alcohol, drugs, and prostitution.⁷¹ They all toured on similar tracks and also shared intellectual journeys, developing similar forms of physical and spiritual exercise—*doing utopia*—to overcome vicious temptations.

Combined physical and spiritual strength as traits of the human body to challenge the alleged evil forces of civilization, radical utopians across the world argued, would foster independence from imperialism and global capitalism. This world order, they contended, grounds in labour exploitation, racist hierarchies, and the alluring powers manifest in alcohol, gambling, and illicit sex—an unholy trinity the Rastafarians have called Babylon and thus corresponds to Gandhi’s understanding of vices’ domino effect. Moreover, the Rastafarians shared a global vision to challenge these alluring powers, since Rastafari was not only countering the Babylonian conditions in Jamaica, but by extension those of the whole, especially Western world.⁷² Similar to Gandhi and

⁶⁷Harald Fischer-Tiné, ‘Eradicating the “Scourge of Drink” and the “Un-pardonable Sin of Illegitimate Sexual Enjoyment”’: M.K. Gandhi as Anti-Vice Crusader’, *Interdisziplinäre Zeitschrift für Südasiensforschung*, No. 2 (2017): 113–30.

⁶⁸Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Key to Health* (Ahmadabad: Navjivan, 1948), 36.

⁶⁹Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 92.

⁷⁰Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul: Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); Vinay Lal, ‘Nakedness, Nonviolence, and Brahmacharya: Gandhi’s Experiments in Celibate Sexuality’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9, 1/2 (2000): 105–36. Jad Adams, *Ghandi: Naked Ambitions* (London: Quercus, 2010).

⁷¹Pliley et al. eds., *Global Anti-Vice Activism*, 5; Ian Tyrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Judith Große, Francesco Spöring and Jana Tschurenev, eds. *Biopolitik und Sittlichkeitsreform: Kampagnen gegen Alkohol, Drogen und Prostitution 1880–1950* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2014).

⁷²Edmonds, *Rastafari*, 42.

Kallenbach, Rastafarians proclaimed that, ‘The forces of evil’, in Ennis Edmond’s words, ‘are not metaphysical entities, but human attitudes and activities that are out of touch with the divine, natural order’.⁷³ Various bodily practices, including the ritual use of cannabis, ritual chants and drums, vegetarian diet, and non-exploitative, collective agricultural labour, allowed Rastafarians to distance themselves from Babylon’s forces of evil.⁷⁴

At Pinnacle, land was at the Rastafarians’ disposal, free of the post-slavery plantation system, independent of landowners demanding royalty and without foremen giving commands. As news of the opening of Pinnacle for the Rastafarian community in 1940 spread, the first euphoria prompted people almost overnight to build huts and cultivate the land by planting corn, yam, and fruits. Others started to burn coal and sold it in the nearby villages; and still others started a tannery, and a shoemaker provided the Rastafarians with their ‘power shoes’—sandals made of rawhide and rubber from old tyres.⁷⁵ Agricultural production at Pinnacle aimed first and foremost at the community’s self-sufficiency. The commune’s members worked collectively, and everyone did his or her task according to their trait, trade, and training. The Rastafarians took pride in self-sufficiency, because working for themselves and the community meant independence and no backing down to any exploitative planter, crooked investor or any other (state) authority as their work would be the foundation of their own survival. This also took journalist John Carradine by surprise, who visited the Rastafarian community on a Sunday and expected to witness mystic rituals. Conversely, ‘It was in every wit like an ordinary working day’, he wrote in 1940, ‘men in the fields with cutlasses weeding, women looking after their household duties, shoemakers plying the awls, carpenters their tools’.⁷⁶ Indeed, contrary to established stereotypes at the time, the Rastafarians were not a religious sect but much more occupied with selling their surplus handicrafts, coal, and fruits and vegetables on the local market; apparently they also owned a bakery in Kingston. Their most popular agricultural product, however, was marijuana, or *ganja* in the Jamaican vernacular, which allowed the commune to gain massive income as the island’s largest producer of cannabis. Yet, this economic success brought also about the commune’s downfall as imperial anti-drug legislation was the pretext that enabled the colonial police to repeatedly raid and eventually destroy the Pinnacle Commune in 1958.⁷⁷

Similar to Gandhi and Kallenbach, the Rastafarians embraced the idea of natural living, which they similarly practiced in labour and eating. Food was to be self-produced and unprocessed, meaning without the “Babylonian” food processing machinery, which included products from cash-crop plantations and other trade-for-profit fruits and vegetables as from the hands of companies like United Fruits, as well as food refining and canning factories. Local, organic, and self-made were thus the key ingredients of Rastafarian food practices, which later became known as ‘Ital’.⁷⁸ Some Rastafarians have been practicing strict vegetarianism, others were and are following the Biblical food restrictions of the old Israelites. The Rastafarian term ‘Ital’ foods is already expressing this in its everyday practice, as ‘Ital’ is another Rastafarian neologism that has cut the ‘v’ from ‘vital’ and replaced it with the ‘I’ to emphasize and verbalize the ‘Jah’, short for Jehovah, which signifies the divine presence in all things and practices that matter to the Rastafarians, a divinity that equals being natural, pure, and here clean for bodily ingestion, and which is an integral part of the Rastafarian’s responsibility and everyday practice.⁷⁹

⁷³Ibid, 45.

⁷⁴Even in the 1960s UK, smoking cannabis was still associated with the (former) ‘colonized’ and an expression of rejecting the politics of Empire. James H. Mills, *Cannabis Nation: Control and Consumption in Britain, 1928-2008* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 118.

⁷⁵Lee, *The First Rasta*, 129.

⁷⁶Carradine, ‘The Ras Tafari Retire to Mountain Fastnesses of St. Catherine’, *The Daily Gleaner*, 23 November 1940.

⁷⁷Dunkley, ‘The Suppression of Leonard Howell in Late Colonial Jamaica’, 87-88.

⁷⁸Edmonds, *Rastafari*, 47.

⁷⁹Adrian Anthony McFarlane, ‘The Epistemological Significance of “I-An-I” as a Response to Quashie and Anacyism in Jamaican Culture’, in *Chanting Down Babylon: The Rastafari Reader*, ed. Nathaniel S. Murrell et al (Philadelphia: Temple

Japanese anarchists of the Nōson Seinen Sha equally emphasized the importance of food in their radical utopian community and the overall anarchist revolution, also in terms of purity and truth. Yet, this was not due to food's divinity or one's ascetic discipline, but because food and its equal distribution would ultimately determine emancipatory social organization. Illuminating is the Nōson Seinen Sha's choice for the pseudonym Pan to Jiyūsha (Bread and Liberty Society), which the group used for several publications. The naming itself already bears a temporality that signifies priorities: first bread, then liberty. The premise for—and promise of—true liberation through social revolution, they argued, was rooted in the satisfaction of material human needs, which would take its most simple beginning in appeasing one's hunger. Only afterwards the modes of production and complex social organization would take place.⁸⁰ This is most apparent in the anarchist analysis of food and its distribution by George Barrett in his *Anarchist Revolution* (1920), which Nōson Seinen Sha member Suzuki Yasuyuki translated into Japanese in 1930:

Like an organism [sic!], [the] free society grows into being, from the simple unit up to the complex structure. The need for bread, hunger—or, in other words, the individual struggle to live, in its most simple and elementary form—is [. . .] sufficient to set the whole complex social machinery in motion. Society is the result of the individual struggle for existence; it is not, as many suppose, opposed to it.⁸¹

Along Barrett-cum-Suzuki's line of argument, food (here: bread) turns into an ordering principle. This social organization, grounding in autarkic agricultural villages and small-scale industrial workshops, could do without and eventually dispend (state) authority, privilege, and unequal distribution of power. In order to initiate a decentralised and liberated society, the Nōson Seinen Sha argued, it would be necessary to put human needs and their satisfaction first and subordinate production and socio-economic control. The biggest hurdle to achieve a truly liberated society is any system of accumulating capital and state power, in which production and state rule determine people's needs. In this regard, they operated with a terminology of purity and truth, based in scientific reasoning, as they claimed their anarcho-communist model of overcoming capital, empire, and state with a consumption-focused social re-organization as 'pure anarchism' (*junsei musei-fushugi*).⁸² Their conception of purity and truth was inspired by Kropotkin's idea of 'mutual aid'—*sōgo fujo* in Japanese, which had universalist aspirations, because for the Nōson Seinen Sha the most important task was bringing about radical social change by implementing co-operatist communalism as part of a globally synchronic endeavour for the liberation of human life all over the world.⁸³

We do not know much about the actual daily life of the Nōson Seinen Sha's radical utopian community project in imperial Japan's hinterland of Nagano prefecture. Yet, the group's members provided highly sophisticated elaborations of agriculture, work, and community. Miyazaki Akira

University Press, 1998), 108; Enis Edmonds, 'Dread "I" In-a-Babylon: Ideological Resistance and Cultural Revitalization', in *ibid.*, 33; Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom*, 28.

⁸⁰Pan to Jiyūsha (Nōson seinen sha), 'Saikin undō no soshiki narabi ni keitai nit suite no ichi teian', in *1930 nendai ni okeru nihon anakizumu kakumei undo: Shiryō nōson seinen sha undoshi*, (ed.) Nōson seinen sha undoshi kankyōkai (Tokyo: Unita shoho, 1972 [1931]), 130.

⁸¹George Barrett, *Anarchist Revolution*, 2nd Edition (London: Freedom Press, 1920 [1912]), 18; and its Japanese translation by Suzuki Yasuyuki, transl., *Anakisuto Kakumei* (Tokyo: Kokushokusensensha, 1930).

⁸²Such understanding of 'pure anarchism' had already been put forward in imperial Japan by Hatta Shūzo (1886-1934), who offered an anarcho-communist design of a social organization and that would aim for a decentralized society; John Crump, *Hatta Shūzo and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 63.

⁸³Miyazaki, 'Nōmin ni yobu', 532-3. In this sense, the *Nōson Seinen Sha* was arguing strikingly similar to Japanese anarchists such as Arishima Takeo in the 1920s. Sho Konishi, 'Ordinary Farmers Living Anarchist Time: Arishima Cooperative Farm in Hokkaido, 1922-1935', *Modern Asian Studies* 47/6 (2013): 1846.

even celebrated the farming village as the key site for social revolution. The three main tasks, he argued, are to live in autarchy, to possess only shared property, and to build communal welfare based on mutual aid. Less attentive to a vegetarian diet as well as alcohol and drugs, Japanese anarchists nevertheless saw similar dangers to the body, which they similarly emphasised in terms of labour, community, and nature. For their part, they saw the body endangered by corruption not so much by the evils of alcohol, drugs, and illicit sex, but by exploitation, profit, and money. Similar to Gandhi's assessment of man's helplessness and the Rastafarians' disgust of Babylonian evil when it comes to the harmfulness of money, Nōson Seinen Sha member Miyazaki Akira declared that, 'With the birth of money in society happiness vanishes'. Money, he argued, enables exploitation through profit and division of labour, and considered it therefore a force eroding solidarity, because it would divide people and nature, humans and their products, farmers and workers, cities and countryside. Self-sufficient farming within the village community and shared property, Miyazaki concluded, would contain the threat of money, and prevent the establishment of hierarchies.⁸⁴

Moreover, money—linking and enabling property and exploitation—also threatened individual freedom, social organization, and nature in another way. According to Japanese anarchists, rejecting money and, with it, capitalist modes of production, particularly in the industrial sector, also overcomes capitalism's expansion and imperialism's aggression. It would be a mistake to think that people's participation in an imperial collaborating society (*kyōdō shakai*), contributing through labour and tax payment to a society that is nevertheless controlled by the imperial state, its institutions, and interests, would establish national unity and imperial strength to everyone's benefit. On the contrary, Miyazaki argued, the government's call for unity and security would be a distraction, and only the ruling class (*shihai gaikyū*) would benefit from people's hard labour and tax payment. Ultimately, he even considered money, taxes, and capitalism to be the foundation for war and Japan's imperial expansion in Asia since particularly modern industrial production is indispensable for modern war—and arguably vice versa.⁸⁵ The evils of money and profit-making are thus not only undermining and threatening the well-being of the individual and the social body through exploitation of labour power. Rather, money, profit and exploitation generate war—a condition that inevitably hurts the individual and social body. War, as has been underscored by Elaine Scarry, has its main purpose and outcome in injuring. Moreover, in war 'the incontestable reality of the body—the body in pain, the body maimed, the body dead and hard to dispose—is separated from its source and conferred on an ideology or issue or instance of political authority impatient of, or deserted by, benign sources of substantiation'.⁸⁶ Japanese anarchists' rejection of the vicious forces of money, profit, and exploitation—similarly grasped in Gandhi's *satyagraha* as well as in the Rastafarian's fight against Babylon—addressed war as the ultimate destructive force targeting the human body and human existence. Radical utopians' only weapons against these forces of capitalism, imperialism, and modernity, they believed, were their untainted bodies, also as symbols of their pure existence and universal truth of their communal being.

Conclusion: Complicating connectivity and the body

Radical utopian communities and their efforts of doing utopia the world over were an integral part of the modern world and early twentieth-century global structural transformations across different cultural, national, and imperial locales. Despite all their differences, intriguingly similar, they built self-sufficient communes, pursued agricultural labour, journeyed the world physically and intellectually, and reformed the body as kernel to the human condition and all social relations.

⁸⁴Akira Miyazaki, 'Nōmin ni yobu', in *Nōson Seinen Sha Shiryō: Shakai Mondai Shiryō Sōsho 1/12*, ed. Shakai Mondai Shiryō Kenkyūkai (Kyoto: Yutaka, 1972 [1930]), 523.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 527-28.

⁸⁶Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 62-3.

Navigating within and beyond the confines of imperial formations, they all articulated—and practiced—decided critiques against imperialism, capitalism, and state authority. To emphasize all these similarities, however, is not to uncover an ideal type of radical utopian communities. Rather, similarity underscores that even separated radical utopian communities developed similar visions, operated with analogous poetics, and addressed the same debates, and that they shared a global consciousness as they were convinced that their doing utopia would ultimately be making history.⁸⁷

However, bringing similar yet different radical utopian communities into conversation—in particular with a focus on mobility and the body—also requires complicating similarity and global connectivity. To begin with, modern mobility being a key aspect of radical utopian community building bares a certain irony: all radical utopian communities shared a critique against capitalism, imperialism, and state power, yet they were themselves constitutive to or at least part of it—at times one might even say complicit. Gandhi's relationship with steam-powered machinery—simultaneously repulsive and supportive—is emblematic for this contradictory concurrence, as is his legal anti-colonial campaigns that were nevertheless embedded into the rule of law as the foundation of the British Empire.⁸⁸ Indeed, arguably the most pronounced, somewhat ironic, yet nevertheless historically specific characteristic of radical utopian communities was their experience of capitalist modernity that manifested in their very critique of capitalist modernity itself.⁸⁹

Furthermore, the existence of intriguing overlaps of methods and practices of self- and world-improvement across ideological divides still does not simply imply a more unified and standardized world. It even raises attention to the increasing diversification of the globalized world. Shalini Randeria has recognized this ambivalence, arguing that entangled or connected history is indeed narrating a 'geteilte Geschichte', which bares the double meaning of *shared* and *divided*.⁹⁰ Hence, it would be misleading to romanticize any revolutionary and emancipatory solidarity by ignoring the intimate encounter, the 'tense and tender ties' within radical utopian communities.⁹¹ They were not free of hierarchies, and its participants also appropriated, negotiated, and failed to overcome boundaries of race, class, gender, and sexuality—despite a prevailing rhetoric of liberation. Gandhi was exceedingly racist and misogynist, complaining about the allegedly 'lazy Black laborers' and ordered women 'to be chaste' while he himself engaged in homo-erotic experiments with Herman Kallenbach. Among Japanese anarchists, race and gender as analytical categories for criticising asymmetries of power were most conspicuous through their absence as all the abstract rhetoric of a cosmological liberation and social organization in mutual aid never addressed issues such as racism and sexism. And Rastafarianism, despite being very attentive to the history of class, race and racial hierarchies, is over-patriarchal.

Finally, one vivid yet also highly problematic attraction shared among all three communities was 'nature' and 'natural living' as reoccurring tropes in their *doing utopia*. These tropes expressed the desire and search for a supposedly authentic, just, and even life that would not have been deteriorated by the forces of global capitalism. Such desire, produced by the very same means of capitalist production that constantly produce global unevenness, as Siegfried Kracauer has illustrated contemporaneously, would open the gates to conservative and reactionary ideas and

⁸⁷The term 'global consciousness' is borrowed from Sebastian Conrad and Dominik Sachsenmaier, eds., *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 14.

⁸⁸Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *The South African Gandhi: Stretcher-Bearer of Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

⁸⁹Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, xvi.

⁹⁰Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, 'Einleitung: Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt', in: *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt/M: Campus, 2002), 17.

⁹¹Ann L. Stoler, 'Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies', *The Journal of American History* 88/3 (2001): 829-65.

explanations of organic communal belonging, and potentially to fascism.⁹² With their uncritical longing for nature, radical utopians, to various degrees, were also in danger of entering this slippery slope, which manifested in Rastafarian Ital food, Satyagrahian simplicity or anarchist rice-paddy-harmony that were part and parcel of radical utopian communities' self-sufficient agricultural life as antithesis to capitalism, colonial rule, and the imperial state. Fortunately, they never got to the bottom of that slope.

In sum, a close look at the everyday experiences and practices within radical utopian communities beyond the discursive demystifies the image of borderless cosmopolitan mobility, and also offers an important critique of the ideals of communal harmony.⁹³ Radical utopian ideals and interventions could liberate and undermine established social existence, but sometimes also affirm the allegedly clear-cut boundaries and hierarchies of modern society. Yet perspectives on and from the margins offer an ideal opportunity to analyse the range—and limits—of actors of globalization, the circulation of knowledge, and strategies of intervention. Investigating and connecting the different yet similar radical utopian communities and their doing utopia is one way, among many others, of exploring opportunities to narrate a decentred global history of the early twentieth century. And it ultimately demonstrates that alternative life worlds were not mere naïve dreams or failures, and not as marginalized after all, but actually accomplished: *done* utopias.

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⁹²Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 50-63; Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity*, xxvi-xxxii.

⁹³Fischer-Tiné, *Shyamji Krishnavarma*, 185.