

'More Modern than the Moderns': performing cultural evolution in the Kibbo Kift Kindred

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Introduction

The legacy of evolutionary theory had a profound effect upon art and culture in the early twentieth century, not least via the various manifestations of evolutionary ideologies that were widely embraced across the political spectrum and sharpened in the popular mind by the events of the First World War. As Gillian Beer has argued, evolutionary theory was 'a form of imaginative history' that impacted upon notions of the past and visions of the future, and acted as a guiding metaphor for a wide range of cultural applications that reached far beyond biology.¹ Drawing on works that assess the intersection of scientific ideas in application, from Stephen Jay Gould to Oliver Botar, this chapter explores the ways that popular scientific ideas about the life force, degeneration, cultural evolution and the biogenetic law were disseminated and incorporated into the symbols, philosophies and practices of experimental woodcraft campaign groups in interwar England.

Woodcraft

During and after the First World War, when a stream of pacifist troop leaders split from the British Boy Scouts, disillusioned with what they perceived to be its increasing militarism, they frequently sought to return to the founding ideals of artist and naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton.²

English by birth but American resident for most of his life, Seton had devised a system of 'Woodcraft Indians' training for boys as a broadly socialist educational scheme that combined knowledge of nature with so-called picturesque practices, loosely inspired by idealised Native Americans drawn from myth and literature.³ These ideas had, in part, inspired British scouting endeavours but some felt that they had been pushed too far aside in the dominating disciplinary structure of drills and 'preparedness' in Baden-Powell's imperialist project. One seceding group in particular incorporated aspects of Seton's methods into an ambitious utopian outdoor movement that embraced both sexes and all ages. The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, founded in 1920 and led by charismatic artist and author John Hargrave, comprised several hundred seekers and reformers including utopian socialists, former suffragettes and Theosophists, and aimed for nothing less than world peace, to be achieved through an eclectic blend of camping, hiking and handicraft.⁴ Despite their relatively small numbers and the eccentricity of their methods, the Kindred's uncompromising vision for the new world that they expected to lead was total, encompassing bodies and language, design and dress, music and performance, education and economics, spirituality and science.

This chapter explores the range of ways that science – broadly understood – was used as creative inspiration and intellectual justification for woodcraft philosophies, and how the cultural programme that Hargrave and his largely self-educated followers devised was underwritten by popular understandings of evolutionary biology. As such, this chapter explores the ways that scholarly thinking was received and applied outside of metropolitan elites. In the context of woodcraft groups, it also examines how such disciplinary concepts could also be reinterpreted into a distinctive set of cultural activities aimed at putting scientific theory into practice, as the groups styled themselves to be producers as well as consumers of new ideas, and ultimately as leaders and instructors-in-training for the new world to come. As this book as a whole argues, engagement with science was shared by a range of artists and writers experimenting with new cultural forms in the early years of the twentieth century; the confluence of these aspects was a key component in the experience of modernity. A central aspect of Kibbo Kift's project, among all woodcraft groups, is that such themes were not only discussed in group communication; scientific concepts and metaphors were also demonstrated. Internalised ideas were exteriorised on clothes, paraded on banners and performed in rituals. Moreover, especially in terms of the concept of cultural evolution, Kibbo Kift sought

not only to disseminate the concept but also to embody and become its progressive outcome, through the attainment of the perfected physiques and higher consciousness required for the founding of their new 'race of intellectual barbarians'.⁵

Eugenics

While the words 'Kindred' and 'Kibbo Kift' – drawn from an archaic Cheshire term meaning 'Proof of Strength'⁶ – together signalled an organisation grounded in solid brotherhood, the curious name also subtly revealed the group's core eugenic ambitions. Formed with the aim of establishing a new 'confraternity' of elites, comprised of fit, trained, virile and beautiful men and women who would marry, reproduce and thereby establish a 'heritage of health' for future generations, Kibbo Kift was borne of a broader anxiety that so-called civilisation had become physically and culturally degenerate.⁷ Hargrave had outlined the present state of destitution, as he saw it, in a nearly 400-page-long sprawling text of 1919 entitled *The Great War Brings it Home: The Natural Reconstruction of an Unnatural Existence*. This ambitious, angry volume, which incorporated practical woodcraft and camping techniques with spiritual guidance and political polemic, had been written in the fertile space between Hargrave's return from war service as a stretcher-bearer in the disastrous Dardanelles campaign and the establishment of his independent alternative outdoor movement. Echoing a concern that was shared by many in the wake of the scale of war fatalities, Hargrave stated, 'Our best blood soaks into the sand of Suvla Bay, and into the mud and grass of Flanders. We have weeded out all our weaklings by medical examination, and *they* are left at home – *to breed!*'⁸ He argued:

Every effete civilisation must crumble away. The only hope is that a new and virile offshoot may arise to strike out a line of its own ... nowadays, owing to the fact that modern civilisation has penetrated throughout the world, there are no 'Barbarians' to sweep us away. Therefore the cure must be applied internally – and *we must produce the 'Barbarian' stock ourselves.*⁹

Hargrave initially planned a training scheme that could be implemented through the channels of socialist political parties and existing progressive organisations, rather than founding a new group of his own to lead the challenge. In a chapter entitled 'What is Being Done', he catalogued

a range of reform institutions that were ‘all set upon the same trail’, that is, ‘to counteract the evils of over-civilisation’. These included existing youth movements, open-air schools and the Eugenics Education Society.¹⁰

The Eugenics Society, established 1907, aimed to improve ‘racial health’ – a term which was used synonymously with national health or the health of the human race – through better breeding, and was based on a concern that the general physical fitness of the British population was diminishing the reproductive quality of the ‘stock’.¹¹ In practice, across its various outposts, eugenics encompassed a range of so-called ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ ambitions, from the promotion of improved sex education to – at the other extreme – the objectification of bodies and the promotion of sterilisation among the deeply questionable classification of the physically and mentally ‘unfit’.¹² Richard Soloway has argued that eugenics offered, as an ideology, ‘a biological way of thinking about social, economic, political, and cultural change’; it was also one that lent scientific credibility to middle and upper-class anxieties and fears.¹³ Although most knowledge of eugenics is now coloured by the extreme consequences of its deployment in the Nazi regime, historians of the Eugenics Society have carefully noted that its early aims were sufficiently diverse for it ‘to be harnessed to different ideological beliefs, ranging from the ultraconservative to the social reformist and socialist’.¹⁴

Hargrave’s self-styled ‘natural eugenics’ certainly fell into the social amelioration category. While his statements of disgust for the frail and the ill are unpleasant to a modern reader, his proposed scheme was ultimately benign. It aimed to educate men and women in the positive values of mental health and physical ‘hardihood’ so that their preferences would become ‘instinctive’. The consequent improvement of the ‘blood-line’, as he put it, could thus be inherited by future generations without the need for further intervention.¹⁵ Although eugenics’ varied ideologies were expressed rather differently by its varied supporters, as Lucy Bland and Lesley A. Hall have noted, for many ‘eugenics was part of a general bundle of “modern” ideas about the reform of society’.¹⁶ Many of those that we would now consider to be left-leaning radical thinkers, including novelist H.G. Wells, sexologist Havelock Ellis and biologist Julian Huxley, were, as Tim Armstrong has put it, ‘modernist eugenicists’.¹⁷ Each was also a member of Kibbo Kift’s Advisory Council, and their ideas are directly traceable in Kibbo Kift philosophies.

Popular science

Hargrave's establishment of his Kibbo Kift movement after his forced ejection from the scouts was marked by the drafting of an ambitious covenant. This required its members to commit to major political plans, such as reorganisation of industry on a non-competitive basis, synchronised international disarmament, the establishment of a single international currency, and a world council to include 'every civilised and primitive nation'.¹⁸ Authorisation that these aims were serious and the miscellaneous, amateur and modestly-educated signatories were fit to carry out such world-changing tasks was given by an impressive list of names at the top of Kibbo Kift letterheads and other promotional material. Leading thinkers including politicians and Nobel Prize winners lent their names to the Kibbo Kift project, if not their active involvement.¹⁹ In practice, most seem to have lent support by letter alone. There is no record that the council ever met in person and few attended Kibbo Kift events. Nonetheless eminent scientists such as Huxley and J. Arthur Thomson, as well as popularisers of biology in application (including Ellis, Wells, anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon and polymath Patrick Geddes) all lent scholarly respectability to the project. The interests of other prominent figures who were approached – from biologist Ray Lankester, populariser of the term 'degenerate', to playwright and eugenicist George Bernard Shaw – further underscore the particular timbre of Kibbo Kift's intellectual basis as an ambitious reform project based on scientific ideals.²⁰

Why was the discipline of science such a focus, and its practitioners and popularisers so eagerly courted by Kibbo Kift as legitimators? The role that science could play in an organisation largely aimed at cultural reform through outdoor living and handicraft production may not appear to be immediately obvious, but its applications were numerous. In the first instance, scientific method was regularly evoked in Kibbo Kift literature as a measure of seriousness of mind, precision and critical rigour. Although the internal contradictions of Kibbo Kift's own methods for achieving their ultimate objective – merely the unification of the human race – might not have stood up to microscopic scrutiny, the group was determined that its philosophies were perceived as robust, and the use of scientific research terminology conferred this status. As one Kinsman, Idrisyn Oliver Evans, put it, writing under the adopted Kin name of Blue Swift in a 1927 article entitled 'K.K. and Scientific Method' in the Kibbo Kift periodical *The Flail*, 'the world's problems can only be solved by a rigorous determination to see facts as they are, to discover

and verity and expound the truth. This attitude is difficult to attain, but it may be reached by the cultivation of the scientific spirit of free enquiry'.²¹

Very few Kibbo Kift members held professional qualifications, not least in science, although all members were rooted in a broad culture of middle-class self-improvement. Most members worked full-time in white collar occupations, with office workers and teachers within commuting distance of central London forming a significant proportion of the group's demographic. The Kibbo Kift project was also very much part of this self-educative drive, with a circulating library of philosophical texts available for loan, and recommended reading lists, book reviews and potted summaries of selected scholarship regularly provided in the group's internal publications. Evans was a key figure in Kibbo Kift and his background – as a civil servant with a keen amateur interest in psychoanalysis, archaeology and science fiction, among other subjects – was typical of Kibbo Kift aspirational membership.²² Evans authored a monthly feature entitled 'An Epitome of Science' in Kibbo Kift periodical *Nomad* during the mid-1920s, whose coverage included such ambitious topics as Trigonometry, Non-Euclidean Geometry and Hyper-Space. Evans explained the purpose of his summaries to the Kindred as follows:

As most of the Kindred have to spend the greater part of their lives 'earning a living' in some task of no special intellectual value, they are only able to give the study of science a very limited attention, and are therefore not usually able to make themselves familiar with the literature of their subject.²³

For Kibbo Kift members, modelled on Wells's fictional New Samurai ideal of a scientifically-minded voluntary elite, the relevance of these for Kibbo Kift practices should have been evident.²⁴ Evans spelled it out for those in any doubt: 'You cannot pitch a tent without bringing into play a number of mechanical forces, make a cup of tea or boil and egg without making use of chemical reactions, or lead a K.K. Tribe without using practical psychology'. Evans complained that, 'as a matter of general practice in everyday experience we are content with just as little science as will serve our immediate purposes – and often enough used in a very rule-of-thumb manner'.²⁵ The 'Epitome of Science' series was designed to go much further. Like Hargrave, Evans acted not just as a receiver of intellectual ideas but also as their interlocutor. His interpretations were themselves largely synthesised from popularisers of science, history and culture, for example from J.G. Fraser to H.G. Wells.²⁶ In Evans's view, the research scientist was 'the highest type civilisation has produced'.²⁷

Science was thus understood as the apotheosis of intellectual culture – a culture from which many members could only view from a distant position – and thus professional scientists’ benediction of the Kibbo Kift project, alongside scientific enthusiasts’ discussion of their ideas, conferred some this elite status by proxy.²⁸

Evans insisted, ‘Each kinsman is expected to have some practice of creative art; it is of equal importance that he should have some experience of scientific work’.²⁹ The level of expertise that Kibbo Kift members were expected to acquire was demanding, and included a ‘general knowledge of the following theories: Evolutionary, Nebular, Atomic’.³⁰ A series of pictorial Badges of Knowledge – a form adapted from scouting structures – was awarded to adults those who had mastered fields as varied as Oceanography, Embryology, Radiography and Astronomy. How laboratory science was to be studied by untrained amateurs on limited incomes was dealt with practically. ‘Infra-Atomic Physics needs too much apparatus for the ordinary student’, members were warned, ‘while Relativity demands too great a mastery of Mathematics’. Instead, Kinsfolk were encouraged to begin closer to home by making ‘careful and systematic observations in their own locality in such subjects as Natural History, Ecology, Geology, and Meteorology’; they were also encouraged to engage in the less equipment-heavy studies of Anthropology, Sociology, Psychoanalysis and even the Occult.³¹ This was science very broadly understood. The merging of practices across pure, applied and social categories, alongside studies that might be more comfortably placed in the humanities, served a practical purpose for those without necessary equipment or training but also fitted with Kibbo Kift’s larger ambitions: to unite fractured areas into integrated wholes.

Holism and vitalism

As part of their far-reaching system for world unity, jointly inspired by Wellsian dreams of a world state and League of Nations practical plans for international reconstruction, Kibbo Kift sought the union of art, science and philosophy. Hargrave argued that knowledge had become splintered into separate, specialist domains. With characteristic ambition, he saw their unification as an essential Kin duty. In his dizzying exposition of his movement’s aims, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, published in 1927, Hargrave paraphrased scientist Claude Bernard at the end of the previous century. Bernard had yearningly predicted, ‘There

will come a day when physiologists, poets and philosophers will all speak the same language and understand one another'; for Hargrave this time had come with Kibbo Kift.³² What we might describe today as an interdisciplinary aim was more of a mystical mission for the group; art, science and philosophy were considered to be the three core branches of the Tree of Knowledge, and their holy coalition was described as the manifestation of the 'Sancgraall' of the Knights of the Round Table, hidden in plain sight.³³

In the Kinlog, the vast illuminated logbook of the movement, launched in 1924 to record the official history of Kibbo Kift for the benefit of future generations, Hargrave outlined their principles in the form of a twentieth-century Book of Kells (Figure 14.1).

Amidst saga metre text and in a typical medieval-modernist artistic style, an illustration shows a classically-robed artist, a gas-mask-clad scientist and a bearded philosopher collectively grasping the 'Three-Edged Sword of Truth' that will bring them together (Figure 14.2).

Below this, a green-hooded figure representing a Kinsman emerges from a tangled flow of ideas, supported by a wreath of figures that reveal Kibbo Kift's intellectual debts and inspirations. Among the ancient Greek, Egyptian and Chinese masters and sages depicted, one figure stands out temporally and stylistically – that of Henri Bergson.³⁴

Bergson's Neo-Vitalist writings, in *Creative Evolution* and other texts, had achieved mass popularity in the early years of the twentieth century, not least because his metaphysical concept of an unknowable and invisible force at the root of all living things seemed to offer the hope of a romantic reinsertion of spirit in an otherwise disenchanted, mechanistic world.³⁵ Kinswoman Kathleen M. Milnes, an art teacher and the Kinlog 'Scriptor' (calligrapher and illustrator), was a particular devotee of Bergson's theories and wrote about them effusively in her personal Kibbo Kift log. Bergson was also recommended reading in Kin educational guidance. Even when not named as such, a powerful philosophy of Neo-Vitalism was evident across Kibbo Kift thinking.³⁶ At its most banal this was manifest in the regular use of the term 'vital' in group literature, as linguistic shorthand for the dynamism, progress and energy that Kibbo Kift venerated and saw its membership embodying. At a more profound level, the influence of new vitalistic ideas infused Kibbo Kift's worldview and gave it philosophical justification.

Neo-Vitalism has been described by Oliver Botar and Isabel Wunsche as one of a number of 'biocentric' systems of knowledge and ideas popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; they position it alongside organicism, holism, monism and Neo-Lamarckism.



Fig. 14.1 Kinlog cover by John Hargrave, 1924.

(c) Kibbo Kift Foundation, with kind permission of Museum of London



Fig. 14.2 Kinlog interior, illustrated by Kathleen Milnes.

(c) Kibbo Kift Foundation, with kind permission of Museum of London.

While each had distinctive variations, all biocentric models held in common:

the privileging of biology as the source for the paradigmatic metaphor of science, society, and aesthetics; a consequent, biologically based epistemology; an emphasis on the centrality of “nature,” “life,” ... the self-directedness and “unity” of all life; a valorization of the quasi-mystical feeling of unity with all nature ... a stress on flux and mutability in nature rather than stasis; and a concern for “wholeness” as opposed to reduction at all levels.³⁷

Biocentrism, or ‘biologistic Neo-Romanticism’, is located by Botar in particular in the *Lebensphilosophie* of Nietzsche and Bergson, and in the work of what he describes as ‘scientists with philosophical pretensions’, in which he includes Ernst Haeckel, Elisee Reclus and Patrick Geddes.³⁸ All vitalistic philosophers were, as Richard Lofthouse has put it, also ‘impatient of traditional epistemological boundaries’.³⁹ While Kibbo Kift’s intellectual bases were more eclectic than those drawn solely from biocentric sources, the names and approaches highlighted here each had a direct intersection with the group. Most literally, the holist biogeographers and educational reformers Reclus and Geddes lectured at Kibbo Kift meetings and led tours of prehistoric sites for members. Nietzsche’s *Übermensch* ideal is evident in Kibbo Kift desires for human perfectibility and the cultivation of a self-conscious elite. Several of Haeckel’s ideals, including the concept of the Monad as a concept to communicate the unity of existence (as opposed to the duality of mind and spirit), were key to Kin thinking – the Monad symbol even formed the basis of the group’s much-utilised insignia, the Mark.

Monism, Haeckel’s nineteenth-century concept of nature as a singular whole, had started as a secular, materialistic creed in its first formation but by the end of Haeckel’s life it had become a vitalistic one.⁴⁰ In later Monism and its related philosophical territories, all was one; all was spirit. In Neo-Vitalist thinking more broadly, even objects previously thought inanimate were understood to be charged with life force. In a 1925 article entitled ‘A Short Exposition of the Philosophic Basis of the Kibbo Kift’, Hargrave took up these ideas that bridged science and spiritual philosophy and put them into the service of Kibbo Kift. He celebrated the breakdown of the tripartite classification system of animal, vegetable and mineral, arguing that vitalistic forms of thinking confirmed instead a ‘blood relationship and atomic-kinship with Birds, Beasts, Flowers, Rocks, Stars and the Energy of all of the Suns’. Drawing

from Kibbo Kift advisory councillor J. Arthur Thomson's assertion that 'phrases such as "dead" matter and "inert" matter have gone by the board' in modern science, Hargrave argued that the latest thinking in the discipline now served to verify the 'ancient seers and philosophers'.⁴¹

For Kibbo Kift, the assertion that matter could be composed of the same energy that underpinned all living things reinforced their philosophy of world peace and cosmic unity. In a striking passage that demonstrated spiritual immanence and atomic kinship at play in an evocative list of modern miscellany, Hargrave asserted that this new way of thinking:

means that teapots, chairs, mud, electric light bulbs, fingernails, hammers, steam engines, mountains, hats, shoes, needles, tram tickets, lilies, telephones, tents, dynamos, walking sticks, cow dung, churches, iron foundries, neckties, cats, human beings, steel plates, bricks and mortar, glass, sealing-wax, trees, thoughts, tables, music, flowers and flower-pots, clouds, gutter-gratings, books, food, buttons, machine guns, beads, rain, clocks, boots, ferro-concrete, eggs, sunlight, coal, stars, solar systems, slugs, pictures, maggots, wheel bolts, smells, darkness and light, collar-studs, speech, seeds, birds, bootlaces, insects, skeletons, pepper-corns, babies, Space, Time, Matter, all religions, all Spirits, all Matter(s) ... all, all, are actually the ONE GREAT POWER.⁴²

Within the sphere of biocentrism and its understanding of the complex interconnectedness of all things, new metaphysical understandings of the concepts of 'nature' and 'life' emerged. However indirectly these *Lebensphilosophie* and *Naturphilosophie* ideas travelled to Kibbo Kift, a pantheistic understanding of the natural world provided a core underpinning to the group's beliefs. Anna Bramwell, in her history of ecological thought in the twentieth century, has documented the increasing tendency, post-Darwin, for God to be replaced by Nature; a personified force that she describes as 'somewhat dominating'; this was 'a Nature expected to educate and guide humanity'.⁴³ Life, too – frequently capitalised and personified with divine qualities, as in many Kibbo Kift references – became less a descriptive term to summarise the passage from cradle to grave and more a stand-alone philosophical category.⁴⁴ Herbert Schnadelbach, describing its application in the German context, notes that the life-concept was an 'attack on a civilisation which had become intellectualistic and antilife, against a culture which was shackled by convention'. It stood for 'what was "authentic", for dynamism,

creativity, immediacy'. 'Life', he notes, became the slogan of the youth-movement, and of educational, biological and dynamic reforms.⁴⁵

An early organisational banner of a Lodge within Kibbo Kift makes this philosophy visible through an extraordinarily daring image for its time (Figure 14.3).

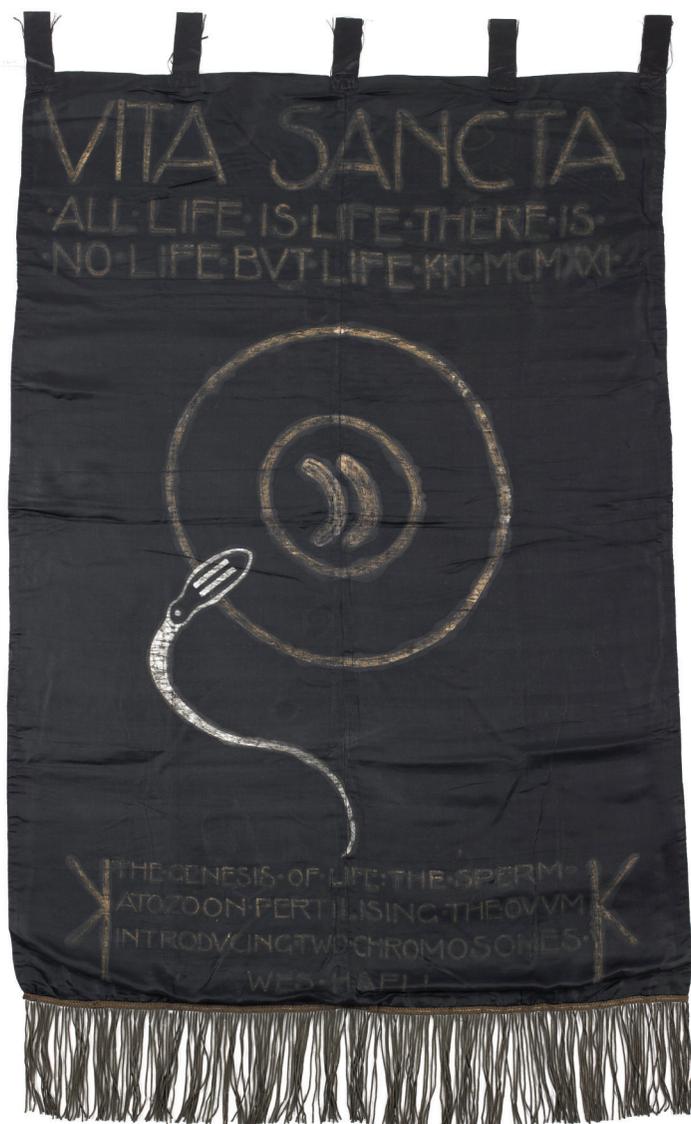


Fig. 14.3 Kibbo Kift Vita Sancta banner, 1921.

(c) Kibbo Kift Foundation. With kind permission of Museum of London.

Executed in gold paint on black satin, under the heading *Vita Sancta*, the mystical banner depicts, according to its inscription, 'The genesis of life: a spermatozoon fertilising the ovum and introducing two chromosomes'. In this image, the moment of fertilisation is venerated, even fetishised; elsewhere in Kibbo Kift insignnia, sperm penetrated eyes of Horus and mystical suns, not to indicate sexual license but to celebrate philosophical *elan vital*. The banner's subheading, 'All Life is Life: There is no Life but Life' is almost comical in its circularity but its purpose was to communicate the group's vitalistic beliefs in a striking motto. The style of the refrain undoubtedly owed something to Hargrave's talents in publicity; he earned his bread and butter income throughout the interwar period as a copywriter and commercial artist for a major advertising agency and knew the power of symbol, stunt and slogan. Other statements and chants that the Kibbo Kift corralled around were similarly cryptic but equally inflected with the union of physics and metaphysics, from campfire songs of praise for 'Energy, Energy, Ceaseless Energy' to the succinct spiritual encapsulation of interconnectedness, 'One is One'.

Kibbo Kift's arcane language and occult rituals suggest a highly idiosyncratic formation that could be dismissed as of only marginal relevance to the wider world. It is worth remembering, however, that alongside Kibbo Kift's documented appeal to major public figures in the arts, humanities and sciences of the period, much of the material which seems outlandish to twenty-first century eyes had significant status in the mainstream at its point of publication. Haeckel's ideas, as Bramwell has pointed out, had mass distribution and influence: 'For self-educated working men, his two-shilling works with titles such as *The Riddles of the Universe*, or *The Wonders of Life* ... were a life-line to political awareness through scientific knowledge'.⁴⁶ Bergson's books were bestsellers; indeed Bergson himself became something of a celebrity. Perhaps the book that came most frequently recommended as a Kibbo Kift model for understanding the world was H.G. Wells's biologically-informed teleology, *The Outline of History*, which had been immediately successful on its release in 1919; by 1922 it had sold over a million copies.⁴⁷ Thompson's *Outline of Science* of 1921 aimed to build on Wells's success and sold half a million copies in its first five years. These ideas were not marginal, even though their reinterpretations and adaptations in Kibbo Kift were often unusual. They fitted into a broader popularity of science in application and a willing embrace of a range of modernist ideas that were circulating in the utopian space of the immediate post-war years when culture needed be remade from top to bottom.

Evolution

Perhaps the most popular of all scientific ideas in application was that of evolution. By the 1920s some aspects of mid-nineteenth century evolutionary theory had become accepted as orthodoxy but the power of the evolutionary idea outside of science showed little sign of diminishing. Indeed, as Gillian Beer has argued, 'evolutionary ideas are even more influential when they become assumptions embedded in the culture than while they are the subject of controversy'.⁴⁸ Evolutionary metaphors prevailed across all aspects of early twentieth-century cultural life and the multivalency of the theory could lend it to a range of wildly divergent readings. Evolutionary thinking was also repeatedly invoked in the Kindred's writings; as an article on the subject stated categorically, 'Evolutionary Theory has always been recognised as fundamental to the whole Kin philosophy'.⁴⁹

Evolution was used for a variety of purposes, including to justify the small size of the group against its competitors. As Hargrave put it, had not the simplicity and complexity of the tiny adaptable amoeba outsmarted the lumbering labyrinthodons?⁵⁰ Natural selection was also used as a means for explaining the necessity for physical and mental development:

In this struggle for existence, plants and animals have developed weapons and means of protection that will help them to survive, and the great weapon and protection of Man in this struggle is his mind. If we let our bodies get unfit, if we let our brains slack, we shall be destroyed and our place will be taken by others. Therefore we of the Kibbo Kift camp out and keep fit, and we keep our minds alert by study.⁵¹

Evolutionary themes, more or less explicitly, were also visible across the Kibbo Kift's striking designs for ceremonial and propaganda purposes. Most literally, Darwin appeared on a series of parade banners of the Great Seers and Thinkers, as one of an eclectic community including Tolstoy, Plato, St Francis of Assisi, William Penn and Walt Whitman. Elsewhere Darwin was listed among Kibbo Kift's 'Heroes of World Service' and was claimed, somewhat retrospectively, as 'as strenuous a Woodcrafter as anyone could wish'.⁵² The group's passionate interest in the evolution of humanity was repeatedly expressed in Kibbo Kift imagery: encounters between hooded kinsmen and stooped prehistoric figures in leopard skin robes were regular motifs. Perhaps the most



Fig. 14.4 Kibbo Kift ‘Touching of the Totems’ rite, 1925.

Collection of A. Pollen.

passionate of these encounters was the one established between the Kibbo Kift and the Piltdown Man. The 1912 discovery in rural Sussex of fragments of bone purported to be the jaw of the earliest inhabitant of England was considered by many to represent the ‘missing link’ in the evolutionary chain, providing incontrovertible proof of a relationship between present-day humans and their ape ancestors. Shown to be an elaborate hoax in the 1950s, in the 1920s an unwitting Kibbo Kift made and paraded plaster cast reproductions as totemic objects in their camp rituals and staged pilgrimages to the field where *Eoanthropus Dawsoni* was found (Figure 14.4).

Although Kibbo Kift did not explicitly distinguish it as such, much of the group’s evolutionary thinking drew from Neo-Lamarckian models, which proposed an evolutionary development that was willed and shaped by human creative intervention. This was not an evolution thrust upon humanity by outward forces, as in Darwin’s theory of natural selection, but a rather more appealing and flattering model that gave a central role to human will and intention. Monists had asserted that man was a voluntary co-operator in the service of evolution, and that evolution could be transformed and improved by ‘a conscious upward striving towards a higher condition, a pressing forward towards an ideal’.⁵³ Lamarck’s principle that learned behaviour could be passed on as an

inherited characteristic gave humanity an appealingly determining role in the development of the species.

Evans explained that Kibbo Kift's use of evolutionary theory:

justifies the view of the Kin that progress is possible; and that it will need effort; that it can only arise through unprecedented ideas; that such ideas must deal with social and political questions; and that to produce and apply them ... will be necessary. Our methods are in line with those through which evolution, biological and social, have taken place, and we therefore may regard them as likely to be productive of result.⁵⁴

Here, evolution is not a natural trajectory that has occurred passively but a system that could be harnessed to one's own advantage. Evolution could and should be bent to one's will as a duty; as Hargrave had also noted, elsewhere, 'leaving things to evolution' is 'not in the tradition of full-blooded men'.⁵⁵

Biogenetic law

Scientific thinking was understood to be at the very forefront of intellectual practice and thus offered an engagement with the biggest and newest of ideas. In addition to being hungry to engage with the latest thinking, however, Kibbo Kift practices also looked 'back', as they saw it, either to historic cultures (variously medieval or prehistoric) or – more problematically – to temporally coeval cultures inside and outside of Western Europe (those labelled 'folk' and/or 'savage'). Kibbo Kift's ambition was not to revive these cultures – revival was, in fact, taboo – but to reinvigorate them through the prism of modern experience, in order to achieve what H.G. Wells had called 'the next stage of history'.⁵⁶ Scientific thinking and its natural partner – the latest technological products – provided the ideal symbolic structure for communicating this complex retro-futurist trajectory. Kibbo Kift members saw no contradiction between their plans to construct an air squadron and the practice of traditional handicrafts, or the frank discussion of the newest forms of birth control and the use of archaic forms of language. The intersection of past, present and future is of key significance to understanding Kibbo Kift's philosophy; to look back was not to reject the modern world but to its revisit cultural history in order to develop the group into something they hoped would be distinctively avant-garde. As Hargrave put it, in a typically ostentatious battle

cry, perhaps overcompensating for being outside the closed circle of elite intellectual culture: 'We are more modern than the moderns'.⁵⁷

This backward-forward trajectory was especially important in relation to the education of children. Built on Hargrave's scheme of 'Tribal Training', Kibbo Kift's educational programme was underpinned by the recapitulation theories of American psychologist G. Stanley Hall.⁵⁸ Hall applied an adaptation of Ernst Haeckel's biogenetic law, which proposed that ontogeny (organism growth) recapitulates phylogeny (evolutionary history of the species). Recapitulation as a concept can be found in application across a broad range of non-scientific disciplines during and after the nineteenth century; indeed Beer has described this formula as 'one of the most powerful new metaphors of the past 150 years'.⁵⁹ Stephen Jay Gould has also noted its enduring pervasiveness, despite it being fundamentally incorrect; he suspects that 'its influence as an import from evolutionary theory into other fields was exceeded only by natural selection'.⁶⁰ In Hall, Gould has argued, 'recapitulation reached the acme of its influence outside biology'.⁶¹ Halls' theory was outlined at length in his 1906 book *Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene*; children, as apparently natural 'savages', he asserted, needed to re-enact a sequence of stages of cultural evolution in order to become fully-rounded beings.⁶²

In Kibbo Kift's adaptation, children were taught the scientific development of world culture from its very earliest stages, as in Wells's *Outline of History*. It was said to be 'vitaly important for the youngest child to be taught that the world began as a blazing ball of gas, and he must go on from that'.⁶³ Child development was then mapped onto a seven-stage linear understanding of cultural history. So-called 'cultural epoch' curricula had been pioneered as an educational experiment in the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁴ In Kibbo Kift's formulation, applied in a clutch of experimental open-air and woodcraft schools in the interwar years, children were not only to study the aspects of history deemed to be appropriate to their developmental stage; they were to physically inhabit characteristics of the development of culture, as it was then understood.⁶⁵ Kibbo Kift's idiosyncratic model positioned 'prehistoric' and 'primitive' life at one end of the line, with 'modern day', 'present day' and then 'Kibbo Kift' as the three final stages of completion. Each stage had to be enacted through practical craft projects and prescribed picturesque performances, from the making of fire in the early stages to jazz dancing and committee meetings in the modern years.

The application of biologically-informed recapitulation theory to youth training was not Hargrave's invention; it had informed the training



Fig. 14.5 John Hargrave with children at Tribal Training Camp, 1928. Photograph by Angus McBean. Collection of A. Pollen.

of boys and young men in both Baden-Powell's and Seton's groups for boys. When blended, in Kibbo Kift, with metaphysical Neo-Vitalist thinking and a Futurist-Primitivist visual style, however, the collective result was certainly an innovative – if sometimes bewildering – melange of art, science and philosophy. The learning-by-doing aspect of Kibbo Kift's performances was part of the group's commitment to direct action over discursive deliberation. This was in part borne of impatience with aspects of the modern world that were perceived to be 'overcivilised'. While the group identified with the 'scientific mind' rather than 'unthinking' mass mind, formal education was seen as inferior to knowledge that had been developed through 'instinct' and practical skills.⁶⁶ Theory for its own sake was largely dismissed as 'intellectual botheration'.⁶⁷ The importance of science was never for its own sake; biology was understood in Kibbo Kift's life reform project as the direct means by which physical, social and cultural betterment could be brought into being.

Critiques

The twenty-first-century status of the Kibbo Kift Kindred as largely forgotten might appear to establish damning proof of their project's

inadequacy. Despite their high-profile public support, given the actual size of their numbers and resources, the scale and eclecticism of their ambitions seemed doomed to fail.⁶⁸ The group's fortunes were also hostage to the vicissitudes of the singular, top-down leadership of Hargrave, who dramatically shifted ideological direction a number of times during the 1920s. By the early 1930s, Hargrave had transformed Kibbo Kift into a political-economic campaign group and many aspects of the group's original ethos, practice and membership fell away as the original campers, artists and idealists were expected to become the Green Shirts, an urban, uniformed street-marching campaign group pressing for Social Credit for all. Even without this fundamental change in purpose, disciplinary developments in science, psychology, education and anthropology had negatively affected some of the core principles on which Kibbo Kift had been based, suggesting that their biocentric cultural project could only have ever been short-lived.

Although Kibbo Kift's *Vita Sancta* banner showed their veneration of fertilisation and their knowledge of at least some aspects of chromosome theory, Mendelian genetics, which demonstrated that important determining genes were present at the point of conception, undermined the ontogenic ideas behind recapitulation that the Kindred simultaneously held dear. Thompson, one of Kibbo Kift's scientific figureheads, had already cast doubt on recapitulation in his *Outline of Science* but the group seem to have read this text rather selectively.⁶⁹ Recapitulation's precarious footing in biology necessarily led to some knock-on questioning of its premise in the educational and psychological domains during the 1920s.⁷⁰ This also happened to some extent in woodcraft circles, where it was recognised that some practicing the method knew far more about the practical psychology of the child than they did about culture or history.⁷¹ At the same time as science was questioning biogenetic law, the cultural evolution model that formed its partner in recapitulation theories of education was also subject to institutional critique by new challenges in anthropology. Franz Boas, for example, showed the fallacy of race as a biological category based on studies of the cranium; he also argued for the development of tribal cultures to be studied in relation to their specific cultural contexts.⁷² Although Hargrave was exposed to Boas's publications (he modelled drawings on illustrations in Boas's *Primitive Art* of 1927, for example) he seems not to have grasped the implications of Boas's findings for his own instruction – that so-called primitive cultures are just as flexible, dynamic and developmental as European cultures. As Kevin Armitage has noted, it was with more than a touch of irony that cultural theories of evolution

unravelling: ‘recapitulation gained prominence as a scientific justification for pedagogical methods meant to unify unbound human nature with modern civilization but was undone by the epitome of controlled civilised objectivity, scientific inquiry’.⁷³

Other scientifically-informed ideologies that had influenced Kibbo Kift at the outset were also subject to some significant realignment over time. The Eugenic Society achieved some public acceptability until its application by Nazis at the end of the 1930s made it publicly unpalatable and philosophically untenable.⁷⁴ Vitalistic beliefs in invisible forces and life’s fundamental mystery struggled to maintain validity in science in the light of the discoveries made by Mendel. Neo-Vitalism had already begun to shift sideways into mystical philosophical circles by the 1920s. This was the manoeuvre made, for example, by leading vitalist Hans Driesch, and the same move was completed by Hargrave by the Second World War.⁷⁵ As Lofthouse has noted, ‘vitalism flourished within a context much broader than the supposedly limited designs of “neutral” scientific enquiry. It was merely one strand in a thick rope comprising creative and emergent evolutionism, cosmic teleology, psychology, psychical research, the paranormal, the occult, eastern religion and spiritualism’.⁷⁶ Kibbo Kift’s theories were similarly entwined in these ideas. Although they considered themselves to be modernists in their embrace of evolution, their application of it was often more poetic than precise and more spiritual than systematic; its greatest utility was as linguistic metaphors and visual tropes. At worst, as Evans suggested, woodcraft practitioners could be ‘modernists with a greater theoretical admiration for Science with a capital S than readiness to submit to its austere disciplines, and careless as to whether their views are really scientific as long as they sound “scientific” and “evolutionary”’.⁷⁷

Perhaps the final word on the subject should be given to Leslie Paul, a former Kibbo Kift member and a keen proponent of evolution in the 1920s in his own organisation, The Woodcraft Folk. Informed by precisely the same intellectual currents as Hargrave, he largely modelled his organisation on Kibbo Kift, from which it had begun.⁷⁸ Paul had written in 1926:

On the basis of biology and evolution is built the philosophy that underlies both our educational methods and the charter of the youth movement. We believe that man must use himself consciously as a tool of evolution. That is, he must regard evolution as a process that touches him and his kind intimately, and that we are masters of our fate only when we assist our own becoming, and the evolution of the race⁷⁹

By 1951, however, Paul had fundamentally changed his position. With the benefit of hindsight, he reflected:

What strikes me about all this to-day is its irrelevance. It is doubtful if man is physically evolving any longer, it is certain that it is a dubious intellectual trick to apply the doctrines of physical evolution to human societies and cultures. Even if man is still evolving, no one can say with any certainty what acts of man will aid his evolution or hold it back (assuming it is possible to do either) ... Unless man gives up thinking and moralizing, and goes back to an animal state in which the pure law of survival can operate again (if it ever really operated as Darwin supposed) then he must make decisions upon quite other grounds than 'evolutionary' ones. Evolutionary theory is irrelevant to the human situation, and only spurious philosophizers pretend otherwise.⁸⁰

In conclusion, then, although its moment was short-lived, popular science in general and evolutionary biology in particular was used by woodcraft groups in the 1920s to inspire and defend a diverse range of ideologies and practices, from eugenic body culture and experimental educational policy to pantheistic religion. At their fullest flowering in the ideas and activities of Kibbo Kift, the application of science to cultural domains could achieve a hallowed status. Unlike later New Age oppositions to science (or 'scientism', as it is sometimes denigrated), in the 1920s Kibbo Kift saw science as an essential aspect of their philosophical make-up, part of an indivisible triumvirate with art and spirituality, that demonstrated their forward-thinking modernism. The study of the application of science in woodcraft groups offers a productive – if highly idiosyncratic – means of exploring the ways that scientific ideas in the early twentieth century were received and reinterpreted outside an intellectual elite. Significantly, concepts of chromosomes, apes, amoeba and atoms and were lived as well as read in Kibbo Kift. Through evolution's practical and performative embodiment, they believed that theory would be made flesh and culture would progress.

Notes

1 Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6.

2 Several groups based on woodcraft principles split from the British Boy Scouts for pacifist reasons. The first, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, is not

- discussed in detail here. For more information on this organisation, see Derek Edgell, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry 1916–1949 as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).
- 3 Seton's methods can be seen in his own writings, for example, Ernest Thompson Seton, *Woodcraft and Indian Lore*, (Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1930). A useful recent interpretation can be found in David L. Witt, *Ernest Thompson Seton: The Life and Legacy of an Artist and Conservationist* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2010).
 - 4 The archival papers of the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift are split between the London School of Economics Library Special Collections and the Social History Collections of the Museum of London. The first substantial sociological study of Kibbo Kift can be found in Mark Drakeford, *Social Movements and Their Supporters: The Green Shirts in England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997). A full-length account of the group's cultural history is provided in Annabella Pollen, *The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift: Intellectual Barbarians* (London: Donlon Books, 2015).
 - 5 This phrase comes from a 1923 silent newsreel on the subject of Kibbo Kift. The title card reads, 'Meeting of new Kindred who aim at a race of Intellectual Barbarians. Mr H.G. Wells is a member of this camping fraternity, who combine the ideals of Scientists and Red Indians'. Great Missenden – The 'Kibbo Kift'. 1923. Topical Budget [news reel]. British Film Institute 626:1.
 - 6 Roger Wilbraham, *An Attempt at a Glossary of Some Words Used in Cheshire*, second ed. (London: T. Rodd, 1826).
 - 7 The literature is too extensive to be summarised here. Texts that offer useful context for Kibbo Kift attitudes to degeneration in the social body include Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain and the Crisis of Civilization, 1919–1939* (London: Penguin, 2009) and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health and Fitness in Britain, 1880–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
 - 8 John Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home: The Natural Reconstruction of an Unnatural Existence* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1919), 51.
 - 9 Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, 21.
 - 10 Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home*, 68–74.
 - 11 Nancy, Stepan, *The Idea of Race in Science: Great Britain, 1800–1960* (London: Macmillan, 1982), xviii.
 - 12 These 'positive' and 'negative' approaches are outlined in Overy, *The Morbid Age*, 93–135.
 - 13 R.A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xviii.
 - 14 Lucy Bland, and Lesley A. Hall, 'Eugenics in Britain: The View from the Metropole', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, ed. Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 216.
 - 15 Hargrave, *The Great War Brings it Home*, 364–367.
 - 16 Bland and Hall, 'Eugenics in Britain', 217.
 - 17 Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 74–78.
 - 18 A copy of the Kibbo Kift covenant is reprinted in the first issue of the first Kibbo Kift magazine, *The Mark* 1, no. 1 (June 1922): 16.
 - 19 Other significant names on the Kibbo Kift Advisory Council include writers Maurice Hewlett and Rabindranath Tagore, campaigners and suffragists Henry W. Nevinson, Mary Neal and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, and Norman Angell, MP. For a fuller discussion of the Advisory Council, see Pollen, *The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift*.
 - 20 Lankester, Shaw and Haddon were all approached after the 1923 Althing (Annual General Meeting). Record of the Fourth Althing, 1923. Private papers of Hazel Powell, with thanks.
 - 21 I.O. Evans, [Blue Swift], 'K.K. and Scientific Method', *The Flail: An Independent Kibbo Kift Magazine*, 4, no. 1 (Summer 1927): 139–141.
 - 22 In addition to authoring an important overview of the woodcraft movement, Evans published an adaptation of H.G. Wells's *Outline of History* for children as well as a book of scientific predictions. He later became the principal translator of Jules Verne's science fiction into English. I.O. Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service* (London: Noel Douglas, 1930); I.O. Evans, *The Junior Outline of History* (London: Denis Archer, 1932); I.O. Evans, *The World of Tomorrow: A Junior Book of*

- Forecasts* (London: Denis Archer, 1933). For Evans and Verne, see Brian Taves, "Verne's Best Friend and His Worst Enemy": I.O. Evans and the Fitzroy Edition of Jules Verne', *Verniana: Jules Verne Studies* 4 (2012): 25–54. For copies of Evans's science fiction writing in the 1930s in *Tomorrow: The Magazine of the Future*, thanks to Charlotte Sleigh.
- 23 I.O. Evans, [Blue Swift], 'Book Here: Books for a Kibbo Kift Library', *Nomad* 11, no.1 (April 1924), 133–4.
- 24 The concept of New Samurai appears in H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (London: Penguin, 2005 [1905]). The concept was revived in H.G. Wells, *Men like Gods* (London: Cassell and Co., 1923). For further discussion of the intersection between Wells's works and Kibbo Kift, see Anabella Pollen, 'Utopian Futures and Imagined Pasts in the Ambivalent Modernism of the Kibbo Kift Kindred', in *Utopia: The Avant-Garde, Modernism and (Im)Possible Life*, ed. by David Ayers, Benedikt Hjartarson, Tomi Huttunen and Harri Veivo (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).
- 25 I.O. Evans, [Blue Swift], 'The Tree of Knowledge: An Epitome of Science', *Nomad* 3, no. 2 (August 1924): 177–8.
- 26 Jonathan Rose briefly considers Hargrave as reader and interpreter of intellectual culture in Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 454–455. Joel S. Kahn, considering the ethnographic thinking of Hargrave, has suggested that he can be fit into the Gramscian model of the organic intellectual, as Kibbo Kift texts are neither hegemonic nor subaltern. Joel S. Kahn, *Modernity and Exclusion* (London: Sage, 2001. 33–34).
- 27 Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, 132.
- 28 Hargrave and the Kibbo Kift were dismissed as class deficient by those in more privileged positions. Rolf Gardiner, friend of writers W.H. Auden and D.H. Lawrence, and one-time member of Kibbo Kift, was wealthy and Cambridge University-educated; he snobbishly dismissed Kibbo Kift as 'Suburbia Incarnate' and complained, 'White Fox [Hargrave] has not got any, not one single first class brain or personality in the Kindred'. He noted that Kibbo Kift ideas were 'the product of a mentality that has grown up in Balham and been fed on Methodism, the Cinema, The Wonders of Science (popularly explained) and the novels of Mr. H.G. Wells. They vulgarise the whole realm of experience'. Rolf Gardiner to Jack Winter (6 December 1925) Rolf Gardiner papers, Cambridge University Library Special Collections C6/3/1. Poet W.H. Auden described Hargrave as 'terribly lower middle-class': David Bradshaw, 'New Perspectives on Auden: Rolf Gardiner, Germany and the Orators', *The W. H. Auden Society Newsletter* 20. 2000: 20–28.
- 29 Evans, 'K.K. and the Scientific Method', 140.
- 30 These skills are outlined in the Kibbo Kift's 'Seven Degrees' system of recapitulation. Stanley Dixon collection, courtesy of Gill Dixon. Private collection of Tim Turner, with thanks.
- 31 Editorial, *Wandlelog*, 2, no. 2 (Spring 1926): n.p.
- 32 John Hargrave, *The Confession of the Kibbo Kift*, (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1979 [1927]), 48.
- 33 John Hargrave, 'Letters to the Kindred', *Nomad* 11, no.1 (April 1924): 125–7.
- 34 John Hargrave, and Kathleen M. Milnes, *Kinlog: Being the Annals of the Kindred Called the Kibbo Kift, 1924–1982*, Museum of London Kibbo Kift collection. L198/H.1.
- 35 Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (London: University Press of America, 1983 [1911]).
- 36 While Hargrave and Kibbo Kift did not use the term to describe their own beliefs, Hargrave would have been familiar with the concepts through his reading. In the early 1920s there was also an attempt to establish a new, formal society called The Neo-Vitalists. Led by Douglas Renshaw, this group were allied with a range of reformist causes. Renshaw attended Kibbo Kift events and Hargrave lectured to his group in 1923.
- 37 Oliver A.I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche, 'Introduction: Biocentrism as a Constituent Element of Modernism' in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A.I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 5.
- 38 Oliver A.I. Botar, 'Defining Biocentrism' in Botar and Wunsche, *Biocentrism and Modernism*, 15.
- 39 Richard A. Lofthouse, *Vitalism in Modern Art, C. 1900–1950: Otto Dix, Stanley Spencer, Max Beckmann and Jacob Epstein* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 20.

- 40 Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 54.
- 41 John Hargrave, 'A Short Exposition of the Philosophic Basis of the Kibbo Kift', *Nomad* 2, no. 12 (May 1925), 281–284.
- 42 The Lodge of Instruction, Script III, Rune III. Museum of London, 2012.72/9.
- 43 Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century*, 47.
- 44 Lofthouse, *Vitalism in Modern Art*, 30.
- 45 Herbert Schnadelbach, *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933*, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 139, quoted in Botar, 'Defining Biocentrism', 16–17.
- 46 Bramwell, *Ecology*, 41.
- 47 William T.H.G. Ross, *Wells's World Reborn: The Outline of History and Its Companions* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2002).
- 48 Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, 2.
- 49 I.O. Evans, [Blue Swift], 'Evolution and the Kindred', *The Flail*, 7, no.1 (Spring 1928): 263–5.
- 50 John Hargrave, 'Chief Ritesmaster's Speech', c. 1931. Kibbo Kift Collection, London School of Economics Library YMA/KK/20.
- 51 I.O. Evans, [Blue Swift]. 'The Piltdown Skull', *Wandlelog*, 1, no. 1 (Winter 1924–5): n.p.
- 52 I.O. Evans, *Heroes of World Service* (London: Murray & Co., 1930), 50.
- 53 Joseph le Comte, *The Monist*, 1890–1, vol. 1, 334–5, quoted in Bramwell, *Ecology in the Twentieth Century*, 49.
- 54 Evans, 'Evolution and the Kindred', 265.
- 55 Hargrave, *The Confession*, 157
- 56 H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, vols. I and II (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1920).
- 57 John Hargrave, 'Now for 1932!', *Broadsheet* 70 (January 1932), 1.
- 58 Hargrave's elaborate recapitulation schemes were laid out in several of his books including John Hargrave, *Tribal Training* (London: C. A. Pearson, 1919) and Hargrave, *The Great War Brings it Home*.
- 59 Gillian Beer, *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 123.
- 60 Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), 115.
- 61 Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 143
- 62 G. Stanley Hall, *Youth: Its Education, Regimen, and Hygiene* (New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1906).
- 63 Arthur B. Allen, [Lone Wolf], 'Kibbo Kift and the Teaching of World History', *The Flail* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1926): 33.
- 64 Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 150.
- 65 Kibbo Kift was affiliated with several independent progressive schools run on open-air or woodcraft principles in the 1920s. These included Matlock Modern School in Derbyshire; The Woodcraft School, Winscombe; Badminton School, Bristol; Friar Row School, Caldbeck; Priory Row, Kings Langley; and The Garden School, Great Missenden. A Kibbo Kift "Teacher's Guild" was established in 1927 to consolidate and develop progressive educational schemes through an affiliation of sympathetic teachers, both inside and outside the Kindred.
- 66 John Hargrave, 'The Attitude of the Kibbo Kift towards the Labour Party. A Brief Statement', *Broadsheet* 4 (October 1925): n.p.
- 67 Hargrave was highly dismissive of 'townbred intellectuals ... who discussed ideas interminably'. See, for one example, his unpublished autobiography written during the Second World War. LSE Hargrave Collection, Box 28: n.p.
- 68 There were never more than 500 members of Kibbo Kift at any one time, and membership frequently hovered at around 200. The group had no property, land or substantial means of income.
- 69 J. Arthur Thompson, *The Outline of Science* (London: George Newnes, 1921).
- 70 Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 153.
- 71 See, for example, Evans's review of Dorothy Revel's educational text, *Cheiron's Cave: The School of the Future* in *The Flail* 2, no. 9 (Winter 1928), 33–34, and the detailed demolition of woodcraft recapitulatory methods in Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, 128–132.
- 72 An outline of Boas's approach to anthropology is given in Jerry D. Moore, *Visions of Culture* (Lanham: Altamira, 2004).
- 73 Kevin C. Armitage, "'The Child Is Born a Naturalist": Nature Study, Woodcraft Indians and the Theory of Recapitulation', *The Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era* 6, no.1 (2007): 69–70.
- 74 Bland and Hall, 'Eugenics in Britain', 223.
- 75 Hargrave maintained an interest in the occult his whole life. After the demise of his movements in the late 1930s he established himself as a psychic healer and traded in healing paintings called

- 'psychographs'. He also wrote several articles in the 1940s for The Occult Observer journal produced by London's Atlantis Bookshop.
- 76 Lofthouse, *Vitalism in Modern Art*, 23.
- 77 Evans, *Woodcraft and World Service*, 128.
- 78 The Woodcraft Folk was established in 1925 after a group of socialists and co-operators in Kibbo Kift had clashed with Hargrave and walked out. They continue in 2017 with 15,000 members. For more on the break, see Pollen, *The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift*.
- 79 Leslie Paul, *The Child and the Race* leaflet, quoted in Leslie Paul, *Angry Young Man* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 109.
- 80 Paul, *Angry Young Man*, 109–110.